

the Way of the Fool

***the conscious development of our human character,
and the future* of Christianity - both to be born
out of the natural union of Faith and Gnosis***

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- published in 2009 -

this is a 3rd edition, with some changes since the original was first self published in a similar on-demand format over two years ago

* Regarding the future of Christianity, here is John 16: 12-15 *"I have much more to say to you, but you can't bear it just yet. But when the other comes, the breath of truth, he will guide you in the ways of all truth, because he will not speak on his own, but will speak what he hears and announce to you what's coming. He will glorify me, because he will take of what is mine and announce it to you. Everything the Father has is mine: that's why I said he will take of what is mine and announce it to you"*

Dedication

This book is dedicated to Mary Kelly Sutton, MD (anthroposophical doctor and dear friend), without whose support, generosity and hours of conversation during its initial creation, it could not have been written.

Acknowledgments

The list is long, and for this reason you will find it at the end of this book - one caveat, however: the text has not been edited by a professional, and is therefore no doubt filled with matters that might make other writers, editors, teachers of English and anyone connected with good writing, cringe. For this torture of the editorially gifted, I apologize.

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Introduction

This introduction is a bit long, but it is necessary to touch on a number of preliminary points so as to form a contextual basis for what is in the main text. At the same time, the reader should feel that there is nothing here that has to be deeply learned or memorized. In a way we are just going to travel through an introduction to the landscape of ideas to be later encountered in this book, and you should just enjoy the view and the visit. The nice thing is that because this is a book, you can always revisit it in whole or in part as you need.

There is also a lot of unusual or different content in this book - perhaps for some readers too much. Given that reality (of much unusual content), the reader is urged to take in only what seems to be of personal value and to discard the rest. Different concepts will resonate more strongly with different readers. Let that resonance, that spark of personal interest, be your guide.

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If there is a main point in the introduction, it is this:

My own life experience begins as a ordinary Christian, with all its ups and downs, periods of doubt and periods of secure Faith (the Way of the Shepherds). Yet, in the middle of my life I began to learn about Gnosis (the Way of the Kings), something I hadn't expected or been taught to recognize. I discovered that these Ways were not in opposition to each other, but rather belonged together, the older Way (Gnosis/Kings) complementing and completing the younger Way (Faith/Shepherds). Their separation over 2000 years ago was for a purpose, and the contemporary need for the beginning of their rejoining also has a purpose. That, however, is the longer story this book hopes to illuminate.

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In writing of the natural union of Faith and Gnosis, I am referring to something which is already ongoing in the present, in human consciousness, albeit mostly instinctively. This is a complex matter, and in one sense takes the whole book to explain. Here, in the beginning, we should just have the idea that *true Faith* - indirect knowledge of God - is different from *mere belief*; and, that *real direct knowledge* of God (Gnosis) can be scientific. This union of Faith and Gnosis then is also the coming natural integration of what otherwise seems today to be deeply divided, namely Science (knowledge - Gnosis) and Religion (Faith).

This union is taking place in the individual consciousness (our soul), and requires of us that we faithfully observe (be scientific about) our own soul/consciousness in order to come to knowledge of its real nature. What should not be overlooked, however, is that this union of Gnosis and Faith, or Science and Religion is really an Art - the Art of conscious (intentional) soul life or character development.

For a starting point, here is some apt wisdom from the middle-East: *cultivate your thought for thought will become speech; cultivate your speech for speech will become deeds; cultivate your deeds for deeds will become character; and cultivate your character, for character will become destiny.*

By *the Way of the Fool*, I mean to use the term *Fool* in the same manner as has the anonymous author of *Meditations on the Tarot: A Journey into Christian Hermeticism*, wherein the Arcanum (the Meditation on) *The Fool* is also called *Amor*, or *Love*. This is what then gives this Way its Christ-based texture, being an act of *Love*. By using the term *human character*, I also mean to suggest that this Way, while it has kinship with Buddhist or Yogic Enlightenment, is yet different - the Path of Love being a further evolution of the Path of Compassion [Christ being *Essence* rather than *Being* - the goal, for example, of the Buddha at one time]. Since the former is a facet of God becoming human (for a time), and the latter a facet of the human moving in the direction of becoming only pure *Being* - disappearing into or returning to the Source, then the activity - the Teaching of the Way of Love in human evolution - appears in human history *progressively* subsequent to the Teaching of the Way of Compassion.] . This being the case, we should also notice there is a difference (as well as a relationship) between Compassion and Love, which is why we have to also consider the term initiation as well as the term enlightenment.

Without going too far into the matter, from a certain point of view it is possible to speak of *depth spirituality* (spiritual practices requiring serious meditation practice and other acts of intentional self-development) as needing to be called *enlightenment* in the East (Asia), *initiation* in the Center (Europe) and *character development* in the West (the Americas). With *enlightenment* we are raising the individual up into spiritual heights. With *initiation* we are using the spiritually developed individual to bring down cosmic wisdom from these same heights. With the *development of earthly character*, we are seeking the *moral integration* of the individual as a member of all communities, both visible and invisible. The author of this book is after all an American, and this causes a certain perspective to arise, and a certain given nature to be in effect.

And, speaking of Buddhism...there is a kind of technical problem. In a very real sense there is more than one kind of Buddhism, just as there is more than one kind of Christianity. In the Cultural West, especially America, these various versions of Buddhism have made a deep penetration, not all of which has been to the good. Let us call the more healthy versions *depth* Buddhism, and the less healthy (superficial) versions *pop*-Buddhism (we can make a similar distinction as

regards Christianity - there are *depth* aspects and merely *pop* aspects). Part of the effort in this book then, is to help the reader distinguish between the *superficial* versions of spiritual practice and the *depth* versions, as well as to become awake to certain distinctions between depth Buddhism and depth Christianity.

Now I don't mean to suggest, by the use of the term *superficial*, any particular human failing. Rather, as we all know, some people only go to Church on Sunday, and others are so devoted to religious practice that they enter a convent or a monastery. This also we all know, for not only is this a teaching in many religious and philosophical texts, it is also a lesson of life: *as you sow, so shall you reap*. Those who take their religious *practice* more seriously than others will find inner riches that others cannot yet reach and discover.

The core of the character development aspect is, however, tied up with the problem of morality - in a manner that is not easily approached from a traditional frame of reference. A real focus of this book then is about how we can come to trust our individual and independent moral judgment (outside of tradition), and the meaning of that search for both our personal biographies and the general condition of the world - something that is not a small topic in any event.

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The image on the cover is a weaving of seed beads (an artistic effort inspired by the use of such beads by Native America Peoples), which I created around 1977.

Much the same way that cover design is created out of many many small colored beads, so is the design of this book created out of individual words - lines of dark upon a page - a mosaic of ideas set free in trust for the reader to make of it what he or she will. I am grateful to whomever takes the time to let into their soul this small offering. Thank you.

*

The words that follow in this small book then, and the thoughts which seek to live through them, are derived from the whole of my life. This means that in certain respects I am a very lucky human being - I have been

Graced with a rather remarkable series of teachings, most of them out of life experience. But of my own story, my biography, I will write only occasionally, in the light of the following observation.

Who I am, and what of the truly human I have become (we are not born fully human, but must seek it and become it), is mostly due to all the people I have met in life. I have had the great fortune to encounter at almost every turn wise and loving people. Yes, there have been all the usual personal struggles, even including addiction, but all the ordinary human suffering that I have experienced has been far out weighed by the Grace of a very wise Providence, who placed in my life's path a sequence of teachers and life teachings for which I am not only very grateful, but upon whom I am completely dependent. The best in what I write is born in them, while the worst will be due to my own failings.

All the same, to receive such treasures into ones soul and spirit is clearly not meant to be for me alone. It is, in fact, an aspect of age (I was halfway through my 64th year when the major portions of this book were being written, and I am 68-69 at the writing of these current revisions) that creates a need to pass on what has been learned, knowing that it was by such a sharing from others that ones own life was greatly enriched.

At a certain point in my life, while reflecting on the nature of these riches entrusted to me, I wrote of what it was like to receive them using the following words: "*Listening to the World Song*". Here then, in this book, is a portion of what I heard - the Story Sung to me by the World Itself, concerning the human adventure that is each individual's biography, as that biography is held within a most wise and loving embrace - an embrace which was once called Divine Providence, and which today we might call: *Earthly Human Existence*. The meaning of this *Earthly Human Existence* will be the principle thought-picture, in this landscape of ideas, to be brought forward at the end of the main body of the book.

I should also confess that a great deal of what I write about this *Way of the Fool (Love)* is based upon direct personal experience. Very little is just the repeating of ideas gained from the reading of books, or the shared wisdom of people I have met. Always it has been my practice to test pragmatically any suggestion of others as regards spiritual or inner work. This being the case I have in the main only spoken from experience, although I frequently quote sources especially the teachings of Christ as

contained in the Gospels. Of all that has been tested in practice by the way, it is Christ's teachings that have been the truest, the deepest, and the most practical.

At the same time, the reader should be able to find here a few indications (*stories*) describing how a certain understanding came to me during the course of my biography. Let me here give an example of the kind of story that I will infrequently tell:

In about the year 1979, I was working as a dishwasher in a small restaurant near Lake Merritt in Oakland California. The owner was an unusual and passionate gay man, given to all manner of human excesses, coupled with a remarkable generosity. Human beings, somewhat in the nature of stray cats, would come to his attention and he would help them with jobs and money. I was one such stray cat.

One morning when I got to work there was an older gentleman standing in that part of the kitchen where I worked at washing dishes and certain other tasks. The owner, Patrick, had apparently brought this man to the restaurant in order to give him some work. My guess is that Patrick had wanted to give the man money, but the older gentleman being of another generation, his pride probably demanded that he work for this gift. Just to round out the reader's picture of this gentleman - he was tall (a little over six feet) and thin, with short gray hair, and a couple days gray stubble on his unshaven face. He was wearing a threadbare dark blue suit and a white shirt with no tie. He was not dressed for working in a kitchen.

I was introduced to this gentleman upon getting to work and told that he would be doing some tasks. But breakfast was a busy time and I soon was very active, as were all the rest of the employees. As I ran around doing what was expected, the gentleman stood quietly and silently out of the way. Concerned, I asked him if he would like some coffee while he waited, to which he replied: "Yes. Please." I then retrieved a cup from that place where it was produced and which he could not have seen or known he could use. When I handed him the cup he said: "Thank you, I am twice warmed."

I had never heard this form of speech before, and my facial expression became clearly quizzical. This he immediately noticed, and then said:

"The hot coffee warms my body, but the kindness of your act warms my soul."

Such are the lessons with which we are surrounded in our biographies.

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A couple more introductory points....

As most everyone knows there are many translations of the Gospels and other Old and New Testament texts. Where a particular author has used a text, I will quote it as used. Where there is a certain reference I need to make, I will quote from a beautifully bound Bible that I found on sale at a Monastery. The bible calls itself the: ***Catholic Family Edition of the Holy Bible*** and was published in 1953 by John J. Crowley & Co., Inc. of New York. Where the Gospels in particular are being quoted I will do something in addition, namely quote the same passage as published in the book ***The Unvarnished Gospels*** by Andy Gaus. There is a reason for this.

When the Gospels were first written down (they were oral traditions before being written), they were written in Greek, the language of scholarship in that Age. As time passed, and the religion that is Christianity arose, translators began to adapt the original Greek and to change it to accord with various established doctrines. So in our time we don't get what was actually written of the Gospels in their original form in Greek, but rather official versions and later interpretations that change the original text to make it consistent with the by then established doctrine. By adding a translation faithful to the original Greek, it is my hope to aid the reader to see that perhaps something of the true Mystery has been sacrificed over the centuries in order to force the text to conform to someones later invented dogma.

Just to give an example, here is a quote from the preface to ***The Unvarnished Gospels***, which preface was written by one George Witterschein:

"To my eye the most startling difference between this version and all others I know occurs in the famous Prologue to John's Gospel. Everyone has heard it: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God." Now one of the first things I noticed upon

reading this passage in Greek was that it doesn't say "the Word was with God." It says "...and the Word was towards God," or "...was going towards God."

Which is another matter altogether. If the Word was in motion towards God, instead of being literally and plainly identical with God, then St. John is introducing the notion of development (or process, or progression) within the divine nature, as the explanation for the origin of the created universe! "Movement toward " implies a separation that is in process of being overcome. The movement of the Word towards God can then be seen as history: the history of the created universe, going back to its very beginning, is one of overcoming a separation from God, of a process of reunification."

{Where I have quoted from *The Unvarnished Gospels*, this quote will appear in the text below, in bold and italics - that is in this form.}

One small caveat...*The Unvarnished Gospels* is not perfect. Choices were made and not all those choices were wise. A reader now awake to this problem will probably want to look to the Internet or other sources for the further considerations of any difficult or seemingly ambiguous passages.

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With reference to modern Biblical scholarship, a field full of worthy effort, I must make some small comments. We have, of course, a long pursuit of the historical Jesus by the world of scholars, some believers and some not. Documents are studied, languages are mastered, papers written and conferences held. In spite of all the valiant efforts made, I do not believe this activity has any hope of finding the truth of who Jesus was, and what those events of 2000 years ago meant then, mean today and will mean on into the future.

True knowledge of this kind comes in only one way - the practice of the teachings in the Gospels. The essence of what is to be learned is not found in any text, whether it is the Four Gospels themselves, the supposed book of Q, or the newly discovered Gospels of Mary and of Thomas. This essence is only found through the trials in life that come from struggling to follow in the footsteps of the Teacher. This knowledge only comes from

doing, not from mere belief, reading, study or contemplation of any text - even the many texts which I will cite below.

Let me come at this again, from a slightly different direction...

Consider the Gospels of Mary Magdalene and Thomas, which some today find remarkable, especially since these two seem to emphasize the teachings of Jesus in a manner more familiar to that kind of spirituality we have been hearing from the Eastern Ways, such as various forms of Buddhism (such as Zen) or the equally indirect teachings found in the Sufi Tales. There is a similar enigmatic quality to these newly discovered Gospels, and a kinship to various kinds of Gnostic teachings. For those of us made sensitive to this kind of spirituality, and who have also become hardened or resistant to the confused religious *beliefs* of many traditional Christians, there has come to live in us a hunger for something other than the traditional interpretations of what the Four Gospels mean.

Consider then the possibility that there is nothing essentially inconsistent between the Four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and the Gospels of Mary and Thomas, or the teachings of the Gnostics. Suppose, once we enter the realm of *doing* and not just reading and having beliefs, the light that inspires all spirituality and all religion begins to shine. This is a light that shines in and through us, and once alight will itself illuminate in a new way the Four Gospels themselves, and give rebirth and resurrection to our understanding of the meaning of the Incarnation.

Lets add here a nuance much discussed in traditional Christianity, and this is the distinction between *works* and *grace*, for in emphasizing *doing* I appear to suggest that works are superior to grace.

It is possible to read many arguments about this problem - are we *saved* by grace and by faith alone, or are works necessary too. In framing the question this way, something else is added, namely the idea of being *saved*. However, when I wrote above about *doing*, what I said essentially was that *true knowledge* comes only from *doing*. I was not speaking about being *saved*. At this point I only want to suggest that there are subtle matters involved, and that this problem of the relationship of *knowledge*, *doing*, *being saved*, *grace*, *faith*, *gnosis*, and *belief* are worthy of a great deal of thoughtful attention, and ought not in any case to be just

left aside as matters of mere doctrine and dogma. They must be examined, and made whole with experience.

On this theme, however, one more matter needs to be expressed:

In the Bible we have collected the testimony of many human beings, who many feel were inspired by God to give this testimony. We today then interpret this testimony to create our own systems of belief, which frequently conflict. What we don't do, however, is allow God to offer new inspiration forged into new testimony. Instead we seek to fix the old testimony into rigid meanings, and then bind ourselves through our interpretive beliefs to these past utterances.

God - the Divine Mystery - is, by such methods as we have applied, not allowed to proclaim anything new, or to appear to change His mind (as we have interpreted it). Or, to urge us to consider that we may have made errors of interpretation. God, by this attitude of ours, we silence.

In fact, to insist on biblical inerrancy is to confine God not only to ancient textual considerations, but to our all to human interpretations of those words. But the Divine Mystery cannot be silenced, however hard those who want to proclaim rigid doctrine and dogma try. God has never stopped speaking to us - we've (mostly) just stopped listening. This book then aims to unveil new testimony, which is rooted scientifically in new and fully conscious inspiration.

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One of the aspects of human nature that has become somewhat lost and confused to modern human beings, particularly in the Cultural West, concerns the role of the imagination in our understanding of existence. I will speak more in the main text about the imagination in certain specific instances, but here I just wanted to point to the problem, and also just point at the depths that can be considered, for example in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's (not as well known as they should be) remarks on primary and secondary Imagination, from Chapter XIII of his ***Biographia Literaria***:

"The Imagination then, I consider either as primary or secondary. The primary Imagination I hold to be a living power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act

of creation of the infinite I Am. The secondary Imagination I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the former in the kind of its agency and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operation . It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead."

Then there is Coleridge's distinction between these and Fancy:

"Fancy, on the contrary, has no other counters to play with, but fixities and finites. The Fancy is indeed no other than a mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space; while it is blended with, and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will, which we express by the word Choice. But equally with the ordinary memory the Fancy must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association."

The imagination, as you might now be able to see, is not well understood in general today, but I will be trying to bring it more to the fore in the book below where I am going to tell some *stories* - in some cases what I explicitly call *Tales*. Ordinarily we think of such (*Tales*) as fanciful feats of the imagination, and no more real than comic books. Such is also the view of many concerning Religion, or at least the reality of the Divine Mystery - what some see as just another fanciful myth.

Each of us will have to decide the truth of such things for ourselves. All the same, the reader should know that the author of these words knows the imagination in a most intimate fashion, and as something of far greater depth and reality than the merely fanciful. Our inwardness is joined to another Inwardness, and the boundary world between our personal mystery and that far greater Mystery is the imagination. Yes, the world of the imagination is prone to illusion and fancy, but that comes from our approach to it, not from its own nature. If we approach it from a particular direction, as explorers and adventurers - knowing we enter a place of mystery and awe - then the imagination becomes what it truly is meant to be - a light-filled bridge between ourselves and the Divine.

In the imagination we make our first baby steps away from mere sense experience, and turn inward, into realms of mystery and enchantment (something all good authors of the arts of fiction and poetry well

understand). Even science travels here, although it has masked its journeys in such sterile (bloodless) terms as *hypothesis* and *theory*.

For example, Quantum Theory, the Big Bang and the Theory of Evolution are products of the human imagination, albeit falsely treated by many scientists, and even more by the general public, as known facts.

All the same, with the undisciplined imagination there is darkness there as well as light - a little illustration, that is, a *story*:

A man's wife travels into the city with some girlfriends. In the evening, on their way from dinner at their hotel to the theater, the man's wife becomes separated from her friends for a moment and is mugged.

Later, on the train coming into the city to see his wife at the hospital (she may not live), the man closes his eyes and drifts on the sea of his mind. He imagines life without her, and part of him would like that, would like to be free of her shadow side, the side that wants things he can't understand or give, and which often treats him in a way he does not feel he deserves. So he imagines life without her, and the freedom from the necessary pains of relationship and marriage.

After a time someone coughs, which wakes him from his day-dreaming while riding the sea of his mind, and he now feels guilty. How could he want her dead, she who bore his children, and gave herself to him in so many ways over so many years?

We know these dark dreams. We know that the fanciful and the imaginary are not easily controlled. There is no logic there of the cold, hard and certain kind. The imagination is of the blood and the heat, which is full of life yes, but like life is dark as well. We are right to fear its siren songs. If we swim in these waters without proper care, we can end up mad, or in prison, the victim of our own unbridled passions, or lost in illusions.

This is why some like science and technology. Not so messy these cool, smooth and controllable things (as long as we pretend that *hypothesis* and *theory* are not of the imagination). Not like love, or attachment or other matters of the blood and of the heart. That is the true danger of the imagination - not that it is fanciful, but rather because it is too real.

About science...

The intersection between religion and science is part of this book, but as everyone knows that subject is so huge that I'd have to write a half dozen books to even begin. In this book - *the Way of the Fool* - it should be said that the process of inner development (Gnosis) referred to here is completely empirical and objective. The only difference is that instead of studying the outer sense world, the neophyte *scientist of the spirit* begins by studying his or her own mind.

At the same time, if we look at what science actually knows about consciousness and soul life (psychology), it becomes clear that just here lies a great mystery. There are far more questions in this realm than answers, although all kinds of theoretical formulations can be found. At the same time, the one thing that is clear is that the scientist does not investigate his own mind; that is, the scientist does not examine his own inwardness with the same empirical objectivity he studies the consciousness of others. We each have before us our own inner life, and science seeks to know this only from the outside, without being willing to face the questions of what might be known by looking directly at what can be observed through self observation (introspection).

In essence the scientist creates his meaning - his world view - using a tool he does not actually understand: his own mind (as do the religious, by the way). For example, what is the relationship between personal egotistical ambition and what the scientist finds as conclusions? Anyone who really observes how scientific knowledge is produced will find everywhere that the unexamined subjectivity of the scientist's own mind has left its fingerprints on all thought (and the same is true of the religious).

Lets look at the need for this in its essential nature. Whatever science knows through experiment and investigation, in the end the meaning and significance of the world view produced - this meaning - is produced by thinking. The scientist interprets the world according to his methods of investigation, and in finding that this world rests only on matter and never on spirit, it is human thinking processes that are at the core of any such conclusion.

The sad fact is that scientists have just as many beliefs as do the religious, including the vain belief that only their method of investigation is capable of understanding the world. At the same time this is entirely expectable. Both the religious and the scientific among us are human beings.

Now we do know that science and religion seem to express two completely opposed paradigms or views of the nature of reality. This book you hold in your hand then is also a paradigm - a *story* - that seeks to include the essential aspects of both views and hopes to suggest there can be expressed here a viable (though brief) synthesis. This paradigm of synthesis will also have qualities that *for the reader* are hypothetical and theoretical. This book then means to create a picture in the imagination, in the same way that the theory of evolution is a picture in the imagination, which sought in the 19th Century to *explain* what is behind known facts. The paradigm expressed here in this book will *explain* (again briefly, and as part of a greater whole) the future integration of science and religion (through the art of character development) that can be thought by a mind that has come to know itself empirically and objectively. If we can learn to understand our own consciousness out of the scientific spirit, then that understanding - that science of *insides* - penetrates and changes all the other facts we believe we understand on the basis of our science of outsides (scientific materialism), such that religion and art themselves take on new meaning.

As food for thought on this, consider the implied relationship of these concepts (as lived) : truth, beauty, goodness / science, art, religion / reason, imagination, devotion. Or seen another way: truth - science - reason / beauty - art - imagination / goodness - religion - devotion.

And finally (at long last)...

Mostly this book is descriptive, that is it is a synthesis of experienced observations, and not an analysis of abstract facts; or again, it is the result of many years of empirical: *Listening to the World Song*.

Which is why we come back to *character*...this book is written mostly to help people understand (explain) their interior life better, and explain the relationship of that interior life to the elements of their biography. How the reader chooses to act, in the light of this new understanding, will become an aspect of their character, and thus, their destiny. We are, after

all, artists in the co-creation of our lives, thus the Navajo blessing, which I now address to my reader: *May you walk in Beauty*.

and now, *finally*, to the main text of

the Way of the Fool...

Moral Grace

- the theme (song) of the central mystery of the modern age -

first stanza

Shepherds and Kings

- a Temporary parting of Ways -

We have been told that attending the birth of the Christ Child, besides the immediate family, were two different groups of human beings, the Shepherds and the Kings. This element of the story is worthy of deeper study.

These were times of oral culture, and the Gospels, in spite of all our other uses for them, were originally stories. This is how wisdom was shared among the common people in that time, and in fact for most of history. We moderns with our written literature, and television and videos, have lost sight of the more essential, more human element. It is really the oral stories that we share among us as human beings that brings forward wisdom and human knowledge. Yes, we have all kinds of modern ways,

including the Internet, but the wise reality of life always comes down to our tales, shared from one to another (c.f. Le Guin's *The Telling*). At the time of the Gospels few could read, and most learned all that was learned through being told via speech (remember the story of the miracle of Pentecost?). With this in mind then, let us recall the Gospels in the more true way - as wise tales.

We might also keep in mind, that contrary to some modern scholarship, it is also very likely that the disciples of Christ to whom the Four Gospels are attributed, were in fact the creators of those stories. In an oral culture, these stories would have been memorized once originally told, and frequently quite accurately at that. No one would dream of retelling such stories and adding embellishments. To do so would dishonor the original speaker, and the story itself; as well as violate the trust of the listeners. Whether they were told in Greek, or not, we do not know for sure, although we might guess that they were told in multiple languages as the story of Pentecost implies. All we really know is that when first *written* down, they were rendered into Greek (the language of scholarship in that Age), which has now been translated for us in *The Unvarnished Gospels* into idiomatic English.

Now I do know that intense scholarship over many many years is able to look at these documents and find (sometimes often) more than one voice or hand in the expression of the text of any particular Gospel. This process of analysis, modeled on the approach of science to all that science studies, results in a certain set of consequences for the thinking of these scholars and also for those they teach. In essence, this process of analysis kills the living element, for the whole effort is directed at taking the story apart.

The Gospels, in spite of this effort at studied analysis, remain stories with an overriding whole meaning. We can't just take them apart and separate the pieces and then find the truth of their meaning. As I said before, the truth is not found this way. We have to practice the Gospels, for that is where the truth lives - in the results of practice. Once our understanding has been illuminated by the experiences derived from practice, the overarching meaning of the Gospels becomes apparent, and the details of who said what and when becomes more and more irrelevant.

Consider an analogy...

Suppose that all we knew of martial arts was written in books, many ancient and wise. We then had scholars who studied these books and wrote their own books about the books. Libraries became filled with texts, analyzing other texts. In spite of all these texts, however, no one knew what happens if you practice the martial arts. There were, apparently, no fighting adepts, and no teachers of fighting adepts. Or so it might seem if we just look to the schools of the readers and writers of books. In life, we might well find something else.

In the history of Christianity, those who practice stand out. For example, most of the religious orders of the Catholic Church were founded by individual personalities who practiced the Gospels, and these folks always confounded the authorities on doctrine, dogma and the official meaning of scripture.

The same is true today. Practitioners are far less visible, for they are out in life, doing. They are not in the centers of theological learning, studying. Enough said, so let us return to trying to appreciate the overarching meaning of the Gospels as wise stories meant to guide our actions in life.

To really appreciate this, we should imagine ourselves around a hearth, in the evening. The traveler, who is now our guest, has had his feet washed (he has walked far to visit us), been fed and allowed to rest. This is the best way to receive the Gospels - orally, yet in the closeness of family.

All we have to do is read the opening lines, and the story nature of the Gospels is clear. For example, Mark 1:1 says: "*The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God*". **{The Beginning of the Good Word of Jesus The Anointed, Son of God}** Or, Matthew, after laying out the line of genealogy peculiar to his Gospel (a quite different genealogy from Mark by the way), says in 1:18: "*Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way*". **{The birth of Jesus the Anointed was like this:}**

These are classical forms for the beginning of a story. I am, by the way, not suggesting anything about the truth or not of these stories, but rather pointing to something else. These stories are not meant to be the dry recitation of facts, but have behind them the intention to render into words

what for the speakers was rooted in the *experience* of a most sublime mystery.

What this means for us is that there is nothing superfluous in these stories as originally expressed. Every detail was placed there for a purpose, and nothing was intended to be simple filler, or any excess of exaggeration or fancy. This is so even when the speaker already has an agenda to render the story in a way consistent with his own understanding. (see in this regard, the book: ***Reading Judas: The Gospel of Judas and the Shaping of Christianity***, by Pagels and King) And, given that what is being rendered in the Gospels concerned what the story tellers conceived as the greatest of Holy Mysteries, we cannot pass by any element of the story without considering its possible wider meaning.

Nor should we, as is done far too frequently today, render these Mysteries into rigid meanings and certainties. The Gospels are meant to evoke Life in our souls, to enliven us and inspire us, not to kill what lives there with cold intellectual concepts and arid doctrines inviolate for all time. We should try to hear them as we once heard them when we were little children (*lest ye become again little children...*), out of a natural feeling of awe and mystery.

With the picture of the Shepherds and the Kings attending the birth (and early life) of the Christ Child, we come upon a much overlooked aspect of these Gospel stories - an aspect that can tell us a great deal about our time, and the future. Those, who know the nature of humanity's deep and wise stories, know that just such little details often reflect Archetypes, which when properly appreciated lead us to what are otherwise hidden, or at least less obvious, meanings and truths.

Christ Himself taught frequently using the image of the Shepherd and his flock, which fact ought to suggest that it is of no little moment that the birth of Jesus was known to two quite different classes of human beings. Yet, about Kings, Christ tells no parables. Moreover, the Shepherds who attended the Birth in this story knew of the Birth in one Way, and the Kings who sought him own knew in another Way. This difference is itself important.

The Kings are described as following a star (Matthew 2: 7-12), which led them to Bethlehem and the Birth, to actually seeing the Christ Child. The

Shepherds, on the other hand, experienced an announcement from an Angel, and from this they then traveled to the place of birth (Luke: 2:8-20).

We can, for example, understand that for the ancient peoples of this time, a star was part of the vault of heaven, and not, as we are taught today, a mere object in the sky, no different from the Sun, and certainly having no being or consciousness. So in the story, when it was taught that the Kings followed a star, it was understood by all listeners that they followed *a sign from heaven*.

We have here then two ways of coming to knowledge of the Birth, and these two ways effected two quite different groups of human beings. The Kings were knowledgeable and wise (able to understand and follow a *sign*), and the Shepherds meek and ordinary. The Kings knew something on their own out of a wisdom tradition, and the Shepherds had to be told by an Angel in order to know.

Who were the Kings?

Part of our history of those days has been forgotten, and it certainly was true that as the early Church grew into prominence, it went on the attack against the various Mysteries that had preceded Christianity. Today we call these prior Mysteries: *paganism*; and, some treat them as if they were the superstitious ravings of lunatics. But this is a false revision of the true history of those days.

In point of fact the Kings were Priest-Kings, for in those times the rulership of nations and principalities had often been in the hands of these so-called Pagan Mysteries. Moreover, these Mysteries practiced disciplines by which individuals were brought to what is called *a state of initiation*. A Priest-King, who was an initiate, experienced directly the sublimity of the Divine. These Mysteries practiced forms of gnosis - or the direct experiential knowledge of God.

Today, of course, those who consider themselves educated do not believe such a view of ancient times. Even so, it must be understood that those moderns who harbor such beliefs do not in fact know the truth of this past. It is a kind of negative superstition to assert that something isn't true that we don't really know can't be true. Many assume this, and will often as

well hypocritically criticize others for believing in matters that seem outside the scope of being knowable. Richard Dawkins, the author of *The God Delusion* is one such, for he asserts as not true something he can't prove is not true (not to leave out Sam Harris, and his flawed book: *The End of Faith*). We will return to this later in the text in considering the deeper implications of fundamentalism (there can be a scientific fundamentalism at the same time there can be a religious fundamentalism).

Now to return to the *story* under consideration...

The story tells us indirectly that the Kings that attended the Christ Child knew through initiation (direct gnosis) about the Event in Bethlehem. This is implied by story of the Star, and the recognition that they were *wise* and therefore could follow *signs* (remember, in order to truly understand the *story*, we have to place our selves inside the consciousness of the listener of that time). Thus the Kings knowledge was based, in large part, upon their own efforts (coupled, of course, with Grace - Grace being an act of the Divine Mystery reaching down into the human realm). This supersensible (beyond the senses) knowledge is reflected in the story by the picture of the Star. The Kings followed their direct transcendent knowledge - their Star - which then led them to the Birth.

The Shepherds, on the other hand, were simple and ordinary. Their relationship to the Divine was based not upon direct personal knowledge, but upon the early soul conditions of Faith. This then required that they be told through the *office* of an Angel about this Event.

In this way the Birth and early Childhood was attended by what is essentially a small class of individuals - namely initiates (Priest-Kings); and, it was attended by representatives of a much larger class, namely the ordinary and the lowly - the meek (Shepherds). Please remember: *Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the Earth*. Matthew 5:4 ***{The gentle are in luck, they will inherit the earth.}***

In this way the Gospels tell us the story that there are two ways of knowing about God. One direct, personal and immediate, and the other indirect and mediated by another Being, in this case an Angel. These two Ways we will call here: Gnosis and Faith. I do not, by the way, refer in my use of the term gnosis in this book in any way to the Gnostic Religion,

but only use the term to refer to the direct personal experience of the Divine Mystery.

As most everyone knows the Ways of Gnosis disappeared, and the early Church even up to the late Middle Ages, considered such views to be heresy, often punishable by death. The Church, founded on the rock of Peter, elaborated by the heart of Paul (and later stolen by the power of Rome), became a Church that sought to root itself in Faith. Knowledge of the true meaning in the Gospel stories of the Kings was deliberately ignored, then forgotten and finally lost. Only the Way of Faith seems to have remained historically visible.

But not really...

For a certain other fact was written into the *stories* of the Gospels. Most everyone knows that the Matthew, Mark and Luke Gospels were significantly different from the John Gospel. Biblical scholarship has long recognized these differences, and actually creates a separate category for the first three Gospels, calling them the Synoptic (*seeing with the same eyes*) Gospels.

The reason for this is plain, once we understand the meaning in the story of the two groups who attended the Christ Child. The Kings were allied with the old Mysteries, and for Christianity to develop as a new Mystery, the old had to pass away for a while into the mists of time.

The result is that we have in Christianity two Ways. The Way of Faith, or Pauline Christianity and the Way of Gnosis of Johnine Christianity. The Gospel of John has contained, since the beginning, knowledge of the Way of Gnosis. In spite of this, most of Christian history has involved the coming into being of the assumption that the John Gospel was just a maverick variation of the other three, with the result that a true appreciation of what is described in John has been lost. [See, for example, a modern look at the John Gospel, which rediscovers its original meaning: ***Becoming Aware of the Logos: The Way of St. John the Evangelist***, by Georg Kuhlewind.]

Today, what has been forgotten for two thousand years is returning (with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Gospels of Mary and Thomas, for example). The true meaning of the Gospel story of John has

begun to emerge from its hiding place. Once again there exists knowledge of how to know God in a personal and direct Way. In reality, this Way was never truly lost, but mostly had to sacrifice its former preeminence in order that the Way of Faith could bring forward its gifts, which were new, and very important for the future.

Consider that Christ said: *Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.* ***{How lucky are the ones who never saw but still believed!}*** John 20:29. The ancient mysteries were mysteries based upon the gnosis (initiation) of the priests, whose authority then was accepted by their followers. The Way of Gnosis, the form of the old Mysteries (with an active and dominant priesthood), had to go into the background for a time, as part of a long term process which was to make it possible for human beings to no longer need any kind of intermediary between themselves and God (many of the patriarchs, kings and prophets of the Old Testament had direct experiences of the Divine Mystery - Moses, for example sees the burning bush). All the same, in the beginning of the history of the Church, a priesthood remained necessary, but this intermediary priesthood was itself to be based upon faith, and not any longer upon the old gnosis (initiation). However, in order to understand in a deeper way why it was necessary for the Way of Faith to dominate early Christianity, other considerations must be added.

second stanza

the Evolution of Consciousness

*- the meaning of the historical differences between
the time of the Pharaohs (the time of the Old Testament)
and our present Age (the Dawn of the Third Millennium) -*

To understand this next part a little better, let us first examine a question seldom asked: *Where was Christ before the events described in the Gospels?*

Our Faith is that Christ (the Son) was sent by the Father to save us - to walk the earth as (or in) a human being, to eventually be crucified, to die and be buried, and then to be resurrected. And, in this process to take on the sins (errors) of the world.

At the same time, Christ certainly *existed* before this human historical moment. Where then was He? What did He do? Was He known to human beings in some *other* way?

How did the Magi know of Him? Had their understanding - their insight, the signs - told them that Christ was coming? Coming from where?

In the pre-Christian Mysteries, knowledge of the deeds and the meaning of the Son - of Christ before the time of the Gospels - was available to those who spent a lifetime in religious instruction such as led them to *initiation* - to a consciously created condition of *gnosis* - *direct experience of the Divine Mystery*. This is the secret of the stream of the pre-Christian Mysteries represented by the Kings (priest-kings) - the Magi - of the Gospel stories.

It is these pre-Christian Sun Mysteries that many opponents of contemporary Christianity use to assert that the Christ story was borrowed from other myths, and is not original. Those who do this, however, fail to appreciate that these prior to the Birth myths have their own true background, which if carefully investigated would reveal that Christ existed and was known before the Birth at Bethlehem.

So, where was Christ before the Birth? This question we will have to leave aside for later, only drawing from it now that there might well have been those at that time who knew, and who saw. Just as with the Gospel Stories, the pre-Christian myths have to be understood as their listeners understood them, not in the light of our modern, and supposed superior, points of view.

This pre-Christian *initiation wisdom* did not disappear after the Incarnation, but instead stepped aside (sacrificed itself as symbolized in the Gospels stories in the gifts offered by the Wise Men from the Orient) so that Faith could begin to become the force it is meant to become in human souls (as an aspect of the Evolution of Consciousness). Having gone into the background, as it were, initiation wisdom hid from the temporal power of the Roman Church, slowing re-emerging beginning around the 14th Century, first in the symbolism of the Marseilles Tarot Deck, then in Alchemy (as a secret coded language), finally to manifest in Rosicrucianism and Free Masonry (all heresies to the Roman Church).

There was, briefly, at around the year 1000, at Chartres an encounter between the Shepherds and Kings stream of wisdom, but it was a subtle event and while one can read about it indirectly when studying that time, the intercourse between the two streams, while significant, was not obvious.

Then in the 20th Century the meaning-essence of the initiation wisdom at one time represented by the Kings in the Gospel stories began to return with full outward strength. With this book, *the Way of the Fool*, an attempt is being made to bring the two streams into contact with as much direct force as possible. What does this modern initiation wisdom have to say to us today? A great deal, but we can only take up what has been offered a bit at a time, so as an example, we will now look toward the work of one such human being.

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) is a modern representative of the stream of mystery wisdom once belonging to the Kings in the Gospel stories. He was an initiate, and had direct personal experience of the Divine. While it is not necessary to take my word here on this, it would be wrong for me to pretend that I know otherwise. However, what we are going to do here is the same that we did before with the Gospels. We are going to look at some of the *stories* that Rudolf Steiner told. No one is required to believe Steiner was an initiate - I only tell that part of his story so the reader will know what is my experience as regards his status.

Let us now look at some of what Steiner taught, not as knowledge to be believed on his authority as an initiate, but rather as a story, from which we are free to draw our own conclusions. In our Age, the Kings are no longer meant to dominate, but rather have joined the rest of us at the shared common ground of our humanity. In fact, deep *initiation* in our Age is frequently more of a unusual challenge than a blessing.

[As a small aside, let me elaborate the nature of this challenge. It is unusual, as we would all agree, for individuals to have direct experience of the Divine. In fact, in the modern scientific age, to assert that one has known God directly is often considered madness, for to many in science God is not real, but rather a superstition. Yet, for people of integrity, to deny their experience is impossible - in point of fact, it is a violation of conscience. One must be honest about ones experience in this regard (although some discretion is natural, and there is seldom reason to stand

on the street corner and assert ones religious importance as some kind of messenger). In fact, in most cases conscience forbids acting as if one was more special than others because of these experiences. This direct experience of the Divine then becomes a kind of weight, where one must choose between honesty about what has been learned, and ordinary human humility. It is this weight, and its difficult moral dilemmas regarding when to speak and about what, that creates the unusual challenge, which itself tends to separate someone with this particular challenge from the rest of us. Those, who speak of their authentic spiritual experiences often face subsequently some sort of trial (another aspect of the challenge), such as either being seen as mad, or treated with an excess of deference (a hard, but necessary aspect of the development of character). At the least, we need to recognize that in our age, those who say they are having visions are not seen in the same light as ordinary human beings are seen. In point of fact and in large part because of this challenge, Steiner attempted to place his life's work (what he called Spiritual Science, and Anthroposophy - which are not the same) on a scientific foundation. He hoped, that by showing how people could make empirical such research and find out for themselves, that the previously solitary nature of authentic spiritual experience could be overcome.]

In addition to Steiner, if one chooses, there are others that can be looked to for conformation about what I will write below regarding the Evolution of Consciousness such as is described in his stories. Here are three such books and authors: Ernst Lehrs' book, ***Man or Matter: Introduction to a Spiritual Understanding of Nature on the Basis of Goethe's Method of Training Observation and Thought***; Gottfried Richter's book, ***Art and Human Consciousness***; and, Owen Barfield's book, ***Saving the Appearances: a Study in Idolatry***.

The story that Steiner tells about the Evolution of Consciousness is long and complicated, being an attempt to tell a broad history of the whole of human and spiritual evolution, from the very beginning of Creation to modern times, and then beyond into the future. Here we are only going to look at a very narrow aspect of this much greater story.

In the vocabulary that Steiner creates for telling this long story, he speaks of what he calls "*cultural epochs and ages*." Our present time is one cultural age among seven others, which seven is again embedded in larger

periods that he called Epochs. We are only going to examine the middle three cultural ages of the current Epoch.

The time of the ancient Hebrews and Egyptians was in Steiner's words the time of the third cultural age of our modern historical era (Epoch). This age extended from around 2800 BC until about 700 BC (this latter date roughly corresponds to the founding of Western Civilization), at which point begins the fourth cultural age that goes until around 1400 AD, after which begins the fifth cultural age of the modern era - or our own time.

Each cultural age also corresponds to the development of some particular *inner characteristic of human consciousness*. For the third cultural age, humanity developed what Steiner called *the sentient soul*; for the fourth, *the intellectual soul*; and in our time (a period that will last until about 3500 AD), we are developing *the consciousness soul*. Now these different consciousness (or soul) developments are just the names that Steiner gives to aspects of human nature in his stories. They could be called anything, for it is not the name so much, but the actual nature and experience of the developing inner quality of being human that is important. This varies, one stage building upon another, so that while our physical evolution is mostly at rest (perhaps even starting to enter a time of decay), our inner spiritual evolution is potentially always ongoing (it is, however, not automatic, but requires our participation).

Now what makes Steiner's story even deeper is that each form of soul development has a corresponding social form. That is, for *the sentient soul* development there is a characteristic set of social relationships as well as historical conditions; for *the intellectual soul* development another set of social arrangements and historical conditions; and, for *the consciousness soul* a third characteristic social structure and historical frame of reference.

The reason this is important is that one can see in history, as we know it, the proof of Steiner's observations. Our knowledge of the time of the ancient Hebrews and Egyptians shows us both the outer social forms, and by implication the inner nature of human consciousness that went with that period of human evolution. So also with the fourth and fifth cultural ages. Steiner's stories in this regard are not inventions, but rather much deeper and wiser descriptions of the meaning of these periods of human

history, than those ideas we are taught by our current professors and teachers.

For once we recognize this Evolution of Consciousness, we also realize that modern humanity tends to mistakenly fancy that consciousness was the same in the past as it is in the present, and so our modern teachers describe events in ancient times in such terms as if those peoples thought, saw, and felt in the same way we do today, when the real historical facts everywhere suggest the opposite. The ancients were *inwardly* different, and those differences are precisely why they believed and thought differently. They were not any more stupid or superstitious, but rather had different kinds of *knowledge*, *belief* and *understanding* precisely because they had a different form of consciousness, which also means a quite different life experience. [*knowledge*, *belief* and *understanding* are quite different modes or conditions of mind, and this fact will become more important later when we get into practical inner work.]

Again, let me point to the three authors mentioned above, Lehrs, Richter, and Barfield. Their researches will fully support what I have pointed out above regarding the evolution of consciousness - Lehrs through a history of Science, Richter through a history of Art, and Barfield through a history of Language.

I am also not going to go into the details of *the sentient soul*, and the *intellectual soul*, or any of the greater aspects of the stories that Steiner tells, because the reader of this book, who wants to, can go to that source and get it all in a much better way (see Steiner's ***Theosophy***, and ***Occult Science: an outline***). Rather, I want us here to have a very narrow focus, and to concentrate on what we all see right in front of us - outwardly in social life and inwardly in our own soul life. All the same, a little something needs to be said before going on.

If one wanted to get some sense of *the sentient soul* development, then a study of Homer's Iliad and The Odyssey would be in order. With Homer we can get some sense of how strongly the people of that historical epoch lived in their life of sensation, and the extent to which outside Ideas/Ideals, such as the Gods and love and heroism, influenced this life of powerful sensation, both inner and outer. On the other hand, *the intellectual soul* development would have as its book marks: Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas. In this epoch people began to more and more live quite strongly

in how their capacity for ideation took hold of existence, rather than in how much life filled them with sensation. Oliver Stone's recent film about Alexander the Great gives us a glimpse of the transition from the time of the sentient soul to the time of the intellectual soul. Aristotle was a teacher of Alexander, a fact of no little importance in understanding those events. There is a great deal more that could be said, but I will leave that to the other writers I have mentioned.

The purpose of bringing forward the idea of the Evolution of Consciousness is to get us to wake up to these types of changes, and to see that what we experience today is part of a much larger pattern that can be discovered, if we wish to devote the time to learning about it. We should also note, in passing, that the life of sensation is more outward in its soul nature, the life of the intellect a bit deeper in the soul, and then in *the consciousness soul* age we reach even deeper into our inwardness. The point here is to recognize that the *evolutionary development of consciousness* is taking place with a gesture such that each progressive stage moves further inward into the depths of our true being and nature.

These three cultural ages, being also part of a much larger set of changes that encompass seven periods in all - each period lasting about 2100 years, have a special relationship with each other (if folks are concerned about these number relationships, just consider that the Creation is Art, and that music-like whole number relations should not surprise anyone). The fourth epoch, in which the Christ Events appear at the end of the first third, is a middle or transitional age. While the third (the time of the ancient Hebrews and Egyptians) age and the fifth age (our time) are somewhat mirror images of each other - social forms, historical processes and cultural structures, that turned over and inside out in a kind of way during the fourth period. So we have the third age with its social and inner nature, then a transitional period (the fourth age), and then the fifth age with its social and inner nature, that is something of an inversion of the third age.

For example: In terms of social structure the third age was characterized by top down hierarchical social organizations (priest castes being in charge, whether it was the Pharaohs of the Egyptians, or the Patriarchs and Kings of the Hebrews). While the modern age is characterized by the end of hierarchical structures, and the beginning development of bottom up individualized social forms. In the third age, individualism was not the

point, and general soul development the essence, with the moral order being in the form of laws and rules handed down by the priests (e.g. Moses and the Ten Commandments), whereas in our time, it is our individual moral sense of what is right that wants to dominate and more and more rejects being told what to do by the last remnants of priest classes.

In Matthew 5:17, as part of the Sermon on the Mount, Christ explains at one point that: *"Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to destroy, but to fulfill"*. ***{Don't think I came to dissolve the law or the prophets: I didn't come to dissolve them, I came to fulfill them}*** Then later, when He is asked to speak as to which of the Commandments is the greatest, He explains further this fulfillment in this way, Matthew 22: 37-40 *"Jesus said to him, "This is the greatest and the first commandment. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind." And the second is like it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."* ***{He said to them, "You are to love your lord God with all your heart and all your spirit and all your mind. That is the important and first commandment. The second one is similar: You are to love those close to you as you love yourself. All the law and all the prophets hang from these two commands."}***

By rendering them (the Law and the Prophets) into their essence in the admonition to Love God Completely and Thy Neighbor as Thyself, which when carried out as acts of individual moral intuition (see later the fourth stanza of this section of this book, which is more explicit about ***Moral Grace***) brings the Law no longer from the outside inward (from the outside social community into the inwardness of human beings), but instead from the inside outward (from the individual moral intuitions of the human being out into the social community). *The Law no longer is to act upon us, but we are on the way to becoming (the Evolution of Consciousness) the Law as we act upon each other.* [Yes, this is a very radical idea, but a lot more in support of it will be written as we go along.]

This change, the Kings of the Gospel stories understood, for its coming could be seen in the Christ Event itself. So they followed their *in-sight*, their star, and offered up their gifts (their Way of Gnosis) in sacrifice, as

symbolized in the story in the images of the offerings of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

But such gifts could not be completely sacrificed - gnosis did not disappear as a human capacity (although Christ recognized its inherent problem "Blessed are they who have not seen and yet believe" John 20:29 ***{How lucky are the ones who never saw but still believed}***), a statement which appreciates that there are still those who do "see", which in modern times, as I said, can be a kind of unusual challenge.). Only its (gnosis's) social influence had to wane. For in the age of *the consciousness soul*, in the time when individuals were to think for themselves and make their own individual moral judgments, no priests as authorities would any longer be needed. Yet, gnosis itself did not entirely lose its meaning, for what the Kings had once been still had a role to play for a while, and this we have to understand next.

As the fourth age moved into becoming the fifth, a certain new Way of seeing the world came into being - natural philosophy (science). In the 1400's human beings began to see the natural world for the first time as an object (the *on-looker separation*, see Lehrs and Barfield above).

Lets look a little more closely at the idea of the on-looker separation. In Barfields' book ***Saving the Appearances: a Study in Idolatry***, he describes humanity's beginning state of consciousness as *original participation* (the gods were a given and we directly experience them - that is we felt ourselves as *inside* nature, the mysteries and each other to a degree - no individuality). Subsequently we are brought to a state of separation, pushed out of this original state (recall the metaphor/story of the Garden of Eden), such that by around 1400 this separation became so acute that we felt ourselves completely outside nature, the cosmos and each other. It is this stage of the Evolution of Consciousness (the *on-looker separation*) that makes possible natural science. At the same time the *on-looker separation* is but an intermediary stage in between *original participation* (where the Divine was a given) and *final participation* (where we have to choose to have a free relationship with the Divine). This is, of course, overly brief and one should read Barfield directly in any event.

The paradigm (world view), which emerged initially from the *on-looker separation* (the scientific spirit will produce other views in the future) would be called scientific materialism (only matter, no spirit) in the

beginning, and has played a role in helping us to further individualize and find within ourselves that necessary place out of which to begin to stand as free human beings - free even from the influence of the Divine. (For a detailed examination of this change from a certain point of view, also see ***Evolution and the New Gnosis: Anti-establishment Essays on Knowledge, Science, Religion and Causal Logic***, by Don Cruse with Robert Zimmer)

At the same time, scientific materialism is a heavy burden for modern consciousness. In social Darwinism (a kind of social justification for many clearly immoral acts), scientific materialism turns human being against human being, and fosters the idea that there are those who are more fit, and therefore more entitled to survive. In addition, with the image of human beings as mere animals (something that really can't be maintained if you look *honestly* at Art and other cultural achievements), we find that the *idea* of who and what we are has descended into great depths - we no longer see ourselves as the image and likeness of God (the Fall penetrates even into our world views). But as the Law becomes something inside us, resting not on moral rules, but rather living in our own impulses of the heart, opposition to a spiritless world view (and its terrible social consequences) has appeared everywhere. What Steiner named *the consciousness soul*, has begun (especially in the late 20th Century) to unfold its forces into our social existence, in Civil Society, in the environmental movement, in the opposition to elite globalization and many other social and personal phenomena (see on this theme Jesaiah Ben-Aharon's remarkable: ***America's Global Responsibility: individuation, initiation and threefolding***).

Even so, this change taking place all around us has yet to become fully self aware - to really see and know itself for what it truly is - or to discover how to overcome scientific and social materialism as completely as ordinary people need to be able to overcome it. So, the spiritual essence of the gnosis gesture of the ancient Kings returns for a time, to show that Gnosis still exists, and that Faith has a partner and a companion in the dance that is the *story* and *mystery* of the Evolution of Consciousness.

third stanza
the Church and the Body of Christ
being a discussion of the future of Christianity
as that future develops out of the Evolution of Consciousness

So far we have mostly considered aspects of the past: a deeper look at the matter of the Kings and the Shepherds, and a fairly new idea concerning the Evolution of Consciousness. Let us now look a little more carefully at the present, and at the fact that today what we call Christianity is divided into so many different sects, rites, Churches and other social forms, that often strongly disagree with each other over meaning and doctrine, such that wars are fought and people killed and tortured.

It is my view that no single Christian Church or sect possess, even to a degree, the whole truth of the Nature of the current iteration of Christianity. Each has bits and pieces, but we only begin to see that Reality - the current totality - when we start to integrate into one whole in our thinking, not only the various versions of the Ways of Faith (the Ways of the Shepherds), but also the Ways of Gnosis (the Ways of the Kings).

For example, the Catholic Church in its conception of the Church and the Body of Christ sees one aspect of a mighty whole, while the Jehovah's Witnesses, in their peculiar and unique way of practicing the Eucharist, have knowledge of something of remarkable depth (the Witnesses only practice Communion one day a year, at Easter, and then one only eats the host if one believes that one has so far progressed in ones development as to be a member of the Elect, as prophesied in Revelations). This challenge to the soul to examine itself with such savage clarity is very good for us. I make no comment at this point on whether this is what Christ wanted, only meaning to point out the quite personal test that such an act makes us face.

To give a couple other examples: the Mormons, with their social and community practices have an excellent grasp of Christ's social teachings as regards the practical application of Charity to the social community, while those rites in many Black and gospel singing Churches better understand the nature of Joy and Celebration in Christianity. I am not saying, by the way, that only these aspects of each Church is of value, only that one cannot grasp the totality of present Christianity by only looking at particular Churches, doctrines or sects, as if any single group possessed the whole truth.

One way to appreciate this is to understand that what was originally created following Christ's Resurrection, as a single Church, soon became, under the influence of humanity's slowly developing individualism, a

multiplicity, eventually splitting into more and more sects and divisions, until today we almost have as many versions of Christianity as we have individuals who practice it. This has even gone so far as to divide into such a fine set of distinctions, that many individuals, in whom the fulfillment of the Essence of the Law and the Prophets lives as an impulse of the heart, no longer consider themselves Christian at all, although their every act is Christian through and through (What St. Paul so beautifully describes in I Corinthians 13: "*If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love,...*" - is becoming the essential nature of the human heart, as it finds its way to its full expression in the Evolution of Consciousness). It is as if a once unitary ocean of Spirit has fallen to Earth as individual raindrops. (Please recall what was said above in Witterschein's introduction to ***The Unvarnished Gospels*** concerning the apparently real meaning of part of the opening lines of the John Gospel - "*The movement of the Word towards God can then be seen as history: the history of the created universe, going back to its very beginning, is one of overcoming a separation from God, of a process of reunification.*") These fallen individual raindrops, finally coming to apparent rest in single human hearts, do not stop there or rest content, but from this heart center then seek naturally for reintegration with their original Source.

Now at the beginning of the Christian Era, what is today's Catholic Church claimed, with some justification (a whole other story) it was Christ's Church on the Earth. But as time passed, more and more this Earthly Church became Fallen. Only during the Mass anymore does Christ enter into the Rites of the Catholic Church. The hierarchies and bureaucracy of the Church have become too Earthly, and with the exception of some individuals, this *institutional* Church (but not the laity) has lost its spiritual connection, and become just another earthly power among other earthly political and social powers.

*[a personal aside: In reference to the idea above, that Christ mostly and always enters the Catholic Church during the Mass, I want to tell the following story (while always remaining available to individuals, I am here only reflecting on what He does with regards to the organized Church). Again, it is conscience that requires this, so that the reader may know from where I obtain such thoughts. In about 1986, while I was first studying ***Meditations on the Tarot: a Journey into Christian Hermeticism***, I had an early morning dream (vision), which came to me by Grace {"And it shall come to pass after this that I will pour out my*

spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions." Joel 2:28.}

The following was like a dream: I was walking in a garden, to one side of which was the house in which I was then living, and on the other side of which was a Catholic Church. I was walking with a priest of the Church, and explaining to him why I wanted to become a Catholic (I had not yet done this, or thought of doing this, although 5 years later I did do this). I said to the priest that there were basically two Churches, a pure Heavenly Church, and a fallen Earthly Church, and that during the Mass Christ Descends and brings the two churches into direct contact with each other, and this fact was why I was becoming a Catholic (I did later tell the story of this dream to the priest that oversaw my experience of the Rite of Catholic Initiation of Adults, a 9 month process ending with first communion on Easter - so in every way the dream was prophetic).

While I was saying/speaking in the latter part of the dream, I simultaneously had the by Grace vision aspect. Christ had taken me into Himself and then taken me with Him, while He performed this act of Descent and by Grace reintegration, in which temporarily He united the two otherwise separated Churches, the pure Heavenly Church and the fallen Earthly Church, during the Mass.

At this point, I opened my eyes and discovered myself fully awake and lying in bed on my back. I stayed there, without moving, without even thinking, for about a half hour, at rest and completely at peace. I have never before or after experienced such peace.]

This original hierarchical structure (Popes, and priests) was a remnant of the hierarchical social order that once was dominant in the third cultural age. The Body of Christ, the faithful, at the inception of Christianity were still too child-like within, and needed guidance. But as the fourth age gave way to the fifth, humanity began to leave behind its spiritual childhood, and the need for an intercessor (a priest) became more and more superfluous. This is so elsewhere, not just in Christianity, but also in Buddhism and Islam, for example, - the age of priests, masters and mullahs is falling aside, and in the time of *the consciousness soul* (remember this musical interval in the appearance of time is to last from

around 1400 to 3500), moral truth and goodness more and more belong to the individual to determine.

We can see this quite clearly in the recent sexual crisis in American Catholicism, where it was not the institutional Church in the form of the priesthood (the Bishops and the Cardinals) that understood the true nature of the moral dilemma, but the Body of Christ, the People of the Church who knew what was right and what was wrong.

The Catholics have a doctrine, which recognizes that the Holy Spirit moves among the Body of Christ (the laity). But this doctrine is not so much practiced by the hierarchical structures, rather it is just given lip service. They (the priests and bishops) thought to preserve their prestige and power at great cost to hundreds, if not thousands, of children. Surely the Mother of God weeps, and the not often seen wrath of Christ is subtly descending (the wealth of the America Church is being leached out of it through the legal system as atonement for the hiding of these violations of innocence) upon the hierarchy of the American Church for this intolerable crime, and no doubt also upon Rome for its lack of righteous backbone as regards the same events. In the ascension to the Throne of Peter of a rigid backward thinking theologian (himself the author of the secret policy to hide these crimes), rather than a true pastor - Shepherd - to the faithful, we see the coming end of a true Papacy.

[We have also seen in America, a similar fall from grace of many Protestant evangelical Christian leaders over recent years, for the hypocrisy of sexual and financial excess.]

Yet, this Idea, of the Church and the Body of Christ, has preserved for us something we would do well to understand.

The situation that existed at the founding roots of Christianity is now reversed, and Christianity is becoming (now and into the future) something new. It is the Body of Christ (the Essence of Law and the Prophets as living in individual hearts) that is to structure the future nature of any true order in a social form, such as a Church. The questions of application of moral absolutism in the ideas regarding abortion and the like, and the need for priests to remain celibate and for women not to take up the Celebration of the Mass - all these are fundamentally moral questions, and are no longer to be questions of doctrine or dogma, but

which instead now belong to the laity (of all churches, sects and rites) - the Body of Christ - to determine as the Holy Spirit moves in and through their hearts.

The hierarchically dominated Churches are dying. And, with their much needed Death, something new can be resurrected. Out of the Body of Christ (the faithful laity) can arise a new and true ecumenism - no need for the divisions into Catholic, or Protestant, or Orthodox or whatever. Moreover, this is an ecumenism that will transcend even the divisions into Christianity, Islam, or Buddhism (to name but few). All those old social forms in which Christianity first lived are now to be cast aside. A Christianity of the Heart (see ***Covenant of the Heart***, by Valentin Tomberg) seeks to express itself, and the only matter of import is the Charitable recognition of each individual by each other individual and their mutual companionship as members of the faithful (Shepherds) and direct knowers of the moral (Kings). What was once divided into two pieces, as a kind of ancient division of social class, can now be remade whole as individuals more consciously experience and participate in the stage of the Evolution of Consciousness we are calling *the consciousness soul*.

Does this mean that the Rome of popes and cardinals and bishops should disappear? Or that it is the end of big hierarchical organization in Protestantism? I don't know. I do know that it will be the authority of the Body of Christ that is to authentically anoint any Church functionaries in the future, not the present fallen functionaries themselves (*the real meaning of the Third Fatima Prophecy - the end of a hierarchically determined Papacy*). The line of true moral authority of the hierarchical Churches has broken, and through the many many failings over the centuries (selling of indulgences, torture and burning at the stake of heretics, the inquisition, the turning away for the horrors of the Holocaust, etc. in Catholicism and the excessive interests in wealth and sexual hypocrisy in Protestantism), of which the child abuse scandal in American Catholicism, and the recent fall from grace of leading evangelicals, are only the most modern examples of a complete lack of any such true moral authority in the institutional hierarchy of Christian Churches.

For, as we learn more and more to understand and practice the Moral Grace being described in this first theme of four stanzas, we will slowly begin to see that we all may come to possess now, both Faith and Gnosis,

which in the age of *the consciousness soul* are ours alone to understand and apply. The potential fulfillment of the Essence of the Law and the Prophets now resides within, and the gifts once long ago sacrificed by the Kings, are now treasures that are to be found in each human heart.

fourth stanza
Moral Grace - a first iteration
being an attempt to describe and name
something many people already instinctively know

As spiritual children, it was our need to be provided moral guidance. Thus, in the early stages of the Evolution of Consciousness, moral rules and laws predominated. In Buddhism this took the form of the Eight-Fold Path (right views, etc.), in Judaism, the Ten Commandments, the Torah and so forth, while in Christianity, the Parables of Christ and the writings of Paul, and in Islam, all manner of rules in the Koran coupled with the Idea that all is the Will of Allah (those Christians who find this Idea disagreeable, should review the *mystery* of the second petition of the Lord's Prayer: *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*). Yet, in spite of all the rules, human beings have begun to more and more insist upon their own right to choose. Everywhere the rules are being cast aside, and this rejection of tradition (while frequently - and wrongly - blamed upon the cultural West) is really a consequence of a change within the totality of humanity due to the current phase of the Evolution of Consciousness. Humanity is stepping out of its spiritual childhood and individuals are claiming more and more personal moral responsibility.

What will surprise many, as this transition unfolds, is that this individual spiritual reality is clearly recognized in all the various religious writings. The difference is that when we were children, we saw these writings through the lens of our need for these writings to provide certainty of belief and moral guidance. But as the future unfolds we are to learn to see these same writings with greater maturity, and as we do so, we will find they also support our current condition and aspirations.

Yes, there is deep divide between past and future, which manifests in humanity's religious communities and cultures, most obviously in Islam. At the same time, we need to avoid accepting the pictures provided us by Media, and instead speak to ordinary Muslims. If we do this we will

discover that a moderate and wise interpretation of the Koran is everywhere, but since these voices make no noise, the Media does not see them. Just as traditional Judaism has its corresponding esoteric form in Cabala, so Islam as its corresponding esoteric form in Sufism (the fools of Allah - God).

[Sam Harris's ***The End of Faith*** wants to tie people to the teachings of their Holy Texts, as if what people actually do has no meaning of which he must take account. To do this makes his later bigoted judgments appear justified, but like many politicians (this book is not scientific, it is almost completely political) he wants to cherry pick all the important facts.]

Recently I read where one of the authors of the Left Behind series of novels (completely undisciplined fancy), was preaching about the Koran and its views on the killing of *infidels* (non-believers). This is a strangely hypocritical view, given that this same writer has Christ on His Return (in the novels), killing those who are not saved Christian believers. Can any one tell me what is the difference between these asserted views?

This all raises a rather perplexing philosophical, religious and social question. If we are no longer spiritual children, how are we to be moral beings without descending into some kind of chaos of moral relativism, where there are no rules anymore at all, just raw animal impulses. This is, by the way, an excellent question.

Yet, if we are to trust the Divine Mystery, and have true Faith, then we have been assured that such a question must have an answer. The very idea that God, the Divine Mystery, would leave humanity abandoned in some kind of an anarchy of a moral-less evil and ungodly jungle is to mock the Divine Itself. Surely there is a Plan, or better yet - Divine order and form to our existence.

Well duh!, as the young people say today.

The Evolution of Consciousness is the unfolding of human potential from within outward. Something inside us, as we unfold our humanity, contains within it just what is needed. This is why I give it the term: **Grace**. We possess something as a Gift. If there is a caveat, it is that we only can unfold it by our own will. It is latent and can only come to the fore by our

practice and our intention. We have to will to be moral. We have to choose.

The first stage of this is self trust. We have to have Faith in the Divine within (something appearing more and more everywhere). Emerson puts it most succinctly, in his lecture *The American Scholar*: "*In self trust all virtues are comprehended.*"

This is, of course, one of the hallmarks of the age of *the consciousness soul* - more and more people are trusting their own moral/spiritual intuitions over any outside agency or institution. No longer do we accept and tolerate what the dying hierarchical religious social forms tell us to believe. We only have confidence in our own judgment - we know something trustworthy is living inside of us.

In addition, something is going on in our biographies in this Age. We are being more and more placed in situations where it is not possible to choose to drop back into a dependent child-like moral path. Instead the only choice is to rely on ourselves. Each biography lurches from moral crisis to moral crisis, where not to choose is not to be allowed. Life itself insists: Choose! Choose! Choose!

To appreciate this in its fullness all we have to do is look at what the artists tell us, with their dramas on stage, in film and on television, or in the songs the singers sing. This development is seen everywhere.

For example, one of my favorite television writers, David E. Kelley (whom I call America's Shakespeare), he who has penned much of L. A. Law, Chicago Hope, Picket Fences, The Practice, Ally McBeal, Boston Public and now Boston Legal, has one of his characters (the Sheriff) in Picket Fences, say at the end of a particularly difficult day, something on the order of: "*there are no moral rules any more, we are all on our own.*"

Our very language speaks of this, for what in the fifties was meant by "*do the right thing*," became in the sixties "*do your own thing*." And, of course, there is that very difficult decision that women face today, that appears to divide people everywhere into seemingly war-making camps - the right to life, versus the right to choose.

What this conflict asks is: Can an individual know what is moral, without outside guidance in the form of some religious authority's given rules of conduct? And, keep in mind that those most asserting the right to provide moral guidance, are the priests of the dying hierarchical organizations. In most cases it is they who are not yet ready to let go the prestige and power the claim of such authority grants, while at the same time their congregations are beginning to know otherwise. And, lest we ignore this aspect, it will certainly be the case that many will have no desire to take on the challenge of ambiguity and uncertainty in true moral choice, and will then want to remain in a co-dependent relationship with a supposed moral authority. Some will not want to grown into spiritual maturity.

If, as I have been suggesting, that the fulfillment of the Essence of the Law and the Prophets is now emerging from human hearts, how is that going on, in a practical and observable way, within the inner forum of individual consciousness?

I will put the essential matter this way...

The human being has an inner organization of which we have lost (in the age of a spiritless science) a clear knowledge. We simply do not posses a proper language by which to describe this inner landscape, so as to be able to answer the above question in a concrete, realistic and perhaps even scientific fashion. (In fact, it is one of the main social transformations that is going on today, from the bottom up - namely a reaching into language and reinvigorating its capacity to accurately represent our inner realities.)

What concrete reference can there be, in the age of science, to such terms as soul and spirit?

It is to help us answer this question that the spiritual essence of the meaning of the Kings (initiates) has, for a brief time, returned (Steiner was not the only one, but more on this later).

The spiritual essence of the human being is properly called the "I-am." Although this term, the "I-am", is often written in that form, hereinafter in this text I will write it as follows: *i-AM*, seeking thereby to remind the reader that the *i-AM* is not something which is a mere thing, but is rather something much more dynamic. We are, we exist, that is our spiritual essence. At the same time, we, as *i-AMs*, act - we choose. That capacity

to act, to choose, to create, in this we are will-on-fire, so in giving name to our spirit it is my hope to emphasize this quality by downplaying our individuality (*i*), and up-playing our fiery will (*AM*). We are verbs, not nouns.

We can also call this *i-AM* the ego, but there is a dangerous confusion that can arise when we consider the differences between Christian gnostic practice in this regard, and the deeper teachings of Buddhism regarding ego. It would be going too far to fully resolve this confusion, yet something needs be said here, for many will naturally have a concern, given their own encounters with Buddhist thought (especially any form of *pop* - superficial - Buddhism).

At best I can presently suggest something from another book it has been my fortune to encounter - the previously mentioned and anonymously written *Meditations on the Tarot: a journey in to Christian Hermeticism*. In this book one will find the following idea, which I will paraphrase.

Eastern wisdoms generally consider that the core of the human being is *being*, and that the goal of human development is reached when this core of *being* re-integrates itself with the *Original Source*, or *Being*. This is frequently described as a voluntary giving up of ego, or self identity.

According to the author of *Meditations*, the Christian idea regarding the ego, or the *i-AM*, is different. This *i-AM* is an individual essence (the human being is created in the image and likeness of God), and the goal of Christian practice is the meeting of our individual essence with the Cosmic Individual Essence that is Love. A separate identity remains (for both), even while we become enveloped within Love (described in the Gospels in the Parable of the Return of the Prodigal Son - the Gospel story of re-integration) - *essence within Essence*. The crucial question is put in this book in this way: How can there be Love if there is not a Lover, a Beloved, and the Love itself that is to be shared between them? If *being* simply merges with *Being* (out of which arises identification leading to compassion), there can be no such Love. *Yet, if essence is to meet and know Essence, then the Lover, the Beloved and Love* (the phase of development in the Evolution of Consciousness after compassion) *will certainly be*.

By the way, I do not believe this apparent conflict (between Buddhism and Christianity) regarding the nature of the ego (or *i-AM*) is unresolvable. The full Idea of the nature of the resolution simply lies far outside the intended scope of this small book, although certain aspects of this book are meant to contribute to that resolution on a practical level.

Now within the *inner forum of our consciousness* (the soul), the *i-AM* (the spirit) sits as the essential center (what Steiner describes as that which we only can refer to when we say the word "I"), while the rest of consciousness (the unconscious and so forth - all that is invisible to others, but which each of us knows - at least in part and with great personal intimacy) could be called the soul. So when we see another person, we recognize another ego being (another *i-AM*), who also has a rich inner (soul) life (see all the books being written today in an effort to describe soul life, from Gary Zukav's *The Seat of the Soul*, to Robert Sardello's *Facing the World with Soul*).

This inner life is very complicated, and materialistic science is only beginning to scratch the surface of its realities. However, with regard to the moral question we have been trying to understand and appreciate, the following can be said (at least at this point in this work):

When the human being poses a moral question to him or herself ("*is this act I contemplate right or wrong in a moral sense?*"), we have by Grace the capacity to receive an answer. In this receiving of an answer we are in that moment (again by Grace) inwardly Kings. We are Shepherds in that we have the faith that we can know the answers to moral questions, and Kings when we ask and inwardly listen and receive (this is a more complicated process than might appear, and in the final Stanza - Twelve - I will illuminate those details). Faith and Gnosis in the Age of *the consciousness soul* are no longer apart, but are rather united in human beings that follow the deepest moral sensibilities of their own hearts (an action which, as it develops and grows, requires and results in more and more strength of character).

In the next four stanzas, while we mostly focus on Freedom, we will begin by examining three specific forms in which knowledge of this union of Faith and Gnosis, via Moral Grace, has appeared in modern Western Culture (it is appearing elsewhere, but below I am just going to refer to matters in the cultural West). In this way we will also come to a deeper

and more practical appreciation of what has been, and still is, going on in our Civilization.

Freedom
- the theme (song) of the real challenge of modern life -

fifth stanza

Three New Ways

*being an examination of the profound and surprising interrelationship between the What Would Jesus Do Movement; the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous; and Rudolf Steiner's book: **The Philosophy of Freedom** (also known as, **The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity**.)*

So far we have come to understand that the *meaning-essence* of the Kings of the original Gospel *stories* has returned - that is, that *authentic gnosis* is once more being taught in Western Culture, even though this Culture is dominated by Materialistic Science. Further, many members of the religion that is Christianity want to believe (perhaps erroneously) that their religion remains firmly (and only) rooted in Faith. The ancient wisdom of the Kings has been relegated to a mere paganism, and salvation is now thought to depend only upon accepting Jesus as our Lord, confessing to being saved, and/or in a blind obedience to morally bankrupt institutional hierarchies - the all too often hypocritical priests and preachers, who claim the right and the authority to tell other individuals what to believe and how to be moral.

But the world is not ruled, or given order, by these vain authorities. The world order (as we shall come to more and more understand) is in quite other Hands. A claim of *moral authority* by one person over another person is being replaced by *Moral Grace* from Above - the Law and the Prophets are becoming the spiritual treasure of each individual heart.

Next, we shall examine in detail just how the phenomena of modern Culture reveals that with the co-participation of incarnate human beings, Christ is deeply active in our individual lives.

*

Not everyone is the same. This obvious fact is often overlooked, especially when people want to think that their personal Way is the very best Way, and all the rest somehow lesser means or beliefs. Fortunately, in the age of *the consciousness soul*, this tendency may become extinct to a great degree (at least for some people). This is because one of the items we all first have to learn on our own Path is humility (what in the John Gospel is demonstrated for us by Christ's "*washing of the feet*"). The journey through humility then, as lived in our individual biographies, can soon cause us to clearly realize that each Thou is to be entirely free to choose their own Way, just as we recognize our own need to also be free to so choose.

All the same much is accomplished in communities, and there are three communities that I have come to some personal knowledge concerning, that can serve as excellent examples of not only Moral Grace in practice, but of the relationship of Freedom to that very activity. All the same, we do need to keep in mind the very legitimate question: *Whether it is possible for an individual to have real moral knowledge, independent of seemingly authoritative and traditionally acceptable sources, such as religious texts?* And, as a necessary corollary question: *What does it mean if ones moral intuitions of the heart conflict with these traditional authorities?*

In modern American Culture, for example, Christian Faith is the foremost religious practice. Surely if God - the Divine Mystery - were to offer something new, something beyond moral rules, He/She/It would certainly not leave out ordinary Christians. This is so. At about the same time that Rudolf Steiner (a King) was publishing his book ***The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity (Freedom)*** in Germany in 1894, in the United States in 1897 was published ***In His Steps***, written by Charles M. Sheldon (a Shepherd), a young minister who was then living in Kansas. The fact of the co-participation of Highest Grace, in the more or less simultaneousness of these writings, is not to be overlooked by the way.

the Shepherd's Tale

This book (*In His Steps*) is a fictional (or imaginative) account (a *story*) of what happens in a certain church community when a particular question is faced. This question is: What does it mean to practice being a Christian, such as is described in the New Testament (I Peter 2:21) as follows: "*For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow in his steps.*" (emphasis added) [This being the first lines of Chapter I of Sheldon's book, and of course the basis for its title.]

The rest of the book is an effort to work out this question of Christian practice in quite pragmatic ways. At the same time at the very beginning, certain aspects of the book's *Idea* and its method are laid out very carefully. One of the central characters, for example, asks this question from the pulpit in the second Chapter: "*I want volunteers from the First Church who will pledge themselves, earnestly and honestly for an entire year, not to do anything without first asking the question, 'What would Jesus do?' And after asking that question, each one will follow Jesus as exactly as he knows how, no matter what the result may be.*"

This asking (faith) and knowing (gnosis) is then elaborated a few pages later, as follows: (a question is being asked of the minister who made the above challenge, by a parishioner...)

"I am a little in doubt as to the source of our knowledge concerning what Jesus would do. Who is to decide for me just what He would do in my case? It is a different age. There are many perplexing questions in our civilization that are not mentioned in the teachings of Jesus. How am I going to tell what he would do?"

"There is no way that I know of," replied the pastor, "except as we study Jesus through the medium of the Holy Spirit. You remember what Christ said speaking to His disciples about the Holy Spirit: 'Howbeit when He the spirit of truth is come, He shall guide you into all the truth; for He shall not speak for Himself but what things soever He shall hear, then shall He speak; and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify me; for He shall take of mine and declare it unto you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, that He taketh of mine and shall declare it unto to you.' There is no other test that I

know of. We shall all have to decide what Jesus would do after going to that source of knowledge."

[My interjection - the quote above appears to be from John 16:13-15. Here is a different translation than the one that Sheldon used of the same passage, but which includes the sentence before verse 13, that is John 16: 12-15: *"I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you."* Since this quote that Sheldon uses here concerns the process of gnosis ("going to that source of knowledge"), are we to be surprised that he has chosen to quote from the Gospel of John (the Gospel of Gnosis)? *{I have much more to say to you, but you can't bear it just yet. But when the other comes, the breath of truth, he will guide you in the ways of all truth, because he will not speak on his own, but will speak what he hears and announce to you what's coming. He will glorify me, because he will take of what is mine and announce it to you. Everything the Father has is mine: that's why I said he will take of what is mine and announce it to you}.*]

To continue with Sheldon's book...

"What if others say of us, when we do certain things, that Jesus would not do so?" asked the superintendent of railroads.

"We cannot prevent that. But we must be absolutely honest with ourselves. The standard of Christian action cannot vary in most of our acts."

"And yet what one church member thinks Jesus would do, another refuses to accept as His probable course of action. What is to render our conduct uniformly Christ-like? Will it be possible to reach the same conclusions always in all cases?" asked President Marsh.

Mr. Maxwell was silent some time. Then he answered, "No; I don't know that we can expect that. But when it comes to a genuine, honest, enlightened following of Jesus' steps, I cannot believe there will be any

confusion either in our own minds or in the judgment of others. We must be free from fanaticism on one hand and too much caution on the other. If Jesus' example is the example for the world to follow, it certainly must be feasible to follow it. But we need to remember this great fact. After we have asked the Spirit to tell us what Jesus would do and have received an answer to it, we are to act regardless of the results to ourselves. Is that understood?"

The process Sheldon seems to understand is very clear. We are to inwardly ask, and then listen for the Holy Spirit to tell us what Jesus would do. In this way we are living out Christ's admonition: "*Ask and it shall be given you, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you.*" Matthew 7:7 ***{Ask and you will receive, look and you will find, knock and you will be admitted.}***

So we have, at the beginning of Sheldon's book, a clear outline of how to practice Moral Grace. In the rest of the book Sheldon attempts to imagine what actions his characters might take, and as Sheldon himself is an early Temperance (anti-Saloon) advocate, the rest of the story has certain odd characteristics connected to the time and place, and the related dominant cultural values in which Sheldon himself lived. All the same, his central *intuition* as to *the method of Moral Grace in action* remains valid, in spite of the limitations of his imagination to flesh it out in a way with which our modern sensibilities can easily identify.

Now the curious thing is that at the same time a young Shepherd (a pastor in Kansas) was coming to this understanding, a young King (Steiner had been working on this problem from his mid-20's to his early 30's) was drawing the same conclusions, albeit in a quite different context and by a quite different means. Where Sheldon created an imaginative picture (a story), Steiner wrote a book squarely in the German philosophical tradition, in which its remarks on moral life fully paralleled what Sheldon outlined above.

There is also, due to the differing nature of their approaches (Sheldon the Shepherd, traveling the Path of Faith, and Steiner the King, traveling the Path of Gnosis), a considerable difference in how they framed their understanding of what I have called here: ***Moral Grace***.

For Sheldon the matter was handled in a very pragmatic (and typically American) fashion. It was what worked that concerned him, and his question was: *How do we best follow Christ Jesus in practice?* For Steiner, a middle European, the need was to express the philosophic Ideal in a form consistent with the dominant paradigm of the 19th Century, Natural Science. Thus, his question was: *On what basis can questions, regarding the freedom and moral nature of our inner life, be understood in the Age of Science?*

At the same time, in both cases, each was faced with the reality of human nature, and our actual relationship to Spirit. They just came at that reality from different directions, with the result that the same reality ends up being described in considerably different ways.

the King's Tale

With Steiner, however, we have to take a somewhat different course than we took with Sheldon. What was a novel, and an act of the imagination for Sheldon, was for Steiner an attempt to take an introspective look at the problem of knowledge in a specific field of formal philosophy (what is called there *epistemology*), following logical and observational principles modeled on natural science.

Did you understand that last sentence? Possibly not, and that is a good example of what will be faced by most people trying to read Steiner's ***The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity (Freedom)***, written in German and then translated into English. Because of this I am going to approach the content in this book of Steiner's also as a *story*.

Now keep in mind that this story is coming from a King, not a Shepherd, that is from someone with direct experience of the Divine (Gnosis), not a relationship based upon Faith. According to his autobiography, Steiner began having such experiences from the time he was eight years old, and these continued throughout his life. Here we are looking at a book written in his early 30's, after he had acquired his doctorate degree in philosophy. His problem was to take his spiritual experience and then root it in the soundness of the German philosophical tradition, and in the methods of thinking and observation which were at the basis of natural science. He looked not for the sometimes vague and beautiful mysticism of a St. John

of the Cross, or a St. Teresa of Avila, but for the precision and exactitude of pure mathematics and theoretical physics.

He looked inward, and began to describe, albeit using the language of philosophy, what exact observation (introspection) might find within the inner (soul) life of the human being. In a sense, his description is a map of an invisible territory, that is only knowable if we ourselves look at the same invisible place within our own inwardness. The book then consists of a series of questions one can place before ones self (the map), that can only be answered when we authentically and objectively observe ourselves (the actual territory). The book also seeks to draw this map in as an exact a way as possible, because the goal was to bring to spiritual inquiry the precision of the adventure of science. Remember what I said above in discussing the unusual challenge for those with modern direct experience of the Divine Mystery - the need to make spiritual experience fit in with the spirit of the Age (Science), that is to show how it's seeking and achievements can be repeated by others.

Having followed this map, I will next relate not so much what Steiner describes, but rather my own explorations, using the same language conventions which Steiner used - my own version of the *story* as seen under the guidance of his map, ***The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity (Freedom)*** (or what I sometimes want to call: *The Philosophy of Free Becoming*). [This is by the way, based upon over 35 years of introspective life, for details see Appendix 7: ***In Joyous Celebration of the Soul Art and Music of Discipleship***]

Deep in our soul, our spirit asks several fundamental questions. Here are just a few: What am I? What is the purpose of existence? What is the truth? How do I know the truth? Am I a free human being? What does it mean to be a free human being? Am I a moral human being? How do I know what is moral? As a human being, I have desires, hungers, needs and wants. Am I free when I live out these hungers and wants? Can I choose what I want? Is my will free, or am I just a creature of appetite and habit?

On the journey to answering these questions, Steiner points in the direction of first and foremost examining the nature of thinking itself, for it is in thinking that we first pose these questions. Yet, thinking does not exist in a vacuum, but rather is influenced by our emotional life and by our

life of apparent instincts and hungers. With regard then to acts of thinking, his map suggests that we notice the difference between thinking and experience, or what he sometimes calls: concept and percept. We have experiences, outward in the sense world and inward in the soul world, and these are percepts (perceptions). To these experiences (percepts) we attach ideas or concepts - that is we *think* at the same time we *experience*, and the meaning of the experiences, both outer and inner, is provided by the act of thinking.

For example, in the simplest way we know the names of all manner of objects. This is a tree, that is a car. As we grow, the concepts and ideas we have about something that arises either in the sense world, or inwardly in the soul (such as an experience of an emotion like fear) becomes more complicated. We *learn*, and in this way our conceptual life deepens, so that someone who is a good cook, or a good car mechanic, will know (think) all manner of things, that someone less experienced will not know (think).

And, just as we can know about outer world objects, we also can think about inner world objects. A Tibetan Buddhist, or a contemplative Nun, will have then considerable knowledge from thinking about the life of meditation and prayer.

Steiner's map suggests that there is a hierarchy of objects in the soul (mind) as regards our concepts, for which he uses the terms: mental representations, concepts and ideas. We just need to remember that the crucial matter is to look at our own thinking and see how, and if, such names (mental representation, concepts and ideas) can be related to what we actually experience when we look within. We are being asked by Steiner, in taking an approach to introspection out of the scientific spirit, to make careful observations and fine distinctions.

In this way, and using Steiner's map (the King's Tale), we begin a journey of detailed examination of our inner life that can be as exact and precise as that which a scientist comes to when he examines an unknown compound to determine from which elements and molecules it has been created. All manner of objects can be found there, in the mind or inner life, such as (no need for the reader to know these, I just here give a *few* of the names to lay out some of the more general features of this inner landscape): cultivated feelings, raw emotions, antipathies, sympathies, likes and dislikes,

conscious and unconscious acts of will, mental representations, concepts, ideas, intuitions, and moral imaginations.

As it is that Steiner is a King, it is necessarily part of his intention to make this map capable of leading the reader to the same state of being (gnosis, or what is sometimes called initiation in the cultural Center, and enlightenment in the cultural East). ***The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity (Freedom)*** is a map to the inner world created by a King in order that those who follow it can come, through their own effort at thinking, to authentic spiritual experience. In the cultural Far West, in the Americas, this path leads *through* the development of *earthly character* (rather than *directly* at *enlightenment* or *initiation*), a matter that will become more clear as our discussion deepens over the next chapters.

The freedom Steiner wants for us, in working through his book ***The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity (Freedom)***, is not *political* freedom, but what might be called *inner* freedom or *spiritual* freedom. He lays out his map so that we can, by the growing development of intended and attentive thinking, find our way through the labyrinth of the conscious and unconscious elements of our mind to the gateway that lies in the depths of that mind, and which leads from our own essence (spirit) and inwardness (soul) to the Essence and Inwardness of the Universe.

Now what I have been calling Moral Grace, and what Sheldon describes from his view as a Shepherd (asking ourselves What Would Jesus Do, and then trusting that the Holy Spirit will bring inwardly to us the answer), is in the King's Tale a significant feature of the landscape of this inner world of soul, but not the totality. So we have here from Sheldon, the Shepherd, how Moral Grace is seen from the point of view of Faith, and now from Steiner, how Moral Grace is seen from the point of view of Gnosis. This feature of the inner landscape Steiner has called moral imagination, which he speaks of in the text in the following ways:

"To be free means to be able of ones own accord to determine by moral imagination those mental pictures (motives) which underlie the action."

"...as a moral being, I am an individual and have laws of my very own."

"Moral action, then, presupposes, in addition to the faculty of having moral ideas (moral intuition) and moral imagination, the ability to

transform the world of percepts without violating the natural laws by which these are connected. This ability is called moral technique."

"Moral laws, on the other hand, are first created by us. We cannot apply them until we have created them."

"He [meaning human beings in general, ed.] has purely ideal reasons which lead him to select from the sum of his concepts just one in particular, and then to translate it into action. But his action will belong to perceptible reality. What he achieves will thus be identical with a quite definite content of perception."

Now in the above quotations, Steiner has used certain terms which are in other places in his book more fully elaborated, and which in the quotes above are meant to have a specific and exact meaning - that is to describe and point out something in the inner landscape that all can observe and know, such as mental picture, moral intuition, ideal reasons and so forth. However, rather than get into a long explanatory elaboration of what Steiner meant, I will simply now briefly cover this by sharing what I have learned through my own experience of following this map to the inner landscape of the soul. This is not meant, by the way, to replace the inner work in Steiner's text, for the very reading of that text is a developmental exercise for the soul and spirit of the human being. Here, I am just endeavoring to sketch out the general Idea of the moral aspect of his book, so that we can come to see how this way of seeing the Idea relates also to how Sheldon saw this same Idea (the Idea of **Moral Grace**).

When I am confronted in life by a specific moral dilemma, a dilemma that demands of me that I make a moral choice, there are basically two ways I can go in how in my mind I consider the problem. One way is to draw from memory some learned moral ideal, given perhaps by admonitions or rules acquired from a religious text, or perhaps from a learned relative or teacher. Another way is to ask *myself* what I think is the right thing to do.

More and more in our Age, individuals have been choosing to do the latter, and to leave aside the former. Our current state of development in the Evolution of Consciousness is such that we are learning more and more to trust (recall Emerson's: *In self trust all virtues are comprehended*) our own intuitions of what the good is in any specific situation, than we are any longer willing to trust a rule. The reason this is so has nothing to

do with what critics of this call moral relativism, and everything to do with an emerging intelligence in our own being. This personal intelligence (our own moral genius) actually sees the particular dilemma with greater clarity, including our own relationship to the question. A rule, on the other hand, being of an abstract and idealistic nature, does not take account of the individual characteristics of the situation we are facing.

The reality is that when a moral dilemma approaches us, it calls forth to our individual moral intelligence to respond. This dilemma in our personal biography doesn't say: go to the library of the mind and/or look in a book for the right thing to do. On the contrary, the very personal nature of the dilemma in our individual biography demands an equally personal response. We have to act. Yet, the conflict naturally arises, as both the Shepherd (Sheldon) and the King (Steiner) saw at the end of the 19th Century - *how do we know the good in such times of moral crisis?*

Sheldon's answer was that we have been given, in the Gospels, the clear teaching to follow ***In His steps***, and that in asking *What Would Jesus Do*, we frame in ourselves the necessary first and right question. After which, we trust (have faith in) the Holy Spirit to bring to us (gnosis - knowledge of) the answer. Steiner's answer is that we create an inner picture of the dilemma (a moral imagination), and trust ourselves to experience a corresponding moral intuition of the good as that is needed in the moment as regards that particular moral question.

In practice, although the words used to describe the process are different, it is the same very human inner gesture in each case. We frame a question, and we seek the highest answer in response. And, at the same time, it is *an inner act of spirit* on our part to do this. We have framed the question inwardly, and looked inwardly for the answer. Where Sheldon refers to the activity of the Holy Spirit in the response, Steiner speaks of moral intuition, and by the term intuition he means the exact same thing - namely that such intuitions are not merely an isolated inner act, but given that the human inwardness is a gateway to the Spirit, when we experience a moral intuition we have a like encounter with Spirit as that referred to by Sheldon.

[Another way to see this from the point of view of the Divine Mystery is as follows. The Divine Mystery, in the form of the Holy Spirit, gives Itself to us. We, It's children, receive from within (Above) via our

authentic seeking questioning, as a free gift in this time, knowledge of the Good - the Good being some of the very *substance* of the Divine Mystery. This inner Eucharist is then Moral Grace in action, or what Sheldon calls the Holy Spirit. Another way to see this is that it is a kind of dialog between our undeveloped self, and our highest nature, which we sometimes call conscience. We then consciously exchange or have conscious interaction with our conscience on the path to coming to knowledge of the Good. We seek the conscience, and this seeking becomes a co-participation in the highest that is within the own soul. Conscience is the *substance* of the Divine Mystery given to us (as a part of us) through an act of Grace from above, via the within (*the kingdom of heaven is within you* - Luke 17:21).]

This all to brief and limited explanation then is the main characteristic of our Age, which Steiner in his *stories* calls the Age of the Consciousness Soul, and which in his book *Theosophy* he describes as follows:

"By causing the self-existent true and good to come to life in his inner being, the human being raises himself above the mere sentient-soul. A light is kindled in her [the soul, ed.] which is imperishable. In so far as the soul lives in this light, she is a participant in the eternal. With the eternal she unites her own existence. What the soul carries within herself of the true and the good is immortal in her. Let us call that which shines forth in the soul as eternal, the consciousness soul."

What Sheldon expresses in the question *What Would Jesus Do* is the seeking by the Faithful after the highest good as they might be able to come to know it. What Steiner expresses in the question framed by the moral imagination (the creation of the picture question of the moral dilemma) is the same inner gesture of seeking knowledge (Gnosis) of the highest good. Both Sheldon and Steiner expect the Divine Mystery to participate, and what the one calls the Holy Spirit, the other calls moral intuition, and again each means the same thing, for the mind (soul and spirit) of the human being, in reaching inwardly for an answer to the particular moral dilemma faced by them as an individual - through this reaching this mind does in fact come into contact with the Eternal.

This then is the situation of modern humanity - this possibility to know individually what is moral in any given particular and personal moral dilemma, and which I have called here, precisely because the Divine

Mystery participates in the creation of this potential and its activation: Moral Grace. [This situation of modern humanity is more present in the cultural Far West than elsewhere, a complicated matter beyond the current scope of inquiry. Let us just say that a highly developed individuality is a necessary preliminary stage before the Evolution of Consciousness can call forth the Moral Grace of the consciousness soul, and that in the cultural Far West individualism is stronger *in the present* than in other parts of the world. Other parts of the world have some of this development, but in general lag behind to a degree, for the moment. Advancement of this kind - the Evolution of Consciousness - proceeds in *waves* as it were, and does not arrive everywhere all at once.]

It is though an act of Divine Grace that we possess the capacity to know the Good (the Moral), and the True as an act of individual question and answering. Moreover it is an act, which is clearly meant to enable us to be inwardly free of any confining and limited religious dogma. The days of the authority of priests, or pastors and preachers (and mullas, gurus and masters), to define individual human moral activity are meant to be over, and it is the Divine Mystery Itself that has created in us this capacity to seek, to ask and to find.

Naturally there are many questions, and I will try to anticipate and answer a few of them next.

We can distinguish the act of *knowing* what the good (the moral) is in a given situation, from our *acting* upon that knowledge (moral technique - or how we carry out in practice our knowledge of the good). That is, we remain inwardly free to follow, or not, what we know to be right to do. This has always been the case, and will always be the case. Knowledge of the good and the true (*What Would Jesus Do*) does not compel. We still must choose to follow this knowledge. Recall what Sheldon wrote: "*After we have asked the Spirit to tell us what Jesus would do and have received an answer to it, we are to act regardless of the results to ourselves. Is that understood?*"

While Sheldon, the Shepherd, has understood then Moral Grace, he has not quite yet understood Freedom. He still has to preach, and in so doing instructs those who would take up this activity, that they "*are to act regardless of the results to themselves*". Sheldon understood Moral Grace,

but not yet Freedom - that which comes from distinguishing knowledge of the good from acting upon that knowledge.

People will disagree concerning what is moral in a given situation, in particular if they approach the situation as if there were a set of rules that covered all possible realities. So some will think that all killing or all abortions are morally wrong, and will judge others, who act contrary to their rules as regards such actions, as morally incorrect. But this is not the question really being faced by either Sheldon or Steiner.

First let us take up abortion for the moment as an example, since it is question that dominates the social world in many forms and ways.

First, an abortion always takes place with regard to a particular individual person, and is part of their individual biography. There is then the moral question that belongs to them to answer: Do I have an abortion and why? Second, in a time when many such actions are being taken, those who have as part of their biography the concern as to what it means to end the life of a fetus, come up with a personal question of their own: How do I relate to a world and the culture in which I live, where large numbers of abortions are happening, which I believe are murder? These are quite different questions occurring in quite different biographies.

As we know, in the case of both questions there are many individual circumstances and many individual responses. Some women use abortion as a kind of contraception. Some women never really ask themselves the essential question. Some women agonize greatly, and never feel (whatever their decision) that they made the right choice. Some who oppose abortion generally, will work to convince the potential mothers to take the baby to term and at least give it up for adoption. Some others will picket clinics and try to make their clients and doctors and nurses feel guilty. Some even commit crimes in order to do what they think their conscience requires.

In looking at these social facts, we can see (in spite of what some say is a Truth which all must apply) how in each individual biography a crisis of choice is confronted with greater or lesser consciousness. What this shows us is exactly how the epoch of the consciousness soul is unfolding. Yet, not one of these agonizing trials lies outside the concern and interest

and support of the Divine Mystery. However, we will have to wait until the section on Love to come at this problem more carefully.

To return to the Shepherd's Tale and the Kings Tale...

Nowhere in either work is the question put in such a way that we judge what the other person is doing. We don't ask *What Would Jesus Do*, or seek a moral intuition, about someone else's moral dilemma. We can only ask these questions about our own moral dilemmas, and the operation of Moral Grace is such that we can only receive an answer to a question which is ours alone to ask. The Divine Mystery has not said to us - look within and I will tell you what other people should morally do. There are quite clear reasons why this is so.

Each human biography is unique. Yes, there are many similarities, but each of us is a completely different individual and our biographies are just as individual. Simple observation shows us this. This means that a moral dilemma in my biography, regardless of any superficial comparisons, is in no way the same as a similar moral dilemma in yours. We are very much facing our own trials, and because abstract idealistic rules can't really comprehend the nuances of the distinctions and differences, we have by Moral Grace the means to know what is right to do in our particular and unique situation. The Divine Mystery has created us individuals, and Loves us as individuals and knows that our needs are also individual.

The broader social implications of this we will face later, but for now we need to appreciate that Moral Grace only operates as individual knowledge of the good and the true (*What Would Jesus Do*), and in no way provides us any abstract rule or code by which to judge the morality of the other, *the Thou* (who bear within themselves the same personal gift of Moral Grace).

We can also do a poor job of asking. We can be quite inauthentic and dishonest in how we frame the question, and we can also let ourselves believe we have an answer which is quite self-serving and in error. We are after all quite human, and there is a good reason the Lord's Prayer contains the plea: "*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*" Matthew 6:13 ***{And do not put us to the test, but snatch us from the Evil One's clutches, ...}***. The act of asking the question in an authentic and honest way, and the act of listening inwardly in a selfless and open

fashion, is not an easy act. Much darkness in us will turn us away from the truth. One way we can know that the answer is the correct one will be that it asks of us something we might well not like doing (which truth Sheldon understood, which is why he tried to insist that the knowledge be acted upon). True moral activity is often difficult, and frequently comes with a cost (for a wonderful dramatic elaboration of this reality, see the film: ***Pay it Forward*** from the book of the same name by Catherine Ryan Hyde).

Let us pause here a moment and consider this movie more intimately, for it touches an aspect of moral conduct which we might describe as being pro-active rather than as re-active. Normally in life the moral dilemma offered to us by the individual biography comes toward us in a circumstance of crisis. The dilemma *confronts* us. In the movie ***Pay it Forward***, the teaching intuited there is framed such that the way or how we can act morally *pro-actively* (*creatively*) in the world is more significant than our more normal moral re-activity (that arises only on the basis of being *confronted* in crisis).

In the film this pro-active creative morality (something also common in this Age - see Civil Society, doctors without borders, etc.) is outlined as follows: First, it involves a generosity between two strangers (a re-active dilemma usually involves people we already know). The young boy in the film (Jesus' age at the Temple?) has been asked by a school teacher to *think* of an *idea* that could change the world.

His life experience is hard, such that he believes "*everything sucks*". So his idea is to challenge us to do three pro-active moral acts as gifts to three strangers. The moral nature of these acts comes from their generosity, and the fact that it is difficult or hard for us to be this generous is an important aspect of this self-chosen moral conduct.

He is fighting against us accepting the way things are (or appears to him - *everything sucks*), and wants us to have faith in the goodness of other people, such that when we do this act of generosity, we also ask them to pass it on - to ***Pay it Forward***. He learns a hard lesson in the film, that you can't actually *fix* a person (see the 12 Steps next below), but the person who is inspired by our generosity, to be themselves generous in a difficult way to three others, could very well begin to *fix* (heal) themselves.

To return to our main theme...

In many ways, however, Moral Grace really comes down to *practice*. We have to awaken inwardly and become active there. Without our willing it, nothing happens. Moral Grace needs our activity to manifest. We have to sincerely ask, and be willing to accept the consequences of knowing what the right thing to do is. We should expect to get it wrong, as often as not, for we are here speaking of a very subtle and real inner experience, that requires a certain discipline and silence in the soul in order to have the right space in which to appear. We will also do actions we know are wrong. We have asked and been answered and we do not follow the answer. The activity of the Holy Spirit (moral intuition) does not beat us over the head inwardly, but is more like a whisper, that well-known small, still and quiet voice. *Knowledge of the Good does not compel action upon that knowledge.*

Here, from my biography, is a story told to me by someone of quiet personal grace (I will in all probability get some of the details wrong). This person described to me a situation where she was sitting watching some children at play, the children themselves watched over by their mothers. The mothers chatted and then occasionally acted, not always just looking out for their own child, but often taking in and acting upon the whole play situation. Now my friend on occasion sees Angels, and in this instance an Angel was near where she sitting on a park bench. At one point the Angel comments as follows "*See, do.*" - in this way highlighting the moral activity (love) at the center of the overseeing of the play situation by the various mothers. One first sees, and then does. Now this seeing is twofold, being both outward and inward. One must take in the situation - the ordinary call to moral action (see the need to act) and know the good (see the moral nature of the required act). In life, this seeing of the situation and the good (the required act) are often united in an almost seamless way, the one immediately flowing into the other, or "*See, do*".

So far then we have considered *the Shepherd's Tale* and *the King's Tale*, and seen their inner correspondence. But life is often lived in many kinds of harsh circumstances, and some moral problems run deep, such that we seem almost possessed by evil and demonic forces. As alcoholics and their families know, for example, *demon* rum is terribly destructive, as are all kinds of what we call addictions and other seemingly unchangeable

habits of behavior. But just as we have heard so far of the wisdom-filled experience of a Shepherd and a King, so now we come to the wisdom-filled experience of a couple of Healers, and the development of what are called: The Twelve Steps, applied in myriad places now, but originally created as the founding practices of Alcoholics Anonymous.

the Healers' Tale

As an addict in recovery, I can speak from experience about these kinds of moral dilemmas, which involve deep and seemingly permanent behavior patterns, whose origin is not easy to understand, and for which, in a way, there seems to be no cure. Something exists within the inwardness (the soul), that has to be learned about and lived with. That's why we say "*in recovery*," not "*recovered*." You don't get over it, like one might remove the symptoms of the common cold. You only find a means to master it (instead of it mastering you). In my own thinking I call this process (the Twelve Steps seen as a whole): *the elevation of the spirit for the mastery of the soul*.

What I mean by this, and what the Twelve Steps can accomplish, is not a direct attack on the root of the problem of habitual out of control behavior, but rather a kind of process of *inner education*, by which the individual, in the company of others, learns to live life on a different basis than before. Through this learning (the Twelve Steps), and the social influence of the companionship of others with similar problems, the individuality (the spirit) learns to hold in check the *demon* (my disease) which seems to live permanently within the depths of our inwardness (the soul). This process involves, among many other actions, a kind of constant moment to moment, day to day, brutally honest self-reflection.

The Twelve Steps came into existence through the meeting, in the early 1930's, of Bill W. and Doctor Bob, two men whose own struggles with alcoholism had resisted all their efforts to pass beyond. I'll leave aside the stories of this meeting, its growth and then its evolution so as to include many others, as well as its contextual background, which anyone can read about in what is called: the big book of *Alcoholics Anonymous* (at the same time suggesting that this is a story that everyone would gain from understanding). Instead, let us just go to the Steps as they are understood today.

- 1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol -- that our lives had become unmanageable.*
- 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*
- 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.*
- 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*
- 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.*
- 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.*
- 7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.*
- 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.*
- 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*
- 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.*
- 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.*
- 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*

Now, if the reader will look carefully at these Twelve Steps, it should be obvious how it is that they too are inwardly related to the understanding of Moral Grace offered to us by a Shepherd and a King. At the same time, the Twelve Steps approach to Moral Grace has to go much deeper than the

Shepherd's Tale, for it undertakes *to transform the basic nature of the individual*, not just seek after an answer to a particular moral question.

Again, like with Sheldon and Steiner, the language used is different, but still the Healers looked inwardly at the same reality, and just used the language with which they were most comfortable to describe what they learned. For example, the Healers pursued knowledge of *His will*, but left to the individual how that was to be understood (*as we understand him*). Again, they looked within for the highest moral understanding, all the while recognizing that each individual needed to interpret this experience in his or her own way.

In addition, they went deeper. They sought not only to know the moral and the good (*God's Will as we understand it*), but to transform their character (*remove shortcomings*). They also sought to redeem the past (*make amends*), a present action which when done (as those know who actually practice it) changes you. Nor were these matters to be abandoned when done, but rather the whole was to represent an acquired daily spiritual practice, which had the result of leading to a spiritual *awakening*.

Keep in mind here what has been said above about character. *The Twelve Steps can be a path of character transformation*, and it is no accident that in the Far West of world culture, where the Original Peoples valued (and still value) character above all else, that a spiritual path directed right at character transformation would naturally arise.

In a very real sense, the Twelve Steps (*the Healers' Tale*) are a middle realm in between the work of Faith and the work of Gnosis. Sheldon's version of Moral Grace is the simplest as goes with his vocation, a Shepherd to the faithful. Steiner's version is the most complicated, not only being philosophical and scientific, but the moral question is only part of a much richer map of the landscape he would have us visit on what is intended as a path of initiation. With the Twelve Steps, we get something in between. On the one hand it is clearly not as simple as Sheldon's imaginative presentation, and on the other not nearly as complicated as Steiner's map. The Twelve Steps also partake of that remarkable American quality we know as pragmatism. They are not theoretical at all, but are worked out entirely from practice - the only question was/is: what works.

As everyone knows, however, the Twelve Steps are not a panacea. This as well has become understood pragmatically, for it is out of the Twelve Step work that we get the idea of the difference between merely talking the talk, and actually walking the walk. Anyone can learn the vocabulary of *What Would Jesus Do*, of *the Philosophy of Freedom*, or of *the Twelve Steps*. But being able to use the language (talk the talk) is quite different from the pragmatic and intimate personal knowledge of our own inner life that comes from the practical application in life (walking the walk) of these ideas.

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Before we go on to the next aspect of our considerations of Freedom, let us weave together the various elements of our story thus far...

At the beginning of Christianity, there were two Ways of meeting the Divine Mystery, with the older one receding, while the newer one comes to the fore. The newer one, mediated by a priesthood, was the Way of the Shepherds, a Way of Faith, while the older, direct and personal, was the Way of the Kings, a Way of Gnosis. At the same time, Christ entered the world in between two quite different ages in the Evolution of human Consciousness - in between the third age, characterized by ancient mysteries and hierarchical social structures, and the fifth age, characterized by individuality, free moral choice and community transformation arising out of the social commons.

Christ, in mediating between these two ages - during the fourth age, took the Way of the Ancient Hebrews, what the Gospel stories called the Law and the Prophets, and promised their fulfillment - a New Way, and taught us, as individuals, how to accomplish this. But a task such as this is not easy, and does not take place all at once. The Old Way, with its outside *rules* of moral behavior (top down from an organized priesthood), had to slowly move aside for the New. This direction is pointed out in Christ's saying that the highest commandment was to Love God with all our heart, and all our mind, and all our spirit, with the second like unto it, namely to Love our Neighbor as ourselves.

Christ, as Creator, also added something to human nature, which we have here been calling Moral Grace. Rather than morality coming from the outside inward (the third age, the Law and the Prophets), in the future it

was to come from the inside outward (the fifth age, the Law and the Prophets fulfilled, through human freedom). This fact has been captured for us in three profound Ways, namely through the work of Sheldon (a Shepherd), brought to life in *In His Steps*, through the work of Steiner (a King), brought to life in *The Philosophy of Freedom*, and finally through the *community work* in which *the Twelve Steps* live, and in which healing arises out of practices supported by that brotherhood and sisterhood on which are shared certain agonizing trials in life.

No one needs more proof of the existence of Moral Grace, than what lives in the following of these three paths, all of which have the same inner gesture, characterized by Christ Himself in the promise: "*Seek and you shall find, ask and you shall receive, knock and it shall be opened up to you*" Matthew 7:7 *{Ask and you will receive, look and you will find, knock and you will be admitted.}*

All of these Ways recognize that what is urged is not easy, and this leads to certain yet to be raised questions that have lurked in the background from the very beginning: What is the meaning of Evil in human life? And, what is the significance of the individual biography, as against the vast scope of history? This brings us first to the:

sixth stanza

in the Absence of the Good*

in the Age of Freedom, and in the confusion of the weaknesses of traditional moral authority, what happens when Moral Grace is not present - the Pharmaceutical Industry as an Example

*"*evil is the Absence of the Good*", St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1272)

The following remarks are an effort to show how that in the Absence of the Good certain profoundly undesirable consequences arise. Certainly in the Pharmaceutical Industry (just one example - these problems are everywhere in our culture), as well as in the practice of medicine, there are many honorable men and women. At the same time, as we all recognize, the drive for profit frequently places any other values into the background. In fact, in our Age, while we could say that many wish to do the Good, most are forced to compromise in order to make a living. As a result the macro decisions of large institutions more and more lack any moral center

at all, with all manner of horrible social consequences, both for us as individuals and as members of larger groups. In the case of the Pharmaceutical Industry, those macro decisions made in the Absence of the Good are producing a catastrophic attack on human inner freedom, which it is the intention of the following remarks to illuminate.

One cannot watch television today without seeing any number of advertisements for drugs, created by and sold to us by the Pharmaceutical Industry. They are ever present in the modern world and represent, when understood in their real context, to be one of the dominant active opponents of human spiritual freedom. This Industry mostly serves the Dark God Profit, and being organized in an old hierarchical social form (a Corporation), this Industry is not even permitted by law to take seriously any service to the idea of what truly lives in the human being. The law, in its own present yet degenerate condition, has determined that Corporations owe their primary duty to their shareholders (profit), and their workers and the consumers of their products have significance only as an afterthought.

To a degree the deeper fault for this lies elsewhere, but we are yet not able to open that chapter. Let us here say this: While it is true that *scientific materialism*, in that it believes only in matter and never in spirit, creates the intellectual context for the Pharmaceutical Industry, it nevertheless is *greed* (the Absence of the Good) that drives this assault on human spiritual freedom. This Industry does not have to act the way that it does, but in the Absence of the Good there can be only one result. Drugs are created and sold to us that we do not need, that do not promote either our physical health, or our emotional health or our spiritual health. They are created in order to make money. Lies are told and kept about their side-effects. Government watchdogs, that should protect us, are subverted. And, the greater portion of the medical profession is seduced into cooperation, while those healers, who might have a true sense of what we need, are opposed, attacked and sometimes even jailed.

The *totality of behaviors* of those who lead and guide the Pharmaceutical Industry are perfect examples of the Absence of the Good, and its consequences. Yes, there certainly are moral people in the Industry, but even these are themselves quite often subverted and seduced in order to serve the bottom line - the Dark God Profit. We could take a similar look at the military-industrial complex, or at agribusiness. The same is true everywhere - in the Absence of the Good, evil is the result. [In the use of

the term "evil" here, keep in mind that there is a lot more that has to be said about this, such that we will come to understand that evil has a role in the Creation and is related to something that has to be called: *the Mystery of Evil*.]

Let us next look more closely at the consequences flowing into our shared social life from out of this particular Industry.

In a very real sense, the human community that is sold these drugs is seen by this industry merely as a market. While some thought is given to our real needs, almost no thought at all is given concerning the wider social consequences. For example, there was recently (Aug. 22, 2004) an article in the *New York Times Sunday Magazine* (*Did Antidepressants Depress Japan*), by Kathryn Schulz) on the entrance of the Pharmaceutical Industry into the cultural life of Japan, wherein well understood traditional Japanese spiritual virtues connected with the human grace involved in melancholy, sadness, and suffering, were labeled as a disease (depression). [See also *A Journey into the Economy of Melancholy*, by Gary Greenberg in the May 2007 *Harper's* magazine - a penetrating consideration of the intersection of scientific thinking about our consciousness, with the medical and drug industries, all leavened with a wonderfully subtle and wry sense of humor.]

The basic thinking is that if you are unhappy, you are ill, and need medication. This has now gone so far that a President of the United States (in this case George W. Bush), is now standing behind an effort to test everyone in America for mental disease (starting with all children - parental consent be damned), and if found to be ill, to be provided the assumed needed medication. Following the twisted logic of such efforts by out of control governments, this assault on our inner freedom in the guise of drugging us for reasons of presumed mental disease is called: *The New Freedom Initiative*, after the fashion of *newspeak* in George Orwell's *1984*.

The dark visions of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, where books are outlawed and drugs to control emotions mandatory, is well on its way to coming true. Why? Let us repeat this, for it needs to become our cultural mantra - in the *Absence of the Good*, evil is often the main result. Generally, for the Good to be there, we must consciously insert it.

There will be those that argue, with some degree of truth, that humanity is greatly benefited by modern medical discoveries, including many drugs. This is not disputed here. Who would want to dispute it? But the idea that everything is perfect, all is well, nothing is wrong is as equally foolish as asserting no good has come.

It is one thing to use a substance to heal physical illnesses, it is another thing entirely to define behaviors outside some arbitrary norm as disease, and then bludgeon with drugs the consciousness of a human being in order to subdue their inner life of soul and spirit as a means to making their behavior conform.

It is a question of spiritual (and sometimes even physical) freedom in the very highest sense.

The fact is there is no true scientific standard for a great deal of what has over recent years come to be called mental illness. The diagnosis of mental illness is subjective in the extreme, and frequently involves a judgment on the part of a so-called medical professional, who may simply not like the patient, or find them morally repugnant (an act which our studies of Moral Grace has shown to be invalid). Lest you think I don't know about this problem, I have spent 18 years in the field of mental health, 10 in a for-profit psychiatric facility, and the last 35 years leading a very introspective life. Both sides of this problem live in me in a very deep way.

If you want to study a sociological perspective on this issue, read ***Deviance and Medicalization: From Badness to Sickness***, by Peter Conrad and Joseph Schneider, which describes how all manner of social behaviors that were considered outside the so-called norm, became slowly defined as mental illnesses over the last 50 years, and then became subject to the authority of assumed mental health professionals. Basically what was done was that the problem of good and evil was eliminated from the discussion (too elusive for *materialistic* science), and if the social order (or some small part of it) found you to be deviating from the norm, the mental health industry classified you as diseased and gave you drugs.

As someone who has seen from the inside how this is played out, I can assure you that basically it is a disaster on multiple levels.

For example, the standard defining text for mental illnesses, which is called the ***Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*** (it cleverly gives a number for each supposed mental disease or sub-category of disease), contains an alleged illness called: Intermittent Explosive Disorder. When I grew up we called this having a bad temper, and expected people to get their act together and learn to control it. Now it is being asserted that it is a disease, and as such one is really no longer held morally responsible, can get treatment in a mental hospital and be given drugs to subdue the excess.

Of course, the drugs seldom work unless there is a lot of overkill, so that the whole personality (remember those side-effects!) is pressed down. I recently had a woman doctor of mine say that modern medicines are poisonous toxins that possess good side effects. If you converse with people taking these medications, many of them don't like the effect, and often stop taking this chemical restraint on their inner life. They'd rather have the problem than the cure.

What frequently happens in mental hospitals is a violation of medical ethics (first do no harm), in the name of research and/or assumed to be standard medical practice. Let me tell a story.

The way the Pharmaceutical business works is that drugs have to be tested for their efficacy. Granted part of the demand for testing comes from the government as well as from a kind of poorly reasoned scientific set of assumptions about methodology. At the same time, this demand for testing is mostly a consequence and response to patterns of behavior in the Industry over the years, wherein they released badly tested drugs (e.g. *thalidomide*).

In any event, at the hospital where I worked the Chief of Psychiatry was also a paid consultant to the Pharmaceutical industry, and oversaw numerous test protocols as these were carried out at the hospital. The Chief made extra money, the hospital was able to charge the full costs of the treatment (the patient ended up with no bill), and various ancillary staff were also given additional compensation besides their normal salary.

The studies had to be done under the double blind system, which meant some patients in the test received a placebo (no medication at all), and no one was to know which were being tested with the real experimental drug and which patients were receiving the placebo. Of course to the staff, if

the mental illness was acute (such as schizophrenia), those receiving the placebo were obvious, since they got sicker and sicker, suffering a great deal for the period of the test (often at least for a month, sometimes far longer). Of course the other patients on the ward, and the staff, suffered as well because of those individuals who were not receiving any effective medication in order that the test protocols be scientifically (?) correct. In essence, very ill people, and their caregivers and companions, are routinely tortured in order that the testing be done in this assumed correct way (in the Absence of the Good).

Just to show how cruel this really can be, consider that the patients have often been already declared incompetent. This means that they have a conservator, usually a family member. The family member gets told that the hospital stay will be free (the seduction), and the harm to the mind of the patient, if they receive the placebo, is downplayed (the subversion).

None of this, by the way, deals with the freedom of the acutely ill to choose not to be medicated. Their right to so choose is there in the law, but in practice it is frequently by-passed by obtaining permission from the conservator.

Obviously there are mental illnesses that are real. What I most frequently observed was that the psychiatrist (the ones who had to diagnose and order drugs), were basically experimenters. Routinely the originally prescribed medication was changed, as the doctor hunted around for something that would give him the desired *behavioral* effect. First a certain *behavior* was considered undesirable, and then various medications tried until the *behavior* was altered. In severe cases we admitted we practiced chemical restraint. What we didn't admit was that in moderate cases we did the same thing - we restrained the unwanted *behavior* with chemicals. [Where, in such circumstances and goals (the insistence upon the change in outer behavior) is the individual's own sense of their inner being given any weight and meaning?]

Of course, in order to do this, you have to first convince a human being that they are ill - that they are diseased of the mind. In that most intimate aspect of our being - our soul and spirit, we are assaulted with the socially enforced belief that something is wrong with us, and it has to be fixed. All this in the context of a well understood phenomena, called the identified patient.

Emotional dissonance in the family generally produces (in our current culture obsessed with mental illness) someone who will come to the mental health system seeking treatment (where else can they go?). This is often understood to be the most mentally healthy individual in the family matrix precisely because they are self observant enough to want to solve their inner dilemmas. They are called the *identified* patient, and the assumption of this paradigm is that the root of the problem (unless it is the physical nervous system itself which is broken) most probably lies in those family members who do not seek treatment. The true illness lies elsewhere and can't be treated unless the family consents (admits) to a problem.

Today one can hear remarks from so-called mental health professionals that anywhere from 20% to 40% (or even higher) of the population of the United States suffers from mental illness. In spite of the fact that the vocabulary of this approach no longer uses the term normal (as if there ever was some standard way of being an *individual* human being), the idea of normal is still present. If you deviate from the assumed standard, you are likely to be called ill, instead of just recognized as different and unique. Mostly this fancifully imagined standard arises out of a comparing of behaviors (ignoring our highly individualized inner life), with the so-called standard actually being set by those who have most effectively compromised and conformed their individuality to social normative pressures.

Such a conclusion, and the related suggested responses are horribly wrong (in the Absence of the Good). What makes it all the worse, is that the Pharmaceutical Industry rides this cultural confusion solely for its own benefit. Not only do they ride it, they promote it in every way they can. Huge profits can be made in convincing us that such inner states, for example, as melancholy, shyness, sadness and suffering are diseases of the mind.

Certainly many individuals within these fields and professions seek to act with morality and honor. Yet, the fact remains that the institutional systems have evolved in the Absence of the Good, thus producing evil consequences. For example, over the course of my life, the practice of medicine has changed from that of holding to the idealistic goal of being a healer, to becoming a complicated for-profit business. Third parties, such

as the government and insurers, have inserted themselves in between the patient and the doctor, and over and above this is the idea (promoted by scientific *materialism*) that the human being is a mere mechanism (all matter, no spirit).

Obviously I can't solve this grave problem here. Nor am I the only observer of modern life who is awake to these issues. At the same time I can strongly suggest certain directions to take, and as well some concrete examples that can be practiced. Since depression is thought to be one of the main diseases of modern inner life, let me go forward with a brief discussion of this inner state. In the next stanza, I will come at this from a more intimate discussion of the nature of evil, particularly as regards what is called the double or the shadow in the soul. For now, however, I only want to make more general observations of our inner life of soul and spirit.

None of what is below is meant to suggest that no help is available from either talking therapies or various substances, especially if the therapy is done in the Presence of the Good, and the substances are natural. Here, however, is another of those side-trips it would not do to take. What is below concerns an example of how we as individuals can bring health and balance to our own minds out of our own will and inner activity (in freedom). As this book proceeds, other suggestions regarding the nature and discipline of mind will be put forward.

One of the greatest individuals of human recorded history is known to us as Gautama Buddha. His teachings rest on what he called *the Four Noble Truths*, of which the first is: *Life is Suffering*.

What could be more obvious to any self-honest reflection? We live, and we suffer. We have moments of joy and moments of sorrow. Those who obtain to even the smallest degrees of wisdom know that just in these feelings of the heart we are the most human. Why in the name of the Good would we ever want to chemically eliminate from our lives our feelings?

Yet, we do. We are being taught that sadness, melancholy and suffering are a disease. We are being taught (and sold) that our inner life is not healthy if it contains such fundamental human moods. Why such insanity? Why are we taught to want to get rid of that which makes us

human? And even more scary, why are we being forced, against our wills, to take such a view of our inner and most intimate nature and being?

Science, in order to maintain the fiction that all is matter and there is no spirit, has to create a paradigm that makes of human inner life nothing but biology and chemistry. If my mood has no connection to my will, to my freedom (see B. F. Skinner's *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*), then I am basically a mechanism, and should be treated as such. The problem with this view is that everywhere it is rebelled against. The materialist thinks this principle is a certainty as an intellectual conclusion, yet never behaves in life as if this were true. We have it as an idea, but we don't live at all consistent with this idea.

So our society says: don't suffer, don't be sad, don't be melancholy. Take a pill instead. But you know what's worse? If we get rid of sadness, what happens to joy?

Without doubt there is probably clinical depression caused by a true dysfunction at the level of brain chemistry. Now if you want to not be sad (something you are free to choose or not) or if you are overly sad, and feel depressed, and if some inner voice is telling you that you are unworthy, and unloved, and a failure, it isn't necessary to take a pill and beat up your inner life with some chemical restraint. There are *mind sciences* of deep wisdom and divine inspiration not unfamiliar with this inner state. Here are some practical suggestions.

The anonymous author of *Meditations on the Tarot: a journey into Christian Hermeticism*, advises that you cross yourself three times, and spit over your left shoulder. This ritual (an old folk remedy, well practiced) compels the double (see below, next stanza) to retreat from its work of inner prosecution.

Much normal depression is also due to the holding back of mild forms of irritation and anger. We try too hard to always be nice, and we burden ourselves with the inner consequence. What I have learned to do is to announce to those who live intimately with me, that over the next couple of days I am going to be very cranky, and further that I am going to enjoy it, so they just better get used to it. I then wander around complaining in a loud voice about anything at all that passes my fancy to complain about. I will curse and swear and occasionally insult. Oddly enough I am having

so much fun doing this, that those around me can't help but like it. It clearly isn't really personal, but on the contrary quite inspirational and often catching.

If the depression seems more deep, then prayer is called for. The *shadow* (again see below) in the soul can be sometimes a bit more powerful than the *i-AM* (also see below). In such a case the intercession of the Divine Mother is a powerful help. As I go to sleep at night I make a most sincere prayer to Mary for her aid in helping me overcome this state of excessive inner turmoil. Always on waking, there is a new sense of inner freedom before the torments. There is a kind of gap between my spirit, and the force of these troubles in the soul. I can stand up to them, and send them packing.

Another recourse, from Dennis Kloeck (author of *Weather and Cosmos*, *Seeking Spirit Vision* and *The Seer's Handbook* among a number of other works), is to inwardly look at the dark mood within, as something that is not-I, and say several times to this mood in our inner voice: "*What is your name?*". The dark presence (the shadow-double) cannot then respond to this question, and is forced to retreat.

I have also found it helpful to consciously create alternative inner pictures. Suppose I am depressed (or some other unwanted mood), and I come awake to this condition. Instead of inwardly passively accepting my given mood, I oppose it with my own inner will by making a counter-mood picture. For example, if I think some aspect of the shadow-double is pestering me, I will imagine a kind of small being, humanoid in form, but all angles instead of curves, over which I am pouring hot chocolate and tiny marshmallows.

Or, if I am in a hurry, and I am being tempted (wouldn't you like an extra scoop of ice cream, wouldn't that taste good), I will take control of my inner voice and yell there: *Get out of here you fraud and useless piece of maple syrup!* It is very important in doing such work to use humor, for as we get deeper into understanding the shadow-double within, and its relationship to our inner freedom, we will find that humor is the best antidote.

To close this stanza on a slightly different note, let's take the problem of sleep. In our hurried and harried civilization, many people are going to

the Pharmaceutical Industry to obtain drugs for sleep. This is a bit odd, if you think about it, in that we ought to be able to sleep when we are tired, but many people have the experience that while their body is exhausted, the mind is still rushing about and will not "*turn off*".

Even in this idea we miss the mark, for to think that the soul-spirit nexus (mind) is something to turn off is to live in a kind of denial of our inner reality. Yet, what do we do?

Rudolf Steiner offered a very interesting exercise for the end of the day (the Ruckshau). As we lie in bed, with our mind running at top speed, we take hold of the thinking activity and turn it in the direction of reviewing our day. We picture the day backward. We are lying in bed, our body is beginning to relax, and we take hold of our mind and we expend our will inwardly in this realm of pure soul and spirit existence, and form pictures of the day.

This daily review produces two effects. First it lets us examine our own activity during the day, something that the rushing mind is already trying to do, if we were to observe it honestly. Only instead of letting it rush about from association to association without any discipline, we expend some inner will forces and remember the day backwards. This review of the day helps us learn about ourselves. How did we behave? Did we do the best that we could do? If we failed, what amends might we make tomorrow? In this review, of course, we are free to approach it however we want.

The second effect is that we start to relax the mind. By putting this little amount of will into the situation of the mind, we give order where it would otherwise remain in chaos. This is our last amount of will of the day - a sort of *desert* of the day. If we spend this last amount of will in an *inner exercise*, surprise, we often will fall asleep!

The reason we can't sleep is because at the same time as our body relaxes, our soul-spirit nexus - our mind - needs to finish its business, for it is the soul-spirit (our inwardness and essence) that has been moving the physical body around all day long. In order to have the right relationship between mind and body at the end of the day, so that sleep can arise, we need to make conscious the fruits of the day. When we take a drug to push us into sleep, we miss out on what is the best part of our day - a kind of moral

digestive process. Here, in the daily review, we nourish the heart forces which make possible our free acts of moral grace (below, in the discussion of nurturing love, we will look at this matter from a slightly different direction, since for many people, they do not enter and exit sleep alone, but with a partner).

Emphasis needs to be placed here on the idea of *nourish*. Just as we feed the body, so we need to feed the soul, and one of the foods for the soul is to look back on the day and digest it. We have had a day full of experience, and the more consciously we can reflect on that daily experience, the more healthy will become our soul-life. [The best nourishment for the soul is (obviously) always art and beauty, although that needs to be set to our own specific tastes, which is why so many crave an encounter with the Natural World, or want to lose themselves in their favorite music.]

Of course, all the above is to be taken with a grain of salt, while at the same time sincerity of effort and experience will prove to be the best teacher.

What does this mean?

It means that we have to prize our inner freedom more than we accept the dictates of the Pharmaceutical Industry, which in the Absence of the Good would have us believe we are diseased, when we are only and wonderfully human; and, that we need not any longer accept that we have to have all kinds of drugs for the aid of what are really very normal functions (such as sleep). All the same, to appreciate this even more, we have to enter more deeply into the understanding of human existence and the real nature of the *Mystery of Evil*.

seventh stanza

the Seventh Day of Creation

*the problem of freedom seen in the light
of the nature of evil, and its relationship to the course
of individual human lives (the biography)*

Psalms 23

*The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.
 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
 He leadeth me beside the still waters.
 He restoreth my soul:
 He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name' sake.
 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
 I will fear no evil:
 For thou art with me;
 Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies;
 Thou annointest my head with oil;
 My cup runneth over.
 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
 and I will dwell in the House of the Lord forever.**

[*I can say with assurance that it is possible to experience life in this fashion, minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day, year by year - to **trust Life** knowing (have Faith) that the Divine Mystery is everywhere Present in all aspects - not only in the outer circumstances of our biography (the events which help and challenge), but also in the inner biography (the unfolding of the life of mind and soul, with its moments of both darkness and light.)]

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We come now to one of the great mysteries of the modern age - one which considers the nature of history, the meaning of existence, and the importance of the individual biography. While there are ideas in natural science that some might construe to be in conflict with the material presented here, it must be understood that the scientist does not even really ask the relevant questions. He has asked other more limited questions, so that when he gets to questions of the heart and the deep meaning of human existence, he has no basis in his formalism for that which in life can only be described *with the language of mystery, song and poetry* (as in the 23rd Psalm).

This is what is told to us in the *story* of Genesis 2:1-3:

"Thus the heavens and the earth were finished and all their array. On the sixth day God finished the work he had been doing. and he rested on the

seventh day from all the work he had done. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy because on it he rested from all his work of creation."

The tendency has been in modern times among some religious to consider that the term "day", in the text of the story in Genesis, refers to what we experience as a single day, the twenty-four hours it takes for the Earth's rotation to return the Sun to more or less its same position in the sky as in the previous day. This happens because when it suits our personal agendas, we vainly take our human perspective and insist the Bible speaks to us only in that same perspective - absent poetry and mystery (which is obviously the Bible's real language and song). Others, more awake to the mystery and poetry of such writings as the Bible, understand that the word *day*, in the sense of Genesis, means much larger periods of time, and that God's creation of the Earth took these great periods of time.

My own thinking leads me to put the matter this way. The Divine Mystery ceased the greater part of Its creative activity (rested) at a certain point, after which from that time forward what had been set in motion determined what was next to happen; and that among what had been set in motion was the eventual emergence of human freedom. We don't have to have beliefs to see this, for surely, if anything is obviously true, we are clearly free to be moral, or not, create, or not, and destroy, or not, all that has been previously created by the Divine Mystery.

As the Plains Indians observed in their Mysteries, the human being is clearly the determiner, the dominant decision maker among all of the Creation which can be observed (See ***Seven Arrows*** by H. Storm). Rudolf Steiner puts the matter this way, in his book ***A Theory of Knowledge Implicit in Goethe's World Conception***:

"Man is not behaving in accordance with the purposes of the Guiding Power of the world when he investigates one or another of His commandments, but when he behaves in accordance with his own insight. For in him the Guiding Power of the world manifests Himself."[emphasis added, ed.] He does not live as Will somewhere outside of man, He has renounced His own will in order that all might depend upon the will of man. If man is to be enabled to become his own lawgiver, all thought about world-determinations outside of man must be abandoned."

Yet, much religious thinking and doctrine considers God to be an active presence in our lives. Among evangelical and fundamentalist Christians there is all manner of discussion of the doings of God in our time. Not only this, but from the side of natural science more and more there is coming into being a kind of biological determinism, in which almost all behavior is seen as hardwired into the brain, while the brain itself is merely the creation of a genetic inheritance produced over the eons by natural selection. *Between many religious then, as well as many scientists, human freedom is considered secondary to either a determinism of spirit (the will of God) or a determinism of matter (the will of mindless evolution). Where is human freedom in the face of these twin and related prisons?*

What is the truth?

Basically, people are going to have to decide that for themselves. I'll tell you how I see the world - my *story* of the world. However, I not only don't expect it to be believed, I don't want it to be believed. All that is intended in the *Tale* below is that the reader be given cause to think for themselves. Let us go toward this *Tale* then, first pausing to consider some additional Emerson (an American King/Shepherd/Healer) on these very deep questions. From Emerson's essay **Nature**: "*Nature is a thought incarnate and turns to thought again as ice becomes water and then gas. The world is mind precipitated, and the volatile essence is forever escaping in the form of free thought*".

the Fool's Tale ***(part I)***

The human spirit or *i-AM* is eternal. In fact, it seems to be a piece (a child) of the Father. The Father divided Himself into a multiplicity (all the Angels, all the *i-AMs* and so forth), in the process of the Creation, for what else could He do (God being All) but create out of Himself. When Christian tradition speaks of the promise of everlasting life, it is semi-consciously aware of this eternal nature of the essence of the human being.

As an aside, the reader might note that when we considered Christ's remarks concerning the question of what was the greatest commandment, the doctrinally correct Catholic Bible said: "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole*

mind.", while the *Unvarnished Gospels* says: "***You are to love your lord God with all your heart and all your spirit and all your mind***".[emphasis added, ed.] In the *doctrinally correct* text then, the Greek word spirit has been changed into soul. Why do you suppose that was done? Rudolf Steiner suggests that it was a conscious decision of the Catholic Hierarchy to hide from the faithful the truth of their Triune Eternal Spirit nature (body, soul *and* spirit). On the other hand, perhaps this confusions was authored by the Divine Mystery Itself, Who knew we were not yet ready to have such knowledge.

There are then two basic forms of existence: the Earthly existence in which the *i-AM* inhabits a physical body, and the Heavenly existence in which the *i-AM* is an eternal spirit in a solely spiritual reality. The Shepherds believe aspects of this through Faith, and the Kings know this directly through experience (Gnosis).

Earthly physical existence has a purpose, which is the education of the child - the education of the individual eternal spirit that is the essence of the human being - the own *i-AM*. This *divine* education is only vaguely similar to our processes of education, although we could more and more learn to imitate what has been created. This divine education is of the Highest Art, and being akin to both music and drama, the Bard was quite right in suggesting that: "*all the world's a stage...*". Human earthly life is Art, and we cooperate - are co-creative - in this Art through the gift of freedom.

What this means is that the human biography is a work of Art, created in cooperation with the Divine Mystery. Moreover, the real nature of our shared existence is not seen in history, not in the great events and doings of dominant individuals, but rather finds *its central meaning* in the events of ordinary everyday individual biographies. This is because all else passes away (*and this too shall pass away*), except that which the eternal spirit, or the *i-AM*, acquires in the sense that the experiences of our biography change our nature. We live our lives, acquire experiences that transform us, and what in us that is transformed lives eternally.

Everything else in earthly existence passes away.

Now this, while obvious to many, hardly answers all the questions, of which one of the most important for our time concerns the nature of evil -

what one author put forward as: *Why do bad things happen to good people?* (by Melvin Tinker).

If we appreciate that we have been spiritual children, and only now are beginning to be mature enough to understand such a deep question ourselves, then we can also appreciate why the earlier religious texts, even the Gospels, are not straightforward in providing an answer. In each successive Age, we are provided the answers we need, until in this Age we are more or less now placed on our own, having been given Moral Grace, which becomes a means not only of knowing (gnosis) the good, but also the true. Recall that verse I added above when first discussing the Shepherd's Tale: John 16:12: "*I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.*" ***{I have much more to say to you, but you can't bear it just yet.}***

Christianity is not the only Religion in the world. We get something of a hint in this regard when the Kings are described in Matthew 2:1 as "*Magi came from the East*" ***{wise men from the East showed up}***. As I pointed out, the Kings were Priest-Kings, or initiates in the *ancient* (pre-Christian) *mysteries*. Nowhere should this suggest they did not possess truth, and it is time to consider, as Christians, what wisdom might have had to be left aside for a time, while we were being slowly nurtured into greater spiritual maturity through the gifts of Faith and of Freedom.

Here are some of the left aside wisdoms: *repeated earth lives, karma, fate, destiny and the real meaning of evil with special emphasis on the double or shadow* that accompanies in life each individual human *i-AM*. St. Paul understood these problems, and hinted about this too in I Corinthians 13: 8-12: "*Charity never fails, whereas prophecies will disappear, and tongues will cease, and knowledge will be destroyed. For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect has come, that which is imperfect will be done away with. When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child. Now that I have become a man, I have to put away the things of child. We see now through a mirror in an obscure manner, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know even as I have been known.*"

We need to keep in mind that St. Paul on the road to Damascus was told by Christ that: "...for I have appeared to thee for this purpose, to appoint thee to be a minister and a witness to what thou hast seen, and to the

visions that thou shalt have of me;..." Acts 26:16. Christ speaks here of what Saul becoming Paul has seen and what visions will be given in the future, and by this shows to us moderns, that in St. Paul we have already one who has been appointed both Shepherd, King and Healer, which clearly would have been necessary for the role he was to play in the founding of the Christian Religion.

So we have both Christ and St. Paul telling us that not all can be said at that time, and that we begin as spiritual children who can later become mature. In this light now let us consider the older views of the East regarding repeated earth lives (reincarnation), karma, fate, destiny and the problem of evil as we might understand these today (keeping in mind that the appearance of these ideas among members of the so-called New Age Movement is considered by many Christian *believers* to be itself a terrible evil).

"Vengeance is mine, I will repay, sayeth the Lord", is something we have heard, and of which St. Paul writes in Romans Chapter 12. Does this refer to something hidden, that we have not, until now, been mature enough to understand? ***{I have much more to say to you, but you can't bear it just yet.}*** Here is what I have learned to understand from the study of modern Kings (initiates).

When the human being dies, the essence - the *i-AM*, as well as the inwardness - the soul, survives, and only the physical body decays, its material substance returning to the Earth (dust to dust). In the afterlife, following on the experience of the often reported memory tableau (my life flashed before my eyes), we enter a realm which the ancients called *kamaloka*. In this spiritual realm the *i-AM* is made to experience that which was done to others during the biography. If we murdered, we will experience being murdered. If we abused dozens of children, we will experience what they experienced. Here, hidden but still real, is God's Divine Vengeance (Justice), which is to make us experience what we have done unto others. Christ is telling us this in the Sermon on the Mount when He says in Matthew 7:12: *"Therefore all that you wish men to do to you, even so do you also to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets."* ***{So everything you want people to do for you, you do the same for them, because that's the law and the prophets.}***

And, perhaps even more to the point, Matthew 7:2: "*For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; ...*" ***{...you will be sentenced to the same sentence that you sentence others,...}***. What better description of the kamaloka experience could there be?

When we are told "*vengeance is mine*" we are being told that the Father's Justice (in His *Idea* of the nature of the afterlife) is the best justice, and we need not take vengeance upon ourselves, for in kamaloka we will experience what we have done to others. What better justice could there be?

Now following on kamaloka, we enter what the ancients called lower and higher devachan, a realm of the afterlife in which we reflect on what we experienced in kamaloka and can then choose to accept and contribute to that karma and fate in the next life, which choice will make recompense for the actions and failures of the current life. Thus we are forgiven 70 times 7 (returned to life, reborn to continue to learn our lessons) as Christ admonished Peter, for certainly Christ did not use any arbitrary figure. Karma is the law of recompense for prior life actions, and involves our own acceptance of that compensation. Matthew 18:21-22 "*Then Peter came up to him and said, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to thee seven times, but seventy times seven.'*" ***{Then Peter came up to him and said, 'Lord, how many times shall my brother wrong me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?' Jesus says to him, 'I'm not telling you up to seven times, I'm telling you up to seventy-seven times.'}***

It is out of higher devachan that the next biography is formed, from our own remorse at the actions in our former life. This becomes then our karma (the law of recompense) and our fate (that which must come to us in this life). Yet, it would be an error to assume that all that is evil, or seems unjust, is karma or fate. For we remain free in each successive life to commit new actions of good or evil, and thus create new karma. Our biographies then contain, not only sufferings and joys reflecting prior and future lives (for higher devachan lies outside of time), but also numerous opportunities for new choices with new consequences. So, for example, for someone to say that a woman who has been raped is receiving her karma, is to not understand anything at all.

[We should perhaps also recognize that the reality of Time is not linear, but something quite different - again a matter outside the scope of this work. This means that a sequence of incarnations takes its full karmic shape from factors and intentions that essentially are more artistic, than they are the result of linear cause and effect relationships.]

Not one of us knows how in any life, our own or others, these karmic matters are to be played out, which have been chosen and artistically arranged by us in higher devachan with the aid of the highest hierarchies. In fact, it is terribly presumptive on our part to assume that we can know what was decided by another individual during their afterlife as regards what is to be experienced later. Moreover, fresh evil is always possible.

Here is the picture so far (that will alter later, by the way, when we know more about the Mystery of Evil): The main thing to keep in mind is to not look at any biography but your own, using these ideas of repeated earth lives, karma and fate. Any thought which suggests that we can perceive for others these matters is a idea not worthy to have been thought. The point is to appreciate that what in life we experience as suffering may have as its background the need of our eternal spirit to receive teaching in the Divine School which is the biography. It is up to us, and only us, to recognize and reflect upon the lessons (matters of karma and fate) of our own life.

Now above I also used the term destiny in addition to that of karma and fate. The term destiny is here meant to point toward that aspect of the biography which is neither karma or fate, but rather represents the results and consequences of our own free actions in this particular life. We weave our destiny in spite of karma and fate. We have to endure karma and fate, but to the extent we overcome those and learn their lessons, we also become capable of creating our own destiny.

Let us now turn forthrightly to the problem of evil, and not incidentally, the problem of sin.

By the way, the *Unvarnished Gospels* do not appear to contain the word sin. That conception seems to be a later confusion added by authorities who had other agendas. Here is what Witterschein wrote in his introduction: *"Sin", for example, connotes a deep separation between human will and God's will, a kind of flaw in our makeup that results in our*

acting wrongly. But the Greek word hamartia is startlingly different: it is a term from archery, and means "missing the mark"! The very word itself implies a much more optimistic view of human volition than "sin" does. With hamartia we are talking about something essentially correct in human nature, a part of us that wants to do what is good and right, but missed the bull's eye. Our goal is the right one; but somehow we miss it (Gaus rightly prefers to render hamartia as "mistake" or "doing wrong")."

In the Creation, has the Father brought forward evil and the possibility of mistake into the world for a purpose? This has been a paradoxical problem for humanity for a long time, especially when we consider those forms of evil which seem so terrible, such as the Holocaust, torture and the theft of innocence that is created by child abuse. How can a good God author or allow such suffering?

Well, the first thing to recognize is that God does not make such a choice. What has been created is the possibility of human freedom, as an act of Divine Love. It is that we are loved that we have been offered the possibility of becoming free. It is we, who once freed, that choose to bring evil and error into the world, out of that very freedom.

What God has done is created a loving Divine Justice - a response to our actions, in that in kamaloka we experience the suffering we have caused, and in lower and higher devachan we are offered the opportunity to form our next biography in a way that makes for recompense. Further, in giving our spirit - our *i-AM* - immortality, He has given the victims of our errors and evil a gift far beyond what they suffer in any individual life. He has also created us in such a way that those we have harmed can forgive us (and those who have harmed us can be forgiven). In the Sermon on the Mount we are given, among so much else, the Lord's Prayer, in which the fifth petition is: *"Forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors."* Matthew 6:12 ***{And forgive our debts, the same as we forgave the debts that others owed us.}***

Notice how, like the Golden Rule, this phrase accounts for the kamaloka experience of the afterlife. Where we forgive in this life, so we will experience the effect of that forgiveness in the afterlife. Kamaloka is not just the experience of the consequences for others of our wrongs and errors, but it is also the experience of the consequences for others of our forgiveness and love.

We now need to consider Satan and the Devil, for if we believe God to be real, than certainly we must believe that Satan and the Devil are real.

One of the things we know is that Satan and the Devil (these are not the same by the way) are known as tempters. Neither is the author of evil or error anymore than God is. Eve is tempted in the Garden, and Christ is tempted in the Desert. And we...we are constantly tempted also. This then leads us to the double or shadow.

We really face two worlds. One world is the outer material world we experience through the senses, and the other world is an inner invisible world that in the beginning we only know within our own minds - our own soul life. In stepping out of our spiritual childhood it is the truths and reality of this inner world that we most need to face, after which we may come to understand what the true relationship of that inner world is to the outer world, which we experience through the senses.

For those who seek to follow ***the Way of the Fool***, in essence it is really an exploration of this inner world, coupled with learning to understand the relationship between our actions in this inner world and our actions in the outer world. Here too Christ pointed a clear finger in the Sermon on the Mount when he said (among many other teachings): Matthew 5:28: "*But I say to you that anyone who so much as looks with lust at a woman has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*" ***{But I say any man who looks at a woman and really wants her has already slept with her in his heart.}***

Then here, in this next verse later in the Gospel, is this consideration of the inner world made fully explicit: Matthew 23: 25-28 "*Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but within they are full of robbery and uncleanness. Thou blind Pharisee! clean first the inside of the cup and of the dish, that the outside too may be clean. Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! you who are like whited sepulchers, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear just to men, but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.*" ***{Woe to you canon-lawyers and Pharisees, you fakes, for cleaning off the rim of your cup and saucer while on the inside you're bursting with greed and wild appetites. Blind Pharisee, wash out the***

inside of the cup and saucer first, if you want the outside to end up clean! Woe to you canon-lawyers and Pharisees, you fakes, for being like dusty monuments that look pretty on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of corpses and all kinds of rot. You likewise from the outside appear to the world to be decent, but inside you're full of hypocrisy and ways around the law.}

In this way and others, Christ points out to us that what goes on within is superior to what goes on without. I only learn to love the outer world toward which my acts of will unfold, to the extent to which I master the inner world, from which my outer acts arise. I stand then, in between the outer and inner worlds, toward both of which I must equally attend.

Let me make of these facts a little symbolic diagram:

[sense world < soul (d) < i-AM > (d) soul > spiritual world].

In both directions (< >) the *i-AM* is mediated in its relationship to either the sense world or the spiritual world, through the soul. The soul itself is very complicated, and the "(d)", which I have placed on either side of the *i-AM*, is a symbolic representation of the double, or what is called the shadow and sometimes the *doppelganger*. I will have a lot more to say about the double/shadow shortly. For the moment we need just to place it as the nearest companion to the *i-AM*, in the soul, and as a participant in the mediation between the *i-AM* and the two worlds - the world of the senses and the world of spirit.

Everyone clearly knows something of the sense world. It is the apparent rules of the sense world that natural science believes it comprehends, and it is somewhat the rules of the spiritual world that the religions believe they comprehend. For most of us this spiritual world is not experienced (no gnosis), and what we do *believe* we know of it we know mostly through our *beliefs*, which is not the same as true Faith. About the sense world we seem to know a great deal (a kind of experimentally based gnosis), but if we were to examine this presumed knowledge carefully, we would realize that here too there is a lot of belief. Only this time we have Faith (trust) in the priests of natural science and their teachings. We have been taught (educated in) the paradigms (*beliefs*) of natural science, about which most of those, who do accept these ideas, do so on the basis of their Faith (trust) in the methods of science. This Faith, in several of the

fundamental so far elaborated views of science, will turn out to have been of temporary value. Our Faith in the *scientific spirit* itself, however, is well founded. [The *scientific spirit* seeks objectivity, empiricism and repeatable results with regard to experiments. All such qualities can be obtained in a properly conducted introspective examination of the own mind (soul/spirit nexus).]

Culturally, this inward state (Faith in the methods of natural science and belief in its ideas) exists in many, while in many others there is Faith in God, and belief in various counter-images to the beliefs of science. A kind of battle has arisen, and this book hopes to help the open minded among us to find a path of wisdom between the labyrinthine extremes of the true believers in either Religion or Science.

In modern times the inner world is and has been more and more explored, mostly in the fields of psychology and psychiatry, wherein that exploration follows or tries to imitate the methods of natural science. Many books can be found today, which make a worthy effort to explain *consciousness* in the terms of the world views of natural science, suggesting (for example) that consciousness is a product of the chemistry and electrical aspects of the brain; and, that our behaviors arise from how the brain has become hardwired over the many eons of evolution (in the sense of natural selection). We saw above, in the sixth stanza, how in the *Absence of the Good* these fields of inquiry, in practice and application within the Pharmaceutical Industry, led to evil (the unwarranted chemical restraint of human inner freedom).

I am not here going to digress into an elaboration of the problems with these views of natural science regarding consciousness except to point out the following. Natural science has only been investigating consciousness (in the sense of brain physiology) seriously for the last three or four decades, and it (natural science) really only fully stood on its own feet, as a method of acquiring knowledge, during the 19th Century. Thus, it is clear that the considerations of natural science concerning consciousness are quite young in the history of humanity, and perhaps can be forgiven for being quite naive.

The fact is that human beings have been interested in consciousness for all of our existence. In the process of unfolding this interest, over many millennia, consciousness has been explored over and over again, with

pretty much always the same result. Human consciousness is spiritual in origin, not material. It makes no difference whether one studies the teachings of Tibetan or Zen Buddhism, or Indian Yoga (Hindu Mysticism), or Sufism (Islamic Mysticism), or the Cabala (Hebrew Mysticism), or Anthroposophy, Alchemy, Rosicrucianism, and Christian Hermeticism (all variants of Christian Mysticism). These traditions, some quite new, but most very old, mature and wise, have known from their beginnings that consciousness is not based in matter.

We are then, as the future unfolds, beginning that journey by which our understanding of the sense world, and its relationship with the world of spirit, is to be re-founded. Moreover, we are in that particular Age (the 2100 year - 1400 to 3500 - Consciousness Soul Age) where it is through human freedom that each individual *i-AM* is going to have the opportunity to decide these issues for themselves. No priests, whether of a religious, or a scientific conviction, are any more to be allowed to tell us what to think.

And, it is with this symbolic diagram [*sense world* < *soul (d)* < *i-AM* > (*d*) *soul* > *spiritual world*] that I want to show the reader where we all stand - in between the two worlds, and free to decide all meaning on the basis of our own investigations.

Several years ago, after experiencing a kind of spontaneous awakening, I faced a very deep riddle. What was the relationship between my sense experiences (of the outer world) and my thinking (the nearest aspect of the inner world)? And, in the solving of this riddle, as a second and equally important question: what was the relationship of my conscience (my moral sensibilities) to the process by which I answered these questions?

It is my hope with this book to encourage everyone to seek the answers to these very fundamental questions for themselves. In the aid of this then, what is written here has been carefully from the beginning cast before the reader in the form of *stories* and *tales*, trying as best as I am able to leave the reader free to find out for themselves (which of course is why I placed the first part of *the Fool's Tale* in the section on Freedom).

Nothing is as important as our own thinking. In this regard then, let us look again at a little Emerson, from his lecture at Harvard in 1837: ***The American Scholar***:

Books are the best of things, well used; abused, among the worst. What is the right use? What is the one end which all means go to effect? They are for nothing but to inspire. I had better never see a book than to be warped by its attraction clean out of my own orbit, and made a satellite instead of a system. The one thing in the world, of value, is the active soul. This every man is entitled to; this every man contains within him, although in almost all men obstructed and as yet unborn. The soul active sees absolute truth and utters truth, or creates. In this action it is genius; not the privilege of here and there a favorite, but the sound estate of every man. In its essence it is progressive. The book, the college, the school of art, the institution of any kind, stop with some past utterance of genius. This is good, say they - let us hold by this. They pin me down. They look backward and not forward. But genius looks forward: the eyes of man are set in his forehead, not in his hindhead: man hopes: genius creates. Whatever talents may be, if the man create not, the pure efflux of the Deity is not his; cinders and smoke there may be, but not yet flame. There are creative manners, there are creative actions, and creative words; manners, actions, words, that is, indicative of no custom or authority, but springing spontaneous from the mind's own sense of good and fair.

It now remains to add some deeper considerations of the double or shadow, and in this way to come closer to the problem of the *Mystery of Evil*.

Without doubt modern humanity sees evil everywhere. Recent Presidents of the United States have spoken of the evil empire, or the axis of evil. War is evil (except, hypocritically, for that war we author), A serial killer is evil. Hitler was evil. The Holocaust was evil. Islamic terrorists are evil. America is the great Satan. The anti-Christ is soon to take over the world.

Not everyone agrees as to whether a particular person, thing, event or whatever is evil. Like beauty, evil seems highly subjective. *One man's meat is another man's poison* is the folk wisdom. Referring to our symbolism, we might say that our *perception* of evil arises in the soul itself, and is not a function of that which we see through the senses. or through the eye of the spirit (true thinking). We most frequently project the judgment of evil onto something from out of our own inwardness

(soul), but the thing, in itself, is different in essence from how we see it (via our projection).

In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ gives us a very important teaching about this process of projection: Matthew 7: 3-5: *Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. {Don't judge, so that you won't be judged; you will be sentenced to the same sentence that you sentence others, and by whatever standard you measure you will be measured. Why do you look at the splinter in your brother's eye but don't notice the log in your own eye? And how can you say to your brother, 'Let me get that splinter out of your eye,' with that log there in your own eye? You fake, first get the log out of your own eye, and then you can see about getting the splinter out of your brother's eye!}*

I am again going to tell something from my biography, so that it can be seen how what is being said next is rooted in experience.

In the 1970's, after being out of work for some time, an opportunity came to me to find work running a pornographic movie theater in the Tenderloin area of downtown San Francisco. The wages were small, about \$5 an hour, but as the saying goes, beggars can't be choosers, and I needed work.

For those who don't know, the Tenderloin is one of San Francisco's darkest areas in terms of sleaze, low level crime and general poverty. There are sex shops, greasy spoons, pawn shops, homeless people, street whores, addicts, alcoholics, and other places and folk that most people from the suburbs would avoid at any cost. The movie theater was owned by the notorious Mitchell brothers, and was on that edge of the Tenderloin that touched Market Street, between about 6th and 8th Street.

For \$1.99 one got three movies, which changed to three different movies every Friday. I worked the tickets and tiny candy counter, while the only other hired person in the place was the union projectionist. My shift was

three Twelve hour days, from opening to closing (10 a.m. to 10 p.m.), except half a fourth day when the other manager and I only worked a half shift each. This was a regular money maker for the Mitchell brothers. I never took in less than \$800 on a weekday, or \$1200 on a Friday or Saturday.

You can guess who most of our customers were, except during the noon hour on weekdays, when dozens of gay men in suits would come to have mid-day liaisons in the back row seats. Most people would have a hard time in such an environment, for many of us are taught when young that such folk are immoral and degenerate, to say the least.

For me the matter was a bit more complicated.

At that time in my life, I was very active in an introspective way, and very much struggling quite consciously with the problem of the log and the splinter. I could see arise in my soul all manner of judgments of others and it was a constant battle inwardly to tame this tendency to judge, sentence and measure, on the basis of my assumptions of the moral nature of those coming into the theater. Yet, as an aspect of the miracle of our biographies, I couldn't have asked for a better social environment in order to be forced to face this shadow in my own soul - that part of us that judges, sentences and measures and sees not the human being before us, but only the log, the judgment we have projected onto the other, *the Thou*.

It was a wise Providence then that graced me with this opportunity to see myself with clarity, to see the log, to struggle with it, to tame it, and then to discover that once set aside, a small, but wonderful, miracle happened. With the log gone I began to see the true (and yes, imperfect) human beings as they came past my ticket counter, and over time the regulars and I would converse, as people do who have ongoing casual contacts. I learned things, and began to understand that these folks came to their lives, not because they were less than human in any way, but rather because that was where they had to struggle, just as I had to struggle in my own biography.

I also learned a deeper meaning of Matthew 25:40: "*...as long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me*". ***{Let me assure you, however much you did it for any of the least important of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it for me.}*** Once I saw past the

judgments, sentences and measures, I began to treat my customers with greater respect, recognizing what trials and errors had lead them to this place and time, and also recognizing that much that they had struggled with in their own souls and biographies, I could never have met and mastered had it been my karma to face. These folks were not less than me, but braver and frequently more self honest and human. It was I, with my log, who was the hypocrite and the fake.

Later, as my biography unfolded further chapters (as noted in the previous stanza), I ended up spending about 18 years in the trenches of the mental health system, 10 of those working the graveyard shift in a for-profit mental hospital. Here too I learned about the shadow in the human being, both my own and that of others, and how many people, whose lives seem so abnormal, are nonetheless strong of spirit for having faced trials and tests I know I would have failed.

Of course, we should not overlook my addiction to marijuana and related stronger hallucinogens, and the later struggles in that aspect of my biography to enter the disciplines of recovery.

Being the philosopher that I am by nature, I have taken then time to think a great deal over the years about the *Mystery of Evil*, the nature of the human biography, and the darker aspects of the human being. I have learned not only from observation of others, but also observation of myself. From these experiences comes what I write next in this ***Fool's Tale*** (part I).

Let's once again look at the symbolism: [*sense world* < *soul* (*d*) < *i-AM* > (*d*) *soul* > *spiritual world*]. We are now going to consider the role of that aspect of our inner world I have designated with the term "(*d*)", meaning the double, or shadow.

As the symbolism suggests, the double is intimately related to the *i-AM*. As far as I can tell, there is no part of the soul life more close to our essence than this aspect (except for that aspect of the *i-AM* which we don't yet ourselves even know, but will learn about as our future unfolds, and which some try to refer to in making a distinction between the so-called lower and higher ego). Knowledge of the double has been around for a long while, but was lost for a time in Western culture during the middle-ages. It is discussed in many ways in Native American teachings, and

Carl Jung's psychology of Archetypes tried valiantly to take hold of this reality. Rudolf Steiner writes of it in great detail, relating the double to two major figures in his pantheon of Evil, namely Lucifer and Ahriman. Valentin Tomberg, another anthroposophist (at one time), discusses the double in his work on *Inner Development*, describing three forms of the double: a luciferic form, an ahrimanic form and a human form. The anonymous author of *Meditations on the Tarot: a journey into Christian Hermeticism* considers these problems, identifying inner temptation (the luciferic double) and inner prosecution (the ahrimanic double) to which he adds a long discussion of what he calls human created demons, or *egregores* in Arcanum XV (the meditation on) The Devil. In this same Arcanum one can also find quoted extensively, a great deal of Christian teachings concerning this, derived from the work of such explorers of the authentic spiritual life as St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, Origen, St. Anthony the Great and so forth.

Catherine MacCoun in her wonderful book: *On Becoming an Alchemist*, which is an effort to find a unity between what she understands as Christian Alchemy and Tibetan Alchemy, rather than use the terms Lucifer and Ahriman or refer to the tempter and the prosecutor, speaks as follows: We have within us a tendency to make things absolute, such that we can be affected inwardly by spiritual beings of a like nature. There are two extremes to this situation: Absolute Truth and Absolute Fact. Understanding this can help us observe our own mind's tendencies to hold things in this rigid and absolute fashion, and to recognize how giving in to either view will lead to error.

Here is how the shadow is described in a Native American work: "*Waynaboozoo's Spirit Father advised him: 'You have a twin brother whom you have wondered about and whom you would seek. This I tell you: he is your other side in all things and in all ways. He is with you...do not seek him. Do not wish to know him, but understand him. You will walk in the path of peace...he would not. You are kind...he is not. You are humble...he is not. You are generous...he is not. You seek the good in things...he does not. You shall respect others...he will not. You will seek the goodness in others...he will not. You are the light...he is the darkness. Know that he is with you, understand him.'*" From the Mishomis Book *The voice of the Ojibway* by Edw. BentonBanai, 1979.]

Another Native American approach is found in the story of the Two Wolves: A young man is asking his grandfather about his own nature, and the grandfather says you have two wolves inside you. One wolf wants to do good things, to be kind and loving and helpful, and the other wolf wants to do bad things, to be selfish and insensitive and perhaps unnecessarily violent. So the young man asks his grandfather what to do - how to be more the good wolf, and the grandfather tells him that it all depends on which wolf he feeds. The more he feeds one, the more like that wolf he will become.

What does it mean that the essence of who we are as individual *i-AMs* is coupled so intimately within the soul with something so apparently dark and evil? And, how much do we ordinary folk, who aspire to walk *In His Steps*, and for whom this book is mostly written, need to know?

If we take up self-development in any conscious way, we will have to face our own inner darkness; and, much that Christ taught centers quite clearly on these problems. If we are to be practicing, in the sense of *In His Steps*, we have to relate to these problems, remembering that Christ Himself was tempted, following the Baptism at the Jordan, during the 40 days in the Desert.

But more crucially than this, if we wish to understand human life, our own and that of others, as expressed in the biography, we must take account of the double. It is said in many places in fact, that if we are to believe in God, we shall also have to believe in Satan, for quite clearly Satan has been most successful to the extent that we forget his existence, and fail to come to terms with the Fallen hierarchies and their role in the Creation.

Yet, there is a temptation right here in considering the problem of the Pantheon of Evil (Satan, the Devil, Lucifer, Ahriman etc.). Such a mental playing with concepts of Evil can be distracting from the real work, which is facing evil within our own lives and biographies, our own inwardness. Contemplating the pantheon of Evil is the problem of the log and the splinter on a larger scale. What we need to do instead is look at what is right in front of us, and which we can deal with, leaving aside too much of a focus on grand cosmological questions that attribute modern social problems to such as the Anti-Christ. We can have far too much theory, and not enough practice. If you really want to understand the *Mystery of Evil*, study what you can know about yourself before anything else.

Otherwise, you will be nothing but a hypocrite and a fake. Take it from one who knows.

St. Paul has given us a great hint, in his remarks about how we will what we do not wish to do, and how we wish to do what we cannot will. There can be observed in all our lives the clear fact that our intentions and desires to do good are frequently frustrated by something in us that we cannot tame, yet leads us in directions that bring pain, trials and troubles by the score. As *the Unvarnished Gospels* point out: we frequently miss the mark. Our intentions (our wishes) get subverted on their way to being willed.

Here then we encounter one of the functions of the shadow or double. In order to meet in our biography that which is karma and fate, that which we need to meet in order to learn what this life is meant to teach us, we have to come to certain experiences from which we might otherwise shy away. It is one function of the double to make sure we face our trials, and so we have weaknesses and flaws, in spite of the best intentions of our eternal spirit, or *i-AM*. The aim (wish) of the will of our *i-AM* is true, but we are guided into error in order to experience. In this sense then the double is our friend, or at the very least a divinely authored necessity.

The double or shadow is a gift from the Divine Mystery, that enables the Art of the order and shape of the individual human biography, such that our biography's context and texture contains the teachings we individually need to receive. For this reason are we tempted inwardly - wouldn't this be fun (the luciferic double) and prosecuted inwardly - that nasty voice that tells us what jerks we are (the ahimanic double) and flawed, and as well we have those character defects we need to overcome (the human double, or *egregores*). These indications, just given about the double by the way, are not meant to be complete, but only to hint or point in a certain direction, so that the reader may over time begin to distinguish between that which appears within as acts of their true *i-AM*, and what appears there that is brought by the double and meant to challenge us.

[From this point onward I am no longer going to use the term *egregores* as the equivalent of the human double. While it may be technically accurate (an *egregore* is a self-created psychic parasite - what the heroin addict called: *the monkey on my back*), as a form of expression the term *egregore* is lacking in beauty. I have found over the years that the truth is not only

also good, it is also beautiful. So from this stage forward I will be using the terms *wounds* or *karma of wounds* or *self-generated wound* in order to refer to the human created double.]

What we need to remember, always, is that what we are confronted with by this inner dynamic is choice. We are not compelled by the doubles, but encouraged. We, as *i-AMs*, still choose. Sure, many will deny this. We like to be able to say: it was an irresistible impulse, or I couldn't help myself. But, when we learn to be properly, and brutally, self honest, our inner moment of choice is and was always there.

We also need to recognize that the double is a kind of intelligence, and often, because we are still spiritual children, this intelligence can be helpful.

The pedophile likes that dark pleasure. The drunk likes that first drink of the day. Those with a bad temper like the feeling of power and the rush that accompanies the release of their passions into violence. We have the capacity to lie to ourselves above all other lies we tell in life, and certainly we like to lie to ourselves about these choices and about our true responsibility.

Let me here make a small aside about another aspect of mental illness, for many might become confused, particularly given Christ's method in the case of several healings wherein *demons* were cast out. The natural science practices of medicine are not in error in many cases to find material problems in the brain as a cause of much that we call mental illness. Rudolf Steiner remarked that physical symptoms frequently have their true cause in the soul, while soul problems (dysfunctions of the inner or mental life) frequently have their true cause in the physical-material. Let us take schizophrenia as an example.

Modern psychiatry is quite correct to find material dysfunctions in the brain as a major causal element of this mental disease. But psychiatry is flawed in thinking that the voices heard are, however, in all cases hallucinations. The brain is an organ by which the spiritual takes hold of the material in a certain way, and when the brain is not healthy, the spiritual cannot seat itself properly in the physical. Not properly seated in the physical then, the spirit or *i-AM* is partially and improperly across the threshold into the spiritual world, such that abnormal psychic experiences

are the result. What in a healthy individual would be a balanced relationship, with the doubles and self-generated wounds in the soul, is now imbalanced, and the voices heard that can't be controlled are symptomatic of the fact that these aberrant psychic powers have an untamed access to the *i-AM*. Such individuals then, bear in their biography, the difficult and courageous task of meeting inner experiences without a sound understanding of their nature (which then explains the descriptions in the Gospels of certain of Christ's healings).

In the film *A Beautiful Mind*, we can find a wonderful depiction of these realities, provided for us by the apparently honest and careful observations of the main character, John Nash, a real schizophrenic, who is also a brilliant mathematician. I say *apparently*, because the book and the film are not always exactly congruent. That issue aside, the film depicts his visual hallucinations as being of three main kinds:

First, there was the college roommate, whose playfulness and rowdiness gives us a profound picture of the luciferic double - the tempter;

Second, there is the dark spy figure, whose paranoia and domination of Nash shows us the nature of the ahrimanic double - the prosecutor; and

Third, there is the little girl, who is the human double - the self created wounds connected to Nash's frequent indulgences in infantile behavior in his social relationships (his lack of humility early in life with reference to his genius).

This film also suggests that were we to better understand the nature of these inner torments, we might help the individual find the inner strength and mastery, which led Nash in the maturity of his life to find a place of balance between his own *i-AM* and the double-complex as that lived in his soul. Which balance, by the way, led him eventually to speak, in his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize, so authentically of the importance of love in his own healing and understanding of life.

I can do no more than hint here, but I did want to point in this additional direction so that people will be careful in their judgments regarding the details of much that we have called: mental illness.

Yet, what do we do when the temptation is so deep, so ongoing, so dark and nasty and consuming of our being and brings such horrible consequences with it to our families and loved ones?

Here we come to the created inner demon or *egregore*, which I am now calling a self-generated wound. As suggested above, in an earlier version of this book I used the term *egregore* more or less continuously, and having now decided (getting this ready to be published in a new edition) that I no longer want to express this situation this way.

On the road to being an alcoholic, for example, if that is our karma and fate - or choice, we are tempted by the double. But over time, within us there comes to be, by our repeated (almost like a religious Rite) activity, *the self-created wound* that is evoked by turning again and again to the dangerous pleasure. It is by repetition that something unwanted (the monkey on my back, my disease - the *wound*, a self-created dark entity) grows in the soul. I grow it by indulging my unrestrained passion. The double may tempt me, but the *wound* comes into being through my repeatedly choosing to consent to the temptation. Yet, as we all know, many find the strength to overcome the effects of this self-generated wound in the soul.

It was for healing this that the same Grace that led Sheldon to write *In His Steps*, and Steiner to write *The Philosophy of Freedom*, also led two alcoholics to discover *the Twelve Steps*. *The Twelve Steps* are a Grace given means by which human beings, in the company of others with like trials, can learn to face the weakness of the *i-AM* in the face of the temptations, prosecutions, and defects fostered by the doubles, as well as the self-generated *wounds* created by our repeated giving into the these same temptations, prosecutions and defects.

Please remember that *consciousness* is evolving over eons of time, and that only now is humanity stepping out of its spiritual childhood, such that finally we are becoming ready to confront the inner trials and tasks of facing the shadow, which itself has been placed there by the Divine Mystery in order to bring us to those experiences demanded by the law of recompense, or karma. We have chosen badly in the past, and will chose badly in the future, yet the Divine Mystery, in a most Loving Way, has taken account of this.

Obviously more needs to be said, because some actions are so horrible as to be incomprehensible to most of us. Ethnic cleansing, for example, an unjustifiable euphemism for the murder and rape of innocents of another

race or culture, seems far outside anything we can call human at all. Like the Holocaust, we suspect that there lurks somewhere such darkness of soul and spirit as to be unnatural in the extreme. We are right to ask: Is it possible for an apparently human being to sacrifice so completely that humanness and descend into depths unconscionable? Here we come to a boundary condition in the *Mystery of Evil*, wherein the potential within the *i-AM* for highest good is confronted by its same potential for gravest evil. *Just how free has the Divine Mystery created us?*

It would seem there are no depths we cannot plumb, for the very reason that there are also no heights we cannot achieve. The one cannot exist without the other. Human evil can go beyond even what the Gods ordain, precisely because human good can also go beyond what in that realm has yet been imagined. **Freedom** is that deep and that terrible in all its potentials, and this is one of the lessons of WWII - the one we most wish not to face (there was not only the Holocaust, there was also the Atomic Bomb). Global warming today, along with environmental and financial disasters, suggests we keep inventing new ways to destroy everything.

I can here, as a kind of help in understanding this, only share a very intimate conversation with the Divine Mother that occurred during prayer and meditation one day (see appendix for a discussion of how to combine prayer and meditation in a practical and pragmatic way). I was in a moment of deep personal anguish, aware of my own failings, and aware of how much suffering we humans cause each other. I could not but cry out to the Mother and the Son, how did *They* handle it, for surely *They* experienced everything we did, not only from our side as evil doers, but also from the side of our victims. How did *They* deal with such horror? Horror that had to come to *Them* every day, and had come and would come to *Them* for eons both past and future. My little trials could be nothing compared to what *They* must feel. So, filled with this little pain, which arises just in recognizing the incomprehensible weight and pain *They* must feel, so much greater than ever I would experience, I asked: *What do You do with this intolerable pain?*

Then, from the very deepest realms Her voice came, gentle, soothing, almost caressing in its kindness: *We turn it into Love.*

This then we can understand - that within the Roots of the World, the Divine Mother, and within the Heart of the World, the Son - *They* first

receive into themselves (and take upon Themselves) the sins - the errors - of the world, in the past, in the present and in the future) and then transform even the worst of human evil into Love.

There is more that needs to be said on this theme, but before we can go deeper into this, we need to take up, in the same way we first met with *Moral Grace* and then *Freedom*, a deeper discussion of the nature of *Love*. Once we have some working knowledge of love, we can then make a whole of what has necessarily, up to this point, had to be presented in bits and pieces. At the same time, we need to make one last look at the problem of *Freedom*, so as to enrich our understanding of human history, on our way to beginning our considerations of Love.

eighth stanza
the Gesture of the History of Civilizations
as expressed in both Matter and Spirit
from whence comes technology and where is it going,
or, the entanglement of the i-AM in matter,
its consequences and its meaning

*"It matters to me
for matter to be
and that I to matter
do matter"*

In our previous discussions of the Evolution of Consciousness, we have mostly been looking at the insides of human civilization - at the life of soul and spirit. We need as well to take account of the outsides - that is how the spirit has taken hold of matter and molded it for our needs and purposes. These two streams, one inner and one outer, interact with each other, and how this interaction is to play out in the future is a very important consequence of our Freedom. We are now more and more in charge, as we enter into our spiritual adulthood. Our choices are to be determinative. Do we bring forward Moral Grace, or do we found a new civilization (out of the contemporary conditions of social chaos) that more and more is based upon the Absence of the Good?

We are all aware of the pictures that natural science has given us. First there is the big bang, some mysterious event out of which matter and

energy appear from nowhere in the smallest instance of time. First nothing, then everything. The causal problem is shoved to the other side of this Event. Why nothing, and then everything, is not known; but it seems that somehow this is supposed to have happened all by itself.

There is assumed then, in this Event, to be no consciousness, no being, no meaning. Only matter and energy with the two seemingly interchangeable. The question of whether there is space there before the big bang is also not known. Is there already an infinite emptiness into which the big bang appears as if by magic? Or is space itself created in this moment of mystery? Also, what about time? Where does time come from?

Following on this inexplicable event (inexplicable in the sense of conventional theoretical physics), everything else that happens in time and space is supposed to flow. Matter and energy interact and various kinds of substances form. Over vast amounts of time these dead and empty of consciousness substances interact and coalesce, until we have stars and planets. The great heat of this imagined (theoretical) initial event recedes and all begins to cool (remember, it is not empirically observed, but imagined). At some point water appears on at least the Earth, and then by accident the first stirrings of life - some kind of quasi-organic soup.

Again great time passes. The soup differentiates into a variety of forms until micro-organisms appear. Now the mysterious *hand* of natural selection begins to work its will. Accidental variations arise, and these compete, with that which has the best chance of adapting and surviving passing through this rite of accident and competition. More and more complexity arises as the eons of evolution run their course.

Then again a great mystery - *consciousness* appears! The accidental development of the nervous system and its chemical analogs in the metabolism somehow combine to produce not only a self-reflective consciousness, but one that eventually comes to develop languages, tools, cultures and myths.

The accidental substance wakes up, looks around and thinks! *Thought* comes into being from out of nowhere (or so it seems to many). [Recall again Emerson, from the essay *Nature*: *Nature is a thought incarnate and turns to thought again as ice becomes water and then gas. The world is*

mind precipitated and the volatile essence is forever escaping in the form of free thought.]

Of course, the views of modern science are not how human beings always thought about their existence. Prior to the arrival of materialistic science (as a consequence of the *on-looker separation* stage of the Evolution of Consciousness - more later...), ancient and wise peoples spoke of Gods and other Invisible Beings. Where modern physics speaks of *the big bang*, Genesis says: *Let there be Light!*

The belief of the modern secular humanist, for whom religion has no meaning, is that the ancients were ignorant, and made God in their own image, exporting from their own experience the myths that have come down to us through the Ages. God is an invention for many, and a poorly made one at that.

Of course, it hardly is noticed just how much of the *theories* of moderns are themselves myth. The mud woke up and thought, and after thinking of the Gods, decided after a while to think of a universe without the Gods, perhaps just to have a little variety?

What have the returned meaning-essence of the Kings had to say about this problem?

In the tenth stanza in the section on Love below - *the Seventh Day of Creation as an Expression of Love* - we will investigate in more detail the enchantment of humanity that took place in the years during which science emerged from what some call *onlooker-consciousness* (a very specific stage in the Evolution of Consciousness). For now, let us just consider the wider context of the differences between ancient and modern myths concerning the origin of the universe and the appearance of human beings in that universe.

Owen Barfield, mention above in reference to Steiner's work on the Evolution of Consciousness, has himself studied and reflected with great discipline upon the nature of language, and what the study of language might reveal. Barfield has written a small book, which is nonetheless very important: *Speaker's Meaning*, in which he examines the history of meaning and the meaning of history. I will next summarize one element of his arguments in this book, which is subtly and carefully wrought.

Please take this summary with a grain of salt, for almost certainly I will do it poorly, and one should read this book in any event.

The study of language reveals that languages have common ways in which they arise and evolve. In their beginning, the words always refer directly to what lies in the experience of the culture that is creating the language. Objects of experience are simply named. This is a fox, that is a tree. Here we run, now we eat. As languages evolve and grow, the meanings of words begin to change - these words take on changes in their meanings as the culture's life and growth itself changes. For example in English, over a recent period of two hundred years, the words subject and object exchanged meanings with each other. Eventually in maturity language becomes *metaphorical*, so that, for example, where once one might have used the word *sunset* to refer only to that event which we experience while watching the sun set, now this term can be applied *metaphorically*, such as to speak of the *sunset* of someones life.

Modern thinkers, under the influence and the assumptions of natural materialistic science (Barfield calls this influence in this book: *modern taboos*), look at history in the following way. Closest to us in time is recorded history, history written down as it happened. Then as we go back we have prehistory, where the memory of events was oral only, which oral history was itself to some degree remembered and written down in recorded history. And, before even recorded history, and prehistory, we have the age of myth. In the time of myth the various cultures invented the Gods (so it is thought today), and these myths then become first part of oral history, or prehistory, and then later are also remembered during the period of recorded history.

According to these same modern thinkers, these myths were a *metaphorical* use of language, done in an effort to explain the inexplicable aspects of human existence - those nasty questions about the origin of the universe and the meaning and existence of humanity.

Oops!, says Barfield. The problem with this view, while convenient and consistent with the theories of materialistic science, is that it assumes that language can do something it cannot. Namely, it cannot be *metaphorical* during its youth, which youth clearly occurs during the language's, and its culture's, Age of Myth. Let us go over this again, so as to make it as plain as possible.

Languages and meaning evolve as follows: plain meaning (words refer only to experiences), developing meaning (words changing as to what they refer), and then metaphorical meaning (words given new, even higher meanings). History, according to moderns, goes: myth, prehistory, and then recorded history. The problem, suggests Barfield, is that if myth and plain meaning are linked up, then what is remembered in myths can only have referred to something that was in fact experienced!

This view of the history of ancient cultures seems clearly correct: myth, prehistory and then recorded history. At the same time, the language which is born in this same culture will have its youth in the period of myth, at which time it always and only makes words that refer to experience. This being the case, this means that the myths of humanity always refer to real experiences. These languages developed a name for Gods and other Invisibles precisely because these were part of their experience.

What Steiner as a modern King helps us to see is that the error in thought that is made by moderns is to *assume* that the nature of our form of consciousness is the same as the consciousness of the ancients (we looked at this previously in stanza two in the part on Moral Grace, when first we took up the subject of the Evolution of Consciousness). From the experience of modern Kings we can come to understand that in the time of myth, consciousness was different. Human beings did not live, as we do today, in a state of inner darkness. Rather they lived in a state of dream-like integration - their consciousness united with the invisible realms. For example, think about the aboriginal peoples of Australia and their idea of the *Dreamtime*.

Myths arose because human experience, in this dreamlike state of integration, *named* what was known directly to the type of human consciousness typical of the time of the creation of that myth.

Now we can begin to find the counter-picture to the one of materialistic science, with its modern myth (fanciful imagination known as the big bang) of matters they have not seen or experienced directly, but only *assume* based upon that hypothesis (cold hypothetical and theoretical - fanciful - picture) which only sees matter and never spirit.

If we are to truly appreciate history, without falsifying the age of myth, we can see that more and more humanity became entangled in matter. And that in fact, consciousness was there in the beginning (this is what myth teaches), integrated with the *being* and activity of the Gods. So that as matter comes to be, it is accompanied by consciousness - the two interweaving over the long eons of evolution.

There was no big bang, but there was the Creation: *Let there be light!*

Thus, along with the birth of matter is the simultaneous birth of the *i-AM*. Matter is itself *enchanted being*, a created womb for the unfolding and development of the *i-AM* over the ages, for consciousness and will accompany matter from the beginning. Moreover, what emerges finally in our time as thought, is the slow condensation and contraction of this spirit (the *i-AM*) from its origin in the cosmic periphery into a center - the individual human being.

That which the natural scientist thinks today, could only *be thought* today, because before today it was outside us, surrounding us, carrying us forward in the Evolution of our Consciousness. (See Barfield's *Saving the Appearances: a Study in Idolatry*).

Consider for a moment the question of what is thought? We are being taught, under the assumptions of modern biology, that the brain produces thought. But this is not observed. What is observed (known empirically) is that areas of the brain show increased activity in accord with certain invisible things that human beings do, such as feeling and thinking. Further, that in damaged brains, some activity becomes impossible. Mental processes usual in normal consciousness are disturbed. The conclusion is then drawn that the human activity that exists invisibly (we know it in our self-reflective consciousness) has its only origin in the brain or some other biological (matter based) cause.

These *conclusions*, however, are not observed, but are rather themselves merely *thought*. A great deal of the content of modern natural science consists of thoughts about what was not and/or cannot be observed. When these thoughts become disconnected from observation, the empirical basis of science is lost, and the temptation to myth making arises.

In a fundamental sense, these thoughts are the names of matters not seen, and because this is the case, these thoughts become a modern myth in the sense that we use this term today - meaning something imaged in a fanciful way to be true, but which was not empirically observed.

The general justification for the creation of these neo-myths is that their existence is a reasonable extension of what has already been empirically observed. So these neo-myths then arise on a claimed scaffold of logical thought, out of certain limited acts of empiricism.

To get a sense of this, we have to notice a phrase frequently found when science is described in media: "*leading scientists believe that...*". When modern natural science moves beyond its true empirical limits it becomes more like what some call *religion*. Observers of modern culture have even given a name to this trend: *scientism*; which would be the shared beliefs of scientists and the general public that can't be empirically supported.

Let us come at this from another direction.

In the remarkable film, *Mind Walk*, we have a dramatic dialog between a poet, a politician, and a theoretical physicist. At one point the physicist describes matter as follows (more or less, again one should see the original): Mostly matter is empty space, that is: nothing. An atom is mostly empty space, and the huge empty space between atoms is far larger than the space between the parts of atoms. The parts of atoms are themselves *not there* in the conventional sense that people believe. These parts are more like the geometric intersection of forces. The forces intersect, and a geometric point of intersecting force arises, having a kind of stability or pattern and form according to the laws regarding these various forces. [In quantum theory this stability or pattern is thought not to be fixed until a particular moment in time, c.f. the fanciful imagination of Shrodinger's Cat.]

The concept is that there is really no substance at all in the way we think of substance due to our *sensual* experience of matter. The solidity we experience is empty space punctuated with geometric points of the intersection of forces, which again behave according to laws (not all of which are understood by any means).

What are we to make of such a set of thoughts (concepts)?

One of the problems this points toward, which is not as well understood as it should be, is that this understanding of the nature of matter that can be found living in modern physics is not the idea of matter that is used in modern biology. The concept of matter in evolutionary biology is about forty years behind the concept of matter in physics.

If we turn to the brain, and we realize that the substance being described by the neurophysiologist is really not there at all, but rather only exists as an extremely complex field of intersecting forces that only coalesces into a fixed state at a particular moment (Shrodinger's Cat, again), such that then we have to ask a whole other set of questions, such as: *How does a complex field of intersection forces produce thought?* Or, to look at the question from a very interesting direction: *Is perhaps this complex field of intersecting forces itself the result of Thought?*

These are serious problems, in that science is far more ignorant than its practitioners often admit. Before I offer more of the counter-myth to that of the big bang and Darwinian evolution, let me speak for a moment about what is called the geological record. This record provides natural science with a lot of justifiable evidence for certain of its conclusions.

Let me summarize the record. Layers of rock cover the earth. These layers have a kind of order, which is seen correctly as telling us something of the past. As earth evolution proceeded, these layers built up, and by examining them in reverse order we know something of the geological and biological history of the planet. These layers are not continuous, however, but are broken up by periods in which there is so much chaos - so much lack of organized forms, that we have no reliable concept of what happened during that period of time represented by that chaotic layer.

This means that the geological record is discontinuous - broken up by periods in which what happened left little or no evidence in the sense of organized form, except and unless we read the chaos as evidence itself. The ordered layers themselves also have certain general characteristics, of which the main one is that the biological forms that begin that organized layer are also the biological forms that end that layer (this is called in paleontology: *stasis*). This means that each layer (or period) has the same basic organisms in the end that it had in the beginning.

The massive changes that can be seen in biological forms between one organized layer and the next organized layer are separated by an intervening layer of chaos (mystery).

Lets make a picture of these processes of change. We have a layer that has biological forms in it, which forms it begins and ends with, and then a layer of chaos, and following that another layer of forms which don't change from the beginning of the layer to its end, but which are often radically different from that layer prior to the chaotic layer. If we step outside the geological record, does anything in modern life follow a similar pattern? Yes!

In the change from caterpillar to butterfly we have first a well formed structure (the caterpillar), then a period of chaos (the formless mass in the chrysalis), and then another well formed new structure (the butterfly).

So we could look at the geological record as showing us periods of form, followed by periods of formlessness, followed again by periods of new form - namely a well known biological process we know as *metamorphosis*. What this suggests is that the whole record is itself a sequence of ordered organic changes - one metamorphosis followed by another. [One of the implications of this is that what we call *rock* (look at those kinds of rocks called colloidal) was itself first biological - first organic. This means that the organic is not built up out of dead matter, but the dead matter was produced by the living processes of the Earth. We already see such a process in the embryo, where the skeleton only comes into existence from the living - the hardest parts of the human being are the *result* of a process in the living, rather than their causal precedent. Could this same not be true of the Earth, namely that: *The solid, bone-like Earth is a consequence of something that was previously alive?*]

Now metamorphosis is a biological process in which the organism moves from one form, through chaos, to another form as part of its own natural order. If the geological record is a ordered sequence of metamorphosis, then it is continuous from the beginning to the present - that is: the totality of the geological record is itself one single organism (existing on a planetary scale) undergoing one metamorphosis following on another, which as it progresses extrudes from its living nature some bone-like material which it leaves behind. The Earth is living, and as it has grown

and developed it has created its own skeleton. The lifeless does not produce the living, the living leaves behind the lifeless.

Next we have had an assumption (no evidence) that consciousness doesn't arise until the biological forms achieve a certain complexity. This is not an observed phenomena by the way, but rather an concept imposed upon the phenomena. Part of the justification for this is another assumption, which believes that all biological form has left a record of itself. These assumptions twist the meaning that can be derived from the geological record in a certain preconceived direction.

In point of fact, consciousness by its very nature would never leave a record, since it is not material. The reality is that we have no idea, from the geological record, of in what way (or not) that consciousness participated. We have only assumed it away.

I have not tried above to completely argue away certain ideas. Rather I only wanted to break open our *assumptions*, so that we can see that maybe, just maybe, materialistic science doesn't really know what it thinks it knows, but rather only believes what it thinks it believes (which are two entirely different states of mind).

Let us now return to what the history of language teaches us.

If we admit to the wisdom of the age of myth, we can see that this arrangement we call substance was itself created out of the consciousness and being of what had to preexist any creation. Just as the *i-AM* was created, so was matter created, each to serve a purpose in the whole of the Creation. The forces the physicist has discovered are nothing but *the will of beings*. And the laws the physicist observes are nothing but the higher rules by which those beings (whose nature is found in matter) have been organized according to the Divine Mystery.

We have seen, in the Evolution of Consciousness, that the *i-AM* is being schooled. We can now look at outer history, at the History of Civilizations - the times of the hunter-gatherer, the times of agriculture, the times of invention and industry - as a gradual emancipation *from*, coupled with an exploration *of* the nature of matter. In the beginning, we simply live off the nature and order of the Creation (the story-memory of the Garden of Eden), until we assert ourselves against the apparent rules,

and begin to take more and more interest in the Created world, first transforming it with agriculture and animal husbandry, and then investigating the nature of substance (matter) itself, and learning to manipulate that world as well.

Here we also see something deeper about *thought* itself. Without all the *thought* that stands behind it, that which follows the pastoral dream - the remembered Garden - does not work. To take hold of nature and transform it, proceeds entirely from *thought*. To analyze nature and seek its rules requires *thought*. Our whole civilization is filled everywhere with the consequences of *thought*. It is, in fact, *thought* which penetrates, overcomes and transforms substance.

And, keep in mind here the concept previously mentioned, that thought (genius of spirit) was outside us in earlier stages of the Evolution of Consciousness, and only now in our time (the fourth and fifth cultural epochs) has thought (genius of spirit) individualized and entered into the single human being.

How could what is seen as a mere product of substance (thought in the way materialistic science conceives it) find its way to understanding and transforming substance? By accident? This is nonsense of the most fundamental order, for there is no logical scaffolding that lets us believe as rational beings that the inferior can give rise to the superior. We have, for hundreds of years now, completely misconceived the true nature of both thought and substance. [into which misconception, as a state of consciousness, we were enchanted in order to become free of the gods - see below, the tenth stanza.]

Our intelligence first lived in the form of a dreaming of the invisibles, walking the earth, picking the available fruits, until we more and more wake up in the sense world, and live less in the dreaming connection to the invisibles. The world of substance serves this awaking from the dreaming. Our intelligence - thought - clarifies, and becomes the possession of the individual. For the ancient Greeks, genius referred to a spirit outside us that taught and inspired us, while for we moderns genius refers now to what we ourselves are.

As we press deeper into matter, we become more individualized. What is at first outside as spiritual inspiration (the Gods), now becomes the natural

capacities of each individual human being. The law and the prophets were once outside, and now, they are becoming us. As the *i-AM* dances with substance (matter), we grow and become - we experience directly and personally the Evolution of Consciousness.

Eventually, we find a way to look objectively (myth free) at matter (*the on-looker separation*). Genius is now inside us, so we begin to take matter apart. Free* anymore any experience of the Gods (no gnosis), we think for ourselves, and invent our own myths (the big bang and Darwinian evolution). The inner world is now dark, while the outer world is full of light (where ages ago the outer world was once in shadow and the inner world filled with light). Faith has arisen, but even that (since the time of Christ) has become more and more arid and rigid, leading to inflexible beliefs and fundamentalist social demands.

*[This Freedom is discussed below in the section on Love with respect to the *reason* for the enchantment into materialism.]

Let us review this last point, with a slightly different emphasis. Our original state of being (and of consciousness) was such that what we think of as the inner world of today was light-filled, and the outer world of the senses more in shadow. We knew the Gods then directly (*the Dreamtime*). But as part of the Fall, we lost this connection, and the inner world became more and more dark, while the outer sense world became more filled with light. This change was important in the Evolution of Consciousness, for it is necessary for the development of *individuality*.

At the time of Christ's Incarnation into the stream of matter, and as a human being, the Son was set on the path that was to lead to death (something no aspect of the Divine Mystery ever before, or ever after, would experience). Also at this time, humanity was still within the Fall. The inner world was dark and getting darker (gnosis was to disappear fully, not even initiation would be possible for a time as the Dark Ages of Western Civilization began), yet Christ reminds us of this loss of our original state of integration and the possibility of return, with: "the kingdom of heaven is within you". Moreover, He full well knows that we are to descend (Fall) further, into the state of *the on-looker separation* ("I have much more to say to you, but you can't bear it yet").

Yet to save us, we are given the gift of Faith. Even in the darkness then, we are taught to hold true, and are given the powers of the soul that not only have the capacity to hold true (during the darkness of the Fall), but to act true (recall St Paul's remarks about Faith, Hope and Charity).

Let us now return to our main theme, the relationship of thought to matter...

At a certain point in time, humanity begins to create, albeit in a very clumsy and childish way. We take substance and change it. First we simply combine it with other substances and reform it. We extract it from its natural places and make it serve our needs. As we do this we begin to find that substance contains hidden forces, such as the will of beings constrained by higher law. Yet, we do not recognize that will, for with the *on-looker separation*, and the darkening of our inwardness, we have lost the Gods. Our lamed thinking has produced a view of the world empty of *being* and *consciousness*. We have a highly technological civilization which does not understand reality at all.

Even our contemporary history understands that chemistry (for example) arose from the activity of the Alchemists, who were (in their essence) the first iteration of the return of initiation (the stream of Kings) after a necessary absence. There is no chemistry without the Alchemists, who are falsely accused of seeking to turn lead into gold, in a material way, when their every effort and meaning was about turning the lead of the soul into gold - to overcome the Fall and seek reintegration. Because such views were heretical (leading to torture and death at the hands of the Church), they were hidden by the true Alchemists in a metaphorical language.

Moreover, the leading scientists, which our edited history of science now pretends was not true, were all students of alchemy and astrology (Newton, Kepler etc. to name but a few).

Eventually we abandon the idea of good and evil (the Absence of the Good), and begin to consume the world. We set free electricity and magnetism, not knowing we play with divine fires, until, we touch the very fundament of substance, bursting its lawful arrangement and making, of the destruction of its divinely authored order, a weapon - an atom bomb. [Recall that in order to make a bomb we first have to concentrate in one place tons of what is otherwise finely distributed throughout the

mineral earth, and then refine that substance in centrifuges more and more intensifying and isolating it from its natural condition. Then this now intensely concentrated uranium must further be imploded (forced together in an even higher density by an explosion), in order to have a bomb.

And, not content with the fires hidden in basic substance, our play now reaches into the mystery of organic life itself. Having stolen the truth from our ideas of life, and made of the Creation a meaningless accident, we now look at the laws and mysteries of organic life, seeking to turn them to our purposes. Just as the fundament of substance was cracked wide open in a childish and impetuous fashion, so now we play with the life order of substance and put again at risk our own earthly existence, for the bodies we inhabit are built entirely out of our experiences of the substances of the Earth, whose nature and order we now denature and destroy in our arrogant ignorance.

Yes, our aim is true. We often seek the Good, in impulses to heal, to feed the multitudes, and solve the dilemmas of existence. However, and we all know this, at the same time we do much for selfish purposes, far too much. In fact, our Civilization - Western Civilization - is in its last days precisely because we have much too much woven it out of moral corruption.

Seeing only matter and never spirit (substance is real, but not thought), in our immature arrogance and ignorance, we violate (rape and plunder) over and over again that true Womb (the Earth) in which we were to be physically born in order to experience the life of the senses as a preparation for the development of our individuality and our birth into spiritual maturity.

How far does this go?

Now we can see the deeper meaning of the Eucharist. *"Take and eat; this is my body...All of you drink of this; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is being shed from many unto the forgiveness of sins."* Matthew 26-28 [***"Take and eat this: this is my body...Drink from this, all of you: this is my blood, the blood of the testament, poured out for many for the forgiveness of wrongs"***]

Substance is an aspect of the Divine Mystery Itself, giving Itself to us the way a Mother and Father sacrifice their own being, out of Love, to their children. When shall we learn to truly honor that gift? Yes, it was freely given by the Divine Mystery for our illumination and edification, but just when will we consciously receive this gift and once again be grateful in the same way it was in the long ago Ages of Myth?

Some Christians have taken up a peculiar relationship to that part of Genesis (1:26) which says: "*God said, 'let us make mankind in our image and likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the cattle, over all the wild animals and every creature that crawls on the earth.'*" This might misdirect us, if we take dominion to mean: do whatever you wish. This is, of course, existentially true - we can do anything (that is our Freedom). But the real issue is not what *can* we do, but what *should* we do, and then by what measure do we determine the nature of that should (free moral grace, or by the rules of unrestrained greed and power?)

The true understanding of dominion has been lost over the years, especially since we have come under the influence of natural science. This patriarchal influence has also cut us off, for a time, from a more direct connection to the Divine Feminine. In the section below on Love, regarding the Divine Feminine, and in the appendix where other considerations of Eros are developed (especially the meaning of dominion and surrender) we will gain additional insights into this confusion, which for some Christians leads them to fail to grasp the significance of the environmental movement, with its instinctive understanding of the Eucharist aspect of our true relationship to Nature.

Further, there is some indirect evidence that dominion may be a mistranslation of the original Hebrew, and that the more correct translation might well be *...and let them have communion with the...*, - or as is said in ancient Taoism - be at one with Nature. These - *dominion over* **or** *communion with* - are, of course, two very different qualities of relationship.

This then is the deep riddle of Freedom - which do we choose: *dominion over* **or** *communion with*; and now we are finally ready to consider the riddle and Mystery of Love.

Love
the theme (song) of the deepest hidden potential of the human being

ninth stanza

the Four Forms of Love:

*selfless love (Agape); nurturing love (Storge);
brother and sisterly love (Phileo); and, erotic and sensual love (Eros).*

In the title to this section I have made reference to certain classical Greek terms (Agape etc.). It is not my intention to ground what is about to be written in these ancient concepts. Rather, I only want to honor the depth of wisdom on which Western Civilization was founded, by acknowledging that wisdom. The nature of the human being has changed considerably since the time of the ancient Greeks (see the above discussions on the Evolution of Consciousness). The Civilization founded on their Genius has reached its last days (we presently live in the time of the End of Western Civilization). At the same time there are all manner of good reasons for coming around again to much that they thought and understood, as long as we recognize that this return is not a circle that comes upon its own beginning, but is rather a rising spiral that when it passes that beginning by, does so at a much more evolved state.

What this means at a practical level is that the following discussion (as with much before it) is not based upon some consideration of the Ideals of the Four Forms of Love, but rather on the most intimate personal experiences within my own biography, through which I was taught, by a remarkable Grace, in the practice and the pragmatic understanding of these Forms.

For example, some might consider Agape or selfless love to bear a special kinship with Divine Love. That may even have been what the Ancient Greeks had in mind. It is not what I have in mind, however. Divine Love is, to experience, quite overwhelming. It is so present and penetrating that one is tempted to either drown in it (abandon our own ego) or flee from it in fear. Not, by the way, because the Divine Mystery is calling to us to drown or to flee in fear, but because until we are truly ready to experience Divine Love directly, we are easily overcome due to our own flaws. My personal experiences of Divine Love have shown that this Grace given Gift is only offered for as long as we can tolerate It. Once It tends to

become too much for us, *It* withdraws *Itself* out of the same impulse of Love already present.

This being the case, the selfless love of which I intend to speak here is human in all its dimensions. Selfless love is the human act of personal sacrifice, in which the *i-AM* forgoes any benefit for itself, and only acts for the benefit of the other, or *the Thou*. It is this human love that Christ teaches us in the Gospel lessons. It is this human love that Christ demonstrated by going to the Cross, whereas it is Divine Love that brings about the Resurrection - the re-integration (a goal toward which we hunger and which requires our co-participation before we can be welcomed home).

Now human love, in its most general sense in that it expresses itself in Four Forms, is nonetheless one whole. It is a whole with four faces, or aspects of expression. From another point of view, it is also Fallen or UnFallen according to whether the center of its nature is selfless love, for selfless love itself can never be Fallen (too Earthly). Selfless human love is always an expression of the divine nature of our *i-AM*. It is "*Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven*" Matthew 6:10 ***{Let Your kingdom come, May Your will be seen On the Earth, just as in the sky.}***

Another small aside, as regards the term *sky*. We might think that Christ is misleading us in referring to sky, and that later efforts which substituted the term heaven were more correct. The real problem is understood from an entirely different direction. Later in this book I will discuss how the paradigm of scientific materialism was the result of a kind of divinely authored enchantment of the mind. We moderns don't see the sky to which Christ refers and which his listeners understood, but rather we see the sky which natural science teaches - a sky empty of being and consciousness, concern and delight. We need to relearn to truly see the sky, free of any paradigm, religious, scientific or otherwise.

The fact is that when we see the sky through the lens of our education, we do not see what is there, but what we have been taught to see - a place empty of consciousness and being, and full of abstract forces and processes, without any living intelligence. If we re-educate ourselves, then we can discover how to see the sky according to our own intuitive

understanding - that is give it the meaning we decide, and not the meaning imposed upon us by others.

To return now to our main theme...

What this means is that the other three forms, in order to be UnFallen, must be rooted in their expression in selfless human love ***{Your will be seen}***. This is accomplished through free acts of moral grace (the fulfillment of the law and the prophets in actions based upon the moral sensibilities of the human heart). We will come to this point again later, but for now let us return to our discussion of the Four Forms of Love.

Here is another story from my biography, which really contains all that I can say from experience about selfless love:

I had a very intimate friend - intimate in a way hard to understand. Our relationship was such that when he crossed over, in his early thirties, he was able to leave behind for me as a gift (with the aid of Grace), the fruit, via memory, of his whole life (explaining how and why this happened would be going way too far away from our work here). Now granted this is not the usual kind of experience we have, but I would be less than honest not to make reference here, for it was from him that I learned what I know about how to practice selfless human love.

To make this as clear as possible: I possess all his memories, and should I want to look at how he lived and what he thought, I have but to practice the right kind of discipline and the whole is there for me to experience, in much the same way as we can all experience our own memories should we care to make the effort. What he taught me in this way is that he seldom thought of himself at all, and certainly when with another person he was fully concentrated on their feelings and needs. He was a natural empath by the way, and this enabled him to see more clearly the other - *the Thou*. His biography did occasionally force him to do for himself, but in the main his nature was such that he always placed his own needs, wants, feelings and thoughts second to those he was with. He was also a true innocent, which meant that he lacked those common impulses to ordinary evil which he found in most others. Evil was to him a mystery, for there was no way in which he, who was naturally innocent and selfless, could have empathy with evil (know it from the inside out). He was then instinctively selfless, and I am forever in his debt for showing me a living

realization of this human ideal to which to aspire (yes, I do frequently fail).

Now *nurturing love* we mostly experience as arising between parent and child, or teacher and much younger student. At the same time, lovers who hold each other close during the night, also express this face of love. Our present day culture has lost much of its connection with this form of love, mostly through fear and lack of trust, for nurturing love is most frequently expressed through touch (holding a child in ones lap, comforting a friend with an embrace, care of the ill and infirm etc.). This loss of understanding of the touching aspect of nurturing love in practice has come about mainly because of the influence, on our decadent and decaying Civilization, of Fallen Eros. Young people will know little of this, but for those of us awake at the time, the 1980's, with its fear driven panics (largely unwarranted) over the abuse of children by caregivers, made it impossible any more for teachers in schools to nurture children, or close relatives either. Excesses of publicity, and deep confusion (and error) among so-called professionals in mental health, has driven us away from appreciating the importance and nature of touch between human beings. For a teacher in a school to physically nurture a child (regardless of how deep is the child's need) is seen now (fearfully and unjustly) as potentially sexual, and therefore dangerous (accusations of abuse, and threats of law suits). This is a great loss for both the children and the adults. Of course, the school environment is not the only social environment that suffers because of this confusion.

In my biography, I was graced for a time to be a student of this form of love, as that was carried out and investigated for a few years in Berkeley California during the early 1970's. An organization of lay therapists, which called itself Group House, experimented with the use of nurturing touch at a very high and intelligent level. It was not all that was done there, but it was a main aspect of that work.

Adults were held like babies by group leaders and members. People learned to express anger in a playful way by pushing each other around the room. The accumulated rage of a lifetime could be released, when the person expressing it was held tightly, physically, by the dozen or so other members of the group, so that the anger could be experienced freely, while at the same time remaining connected to the nurturing physical contact of those others present about who one cared, and who care about us. The

floor of the group rooms were layered in mattresses, covered with gaily colored sheets, and with many many colored pillows everywhere. We wore loose clothes and no shoes, and in this environment for people to sit so close to each other as to be touching, hip to hip, arm over arm, or however they wanted to drape themselves in relationship to each other, was common.

There is a book that I value (others do not) called *Seven Arrows*, by Hyemeyohsts Storm. Here is a quote from the opening section called The Pipe: "*The Medicine Wheel Way begins with the Touching of our Brothers and Sisters. Next it speaks to us of the Touching of the world around us...*". While the deep wisdom of Native Americans remembers the gift of touch, though the influence of Fallen Eros (more later) our decaying White culture has more and more lost a true connection to nurturing love by an unwarranted sexualization of all touching behaviors.

From this we can understand a little the nature of the choice offered. If nurturing love is filled from the inside out with *human selfless* love, its Fallen nature (sexualization) can be overcome.

If we turn next to *brotherly and sisterly love*, we find something that has not yet become so Fallen (although it is often faked), but remains strong and growing stronger. Another name for this face (or form) of love is *comradeship*.

The struggles of life are best endured when shared. The real secret of Alcoholics Anonymous is not in the Twelve Steps themselves, but in the community (reread the Twelve Steps and notice the frequent use of the term we, an approach which is also an essential aspect of the Lord's Prayer). It is not the *i-AM* itself that does this work, but each in the company of others. It was the Solidarity Movement in Poland that crucially weakened Communism in eastern Europe. It is associations of social activists and environmentalists that are combating the worst aspects of our degenerating culture. Everywhere that human beings join together to share the burdens of life, *brotherly and sisterly love (comradeship)* is being expressed.

We should also pay attention to where it is faked (Fallen), and what problems result. Mostly this occurs in the work place, and mostly it is faked when it comes from the top down as an urged tool of management

(*we have to be a team*). At the same time, in the same work place, its UnFallen form will appear in the solidarity of the workers uniting against the abuses of management - a management that does not really want to share the burdens of the work, but rather seeks to dominate and to profit at the expense of the workers (*dominion over, instead of communion with*). In our time the faked version of this form of love dominates our work life, and there is no true comradeship between the owners and the workers. Yet, please recall what was said above about the Evolution of Consciousness, and how in our time top down hierarchical social forms are dying (*dominion over*), while bottom up social forms are beginning to emerge (*communion with*).

The faked (or Fallen) form of comradeship has lost its meaning and utility for the whole (it remains useful for the selfish and self centered who, possessing power over our lives, seek to dominate, rather than enrich). Here again in the work place it will only be when human selfless love penetrates the impulses to solidarity or teamwork that true comradeship will arise. In fact, much that the future will unfold depends upon bringing more and more into the work life, this face of love.

Most of us know a great deal about this form of love, for we experience it anywhere we find community (such as a church etc.). The danger is, of course, when single communities can't find a way to solidarity with other single communities. Why this is so is frequently a consequence of our having difficulty finding shared world views, which shared world views make possible the comradeship of a typical community. Yet, if selfless love really comes to penetrate individuals in any single community, that community will then be on the road to learning how to live with other communities, even though they do not share fully congruent world views. The fact is that we all share a great deal more than we think, and the coming changes in social existence, which are to take the form of various political, economic, and environmental crises, will lead us to those choices (free moral grace) by which we can learn to see our shared humanity across a broader spectrum of differences than is presently possible. When there isn't any longer an abundance of food and water for all, the ideologies and beliefs that tend to separate us will hopefully become secondary to the need to cooperate for survival.

In a sense, a major characteristic of the coming crisis in civilization is the conflict between the influence of the false Darwinian social theory

(competition, survival of the fittest) and free moral impulses (chosen cooperation as our true natural state). In the Gospels this message is contained in the Beatitudes, such as: *Blessed are the meek* [the truly humble] *for they shall inherit the Earth*. [The television series currently trying to work with this is *Jericho*, but its general conception of human nature is weak, and it mostly is written for dramatic tension (thus missing a great opportunity to show human beings acting more creatively).]

Here is another brief aside, regarding the meaning of work: There are many kinds of work that are devalued in our failing civilization and culture. People are taught, for example, to consider it demeaning to work in fast food restaurants, or as custodians. All types of labor are thought to be beneath many, who then judge and look down upon those who serve below them. If we are to give rebirth to our civilization, one of the central acts of rebirth will be in the redemption of the meaning of labor. I don't believe anything more needs to be said here.

In my biography, I learned the most about comradeship in the work life.

Now I want to undertake a discussion of Eros, in both its Fallen and UnFallen forms. But preliminary to that, we need to deepen some of what we previously have discussed regarding the Four Forms of Love. And, because of the huge influence of Fallen Eros on our culture, this discussion will have to be done carefully and take some time and effort on the part of the reader.

It is possible to make a *symbolic* cross of these four forms in the following way:

selfless love

nurturing love + *comradeship*

erotic and sensual love

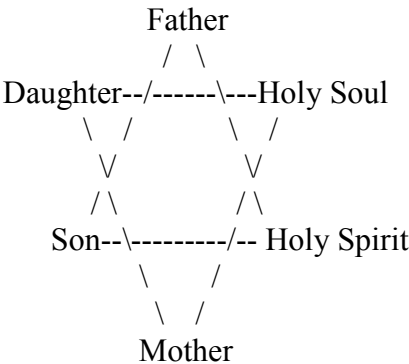
Selfless love is more Heavenly in nature, while erotic and sensual love is more Earthly. It would be wrong, however, to conceive of erotic and sensual love as something sinful or base. The Divine Mystery has clearly placed in the hands of the *forces* of erotic and sensual attraction that power

by which procreation occurs, and by this has entrusted the coming into incarnation of children to this attractive power (or force) of human nature.

I don't, by the way, meant to use the term *force* metaphorically. We have to appreciate that emotion and passion bring about movement toward, as well as movement away. This is a profound power in human relationships. Physics ignores this force since it can not be *quantified*, but anyone who is paying attention to their lives, will have no trouble appreciating the *qualities* here under consideration.

While selfless love and erotic and sensual love seem to have a relationship that can be characterized by heavenly and earthly qualities, nurturing love and comradeship do not. This *symbolic cross* then seems to have both a vertical and a horizontal dimension. In order to deepen this I will have to add some matters which for some will seem speculative, but which I can assure you are also rooted in experience.

Christianity has so far only known much about what is essentially a patriarchal Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are entering on that time when knowledge of the matriarchal Trinity: Mother, Daughter and Holy Soul will be added to our understanding. The anonymous author of *Meditations on the Tarot: a journey into Christian Hermeticism* puts the situation this way in the Arcanum XIX: (the meditation on) The Sun:



Whereby Father, Son and Holy Spirit formed one triangle, and Mother, Daughter and Holy Soul a second triangle, such that the two triangles combined make a hexagram, or the Hebrew six pointed star symbol (*the Seal of Solomon*).

Now it is not my intention to resolve any of the questions that might arise in the reader here, but rather only to bring forth more attention to the Feminine Mysteries and their role in the future, as well as to suggest that there is no understanding the Divine aspects of Eros, without realizing that this part of the mystery of the Four Forms of Love is under the instruction of the Mother. All that I have learned during my biography about Eros has been at the inspiration of women.

So then we have *above* - selfless love (which rests upon the instructions of the Father), and *below* erotic and sensual love (which rests upon the instructions of the Mother), and in between these Heights and Depths we have the Breadths or nurturing love and comradeship (which rests upon the instructions of the Son), evolving our symbolic cross as follows:

selfless love
(the Father)

nurturing love (the Son) comradeship

erotic and sensual love
(the Mother)

Christ, in the Center and in between, then mediates the instructions of the Father and the Mother to the World (in the present), so that selfless human love and erotic and sensual love, representing a Vertical polarity of Above and Below (Heaven and Earth) in ordinary social life, reappear as nurturing love and comradeship, representing a Horizontal or social polarity. Our understanding of these relationships will change when below we explore more closely erotic and sensual love (the instructions of the Mother).

To the above we must add the following symbolism regarding our human organization:

spirit
soul
body

We have a purely spiritual nature in that we are, each of us, an *i-AM - a spirit*. We have a purely physical nature, in that we have a physical material body. In between the spirit and the body lies the soul as a mediating principle. Recall now our previous symbolism:

[sense world < soul (d) < i-AM > (d) soul > spiritual world]

From this we can come to the idea that the soul mediates in two directions - one outwardly toward the sense world, and the other inwardly toward the world of spirit. With these ideas in mind we can now begin to understand why in discussing Eros I have divided it into two distinct principles; the erotic and the sensual.

For purposes of discussing Eros only, we can change the above symbolism as follows:

[sense world - sensual love < soul (d) < i-AM > (d) soul > erotic love - spiritual world]

Sex, or what we interestingly enough call *making* (creating?) love, to most of us involves the stimulation of pleasure centers on the physical body. Not having knowledge of the soul, we might assume that this pleasure is entirely physical in nature. Yet, if we leave aside the theories of modern natural science, and remain true to *our own experience*, we will see that whatever the nature of the physical body is, our experience of sensation, whether just seeing, hearing, smelling and touching, or of the sexual pleasures, takes place in our inwardness. The *experience* (as opposed to the physical mechanism of the senses) *of the sensation is not visible to the eye*, although in love-making these sensations and the related emotions will produce visible movement.

It is the *i-AM* that experiences the sensations, which sensations are mediated by the soul through the sense organs of the physical body (which is why I pointed out above the symbolism: *spirit, soul, body*).

This means that when we touch or see or smell during love-making, it is the sensual capacities of the soul that are evoked, thus *the most Earthly aspect of Eros is sensual love*.

However, we also *speak* when making love. Today's hunger for romance is an expression of this side of Eros, which is then properly named: *erotic love*. In the sharing of ideas and the expression of feelings, we evoke this more Heavenly aspect of UnFallen Eros. Please note the subtle distinction suggested between the *expression* of feelings, and the *experience* of feelings. There is a difference between saying "I love you", and feeling such love for another.

Here we also need to make a distinction between sensual pleasure and erotic pleasure, or between pleasure that is experienced in the sense oriented aspect of the soul, and pleasure that is experienced in the spiritually oriented part of the soul. We should also note in passing, that children are sensual, but not sexual. Sensuality is only sexualized when the mind enters into the pleasure and makes it erotic, and the mind only begins to fully appear in us during adolescence. For example, the pedophile will, having given in to being possessed by his self-inflicted *wound*, claim to love children, all the while being in denial of the fact that if he truly loved children selflessly, he would never destroy their innocence. He really only loves himself, and his Fallen erotic pleasure in tasting this forbidden fruit.

Let us now take a small, but quite important, side trip here into contemporary social phenomena.

Women wisely and instinctively (and frequently) express that they want romance. They want to be courted, and they want to be talked to, both before and after that climax most people falsely assume to be the goal of sensual and erotic expression. Rightly their instinct is that the erotic aspect of love is more powerful than the sensual aspect. It is what is said and felt that is the deepest and strongest, not what is touched or seen. *The purely sensual, while important, often comes down to just technique, while the truly erotic depends wholly on authenticity.*

UnFallen Eros then moves from above downward. The sensual and erotic aspects must be a consequence of the selfless human love which then seeks realization in certain situations of natural attraction, through the authenticity of the expression of ideas and feelings toward the other, or *the Thou*, ultimately being realized in sensual expression. I am selflessly sensual to the extent that my focus is on my partner's sensual/soul experiences, while I am selflessly erotic to the extent that my expressions

of love and feeling are authentic (genuine). When we are erotic first (authentically romantic), this then frees and heightens sensual pleasure.

On the other hand, Fallen Eros moves from below upward, seeking selfish pleasure through the application of technique, whether in dress, movement or touch (in our culture this appears in the constant, and ultimately sterile, drive to look and act sexy), or through the application of lies (erotic speech) in which the expression of feelings and of love are faked.

In the case of Fallen Eros we *try to turn on the other, the Thou*, through technique, while in the case of UnFallen Eros we *become* turned *on* by the authenticity of our expressions of love and feeling. In the former our goal is our own pleasure, while the latter is the natural consequence of the selfless deepening of expressions of affection, mutual trust and concern.

If women wisely and instinctively want romance, what could Men wisely and instinctively want? You will have to excuse me from saying anything at all about same sex erotic expression (at this point in time), this being a territory too charged with excessively passionate judgments and assumptions. At the same time, that wisdom we have seen in the instinct of Women for romance has a corresponding wisdom in the desires expressed by Men. It is just that in the case of Men, this wisdom has been displaced and covered over with aspects of Fallen Eros.

In social life, this displaced wisdom appears in prostitution, the practices of the stripper, the explosion of pornography and the coming into being of paid phone sex, and sexually explicit Internet chat rooms. I am not going to try to give an historical explanation for this displacement, that too being a subject needing far too much detail and care. Let us just consider that, in the main, this displacement is a natural consequence of those same social forces that have led to the End of Western Civilization.

As a small aside, since we do call prostitution the oldest profession, we might remind ourselves that in the most ancient times, in the older Mysteries, the Temple included Rites which were sensual and erotic. This was in times in which the Divine Feminine was more prominent and recognized, so that for the Temple to evoke Rites connected to the true mysteries of Eros, was entirely appropriate. Only when those Mysteries began to decay and fail, did prostitution appear in the social order, as a consequence of the loss of a truly religious appreciation of the sacred

nature of UnFallen Eros. We need to restore this understanding to the next phase of our civilization.

Using our previously developed understanding we can see that prostitution, stripping, and pornography tend to fall on the sensual side of sexual experience, while paid phone sex and written (chat room) sex-play tend to fall on the erotic side. The former tend to mostly appeal to the senses (the body), and the latter tends to mostly appeal to the mind (spirit). These represent the natural hungers of Men, which *if selflessly expressed properly in private, and satisfied in private*, would no longer need to be displaced to our shared social detriment.

If, in situations of UnFallen Eros the woman learns that in her movements, and in undressing and dressing, as well as in touch, she can be selflessly sensual with her partner, she can also learn that with speech, especially of an earthly nature, she can be selflessly erotic. What is displaced, and becomes mere commerce in prostitution, stripping, pornography, phone sex and sex chat rooms, can be returned to the bedroom as an offering to the wise instincts living in a man's natural hunger for a woman.

I realize that today many woman believe that in *publicly* dressing sexy they are finding a certain kind of power, yet at the same time they are conforming to what is really a decadent gesture in our shared social existence (civilization). The unveiling of the human female form, which can be seen as a kind of group insanity of immodesty, is not really appreciated for its negative social consequences. I am, by the way, not being prudish here at all, but on the contrary pointing out that we have to understand that *Eros* is a *force*. A primal power of the Creation is being immaturely played with here, and we cannot continue to ignore its devastating consequences in those situations where we do not use human wisdom to master it.

Let me add to our discussion some matters pointed out to me by my encounters with the wisdom of Native Americans.

There is a remarkable document called the Hopi Prophecy, which is worth all manner of careful study, and which contains the following language referring to that future which has now become our present: "*The sacred body of the female will no longer be hidden, for the shield of protection will be uplifted, an act of temptation toward sexual license*". When

women wear tight pants or shorts, instead of modest skirts, and now among the young with the uncovering of the belly, something socially undesirable is set free. Why? This comes next...

During my biography, I happened to discover that my ability to fully experience my senses consciously was limited by the way in which I was raised. It was not just the form of education, but the nature of the whole of my experience as a youth. The senses really are only opened up properly when in direct contact with raw nature (having been created primarily in that context and for the purpose), and I found it possible to recover some of these natural endowments through various exercises. Here again is a whole other discussion that will have to be set aside.

As a consequence of sharpening my senses, to put the matter directly, I learned that certain experiences caused unconscious (near involuntary) physiological responses in my physical organism. This is not, by the way, the same thing as the embarrassing involuntary movements of a young man's sexual parts, where hormones are just beginning to transform his organism. In my case, I was quite adult, and the experiences were quite subtle. Mostly they had to do with the experience of the curves of the female form.

Now it would be possible to treat this crudely, but please bear with me - this is not my intention or purpose. Just as we experience *aesthetic* pleasure in the soul in the presence of certain music or natural vistas, so for a man, the curves of the female body are perceived semi-consciously as an expression of the Divine Art of Creation. They are meant to attract with great power, for the human female form is one of the wonders of the Creation, and the law of nature that causes men to be attracted to this form is not any different from the also Divinely Ordered law of gravity (with its yet to be perceived or fully understood polaric opposite - the law of levity, which if physicists get their act together will eventually displace the lame concept of "dark matter").

Yes, natural science has uncovered certain aspects connected to the sense of smell, i.e. pheromones, but to place sexual attraction solely in the realm of the human unconscious will be a mistake. Likewise, to rest these matters solely on some altar of genetic selection is again to misread the phenomena. The inner invisible aspects of human existence are always much more profound and powerful than the merely material.

The problem is how to manage the social consequences of this *force of attraction* in a wise way. For many ancient peoples, and still as a tradition of much of the Muslim world (for example), covering the female form was one way to deal with the force evoked during the Male's perception of the female form. Yet, as Western Civilization decayed, social dynamics, both within female and male sub-cultures, encouraged the gradual uncovering of this form, until today we are urged to believe that looking sexy is a high value (when instead it is nothing but Fallen Eros, and as such fills our souls with self-created wounds of soul, for which the middle-ages once used the terms incubi and succubi.).

I don't believe much more needs to be said about Fallen Eros. Everyone can look around the world and see what is going on. For those who advocate inner discipline in the male, this would no doubt help. At the same time there are two parts to this, or two partners. As much as the male needs to master the flood of inner sensations in which he lives as part of our over-sexualized culture, so the female needs to rediscover the wisdom and value of modesty. Would you find any moral value in torturing a starving man with sights of food they cannot consume?

We should not be surprised then that, while these so-called hormonal stimulations (semi-conscious physiological responses, connected to inner struggles with the shadow forces of temptation - the double, and self created repetitive desires - wounds) in all males continue to simmer, there is often little other way for them to move except that of expressing this force in socially undesirable aggression. A great deal of the excesses of competition among males, and aggression toward women, is driven by the semi-conscious over-stimulation of the natural erotic and sensual hungers of the male. What should also not be ignored, is that the advertising business well understands the psychological implications of connecting commerce to a man's desire for the female, and uses this psychological advantage for profit, regardless of the social cost (another example of what happens in the Absence of the Good).

Let us now turn to what can be done to develop a wiser cultural intelligence in the face of this influence of Fallen Eros. However, in order to do that, we need to add some other themes, for Fallen Eros is not the only semi-consciously understood social force (greed, fear of death etc. come easily to mind) loose in our societies that is connected to the real

nature of the *Mystery of Evil*, and which can only truly be transformed by love engendered free moral grace.

tenth stanza

the Seventh Day of Creation as an Expression of Love
- concerning the role of Divine Love, and human love,
in the creation of new social forms, or what we usually call
the Fall of one Civilization followed by the Birth of a new one -
[also contains the Fool's Tale (part II)]

If you will recall, in those aspects of this work concerning the Evolution of Consciousness, we realized that the former top down hierarchical social forms have lost their validity and vitality, and that in the next phase of the future all *healthy* social order will depend upon the bottom up expression of love engendered free moral grace. However, in the creation of new social *forms*, these will only arise out of individual acts, which means that the first new social forms will be the simplest - one into two. A couple, or a partnership, is the simplest basis for a new social form.

What I mean by new social *form*, by the way, is that the rules and structural elements will be based upon the *consciously* love engendered free moral activity of the participants, and not upon sterile and rigid tradition. One of the major characteristics, of this epoch in which we live, is the emancipation of the *i-AM* from social tradition, so that in the future the moral lawfulness of social forms (communities) will depend no longer on the outside traditional values, but on individual, love engendered, free moral grace. Recall that Christ came to fulfill the law and the prophets, and that in His statement (see immediately below) as regards the most important commandments, He described them this way: "*On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets*". {*All the law and all the prophets hang from these two commands.*"}

This being the case, for all the hysterics connected to it, the question of gay marriage offers us the opportunity to look at this problem in its most fundamental dynamics (we will address this in more detail shortly). Love isn't expressed in a vacuum, in some abstract fashion. It appears in reality in what goes on in between people (one of the primary places where Christ can be found - in between - there is always, as regards Love, both the Lover and the Beloved and the *Love* in between). Love is not something found in a book, or known vicariously. At the same time, there is both an

inner and outer aspect to love as it is expressed in the social. Recall our symbolism: *[sense world < soul (d) < i-AM > (d) soul > spiritual world]*.

To the extent that we express love, we express it in two directions. Christ puts it this way, as we noted above, in His response to the question of what is the greatest commandment: Matthew 22: 37-40 " *Jesus said to him, " This is the greatest and the first commandment. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind." And the second is like it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."* On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets." ***{He said to them, "You are to love your lord God with all your heart and all your spirit and all your mind. That is the important and first commandment. The second one is similar: You are to love those close to you as you love yourself. All the law and all the prophets hang from these two commands."}***

Love directed at God is directed inwardly, into and through the doorway within that leads from our spirit (*i-AM*) to the Divine Mystery Itself. ("And on being asked by the Pharisees, "When is the kingdom of God coming?" he answered and said to them, "The kingdom of God comes unawares. Neither will they say, 'Behold, here it is', or 'Behold, there it is.' For behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17:20-21 ***{Asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming he answered: "The kingdom of God doesn't come with watching like a hawk, and they don't say, Here it is, or There it is, because, you know what? the kingdom of God is inside you.}*** Love directed at our neighbors, or those close to us, is directed outwardly toward the Mystery of the other, *the Thou*, as that unfolds in the shared social world, or the Seventh Day of Creation.

Another aside: Christ also turns us in this direction with his remarks at Matthew 22:21: "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." ***{ "So give Caesar's things to Caesar, and God's things to God"}***. Caesar, being the *parable-metaphor* for the social world - the incarnated world of human laws and social traditions, deserves our gifts as well as does God.

This being the general rule, let us first look a little at some macro social processes regarding community and individuality, so as to be able to place our growing new understanding in a more illuminating light. We will first

look at those processes leading to the dissolving of tradition, before considering the up building processes. You will recall that earlier I wrote of the End of Western Civilization. It now becomes necessary to write more carefully about this theme, not only from the point of view of the *i-AM*, and the biography, but also in terms of the influence of the Divine Mystery on all human social order and history - that which appears in part as the macro application of the *Mystery of Evil*. Unfortunately, it would involve a whole other book to deal fully with this theme, therefore the reader will have to get by with a few hints as an aide to their own thinking.

the Fool's Tale
(part II)

Let us first take a bit of thought from Rudolf Steiner's stories about the pantheon of Evil, wherein he writes in detail of two powers: the near-god Ahriman, and the fallen Seraphim Lucifer, otherwise known as the Devil and Satan. The convinced materialist will wince here, but their naivety regarding the role of Evil in human civilization is not really our problem.

Rudolf Steiner suggests that the relationship, between Ahriman and Lucifer and the doubles in the human soul, is something like a glove within a glove, within a glove. The nature of these two powers is such then that their influence within us is mediated and stepped down through a series of intermediary invisible beings, until such moment as their presence in our soul life is appropriate according to the Design of the Divine Mystery. We have to imagine a pyramidal hierarchy that spreads out and multiplies in such a way that the power at the top is only experienced in a very small degree at the bottom, where it plays an ordained role in the soul. Let us symbolize this in the following way: Ahriman, followed by a series of >>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>> arrows, representing the gloves within gloves etc.

With this in mind let us revisit our original symbolism with certain additions. By the way, lest folks get confused here, a couple of crucial points. First, this situation is ordained, and plays a very much needed role in the Evolution of Consciousness in accord with the Seventh Day of Creation out of the Divine Mystery; and second, the appearance of this structure in the human soul does not begin at birth, for in the very young the needs of the *i-AM* are very much under the direct instruction of a Guardian Angel. In addition, you will see that the whole structure is

overseen by even greater Divine powers than a near-god and a fallen Seraphim.

Also, the map below (the symbolism) is not the territory.

Christ Jesus
Guardian Angel

i-AM

[sense world < soul (A/d) < i-AM > (L/d) soul > spiritual world]
human double

the Divine Mother

Now please remember that this is a *symbolic representation* of something that in reality is far more complicated, considerably less abstract and excruciatingly real. We might also pay a little attention to Rudolf Steiner's comments that the double is the Lesser Guardian of the Threshold, while Christ is the Greater Guardian. By *Threshold* is meant that Boundary that we must cross over in order to participate in full and authentic spiritual experience, or what is called in the cultural Center *initiation*, and in the cultural East, *enlightenment*. In the final phases of our development, such that leads to full initiation, the double is consciously met and worked with, until it is no longer needed. Few of us will face this problem in this life, so I will say only a little about it, and that hopefully will be very practical.

In addition, in the Cultural West, where it is neither enlightenment or initiation that is central, but rather *character development*, it is rather our *moral integration* with the living world and the world of invisibles that is important. This moral integration comes about because of how, during the unfolding of the trials of our biographies, our character is created. We will have more to say on this later as well, and in greater detail.

Here again is part of the symbolic diagram:

[sense world < soul (A/d) < i-AM > (L/d) soul > spiritual world]
[human (d)]

This is more of a functional representation, rather than a pictorial. The ahrimanic double (A/d) and the luciferic double (L/d) are intimate

companions of the *i-AM*, and we experience (in the beginning) their urgings and commentary as *an inseparable part of our self* (lower ego). At the same time, in that we inwardly hear this commentary and these urgings, there is a functional separation wherein choice is possible. We know these inner struggles, which appear to us when we seem (emphasis on *seem*) to be fighting ourselves. This has always been a general cultural intuition in the West - one that frequently was seen in cartoon films, where a character in conflict is portrayed in such a way that a tiny angel (the luciferic double) and a tiny devil (the ahrimanic double) are visualized as sitting on the two shoulders of the character, with each one offering their advice of what to do, while the essential self finds itself caught in between.

This fighting ourselves is really a battle between the urgings and commentary of the luciferic and ahrimanic doubles and the *i-AM*. In many instances we actually need these urgings and commentary, for the *i-AM* is not yet capable of sufficient discernment, so that the luciferic and ahrimanic doubles often perform a needed function. There are times when a luciferic impulse or an ahrimanic impulse is a valid response to a life situation. Remember, *we are spiritual children undergoing a metamorphosis, over the sequence of our biographies, into spiritual adulthood, out of our own initiative via love engendered free moral grace.*

The soul, in fact, seems to move from one double, through the center (the *i-AM*), to the other, in a kind of rhythmic lemniscate movement. So imagine an infinity symbol overlaying this: $[(A/d) < i-AM > (L/d)]$, circling first around one double, then through the center and then circling around the other. This is again a functional representation of the inner dialogs wherein we talk to ourselves concerning various choices in life. We often "see" moral issues from three distinct ways. The first one tends to a kind of cold and calculating view (the A/d), while the second one tends to a kind of grandiose and prideful view (the L/d) - in the first two our lower ego is seen as the most important factor in the choice - that is we are self centered in the first two; and, the third is self sacrificing and humble (the true *i-AM*), wherein we choose to recognize that *the Thou* is more important than the I (Love God and thy neighbor - the two most important commandments).

Added to this we might consider a second lemniscate, this one vertical rather than horizontal. In the vertical lemniscate the lower circle gesture is

around the human double, while the upper circle gesture is around that aspect of the *i-AM* that is to win free of all the doubles. We thus might make our symbolism take the following form:

$$\begin{array}{c} i\text{-}AM \\ [(A/d) < i\text{-}AM > (L/d)] \\ \text{human } (d)^* \end{array}$$

*self-generated wounds

We will later go more into the problem of the upper and lower ego, but for now the thing to note is that our natural desire is to learn more and more to make the choices from the center, from the *heart* of our being. While at the same time, we will (and we should expect this) frequently make choices from one pole or the other, and not out of the heart-center. When we do notice that we have made such a one-sided choice (outside of our heart-center), this becomes food for thought in the daily review (mentioned above in the sixth stanza in reference to consciously preparing for sleep).

As our inner development moves forward, especially in a moral way (*we more consciously seek the Good*), then the separation between the *i-AM* and the doubles becomes more inwardly perceivable and we begin to play a more conscious role in the struggle. We start to recognize that the commentary and urgings are not the true essence or *i-AM*.

We then come to a problem, which is what do we do if we wish to change the soul such that the doubles no longer have this role. This desire to change the soul then leads to certain kinds of crises in the inner biography. Do we fight, or negotiate? What role does love play (that is do we love this shadow - this seemingly alien and antagonistic aspect of the soul)? If we take upon ourselves - upon our *i-AM* - the tasks of the doubles, will this free us from their influence? Everyone has to answer these questions for themselves.

The luciferic and ahrimanic doubles are not Lucifer and Ahriman, but rather stepped down echoes of the nature of the Fallen Seraphim Lucifer and the near-God Ahriman. So we have the gloves within gloves within gloves, or: Ahriman >>>>>>>>> a series of intermediary hierarchical beings >>>>>>>>>>>> the ahrimanic double.

Rudolf Steiner created a statue of the Representative (model) of Humanity, where Christ (the model for the *i-AM*) stands in between Lucifer above (the model for the luciferic double in the soul that stands in between us - the *i-AM* - and the spiritual world), and Ahriman below (the model for the ahrimanic double that stands in between the *i-AM* and the sense world).

Now when we have given into an urging or commentary repeatedly, a kind of independent organism grows in the soul due to this repeated giving in. This is the human double or self-generated wound. Various obsessions, even of a religious nature, will create such a wound, and for the practical overcoming of this near independent (tumor-like) aspect of the soul, we have been given *the Twelve Steps*.

This human double is the true source of evil in the world (a consequence of our Freedom), and when in the run up to WWII human beings began to consciously (freely) choose to give into (and consciously cultivate) these impulses (Stalin and his cronies and Hitler and his cronies - and others), that is when the Beast rose from the Abyss and gained entry into the world of human affairs. Here, in a sense, was the deepest point of the Fall of Humanity, and as we will see, it is precisely here at this deepest point of the Fall, where we were standing above the Abyss staring downward at the Shadow that is our darkest self, that this danger was met by the true Second Coming of Christ, or what is sometimes called: the Return of Christ in the Ethereal (See Ben-Aharon's: *The Spiritual Event of the Twentieth Century*).

As everyone is aware, this is a long awaited event. Most Christians assume that Christ will come again in the flesh, not understanding the references to such as clouds of glory, in Matthew 24:30 and 26:64. The first concerns Christ's prophecy about the end times or the Day of the Last Judgment as foretold in Daniel. The second is not a repeat of the first, but is rather another reference, for it is in answer to a demand of the High Priest to be told whether Jesus is the Son of God, to which He answers: Matthew 26:64: "*Jesus said to him, "Thou hast said it. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming upon the clouds of heaven."* [*"That's what you say. But I do tell you this: next time you will see the son of humanity sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of the sky."*]

We need to keep in mind that Christ is referring to heaven or the sky, and clouds because that meant something different than the mere physical world we see today. This is a reference to spiritual reality, not material. So when Christ tells the High Priest that the next time he will see Christ will be when Christ is coming on clouds of the sky, Christ is speaking of His Return (Second Coming) in the spiritual, not the material world. The Kings (Steiner et.al.) speak of this in detail, and Valentin Tomberg (another 20th Century King) wrote a whole book on it: ***The Four Sacrifices of Christ and the Return of Christ in the Etheric*** - meaning by the term etheric (or as some prefer: *ethereal*) that aspect of spiritual existence most closely related to the material world. For example, *true heart thinking* takes place in the ethereal world (more on this in the eleventh stanza).

It is this Return in the Ethereal Realms which marks the 20th Century so deeply, and which prompts this book. It is because of this Return that we can now understand John the Baptist in Matthew 3: 11: *"I indeed baptize you with water, for repentance. But he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to bear. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."* {***Now I bathe you in water to change hearts, but the one coming after me is stronger than me: I'm not big enough to carry his shoes. He will bathe you in holy breath and fire.***} With the Return, described in great detail and with the most profound depth in Ben Aharon's work above, Christ is now back with us, so that He can carry out what John the Baptist foretold: Christ's baptism of us with the Holy Spirit (the return of gnosis), and with fire (the trials in our biographies of spiritual maturation, brought about by our choosing to become awake to evil in the ways now being described as regards the complex of the doubles). Christ is with us and oversees our confrontation with Evil and all its aspects, especially if we pray the 7th Petition of the Lord's Prayer.

To return now to our main theme...

We need to recognize that these doubles (the luciferic, ahrimanic and human) play a needed role in the biography, and we can discover this role when we look back at our inwardness on individual days in evening prayer, or look back over several years time (those periods in the biography wherein self doubt and reflection lead us to wisdom). Through

this looking back we will come to see where so-called bad habits and choices have led us to an education for our *i-AM* that can be found in no other way.

This process of reflection is the surest way to understand these things in our own biographies, and it is only in our own biographies that we have any business considering these problems. Just as we know that we can't fix an addiction or alcoholism in the other, in *the Thou* (we know that only they can fix themselves), so we have to accept our own responsibility. Again, it is in the Sermon on the Mount, where Christ advises us not to judge, but rather to look to the log in our own eye.

The social organism can make laws (consequences) for the giving into various impulses, but only the *i-AM* can heal itself. What *the Twelves Steps* have taught us, however, is that those with similar self-generated wounds can form a helping community, so that we are not alone in facing these self-created near independent creatures in our souls. Moreover, this self-healing begins with what for some is that oddest of gestures: *surrender*. We give up forcing ourselves to change, and in so doing make a space within the soul for help from higher worlds, *and* for help from our shared earthly community. In surrender, the lower ego confesses its incompleteness, and recognizes that the prideful belief that it (the lower ego) can do everything on its own is false. Thus *humbled*, we are now ready to be aided from that which is not-I, but is rather both our spiritual and our social companions.

The poet Novalis has this to say that is quite apt here:

The heart is the key to the world and of life.

We live in our helpless condition

in order to love, and be obliged to others.

*Through imperfection we become ripe for the influence of others,
and this outside influence is the aim.*

In illness we must be helped by others and only others can help us.

From this point of view, Christ surely is the key of the world.

Basically what I am trying to describe is a functionally useful (pragmatic) map. Novalis has given it poetic representation. In any event, each person has to make their own experiences here.

Enough said. For right now we are just trying to see deeper into the inner aspects of the Creation, so that we can better understand the nature of our biographies and their relationship to social existence and history, so let us now turn our attention to some recent history.

Early on, and somewhat in between, I have made reference to the nature of the relationship of a particular stage in the Evolution of Consciousness, with its *corresponding* social structure, such as the third epoch being characterized by top down hierarchical social forms, while the fifth epoch is characterized by bottom up individually created social forms (since we are in the beginning of the creation of such forms they do not immediately stand out, but I can assure you that they are present everywhere if one just carefully observes and thinks). Let's look at this with a bit more attention to detail.

The Twentieth Century is a remarkable case in point, but we only have the time and the space to examine a few small parts of it. Following on the end of World War II, America experienced a kind of pause, which we call the '50's. My friend, whose memories I inherited, came in his biography to his adolescence in these years. This period of pause was followed by a period of rapid social change, which we call the '60's. Most everyone knows of these matters and many have lived through them. What is less known is how these events shape macro aspects of the shared social world of humanity, which social world is the *living context* for all our individual biographies. Conventional history hardly understands these realities at all.

In the '50's, for example, three remarkable American personalities (individualities) began their emergence as a kind of social nexus (or *focal point*) for a great deal of the change that was to come. I am not suggesting these gentlemen were the causes of the subsequent events, but rather that the transformations appearing (from the within outward) in the social order used these personalities as a kind of social lever. These three are: Hugh Hefner, Elvis Presley, and the Reverend Martin Luther King.

With Hefner's publication of his Playboy magazine, the sexual revolution (something very much related to freedom) *and* to further degeneration (it also produced temptations to all kinds of excess) all connected to the forces of Eros (both Fallen and UnFallen) began to emerge with great strength. With the music of Elvis Presley, which combined Black rhythm and blues and White popular lyrics and melodies, a new social dance came

into being, which Presley not only encouraged, but exemplified - so that what we came to know as Rock and Roll emerged (granted Rock and Roll has a deeper history within the Blues, I am here going only to try to open our thinking up to macro social consequences, not the historical details). With the Reverend Martin Luther King, a kind of grace filled higher principle emerged, in that needed social change could be consciously induced through non-violent means (it won't hurt to keep in mind that King learned from Gandhi, who himself learned from Henry David Thoreau's *On Civil Disobedience* - again an insight from one of those souls who was able to remain in touch with the imagination, during the *enchantment* into materialism - for details see below).

It will perhaps not be easy for the reader to grasp this, but worth the effort to consider. There is a certain aspect of this which is connected to the human will, and to the activity of the limbs. Clearly the fostering of a more aggressive sexual impulse is a will/limb activity. Clearly the impulse to dance, and the form of that dance (its lower limb movements in the case of Presley) is a will/limb activity (also connected to Eros). And just as clearly is the expression of a refusal to consent any more to abhorrent social conditions, coupled with the means of protest marches, also a will/limb activity (a sacrifice, in many instances, connected to selfless human love).

People today look at America and most often see a kind of social insanity in the decisions of the sitting government, and the abuses of multinational corporations, many of these dependent upon American military power for their protection and domination. That is an outer characteristic of the last days of Western Civilization, while the above will/limb activities are an expression of the inner characteristics of the emerging new civilization. As suggested earlier, it is the invisible inner gestures that are the more lasting and powerful.

In the epoch of the *consciousness soul*, the development of individuality is an essential aspect of the Evolution of Consciousness, particularly in the sense of freeing the individual from the previously binding influences of community and tradition, so that these same individuals can now stand on their own, thinking their own thoughts, and making, under the influence of moral grace, their own moral judgments. With the emergence of the will/limb activity which was embryonic in the '50's and then exploded in the '60's, higher principles entered into the social world from within - from

that invisible environment which we have been reflecting upon with our various symbolic diagrams.

These higher principles, coming from below upward (in a social sense, not in a spiritual sense - which could also be expressed as from within outward), have had greater social force than all those older, and now decadent social processes, connected to the dying top down hierarchical social forms vainly struggling to hold on to their traditional existences (the struggle in modern civilization to move beyond the past of *dominion over* and to move toward a future understanding of the need for *communion with*). This is true whether these dying traditional forms are religious, educational, governmental or economic. All of them are succumbing to the more powerful inner forces which first emerged in the 1400's in Europe with the *on-looker separation* (leading to natural science - I am an independent self over here, and nature, the cosmos and others are separate and over there), and then later in full social expression in America, and out of the American Soul. America, being a place of unique freedom from the past of Western Civilization, and also being a place where the various Peoples of the whole Earth were gathering, thus became the obvious crucible for just such a birth - just such an emergence of the Phoenix out of the ashes of the dying into fire of Western Civilization. Just so that we can see that this is more than a mere metaphor, just consider that the *social burning* - the destruction of old social form - is taking place very slowly. Evangelicals and Fundamentalist Christians have called this burning of civilization, variously: the *family values crisis* and the *culture wars*.

Now in the beginning these will/limb impulses, being less conscious, served something on the order of a catabolic (destructive or taking apart) metabolic function in the whole social organism of the world. This active process in the social is why it has been so instinctively and intensely resisted by the keepers of traditional social order, first in the Rural South in America, and then later in the Muslim world, in the Far East and in many other places. At the same time, these raw forces out of the will of human beings are not to be denied, for the breaking down of tradition is their initial function.

Here we come to one of the deep Mysteries that has rested misunderstood in the Gospels as a major enigma: Matthew 10:34-40: "*Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter*

against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes will be those in his own household. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it. He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me" {Don't think I came to cause peace across the land. I didn't come to cause peace, I came to wield a sword, because I came to divide a man against his father and a daughter against her mother and a bride against her mother-in-law, and to make a man's servants his enemies. Whoever prefers father or mother over me is not worthy of me; and whoever prefers son or daughter over me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. Whoever found his life will lose it, and the one who lost his life because of me will find it. Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me, receives my Sender.}

Here Christ is telling us that *individuality* - the freedom and development of the human *i-AM* - is so important to the Creation, that the overcoming of the ties of blood (family values) is of greater significance, than the preservation of any tradition.

This takes many forms in practice. For example, in some places Rock and Roll first separates the young from the elders - the emerging individualism of the young uses this leverage to find its first tastes of inner freedom and separation from the group impulses of the older and traditional (top down hierarchical - *dominion over*) social order. In other places, such as communist Russian and its satellites, Rock and Roll was the first taste of free thought, with its anti-establishment impulses. For example, we are just now learning, from modern leaders of the former Soviet Union, just what the Beatles represented to them as a *cultural* - *spiritual* - *influence* - one far greater in potency than any effort claimed to be effective by the Reagan Administration in the United States. In the future we will see that in large part it was Rock and Roll that took down the Berlin Wall.

Obviously I could write a whole book just describing what everyone can learn to see if they just think carefully enough. What arises in the inner world, out of the Evolution of Consciousness, are forces far greater than we otherwise imagine. Old social structures cannot impede them. And, if

we keep in mind what we have been learning about the real dynamics of that inner world, with its impulses to freedom, love and moral grace, coupled with the restraining and limiting forces of the doubles (which give shape to the biography), we can begin to see, in the above single example of these three American personalities and their role as focus points for remarkable social transformation, how the social world is itself given beautiful **logos order** by the Love of the Divine Mystery throughout the Seventh Day of Creation.

This means that out of America, after appearing most strongly there, anti-traditional (catabolic) social forces have (and are) flowing all over the world, helping to individualize the young, and then setting them against their no longer vital social structures. These forces include music, film, art, dress, speech, and myriad other influences, which burst upon the world out of the youthful will forces of the American Soul (character).

What people call today Civil Society, Cultural Creatives, and the environmental and social activist movements, are given *Conception* first through this process of a catabolic (taking apart) social destruction of tradition, which then enables the individual to more easily express *love engendered free moral grace* (the fulfillment of the law and the prophets) in all those social, political and environmental activities in the world (while the *Birth* is itself representative of anabolic (upbuilding) or creative social forces - the Phoenix arises from the Ashes). So we have the catabolic functions in the social organism enabling (midwifing) the *Conception* of more and more individualism, and then the *Birth* itself releasing, through the individual expression of *love engendered free moral grace*, the creative or anabolic social forces. For those who might be concerned about some elevation of Christianity here, let me remind you that I am clearly pointing out the dying of traditional Christian social forms themselves, and the up building of a whole new stage of influences, out of individuals, wherein the essence of the Christ Impulse (that aspect of human nature not so much different from what some might call our Buddha Nature) emerges freely on its own, without any influence from top down hierarchical rules, traditions and structures. Just as the *i-AM/soul* nexus has a Buddha Nature, so does it have a Christ Impulse which is original and latent within. In fact, we could go so far as to say that the individual expression of *love engendered free moral grace* is the first iteration of the Christ Impulse as that exists as an emergent potential within each human heart in the epoch of *the consciousness soul*.

Since it is of considerable import, let us now look more closely at natural science and its materialistic paradigm, which paradigm would currently seem to exclude from our comprehension and understanding, any sense of the real nature of the Divine Mystery, within or without.

I do not want to suggest, however, in any way in the following discussion, that science has not brought us many great benefits, nor does it fail to provide much that we need. Moreover, the practice of science is not uniform, and many scientists are currently moving beyond the materialist paradigm on several levels. Even so, for the ordinary human being there does exist a kind of religious-like conviction, that could be called *scientism*. This belief system lives in such ideas as natural selection (in the sense of accident as the overriding causal element in the creation of life), in the big-bang (in the sense of a universe created without consciousness and life from the beginning), and in many other conceptions which dominate the minds of many of us living in the modern world. It is these *spirit-less concepts* which are false, and, as I will suggest below, have been intentionally created (the concepts) just so we could have a certain kind of experience in the first phases of the epoch of *the consciousness soul*.

Above I mentioned a book called: ***Evolution and the New Gnosis: Anti-establishment Essays on Knowledge, Science, Religion and Causal Logic***, by Don Cruse with Robert Zimmer. In this book is described how a certain error in thought was enchanted into Western humanity, at the dawn of the epoch of *the consciousness soul*. We were led away from knowledge of the Divine Mystery, and deeper into materialism, so that the separation of the *i-AM* from the Divine could be fully and existentially felt. We needed to feel and believe: *God is Dead*. We needed to feel alone. Even our faith had to become abstract and empty. Only through this descent could we become free to choose to know (gnosis) the Divine Mystery out of our own independent and individual impulses.

This is why, when we look away from the sense world, and into the inner world of spirit, we first encounter a darkness. We have been cut off from the Divine Mystery, by the Divine Mystery, in order that any future relationship must be entirely based upon our own free choice.

Now this *enchantment* into materialism was brought about by the doubles. In that the tempters and prosecutors in the soul, in cooperation with the *i-AM*, contribute to the whole world view of a Civilization, the fact that at the top of the gloves within gloves within gloves sits dominant powers, means that a whole culture can be turned in a certain direction from within, because all the doubles can act in concert to a degree (Their main mission is individual, but in specific Ages they also carry cultural influences that are needed. This truth is not meant by the way, to ignore that the hierarchies of the good also strongly influence matters. They do as well, but each role is somewhat different in its emphasis and effect.). In this way, the dawning of the Age of Science came with a Divinely authored blindness meant to set us free of all the old religious traditions.

Not everyone suffered from this enchantment, or what William Blake called: "*single vision and Newton's sleep*". The Romantics and the Transcendentalists kept their insides in mind, and thus did not suffer the sleep from the poisoned apple as did Snow White (the witch who puts Snow White to sleep is Lucifer in the service of Ahriman, and the seven dwarfs are the soul. She, of course, is the Imagination of the *i-AM*, who must fall into materialism and sleep as to the Divine in Creation, until awakened by the kiss of Prince Charming - the Christ Impulse - as that first appears during the unfolding of the epoch of *the consciousness soul*). This Fairy Tale describes in imaginative and exact metaphor the inner happenings of the soul as many have been rediscovering in our time (see for example, Robert Bly's *Iron John*, and *the Sibling Society*).

For those who might wonder what of the Fairy Tale is being reborn in the present, I refer them to the films of M. Night Shyamalan, and the consideration that one needs to not be passive in the face of these films, but participate and *think with* them, in particular paying attention to the visual metaphors used by this, quite ahead of his time, artist. Take for example the film *Signs*. Driven by fear, and a loss of faith, the main character retreats into the cave of his basement, having there his dark night of the soul. Watch closely then, the view from below upward, as the characters leave this night of darkness to again emerge into the light. The film frames a very interesting window at the top of the stairs.

Those, who did not succumb, did so by keeping alive the Imagination, and this power is what one discovers as such an active principle in the Romantics, the Transcendentalists, and many others. Owen Barfield gave

us a very good book about one of these: Samuel Taylor Coleridge (*What Coleridge Thought*), and the discussion of the Imagination in this work can be very enlightening. See especially the discussion in the four Chapters called: *Imagination and Fancy* (1); *Imagination and Fancy* (2); *Understanding*; and *Reason*; wherein Coleridge's systematic investigation of the soul finds expression in the symbolism [*Reason / Imagination / Understanding / Understanding / Fancy / Sense*], which if we reverse it lines up with our own symbolism [*sense world < soul (d) < i-AM > (d) soul > spiritual world*] thus: [*Sense / Fancy / Understanding / Understanding / Imagination / Reason*]. By the way, Coleridge does not mean to use Sense merely as pointing to the material physical senses, but rather as a soul capacity which leans more to the physical sensory side of the soul.

If you will recall, far above I wrote of how the changes from *Sentient Soul* development, to *Intellectual Soul* development and now to *Consciousness Soul* development represent an ever inner deepening of the Evolution of Consciousness. Following Coleridge's observations, we can see that this course of changes travels in the direction beginning with what he calls Sense (the Sentient Soul), through Fancy and the first form of Understanding (Fancy being a mediating function in between the Sentient Soul and the Intellectual Soul), which first form of Understanding is the Intellectual Soul's instinctive use of thinking such that now we are entering into the second form of Understanding (a Consciousness Soul use of thinking), and bridging over into the recovery of the Imagination as a means to finally coming to fully conscious knowledge of what actually lives in Reason - namely the Divine Mystery within and without, or Christ in the Mystery of His *Logos Nature*.

Once we appreciate the spiritual aspect of the Imagination, we can then also see why Sheldon's well reasoned imaginative expression of his understanding of the moral questions regarding following *In His Steps* has the depth that it has. Sheldon's primary act is a true act of Faith, which then enables his developing Consciousness Soul (Faith and Gnosis) to enliven the Imagination within.

Sense and Fancy then are tied to the sense world side of the soul, while Imagination and Reason are linked to the spiritual world side of the soul, with the two forms of Understanding mediating in the middle. Imagination is, as regards the spiritual side of things in the soul, the

partner with Reason, but natural science tried to investigate the world using Reason alone, and out of this *enchantment* induced failure then produced the paradigm of materialism, or what Steiner in one place calls the *Ahrimanic Deception*. Here again is another one of those side-trip stories that would take us too far from our central theme.

In a sense we are now at the lowest point of the Fall (as briefly noted above), which is a Fall into spiritual darkness such that many truly believe we are accidental animals living in an uncaring Cosmos. Yet, in spite of all that natural science teaches, Faith refuses to give in. The *i-AM* says, no, I will not stop having Faith. If you want to see an excellent representation of this problem, watch the movie **Contact**, starring Jodie Foster, and based on a book written by a remarkable natural scientist, Carl Sagan. Even so, faith in the *methods* of natural science is valid, for it is the *method* of natural science that Rudolf Steiner used in creating the map to our inwardness we know of as *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity (Freedom)*.

Through this *enchantment*, natural science was blinded in the beginning, and looked only outwardly at the sense world, forgetting through this enchantment to keep in mind the invisible inner world at the same time that it looked outwardly onto (*the onlooker-separation*) the sense world. The result of this temporary blindness is only that the *dominant present paradigm* of natural science, **materialism**, is false. The *method* itself is fine. For science, in its enchantment (*Newton's sleep*), it is as if our symbolism was only: [*sense world <> matter based consciousness*], instead of the more complicated and real [*sense world < soul (d) < i-AM > (d) soul > spiritual world*].

Here then we see a macro aspect of the Mystery of Evil, in that the social context in which the present phase of the Evolution of Consciousness unfolds, has been given a most powerful and immediate materialistic (*all matter, no spirit*) texture. It is Ahriman, and his aide Lucifer, working through the doubles upon our patterns of thought and modes of imagination, that creates our materialistic and spiritually empty culture. At the same time, it is the Christ Impulse within, and the still somewhat latent but slowly re-emerging *force* of Virginity (the Divine Mother - all things are forever new), which maintains Faith, adds Gnosis, and rises socially from below upward in the creation of a new civilization (for an excellent discussion of Virginity, see Arcanum XI, (the meditation on)

Force, in the book *Meditations on the Tarot: a Journey into Christian Hermeticism*).

Out of the *i-AM*, in the current stage of the Evolution of Consciousness, comes that capacity to know of the activity of the doubles, and the karma of wounds, and to bring healing and balance to the soul (*the elevation of the spirit for the mastery of the soul*). The Christ Impulse, or *love engendered free moral grace*, as that lives in human hearts, is fully able to lift the darkness within and find its way to authentic spiritual experience.

So we have then a *macro Mystery of Evil*, which influences through the doubles a kind of collective enchantment or order and structure to human history, and a *micro mystery of evil* (the doubles and the karma of wounds), that we each must face as an aspect of our own biography and development. In this way, the individual biography rests in a very wise social context, such that the maturing *i-AM* is being born again (awakened from its sleep) into the adventure of the discovery of its own true nature.

In contemplating the *macro Mystery of Evil*, after the fashion suggested here, it is best to gaze upon it from a distance, and as something which is just a part of a much greater Whole. For such purposes our ideas regarding Music are the most useful, for above all (regarding what the Ancients called the Music of the Spheres), there is Harmony in the world of Spirit. Tolkien, in his preamble to the *Silmarillion* gives a good approximation to what can be experienced. Creation is a Sounding and Resounding, and the Dark Gods (of which Ahriman is clearly one) have been placed into the Creation for a purpose. They do not lie outside the Creation.

Now granted the *macro Mystery of Evil* does not lie outside the Creation, does this mean we are to be passive in terms of its effects? Do we submit to another enchantment? No, this would clearly be insane. The last petition of the Lord's Prayer is: "*deliver us from evil.*" {"***But snatch us from the Evil Ones clutches.***"}

This is why in this the time of our emergence from our spiritual childhood (accompanied by the true Second Coming of Christ in the Ethereal World) we are challenged to consider both the existence of God, and of the Devil, as real. The Ahrimanic Deception (the enchantment into scientific materialism) is real. Ahriman's and Lucifer's (the Devil's and Satan's)

influences through the doubles are real. Our civilization is textured by this influence, just so we can meet this texture and become awake to it and learn to overcome it. At the same time, our battle with macro Evil is individual. We will get nowhere forming political parties (one of the errors - sins - of the so-called Christian Right) that seek to reform civilization in a moral direction, because taking that course means to live in denial of the reality of moral grace and freedom. The overcoming of the influence of the macro Mystery of Evil rests with individuals, and is actually, in the present, being carried out and won by individuals. Organized moral authority-based (*dominion over*) political movements are actually reactionary (going backward), and we already see this everywhere in what we recognize as the *fundamentalist impulse*.

The fundamentalist impulse is actually an enchantment induced opposition to the Christ Impulse. The central identifying characteristic of the fundamentalist impulse is that it consists of a lie against time. It argues for the reformation of the present into a fanciful past that never existed. It assumes that the Divine Mystery is unable to influence the present and has no power over the future. It (the fundamentalist impulse) arrogantly presumes that only it can bring moral health to civilization, and then only by bringing into the present something from a fancifully imagined past. *It is a dead and dogmatic belief, without the grace of living Faith.*

This fancifully imagined lie is an act of Lucifer in the service of the goals of Ahriman. It is Ahriman who wants us to make our civilization morally rigid, and by this rigidification stamp out the Christ Impulse (individually love engendered free moral grace). It is Ahriman who seduces us with the desire for material comfort from the one side (the carrot), while at the same time driving us forward through irrational fear (the stick). It was irrational fear that drove nurturing love from the classroom, and it is irrational fear that lives in the War against Terrorism, and the acts of those same terrorists.

When we refuse any longer to accept the Ahrimanic Deception (all matter, no spirit) we snatch ourselves from the Evil Ones clutches (*the Lord helps those who help themselves*).

When we restore (de-sexualize) nurturing touch to our children's lives, we defeat the Evil One. [See M. Night Shyamala's film: *The Village*.]

When we resist the seduction of material comfort, and accept our personal and just ration of suffering, we defeat the Evil One.

And, when we refuse any longer to be ruled by irrational fear in the conduct of our lives, we defeat the Evil One.

When we see through that inner darkness of the lies, and temptations, and prosecutions, that live in our personal inner world, we uncover more and more the true nature of our own *i-AM*. We free ourselves, and by freeing ourselves, begin to free our civilization. By placing in the center of this an act of love, we have in this activity followed exactly that which the Divine Mystery Itself does - *we have transformed evil into love*.

Now what about long term consequences?

As regards the micro mystery of evil - the creation of the karma of wounds by the *i-AM*, or what needs be called human evil - this we must face on our own with clarity and equanimity. Here we have become the authors of true evil in the social world - the Seventh Day of Creation - via the biography. The macro Mystery of Evil gives us the contextual texture (the Stage), but we, in facing the micro mystery of evil, create the Play, and as Actors in the Opera begin also to influence that Stage itself as well. Giving into temptation, we face a trial of whether to continue to Fall (the Opera) and as well to continue the Fall (the Stage), or to begin the presumed hard and difficult work of ascent, of reintegration and of re-creation.

Rudolf Steiner suggests that as we enter the new millennium, humanity will begin to divide itself into two separate species - those who seek to master the life of soul through the elevation of the spirit, and those who choose to succumb to temptation and prosecution, such that they sink further into animality and evil by indulging without remorse in the dark and sterile pleasures of their self-generated wounds.

Again, it is all about choice. And, as with all choices, there will be consequences. We should remember that what the doubles and the self-created karma of wounds do in our inwardness (soul) is very subtle and is there for a purpose - evil exists for us to know the good. Part of its purpose is that we awake to these, and begin to learn the role that choice

plays in our evolving soul life. Heretofore we have been asleep, and now we are to awake (become truly *born again*).

We already know when we are tempted (oh, just one more dish of ice cream, we deserve it). We already know when we are prosecuted (I am such a loser, no one should love me). We already know we have bad habits (I can keep smoking, there's always tomorrow in which to change, or that person is evil and I must fix them.). Now it becomes possible to face these dark aspects in our inwardness, and learn to distinguish them from the true *i-AM*. First we see through a mirror darkly, but then face to face.

It will be easy for some to throw up their hands and give up. Facing the own darkness is work, about which many will falsely believe it is too much work. This is not so. As you read on you will find exact ways with which to perceive and deal with the Shadow in the soul.

It is even thought by some that should we give into these temptations far enough, in the end we will burn in hell forever. Here is what the author of ***Meditations on the Tarot: a journey into Christian Hermeticism*** had to say in Arcanum XX (the meditation on) The Judgment, that is relevant here:

"The last judgment will be the sacrament of penance on a cosmic scale, comprising universal confession and universal absolution, although it is difficult to imagine impenitence in this situation. The Church Father Origen could not do so, and believed that everyone, including the hierarchies of evil with Satan at their head, will be saved. Was he right or wrong? By way of answer, I will pose these two questions: 1. Is there in the world any person or group of people who know with certain knowledge who will be impenitent in the distant future? 2. Is there in the world any person or group of people who have the authority to specify the limits of God's love and mercy?... to state and decree that the love of God goes so far and no further?"

I was graced recently in a vision/dream with a picture of Ahriman, in the true final days, laying on his side and weeping at the feet of the Mother, broken by his labors and begging forgiveness for all the Dark Deeds for whose production he had been created, and which he had faithfully authored as was his given nature and purpose.

The fallen Seraphim Lucifer, by the way, is said to have already redeemed himself, becoming through his own deeds integrated with the Paraclete (the Holy Spirit). This is supposed to have occurred as a consequence of Christ's becoming human and accepting death on the Cross, an event which so impressed Lucifer that he could no longer remain in a state of rebellion, and sought forgiveness and was forgiven. Even so, it is also said that the hierarchies that he led in rebellion mostly remain in the service of the near-God Ahriman (as gloves, within gloves, within gloves), who himself (Ahriman) is said to be planning an incarnation during the Third Millennium (a lot of debate about when).

One can come upon many such stories, as we all know. In the end, it is up to us to choose what to believe, and how hard we will work in the endeavor to seek the truth. As I said above, the contemplation of the grand schemes of the macro Mystery (Pantheon) of Evil can lead us astray, and it is best to remain with what we can observe ourselves, in our own inwardness, of the influence of the doubles and the self-created wounds.

end of part II of the Fool's tale

No doubt there are many questions, few of which we have the time or really need to answer, so we perhaps should go onward now by returning to a previous question, where I wrote above: *This being the case, for all the hysterics connected to it, the question of gay marriage offers us the opportunity to look at this problem in its most fundamental dynamics. Now we have to deal with the emerging new civilization, whose first social forms are naturally the simplest joining of individuals in a partnership, or what we previously called a marriage.*

Here we are concerned not with catabolic (destructive forces of the will-on-fire), but with anabolic (creative) forces of that same will-on-fire. In the Gay Rights movement, with its current desire to have its impulse of love honored within the traditional social arrangement we call marriage, we illuminate in bright contrast the battle between the old and the new. We saw above the same battle in the pro-choice/pro-life conflict. Out of the *i-AM*, in its struggle to express some form of love engendered free moral grace, then arises demands for its view of what is morally right, and this conflicts with tradition everywhere we look.

I am not (contrary to some hopes and expectations) going to attempt to resolve the conflict. Any resolution is up to the individuals involved. My only purpose is to highlight it, as an example of emerging forces out of the inwardness, seeking to create new social form at the simplest level: the *partnership*. Even so let me ask a couple of questions:

To those Gays who seek traditional marriage: Which is more important to you, to push the social envelope and be recognized, by those who dislike you, as married, or to have the *meaning* of your relationship celebrated in a sacred way?

To those Christians who seek a constitutional amendment preventing same sex marriages: do you want more to hold others to your own moral sensibilities, or is it more important to learn to recognize the divine spirit in everyone (*whatsoever ye do to the lest of these...*)?

At the same time, there is a higher principle hidden in all this. I will express it this way. As the new civilization emerges (civilization being not the outer elements by the way, but the inner and more powerful forces of soul and spirit), partnerships create something we might call a Home. In the age of the consciousness soul then, with its individually *love engendered free moral grace*, we have the potential of creating *the new civilization on a foundation of the Home as the Temple of Love, and the bedroom as the Temple of Eros, within this Temple of Love*.

Whereas in the third epoch, the Temple was a place of concentrated social power and mystery, with priests standing over and above all, in this the fifth epoch the Temple now becomes what is built upward from the social depths, engendered through our individual appreciation of the mysteries as we discover those for ourselves. Where once there were but a few Temples, now there are to be Temples everywhere.

In point of fact, we can already observe this, albeit in a fashion that shows we have any number of different gods which we worship. All structures are in a way *temples to the idea that inhabits them*, although often unconsciously. A bank is a temple, as are the buildings on Wall Street. High rise office buildings often are temples where the dark god profit is worshipped. A crack house is a temple to a deep karma of wounds. A church basement where a Twelve Step group meets regularly is a temple to recovery.

In each place, the nature of the *rites* will vary, but everywhere there are temples today where all manner of human ambitions, wants, needs, ideals, wounds and other characteristics are evoked and worshiped. In the wonderful movie *The Contender*, in the speech near the end where the truth comes out, the main character is speaking in a Senate meeting room and calls it: *the temple of democracy*.

Here, in all these temples, the *i-AM*, as a self teaching initiator of its own conscious character development (perhaps ultimately leading to initiation or enlightenment), takes hold of social existence and makes that place or the Home a Temple for this inner/spiritual work. Far better when we come to understand this principle, and seek to make conscious just what in any instance is a temple. Starting then from the simplest self-generated relationships and rites, we re-found civilization from the bottom up. Any community then, in which such conscious Temples arise, will find itself filled from within outward, with all those forces of renewal that we are exploring and creating from out of the individual *will-on-fire*. What is one, is to become two, and then many.

Having set forth this train of thought, let me weave in a question that may lurk in the minds of many readers: *What about single people, people without partner or family?*

We can in this instance think of the single person in same way we think of the individual parts of a partnership or family. In a sense each of us builds around us a Temple to the own *i-AM*. In a very real way we must first come awake to our individuality, before we can move on to the work of expressing love engendered free moral grace. We have to free our individuality from the social and familial past - to step out of those influences that demand compromise and conformance, in order to give full birth to the capacities that can appear from within only out of our own immortal spirit and through our personal initiative.

As we can see in modern culture, such actions, that hope to lead into full independence as an individual, are often filled with dangers. We can go too far, thus the comments for a time about the "*me*" generation. Self absorption is not unusual, however, many have had it, and many will have it in the future. Here we are only noting more clearly the idea that certain gifts of spirit sometimes can only be born out of this life passage into and

through a self absorbed stage of individuality, much the same way any child develops through its own self centered course of inner growth.

At the least, we should note that what goes on in *the Temple of Individuality* is for the most part the private business only of that individual. The fact that many people today seem to get stuck in some phase of development (for example, remain somewhat adolescent even as adults), is more a function of the cultural defects that accompany the end of a Civilization, than of the flaws of any single individual.

We no longer celebrate rites of passage to adulthood, for example, as was common to most aboriginal cultures. In Western Civilization, individuality has so triumphed that the cultural-spiritual processes that ought to accompany a healthy social organism are missing. As a culture we celebrate self-absorbed individuality, popularity, wealth, power, good looks, sexiness and so forth - everything *but* maturation, self control, and all manner of once well understood virtues such as modesty of dress and ambition.

Yes, some religious movements more and more demand conformance to their ideas of a less sinful live, but in the age in which Freedom is so crucial, this demand no longer has any real meaning. We need to take a whole new approach, as a culture, if we wish to enable and support the full development of individuality into such a state of soul that it wants, out of its own freedom, to discover its capacity for selfless love.

This is part of why our Civilization is dying. It no longer contains an appropriate social wisdom that understands consciously the emerging nature of the individual human being in the epoch of *the consciousness soul*. Thus, the current Civilization has to die in order for a new individualized wisdom to create the ripe and fertile ground out of which to grow new social forms and cultural values that take account of the reality of individually expressed: *moral grace, freedom and love*.

Unfortunately, the full discussion of the possible wise content of a new civilization is so far outside the scope of this book, even though such a discussion is as equally important as what is contained here, we cannot presently take up such themes with any of the necessary depth.

This, however, can be said. The new civilization flows from the individual outward. The necessary first discussions of the meaning and nature of that process belong to that individual and its immediate associates, more than that discussion belongs in books and larger social meetings. The core of the new is to be born in the new relationships themselves.

Even so, this picture of the various Temples: the Temple of Love, the Temple of Eros and the Temple of Individuality is perhaps conceptually too Ideal, and we have a need to deal more concretely with the pragmatic and practical aspects, wherein it is useful now to go back to fundamentals, and in this case to look again at something Rudolf Steiner pointed out, namely: That in our inwardness is a hierarchy of content of which the lowest and least developed is the mental image or representation, while the middle development is found in the experience of the concept and the highest potential development is in the experience of the idea.

Recall again part of our symbolism:

[sense world < soul (A/d) < i-AM > (L/d) soul > spiritual world]

We are thinkers, and we have/create thought. This is the nearest inward aspect of the spiritual world (a world shaped mostly in our time in darkness), where our freedom and will can be active. We must wake up here - in the world where thinking arises, in order to develop that side of the potentials of our *i-AM* to their fullest extent.

This then takes us in another direction.

third stanza
entering the Narrow Gate
love as an act of inner husbandry,
through the discipline and stewardship of the life of the mind

Matthew 7:12-14: *Therefore all that you wish men to do to you, even so do you also to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets. Enter by the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there are who enter that way. How narrow the gate and close the way that leads to life! And few there are who find it."* ***{So everything you want people to do for you, you do the same for them,***

because that's the law and the prophets. Go in the narrow door; because the door is wide and the road is broad leading off to destruction, and many people are going that way. Whereas how narrow the door and how constricted the road leading off to life, and how few people find it! }

We approached this once before in considering the problem of judgment in the light of Christ's Sermon on the Mount. We found there that we strongly tend to project onto the Thou something which is more of a log in our own eye, than it is of the splinter in theirs. We now will look at the judgment in more detail, using the terms mental representation, concept and idea as an aide to our understanding. Let us first look at this somewhat abstractly, and then more concretely.

We see a book, for example. Inwardly we can make an image (*mental picture or representation*) of this particular book. Inwardly then we have the capacity to create an image (of the particular book) representing the sense experience. We can also have the *concept*: book. In the *concept* book we have a generalized picture of all books, such that we might even recognize that something can still be a book, which is not physically like the ordinary sense perceptible book. We can think of our biography, for example, as a *book*. The Romantic poet/scientist Goethe spoke of learning to read the book of nature (this book: *the Way of the Fool*, comes in large part from learning to read the *book* of life, the *book* of the own soul, and the *book* of humanities shared social, political and historical existence). With the *concept* book we can do much more inwardly than we can with the mere *mental representation* of a particular book.

Lets look at this once more. We have the sense object: *chair*. We will make *mental representations* (pictures) of individual chairs, and also have a *generalized concept* of *chairness* or what is *the function* that the chair provides. For example, a tree stump or a rock can be sat upon, and therefore performs the same *function* as a chair.

Now we normally, in ordinary speech, often use the term *idea* to refer to what Steiner wants us to see only in the term *concept*. Keep this transposition of terms in mind here, so as not to get confused. For Steiner's exact and precise introspection we need to use the term *idea* in another way, rather than as a mere synonym for *concept*.

Like Coleridge's suggesting of the two sides of Understanding, *concept*, as a term describing something in the soul, can have two faces. There is the more ordinary *generalized kind of concept*, such that particular books are also seen as a general category, which is the one face leaning more toward the sensory side. There is also the *pure concept*, which leans more toward the spiritual side of the soul. We often deal with *pure concepts*, for example, when we form thoughts about mathematics and music. For example, infinity, and the interval (the place in between individual notes where the melody lives) are *pure concepts* when thought exactly.

This lets us make of these concepts above a symbolism: [*mental picture or representation / generalized concept / pure concept / idea*], which again follows our original symbolism (map) for our inwardness.

What Steiner wants us to do, when thinking about our inner experiences, is to begin to awake to the fact that in the *pure concept*, and the *idea* we are at the boundary where our inner darkness ends and the threshold to the spiritual world begins. Experience begins to show that the *pure concept* is independent of our own normal thinking activity. The mathematician Roger Penrose, in his book *The Emperors New Mind*, described his own experience this way: "...I cannot help feeling that, with mathematics the case for believing in some kind of ethereal, eternal existence, at least for the more profound mathematical concepts, is a good deal stronger...".

Once we begin to inwardly awaken to the independent nature of the *pure concept*, we can then start to awaken to the further fact that beyond the pure concept is what Steiner meant as an *Idea*, or what Plato also meant - *an independent self-willed spiritual Being* (Penrose, Einstein, and Godel are all Platonists - for an introduction to this see: Rebecca Goldstein's book: *Incompleteness: The Proof and Paradox of Kurt Gödel*)

Some might think that all this is *fancy* (to again borrow from Coleridge), but I can assure you it is not. What is being laid out here is how, as we work forward in our biography with our inwardness, the content of our thought life enriches. First it enriches in the sense of our waking up to our own creative and free capacities, and this after time leads to waking up to the fact that this thought content also involves the cooperation of other Beings.

We really then participate in two communities. The outer sense world social community of other *i-AMs*, and the inner spiritual community of discarnate beings. Through communication we seek to commune with both communities.

Let us now take these themes and apply them to more concrete experiences.

In our thought life, frequently without our willing it, will arise *mental representations* (self-created pictures) of other people. A lawyer in a hurry walking down a street in New York City will see a homeless man or woman and think (create a habitual inner picture) of them as perhaps useless, unimportant, degenerate, insane, whatever. Likewise, a social activist may, on seeing a corporate leader, believe (again create an inner picture) that sees this CEO as without any sympathy for the natural world, who is driven only by greed and a hunger for power and cares little for those who cannot serve his or her most base impulses. Both the lawyer and the activist live in *mental representations* which do not mirror the truth, but only reflect the antipathies (unredeemed unconscious feelings) living inside their own souls - the log which blinds.

We also have *concepts*. Maybe we think (create a generalized picture that) all conservative politicians are idiots, and that the only right way to run a country is what liberals believe. Or the opposite - maybe we think (create a generalized picture that) all liberal politicians are idiots and the only way to run a country is what conservatives believe. Mostly in this we use *abstract and generalized concepts*. These *concepts* are again created by the *i-AM* and live in the soul as *representations* (mirrored images) of the world. Frequently we recognize the limits of such *concepts*, for routinely we acknowledge that they are opinions, and in America for example, we strongly believe we are entitled to our opinions. However, if we want to truly have peace and a vital social future, we are going to have to get over having mere opinions, and start to seek instead for the truth.

The thing to recognize is that this mental world with its antipathy driven views of other human beings, and its opinionated beliefs about how things should be - this mental world is a necessary - yet self created - construct, developed during the biography in conjunction with our cultural influences and the activity of the doubles. It is also not the truth, most of the time, but rather is a quite complex log which while of value to us in

our individual ways (playing a role in karma and fate), does not serve us in the end, but rather blinds us (makes us spiritually - inwardly - less free). We are infatuated with it, for it is after all our creation, while at the same time it is frequently neither the truth, nor the good (nor the beautiful).

Knowledge of the Good and the True, while potential within us, is not possessed by us on a regular basis. What lives in the mind (spirit/soul nexus) is mostly a poorly cultivated garden of prejudices and biases. Moreover, we basically are asleep here in this inner world, while more awake in the outer sense world. We don't carefully choose our *mental representations* and *concepts* - they just sort of grow there. We are, in fact, too close to them. We are attached to them and we desire this attachment. The wonderful Tibetan Lhama and Buddhist spiritual teacher, Chogyam Trungpa, called this garden of *concepts* and *mental representations*, with *its associated favorite and self-loved feelings*: ego's collection (see his book *Meditation in Action*).

Now in order to cultivate and develop this garden of the mind, we have to first separate ourselves - our *i-AM* - from our collection. The *i-AM* is *not the content of the soul*, but must become its true husband - its true steward. During incarnation spirit and soul are married, with all the intimacy that this suggests, and it is a marriage too long based on instinct, semi-consciousness and illusory cultural traditions.

No one can do this work for us, and it is the only step that allows us to begin to truly understand how to express love into the social world. We first cultivate the garden of the own mind, taking care to eliminate the weeds, and to plant only that which we know through moral grace to be able to bear fruit. Our first moral acts then concern the content of the mind, if we are to be awake to *the consciousness soul*, whose meaning should now be most apparent. We turn our *attention* from concentrating mostly on the sense world, and with *intention* begin to enter into the landscape of the mind, to become active (*will-on-fire*) there as well. Recall our symbolism: [*sense world* < *soul (d)* < *i-AM* > (*d*) *soul* > *spiritual world*]. No longer just looking out, we also look within. And, as we know, many are already on this journey.

Emerson has written in *The American Scholar*, for example: *The only thing of value, in life, is the active soul.*

By the way, this need and process is seen in many places. I mentioned previously the film *Pay It Forward*. Now I'd like to point out another such example - Barbara Hall's remarkable creation, the television series *Joan of Arcadia*. As those who have watched it in its first season know, Joan is a teenage girl who has been seeing God, who visits her in the sense world via a variety of human forms (children, adolescents, mature people, all colors, races, kinds and shapes), and then challenges her to confront various moral experiences. In the final episode of *Season One*, Joan is brought into a condition of doubt, while her parents, who had no knowledge of Joan's sense experiences of the Divine Mystery, are themselves brought to their own powerful experiences (the father sees a dead person, and the mother has a clairvoyant-like intuition, while at Church, of Joan's being hospitalized and needing her).

What we have been struggling with here, regarding making a distinction between sense experience and inner experience, is pointed out to Joan in two statements from God to her, in this episode: 1) *sometimes it's hard to believe what you see, so you have to trust the world behind your eyes*; and 2) *learn to see in the dark*.

Next I am going to shed some light on something not well known yet. This is the application, in practice, of moral grace to the inner world, not just the outer.

Before, we previously learned to understand that we had the capacity, as a matter of Grace, to be able to know in any given individual social situation, what the Good was - what was moral, or what, as Sheldon points out, would Jesus do. Now we are to learn that in the cultivation of the garden of the mind we need to come to understand that the content of our thought life is a moral act as well. Again, Matthew 5:28: "*But I say to you that anyone who so much as looks with lust at a woman has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*" ***{But I say any man who looks at a woman and really wants her has already slept with her in his heart.}*** Or, Matthew 23: 26 ***{...wash out the inside of the cup and saucer first, if you want the outside to end up clean!}***

The same *moral grace* that helps us navigate the world of our social actions, also *helps us to navigate the world of our inner mental image and concept creation*, as well as the life of feelings. We can begin to learn to distinguish here between our prejudices and opinions, and the true and the

good. We can also learn to know the difference between a reactive feeling (someone *makes* us angry), and a *cultivated* mood of soul (for details see in the Appendix the discussion regarding prayer and meditation).

When we think a thought, we commit a mental act. We can learn to look at this act, and ask ourselves a question quite similar to the one which we asked about our outward actions. Is this the good, is this what Jesus would think? From experience I can tell you that the same is true with regard to inner actions as is true with regard to our outer actions. *When we ask if an inner act is moral, we have the Grace given capacity to know if this is so.* And, the same general rules apply.

We can't ask this about someone else's inner actions, only our own. Each such action inwardly is just as individual as our outer social actions. Just as we can approach the outer social world out of a love engendered impulse of free moral grace, so we approach the cultivation of the own content of soul. Nor are we bound by our knowledge of whether an inner act is the good. We still remain free to act upon this knowledge, or not.

Is it hard? You bet. It's just as hard as life. The miracle part is that there is a one to one correspondence between the life of the social world lived in our individual biography and our inner life within the soul/spirit world. We don't need sitting meditation to work on these aspects of our nature (there is however, much that can be said about the life of prayer and meditation, concerning which I will write later). We just live the biography and learn to wake up inwardly to how that inwardness and the outer sense world are joined. What we learn is unique to us. In the main there is no pattern, and we are basically our own teachers. We have stepped out of being spiritual children, and entered the world of spiritual adulthood. As we noted above from St. Paul in I Corinthians: "*When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child. Now that I have become a man, I have to put away the things of child. We see now through a mirror in an obscure manner, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know even as I have been known.*"

What is this mirror of which St Paul speaks? It is the soul, in which the spirit finds its obscure first reflection. As we unfold ourselves inwardly, we pass beyond mere *mental representations* and *abstract generalized concepts*, to the reality of *pure living concepts* and *ideas*, which are not what's but who's - not things, but *Beings*. We pass beyond mere reactive

feelings to cultivated moods of soul, and then through those to communion with the Invisible. The content of mind changes from the merely conceptually reflective, to the clarity of intimate experience with the Divine Mystery Itself - *face to face, and known*.

What is this work of uniting the outer and inner events of the biography in a self-examination illumined by moral grace? *It is the conscious development of earthly character*. Not only that, many readers of this text will have the truthful feeling that they are already doing this in their own way. That feeling is probably accurate, for these experiences are precisely what it means to be in *the consciousness soul* - that is to be alive in this particular period and stage of the Evolution of Consciousness.

It is, in fact, in this work of inner husbandry that we begin to overcome that which separates us so strongly - our addiction to and our egoistic love of our own collection, our individual point of view. Everywhere we look in the social world we see this collision* of individualized views of the world, often elaborate systems of belief, that we hold to so tightly that we would commit violence to maintain and protect them. As Kevin Smith, the creator of the remarkable film ***Dogma***, had one of his characters suggest: *We fight wars over beliefs, while we honor ideas and idealism*. The temptation is to insist that the other, the Thou, give up their beliefs, while the real work always remains how we ourselves cultivate the inner garden of our own mind (for other details of this in practice, see appendix 2) *Sacrifice of Thoughts: cleaning out the garden of the mind before growing new insights, and other unusual properties of our soul-spirit nexus*.).

*[See also the *end story*, *Bicycles: A Children's Christmas Story for Adults*.]

Love, in a social sense, then begins with the sacrifice of that point of view which separates us one from the other. We seek to become as inwardly selfless as we seek to become outwardly selfless. The task is quite simple to state, although hard in practice unless we are diligent and persistent. We give up (sacrifice) the *mere mental representations*, and *abstract generalized concepts*, which inhabit our individualized point of view, and slowly, over time, replace these with *true (pure) concepts* and *living Ideas*. We still think, but we enrich that thinking with acts of moral grace.

[For details on this from the side of Gnosis, read: *In Joyous Celebration of the Soul Art and Music of Discipleship*, #7 in the appendix.]

By the way, this individualized point of view, which we seek to bring more in line with the truth - to make more universal, is not the same as our understanding of moral grace, which must be individualized. Moral acts, being particular and unique to us, must always be based on an individualized intuition of the Good, while the True is something shared by all, and becomes that sharing largely through conversation.

This is an important but subtle distinction, and well worth going over once again.

We know the **Good** as an *individualized moral intuition* (What would Jesus do?). Mostly we practice moral grace in our immediate lives and relationships. We know the **True** as an *universalized pure concept*. The **True** is not individual but universal, while the **Good** is not universal, it is individual. At the same time, to seek the **True** is inwardly a moral act. We know this precisely because we have to give up (sacrifice) our favorite prejudices and opinions in order to seek the **True**.

What we can do, as an individualized inward moral act, is ask ourselves the question: Is this the truth, or merely my opinion? We then test our self-honesty, and develop a subtle, but reliable, inner sense to the truth, as against our own tendency to form opinions (which opinions we often later act as if they were true). Here we are knowing the **Good** insofar as we make a sound assessment of our inner actions as regard the degree to which we seek the true. Seeking is an inner act, and it is that act which we make moral through the Grace which is in us to know the **Good**.

The **Good** in life then we know in an *individualized* way, and as well we know in an *individualized* way the **Good** as regards our inner actions. There are many kinds of inner actions, including the forming of biased mental pictures, opinionated generalized concepts and reactive feelings which control us, instead of us controlling them. We can know when we live inwardly in the one (what are basically lies we tell ourselves) and the other (the truth), via our capacity for moral grace as applied to our inner acts. However, when we seek to know the **True**, which is an universalized intuition, we may in the beginning, through our moral intuition, only know

what we don't know. *Our moral intuition is sensitive to our self-honesty regarding the truth.*

In practice, this ability to know when we are *full of it* (do we just talk the talk, or do we actually walk the walk) or not, is very valuable in all our social relations, and the reader should recall this aspect of the Twelve Steps (Step 10: *Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong admitted it*). Social relations based upon speaking the truth, as against mere opinions, gain from the practice. Moreover, in seeking after the True, we are frequently helped when this is done in community with others - when the seeking for the True is done in a context in which the search for universal concepts is a shared activity.

This then leads us to the main way in which we are social beings: *conversation*.

The poet/scientist Goethe is sometimes quoted as follows, from his Fairy Tale: ***The Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily***: "*What is greater than gold? It is light. What is more enlivening than light? Conversation!*".

Human beings can actually experience the enlivening effects of conversation. In fact, we all have had this experience, whether through the long discussions over food and wine in the family, or those school time all night sessions where deep (and often wonderfully silly) philosophical reflection is the theme.

In conversation then we seek a means to reach a shared and community understanding of the True, while within our own soul we seek the knowledge of the Good through moral imagination or asking What Would Jesus Do. Recall once more our symbolism: [*sense world* < *soul (A/d)* < *i-AM* > (*L/d*) *soul* > *spiritual world*]. In the world of the senses, our shared social world, we need to have a *community* of concepts and ideas, rather than a *collision** of individualized mental representations. This community of concepts and ideas can only be arrived at in a healthy social way through conversation. *[again, see the little story ***Bicycles***, at the end of this book.]

In conversation, the tendency to live only in private mental pictures and generalized opinions can be overcome, should the whole group understand that this is the goal of the social activity. Marjorie Spock, a student of

Rudolf Steiner's, wrote a small book on this theme: ***Group Moral Artistry***.
Valentin Tomberg also wrote a small pamphlet on this: ***The Philosophy of Taking Council with Others***.

Further, our whole social life will change, if and when we can introduce into our public (political) life the understanding of these realities.

fourth stanza
love and the gift of the word - a demonstration
being a deeper consideration of the relationship between
our inner activity, and our outer acts in speech

As the cultivation of our spirit/soul nexus (mind) grows, we encounter a deeper appreciation of the gift of the word. Here is some verse I wrote several years ago. By the way, ***the gift of the word*** (once called: *Speech*) very much wants to be read aloud, with some passion and the occasional rush of words. It also likes to have someone read it to us, so that we may concentrate only on hearing it. Perhaps, even, this whole stanza could be read aloud...

the gift of the word (speech)

Speech, / Words, letters, sounds, / heard by both the inner ear and the outer.

Letters, sounds, words, / linked invisibly to ideas and thoughts.

Ideas, thoughts, letters, sounds, words, / a woven tapestry of meaning, carried by Speech, / sometimes with grace, / but most often just carelessly.

Meaning, / a weaving of thoughts, sounds, words, letters and ideas, spoken into the air and left there, / abandoned.

Words, spoken and heard. / Meaning intended. / But what is heard?

That which is heard is also intended. / Two intentions, two purposes, two meanings.

How difficult then communication, / suffering as it does the contrary pulls of multiple intentions, purposes and meanings.

I speak, you listen. / I mean, you grasp. / Somewhere in this delicate dance of words, sounds, letters, thoughts, ideas and purposes; / understanding is sought after.

Perhaps. / Sometimes.

Voice. / Speech reveals the unspoken. / Anger, fear, pride, arrogance, true humility.

The ear of the heart hears what is hidden in voice.

Posture, gesture. / Speech is more than sound. / The eye hears things the ear cannot, just as the ear sees things the eye cannot.

One mind. / Two minds. / Speech a bridge of woven light between two minds, and sometimes, although rarely, / between two hearts.

Speech, rich and full of flavor, / a light bridge, / joining two separate beings.

Speech denatured, / No sound, no gesture, no posture, no voice.

Speech reduced to lines of dark on light. / Written. / A treasure map in code spilled across a page.

Words, letters, ideas, thoughts, sounds, / reduced to marks upon a parchment. / Speech dying.

Yet, / even in death, murdered by pen or pencil mark, / some essence of Speech still.

Meaning embalmed. Understanding buried. / Until read.

Reading. / Words, sounds, letters, thoughts, ideas, meaning, purposes, intentions,

Speech resurrected in the silence of another mind.

Speech. / Light bridge dying into print, / reborn when read in the inner quiet of another soul.

Speech, / The Spoken Word. / Writing, / The Word entombed. / Writing read, / The Word resurrected.

That this is so, / that human beings live in such an exalted state having Speech, this is Grace.

The spoken word, the written word. / Things so ordinary, so taken for granted, so pregnant with possibility.

The emptiness between two souls is always / chaste, virgin, pure, / waiting for Grace, for the bridge of light, / for Speech.

the gift of the word (Speech) was written on Epiphany, Jan. 6, 1997, in the evening, in about a third of an hour.

Next to the cultivation of our inner life, the cultivation of speech (*conversation*) is of parallel importance. Speaking and conversation are the main actions by which we are social. As I think of you, so shall I speak to you and treat you. There is a middle-Eastern aphorism as follows: *There are three gates to speech. Is it true; is it necessary and is it*

kind. Here is another middle-Eastern aphorism, mentioned once before: cultivate your thought for thought will become speech; cultivate your speech for speech will become deeds; cultivate your deeds for deeds will become character; and cultivate your character, for character will become destiny.

The creation of a socially healthy new civilization rests entirely on *love engendered free deeds of moral grace*, of which the most important are what we think (how we are moral in the inner world) and how we converse (how we are moral in the social world). Everything of a healthy social nature is rooted in these actions.

Out of the gift of the word flow powerful creative forces, as well as destructive forces, and we have only to look at history, and at contemporary events to see what is involved. The lie is everywhere. M. Scott Peck even wrote a book about it, or at least tried: ***People of the Lie***. Modern politics and world events are everywhere confounded with the lie. Our personal lives too are damaged and confused with the lie. The gift of the word is frequently not used with the grace that lives in its potential.

Even Soap Operas, or what the industry likes to call daytime dramas, have as a central artistic element regarding their regular moral themes the demonstration over and over again of how the darkest consequences begin and flow from the lie.

At this point in this text, I would like to use the gift of the word, after the fashion of the Letters of St. Paul, to address modern evangelical and fundamentalist Christians, Catholics, Baptists and all others who give to themselves the name *Christian*. St. Paul had to write to many communities to admonish them for having fallen into error in their understanding of the message of the Gospels, and these same problems exist in Christian practice today, often in ways far exceeding the problems that he previously observed.

As to whether I have any right to speak in the following fashion, I leave to the contents of this book that sharing of my own biography the leads me to the necessity to say what I do. Certainly, as against all manner of preaching and writing by many a presumed authority in the variety of Christian Way's, this little book will be barely visible. Nonetheless,

knowing what I do, I cannot in good conscience leave aside addressing these issues.

the Fool's Tale
(part III)

Dear Friends,

Greetings from one who would also follow ***In His Steps***, to the degree that I am able. It is my thought that to name oneself a Christian - a follower of Christ as many do, seems to me to take upon ones self a grave responsibility. If I name myself a Christian, do I not proclaim to the world more than just a belief in a particular God? What is that more? I have been, throughout this book, trying to suggest that being Christian is found *more in doing than in the mere believing*. But *doing* what? This is not, however, an easy questions to answer, and right in the beginning of this Letter I need to confess, being an addict in recovery, that I know myself to mostly fail to live up to His Example. Be assured, I will not be judging you, for I have no basis for such thoughts, or actions.

Yet there are, as regards true ***In His Steps practices***, many issues. I mentioned in the first stanza the problem of works and of grace, a subject much discussed by others. Let me begin there, now that the major portions of this book have been expressed. I should also remind the reader that I began my biography as a person of Faith, and then only half way through it, in my 30's, did I come upon the ideas and practices of Gnosis. I bridge both worlds, and do not consider that either one diminishes the other, but on the contrary, each enriches the other to a considerable degree.

Remember also, that at the beginning of the Christian Era, Gnosis *voluntarily* took itself into the background - the ancient Mysteries of Initiation consciously gave way to the new Mysteries of Faith. In a sense, what St. Paul experienced on the road to Damascus, in all of a moment (direct experience of Christ - i.e *initiation*), is the path the Evolution of Consciousness can lead all biographies, if we so choose.

It is Christ Himself who makes the new gnosis of moral grace, freedom and love available to us, yet only now, that at least a few of us have won

some of the true gifts of Faith, can this be possible. True Faith is our foundation, and Gnosis is the house - the inner Temple - that can be built on that foundation if we will it. Mere belief is not a sufficient foundation. The conclusion of Christ's Sermon on the Mount is this: *Everyone therefore who hears these my words and acts upon them, shall be likened to a wise man who built his house on rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, but it did not fall, because it was founded on rock. And everyone who hears these my words and does not act upon them, shall be likened to a foolish man who built his house on sand. And the rain fell and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell and was utterly ruined."* Matthew 7:24-27 {***So anyone who hears these words from me and does them, will become like a sensible man who built his house on bedrock, and the rain came down and the floods came and the winds hurled themselves at the house, and it didn't fall because it was grounded on the rock. Any anyone who hears these words from me and doesn't do them, will become like a stupid man who built his house on sand, and the rain came down and the floods came and the winds beat at the house, and it fell, and its downfall was tremendous.***} (emphasis added)

True Faith is that bedrock foundation, and mere belief leads to a house built on sand.

In a sense this means that having been *saved* by grace, by Faith, we now can do more. Yet, there are those who preach and want to suggest that being saved is enough, nothing more is required, which is a view that the Gospels themselves show to be a mistake. We have to ask ourselves, if grace and Faith were all, then why did Christ teach the Sermon on the Mount, the Parables and all else that He taught about doing and works. Just consider the Beatitudes: Blessed are the: poor in spirit; the gentle; those hungering and thirsting for justice; the merciful; the clean-hearted; the peacemakers; the persecuted; and so forth. What did He mean when He said for us to clean out the inside of our cup first? What is the point of advising that the true Shepherd is he who leaves the 99 already saved, to go and find the one that is lost?

Everywhere we look in the Gospels, Christ describes to us deeds, doing, works!

If we really think our way into the Gospels and make of them a whole, then we can see that it is not that we need to achieve perfection, but that we must try. We must aim for the highest we can be, and our Faith is that even if we miss the mark, Grace will not abandon us. We do not need to succeed at that tasks of works, but we are not to rest content and think that all the consequences of our misdeeds, our errors, and our failures have been overcome once all we do is make the commitment to Christ that so many preachers and Churches now suggest will save us - more is required or these words of Christ have no meaning: "*whatsoever ye do to the least of these my brothers and sisters, you also do to me.*" (emphasis added)

Being saved is, after all, something for ourselves. Works are for others. Some think that the main work is to save others, that is to convert others, but which actions of ours do you believe will be most effective in helping others see the Wisdom of Christ: our rigid insistence on correct doctrine, or the obvious sacrament of our own selfless actions toward others.

Charles Sheldon understood this clearly. Otherwise what would be the point of asking ourselves: What Would Jesus Do? If there is no point to this act of asking, seeking and knocking, and if all we have to do is accept Jesus as our Lord (an easy thing to do in the feeling-passion of a well preached Church service), then Sheldon's book: ***In His Steps*** has no meaning whatsoever.

For those to whom this book has meaning, and calls out to them, then more is needed than merely accepting Christ into our lives. If we truly ask ourselves What Would Jesus Do, then following ***In His Steps*** means at the least to live life as He lived, to bear our portion of the washing of the feet, the scourging, the crowing with thorns, the carrying of the cross, the crucifixion, the entombment and the resurrection, as those trials come to us because we share the courage to also act in the world out of love engendered free moral grace.

Going to church on Sunday to be saved and accept the Lord, and then acting in the world the rest of the week as hypocrites, will only lead to one result - a house built on sand.

Sheldon also knew, as he wrote, that when we authentically ask (for he certainly practiced this in his own life) the Holy Spirit comes to our aid.

Recall once more what is written in John and which is described in this book from many directions and in many contexts:

John 16: 12-15 *"I have much more to say to you, but you can't bear it just yet. But when the other comes, the breath of truth, he will guide you in the ways of all truth, because he will not speak on his own, but will speak what he hears and announce to you what's coming. He will glorify me, because he will take of what is mine and announce it to you. Everything the Father has is mine: that's why I said he will take of what is mine and announce it to you."*

When we go more and more consciously to this Source, through our growing development during the Age of the Consciousness Soul (as an aspect of the Evolution of Consciousness) the Holy Spirit will give to the sacraments of our inner life (more below) all that we ask, seek and knock concerning. We bring our questions to the kingdom of God that is within us, and we will receive.

Recall also this important point: Sheldon does not say: come to me and I will preach to you what to do, but rather he says go to the inner forum of your own conscience, and there you will be answered. The pastor is not any longer to be a moral authority, whether Pope or preacher. Only what is in us is to carry that burden, and that gift (*love engendered free moral grace*) is to be the only authority any human being has to acknowledge now and into the future.

At the same time, we know the power of moral action in this world, and its trials, which are many. Mel Gibson's movie ***The Passion*** showed us one version of such trials. While I would not have made such a movie, with its emphasis on the Death of Christ, diminishing thereby the significance of the Resurrection (what for me is the true Teaching), that my view is different is no basis to judge. *Difference in point of view is how we live our biographies, as ordained by our Lord. But difference does not mean better.* My biography led me to writing this, while Gibson's lead him to his movie, each a freely chosen act of the heart.

To follow Christ, to truly follow ***In His Steps***, as Gibson's movie does teach, is to be dangerous and to risk. Everyone who really tries to practice what we might call Christian Life understands this. Christ wasn't crucified because He conformed to the religious or political *fashion* of the moment,

but because true moral action violates all such *fashion* (political correctness).

Yet, many see great evil in the world, and it is Christ in the Sermon on the Mount that teaches us that if we would understand evil we must start with the log in our own eye, before we are ever able to help another with their splinter. And later He says, that we must wash out the inside of our own cup, in order to really make truly clean the outside. Knowing this it pains me deeply in soul to see so many who take the name Christian to themselves, yet act with such judgment on those others who are different.

There is given a lame justification for this: love the sinner, hate the sin (an idea not found in the Gospels at all). As we have come to learn in this book, the concept *sin* was added to the vocabulary of Christ's teachings by others - it was not in the original Gospels, when they were rendered into Greek. Instead, the understanding was that we error, we miss the mark, although our intention (our aim) is true.

For hundreds of years now, judgmental Christian leaders have weighed us down with the *guilt* of *sin* - as if we bore a taint, a stain, from birth that never could be washed away, when Christ Himself has never sought for us to feel this way. Why would Love make His children feel so terribly wrong? Clearly He would not, and nothing in the Gospels suggests this, even His remarks on the Fires of Gehenna, which in the Sermon on the Mount only express the consequences of continuous error, not our given state of being. Is it also not possible that these Fires are another way of describing the experience of *kamaloka* - the after life where we are to endure what we have done to others?

We are to love those close to us as we would love ourselves, and when we classify another as an enemy, how can that be anything but that judgment by which we will later be judged - that sentence to which we will later be sentenced (in the *kamaloka* experience of the after life). Only our Lord can judge, and has He not shown, even on the Cross, the power of Forgiveness?

Can anyone who reads this explain to me how being Christian, truly a follower of Christ, can lead to such divisions over dogmas and doctrines (mere beliefs) that have taken over the One True Church. We have made such a mess of things, such that more and more that greater portion of the

world, which is not Christian, hates all things that claim to be Christian. Do we not need to beg His Forgiveness for this mess we have made of His Gifts?

Would even Christ be a Christian in the sense that this is lived today?

Yet, who can doubt that He does Forgive us, whether we practice or not the Fifth Petition of His Prayer: *And forgive our debts as we forgave the debts that others owe us.*

His Promise to us was: "*Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give your rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light.*" Matthew 11: 28-30. ***{Come here to me, all you drudges and overburdened ones, and I will give you a rest. Put my yoke on and learn from me: I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls, because my yoke is kindly and my load is light.}***

Which do you think is more easy: To hate and despise and judge, or to take up the Yoke of Christ and love? What makes it so hard to love? Is it not our own desires and hungers and wants, that we would have to sacrifice? Is it not our own favorite beliefs and habits of feeling that we would have to give away? We cling to ourselves, and love ourselves more, while the highest love is always to love ourselves less, and God and our Brothers and Sisters more. What is it we fear about love?

We fear love will not be returned, so we do not offer it. We only want to spend love to receive love - to make a commerce of this act, and much of life is this bargain over love me please so that I can love you. Yet, the truth is that the more we love, the more love we have to give. The more we give love, the more we are filled with love to give. The Yoke of Love is kindly indeed, and light as well. To love is to put down the burden of bargaining, to put down the burden of enmity, to put down the burden of judgment. So He tells us overburdened ones to come to Him and He will give us rest. Come to Love, come to gentleness and humility of heart, and find rest for all our souls.

And what is the greatest sacrifice we can make, the greatest burden we can put down? To give up being *Christian*!

Christ went to the Cross as a human being, not as a Christian. And there then is the great choice: To be a human being, one with all our brothers and sisters, or to be this other thing - a Christian, someone who sees themselves as separate and different, someone who is seen now by most to claim moral superiority over all that is unlike itself (recall again the central dilemma of Freedom: *dominion over* or *communion with*) . Each human being, to the extent that they think of themselves as one thing, which others are not, falls into the trap of assumed otherness, such that we falsely believe: *I am different, better, while they are not like me, and morally less than me.* What madness is it that believes so vainly that only those who are Saved (*like me*), or are the Elect (*like me*), or Catholic (*like me*) are worthy in His Heart? What do I owe to those who are not like me?

Which do you think Christ taught? To be a Christian, to take His Name to ourselves, or to be human, and to see Him in every other human being, including ourselves, as He taught us? ***{Let me assure you, however much you wouldn't do it for any of the least important of these people, you wouldn't do it for me either.}***

If we ourselves are an *i-AM*, a spirit, a child of the Father, then so are all other human beings. On what basis then do we dare to conceive ourselves as better or more worthy in His eyes. If He has taught us to forgo the 99 saved sheep to seek the one that is lost, do you not yet understand this question: *What Would Jesus Do?*

Did not St. Paul write: "*Not I, but Christ in me*"? (Galatians 2:20) What about Christ in the other, the Thou?

And what about Faith? Is it the same as a strongly held belief? I think not. Faith involves trust, while belief is what we cling to that makes us feel different. We possess our beliefs do we not? Do we not say: "*I am entitled to what I believe*"? Faith makes room for miracles, for the promise is that Faith can move mountains. Maybe true Faith can move the mountain that is the log in our own eye.

At the same time, all who conceive themselves to be Christians are an odd and individual mixture of true Faith and mere belief. Faith is really an act of will, and not a thought content at all, while belief is mostly a set of

dogmatic beliefs, which are not knowledge - no Gnosis. For Gnosis to have Life (Christ's Presence) it must be founded on Faith. But for the content (the beliefs) of Faith to have Truth (again, Christ's Presence) they must be founded on Gnosis.

Overtime, Gnosis has regularly infused Faith (starting with Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus), but this stream of infusion has been broken up by periods of time where people then clung to the past (making rigid dogmas of the previous infusion). This is most obvious in the Catholic Church, who regularly has received infusions of new inspiration via such as St. Francis or St. Ignatius.

In addition, there is so much hypocrisy in today's Churches and sects, that He must certainly feel great pain. Some preach hate, some preach wealth (in spite of all that Christ warned about wealth), some preach that all manner of sex is a sin, and then the very next day they have to confess to practicing such acts. Do you really think that once you have taken Christ as your Lord and Savior that ends all other striving to do What Jesus Would Do?

Christ made promises, and Faith would know that these promises would be fulfilled. One matter that He promised - one most crucial matter - was that He would Return.

Some men, who many will know of, have written a series of books in which they believe to have set out the meaning for our time of the Last Book of the Bible, the Book of Revelations. Is there anything gentle and humble in making up a story that tells people that Christ only loves the Saved and the Elect, and that He, who taught us to love our enemies, would return in the flesh and spread death and destruction everywhere, acts which have to be the very opposite of Forgiveness and Love? What base human vanity to turn our Lord into a such vengeful monster!

Even so, I would not want to take such a burden as these writers will into the true judgment in the afterlife that is kamaloka. Perhaps they have done their best, and who, but Christ, is to judge them for it. Yet, how can I not wonder otherwise about their pretense to speak truthfully of the Divine Mystery in matters so acute and important to all humanity. These are, after all, books of fiction. Are they the equal of Sheldon's *In His Steps*?

There is a story that has come from the Holy Land, carried by a gentle and humble man. He wrote a book in 1993, which he called *The Spiritual Event of the Twentieth Century*. His name is Jesaiah Ben-Aharon, and he has been graced with that knowledge of the spirit world only seen when we travel the path within and enter through the Narrow Gate - via the development of our own will-on-fire in thinking.

This is not a book that is popular or widely known. It has not made its author wealthy and beloved in a worldly sense. It was given humbly, without publicity and advertising. The book simply waits, while its author lives in the Holy Land, working, as many work, in the socially creative vineyards of that troubled and tragic place.

Ben-Aharon not only tells the true story of the Return as Promised, but shows it has a depth far beyond the vain fancies of the authors of the Left Behind series. Read them both and compare and then decide for yourselves which speaks more truly of such profound and Holy questions. I can say this. I have read Ben-Aharon's book, and found not only that which makes Faith more secure, but it also has exact instructions as to how to open up our own souls to the experience of the *Return*, and, even more strangely and profoundly, *how to truly participate in this Return*.

Some Christians, such as the institutional aspects of the Catholic Church, have come to love their own worldly power far too much. In this Fallen state, they have received into themselves news of a sort that ought to have led to great joy and celebration. Something happened in Europe during the Twentieth Century of profound importance for all who look to Christ's Example. The meaning-essence of the Kings returned and the Church's leaders know it and have said nothing concerning the message that the returned meaning-essence of the Kings has brought. Pride of belief took precedence over love of the truth. Preservation of dogmas and mere beliefs was more important than new instruction. Better for these to hold to their power over others, their claim of moral authority, than to admit the existence of Christ's *continuing* Revelation to humanity through His chosen voices.

Think on this again. Just as at the Birth and Childhood, the Kings (gnosis-initiates) were present, so in this time of the true Second Coming, when Christ experiences in the inner world of spirit a second Calvary, so too the

Kings were present, called by this sublime event so as to witness and proclaim its meaning.

Yet, the historic pride of the institutional hierarchy of the Catholic Church has overlooked many of the most basic teachings of Christ, for example, where He says, in Mark 2: 27: "*The Sabbath was made for humanity, not humanity for the Sabbath.*" The Church was made for humanity, not humanity for the Church. To the extent that a conservative dogmatism rules the minds of the Church's institutional hierarchy - to that extent the *Life*, which is ***Christ's Presence***, is excluded.

Authentic spiritual experience, in part, depends as much upon *Grace from Above* as it does on our will-on-fire in thinking. An initiate does not storm the gates of Heaven and steal its secrets. Rather he purifies himself, humbles his soul and then is meet by *Grace from Above*. When Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) began to openly teach, while many came to hear, others were jealous and turned away. While Steiner battled the birthing of the Beast in National Socialism during the early 1920's (which eventually was to kill him), Rome looked the other way. When the Way, the Truth and the Life, manifested again in the world, priests and bishops and cardinals and popes denied this manifested Presence, much as Peter denied Christ in the hours after the Crucifixion.

So the stewards of the One True Church looked away, and unrestrained, and essentially unopposed, the Beast entered into the world, and thus were slain millions upon millions of Jews, and Germans and Russians, to say nothing of the hundreds of thousands of others who died on the Cross of Rome's denial.

What did the returned meaning-essence of the Kings bring? Well, I have been mentioning portions of it all along. Steiner not only wrote concerning how to exactly and precisely study the life of soul and spirit within ourselves in a fully scientific fashion (through objective philosophical introspection), he also wrote dozens of other books, and gave over 6000 lectures, most of which were transcribed and many of which have been published in several languages. This work of new revelation gave birth to all manner of disciplines, in which knowledge of the world of spirit could infuse and heal the confusions caused by scientific materialism. The role of authentic spiritual understanding in

education, in the arts, in medicine, in agriculture and even in natural science has been laid out for any to see and take up.

What Rome denied wasn't just a prophet standing on a street corner, but a whole unfolding of how, behind the scenes of nature and of the human organism, the world of spirit exists and participates at all levels. Through Steiner, scientific materialism was deconstructed without any abuse to the true scientific spirit, and its quite valid methods of careful observation and thinking. But people, being people - that is human - even Steiner's students could barely carry the stewardship of his work, especially since this work's Christ Essence was denied by the most powerful Church of our time.

Let us consider the practical aspects of this for a moment. The Wisdom that Rudolf Steiner was able to bring (not solely out of himself, but as a *co-participant* with the Above) advanced medicine, education, farming, care of the disabled, natural science, public (social) life, religion, art and much more. However, it also bore within it (in addition to its disagreements with natural science) that which conflicts with Catholic dogma and theology, and which would suggest (as this book suggests) that the moral authority of the Church is no longer valid, nor is it any longer the time for the Church to look upon their charges as spiritual children.

As a consequence, in order to keep its earthly power the Church kept its support away from these remarkable new revelations of the spirit. This new spiritual knowledge was very much needed by a world desperate for advances in all fields that are required in order to overcome the one-sided vision of materialistic science: that existence is only of matter, and never of spirit, or that the human being is an animal, with no spark of the Divine. The Catholic Church, at some conscious level, made a decision to think, in regard to this new revelation, of itself first and humanity second.

This then was the revelation of the first new King.

The second new King I have also mentioned, for Valentin Tomberg (1900-1973), who was for a time a student of Steiner's, was himself rejected by the community of Steiner followers. Not to be foiled by this vain resistance, Tomberg went so far as to become a Catholic during WWII, and following on this (in the decade of the 1960's) he wrote ***Meditations on the Tarot: a journey into Christian Hermeticism***, which expressly was

an attempt to remind the truly religious of the once One True Church of the path of the Kings - the path of gnosis and initiation. This was an extraordinary work, created after he retired in England, which sought to unfold the true roots of the Catholic Mysteries, all the way back through Hebrew Wisdom to the Wisdom of the Ancient Egyptians. With deep humility he had this published anonymously and only after his death.

And, those who are paying attention to these things will also know that while this book has become important among many of the religious, who are also Catholic (as well as many others besides), he also wrote - subsequent to *Meditations* - something more for the laity: ***Covenant of the Heart***.

Has any of the Catholic laity, the Body of Christ, heard either of these books quoted in a homily, or been encouraged to read any of Tomberg's works?

Steiner had been ignored, and next came Tomberg who reached right into the heart of the Church to bring once more the revelation that initiation wisdom is again available for humanity, but once again the Church held more dear its own authority and power.

So passed by the revelation of the second new King.

So far, I have mention two books of Jesaiah Ben-Aharon (1955 -): ***America's Global Responsibility: individuation, initiation and threefolding***; and, ***The Spiritual Event of the Twentieth Century***. There is a third: ***The New Experience of the Supersensible***, in which he unfolds his own understanding of the processes of gnosis in our time.

Here, in his little book (published in 1993) on the true Second Coming (*The Spiritual Event...*), was great news for all Christians - Christ had returned! What more would be needed in a world gone mad, with false prophets everywhere claiming that only the saved could be raptured, that the End Times were here, the Christ was yet to come and when He did He would come in a physical body, and in such a rage that he would kill people.

Instead of this pollution of the truth, Ben-Aharon writes of a second Calvary and second great sacrifice. Here then is the revelation of the third new King, who still yet lives, but who is also denied by Rome.

Like Peter, Rome in the Twentieth Century has three times denied the New Revelations of Christ, including the announcement of the real Second Coming!

[For those who would like some facts, Pope John Paul II is known to have been a part of Steiner groups as a young man in Poland before he became a priest, and there has been seen a picture taken of him, in his office just after becoming Pope, that was published in the German magazine *Stern.de*, which shows him standing behind a desk on which can be clearly seen a copy of *Meditations on the Tarot*. All of this, by the way, is not to ignore the obvious: That the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) has certainly, through its critical intellectual passions, been well aware of these three individuals for some time.]

From out of the depths of soul of those peoples who were and did give millions of lives on the Cross that was WWII, the Hebrews, the Russians and the Germans, the new Kings rose: Jesaiah Ben-Aharon, born a Jew in Israel; Valentin Tomberg, born a Russian; and, Rudolf Steiner, born on the border of Austria and Germany, who was educated in Germany and centered all his work there until the National Socialists drove him into exile in Switzerland in the early 1920's. Such then were/are the acts of love of the new Kings, and it was the Grace of Christ that filled them from within, in all their efforts and work.

Nor is that the end of it. For the new Kings were not alone, but were accompanied by many. Can we not realize that the meaning essence of the Disciples will also return, and that there will also be a second Pentecost. Once we open this door of new revelation, whole worlds open up, including the means to truly reveal how to unite both Science and Religion on such important questions as the true meaning of human physical evolution (a matter requiring too much detail to touch upon here).

May those who seek to follow *In His Steps*, find their way to this fount of *New Revelation* that has been set to flowing once more, beginning in the 20th Century - the Century of Christ's True Return in the Ethereal.

let it be so.

*end of the third part of the Fool's Tale,
and of a direct discussion of love*

There yet remains an effort to make a little summary of this book...

A principle aspect of the great Mystery of our Time is the Mystery of Evil, both outwardly in the structural backdrop to the shared social world of humanity, and inwardly in the depths of our own souls. I have tried above to point out how it is that the essential matter is not the outer social world, but the inner soul world, and the trials and education of the *i-AM*, in the biography. The context, which we need to call the maya of history and current events, and which is *penetrated* everywhere from below by the Dark Mystery of the Divine Mother, all passes away, and only what is Eternal, that is what becomes an aspect of the developing *i-AM*, continues; and, this inner realm (the whole Inwardness of the Creation, which includes human souls and spirits) only *exists* because of the Heavenly Mystery of the *thoughts (Ideas as Beings)* of the Father, while the whole (the outer social maya and the eternal inner mind) is *created, loved, overseen and mediated (wherever two or more are gathered...)*, in all its Grace filled and Artistic interrelationships, by the Earthly Mystery of the *sacrifices* of the Son.

[When He died on the Cross He began right there and then to fulfill His promise to be with us to the ends of time.]

We (humanity) now begin to move out of our spiritual childhood, and in making our way through the Rite of Passage that is Life as it leads us toward our spiritual maturity, we need to take hold of the complex of the doubles and the karma of wounds, as these thrive within our souls, and which encourage human evil through temptation and inner prosecution. Even so, this task of meeting the Mystery of Evil within the soul is not as heavy as we think, for through the *Shepherd's Tale* [Charles Sheldon], *the King's Tale* [Rudolf Steiner], *the Healers' Tale* [the community-created Twelve-Steps] and *the Sermon on the Mount*, we have all the practical instructions that we need.

In seeking to understand *in ourselves* these three: *moral grace, freedom and love*, we set before ourselves what is required to be learned in this

particular epoch of the Evolution of Consciousness, and it is with these three naturally unfolding capacities that we are Graced and strengthened so as to be able to meet with courage the Mystery of Evil. If we do dare this path, and seek for the deepest instruction in Christ's Sermon on the Mount, then will come to us a change in the nature of our biography, such that it more and more takes on the pattern, described in the John Gospel, as the Seven Stages of the Passion of Christ (*the washing of the feet; the scourging; the crowning with thorns; the carrying of the cross; the crucifixion; the entombment and the resurrection*) (for a careful exposition of these Seven Stages, see Valentin Tomberg's (anthroposophical) book: ***Inner Development***).

Whereas Christ lived this in an apparently mostly physical way, those, who truly follow ***In His Steps*** [*the name of Sheldon's book, as well as a critical phrase in Ben-Aharon's **The Spiritual Event of the Twentieth Century***], will in the main feel these trials in their souls, as aspects of the joy and suffering in the human biography.

These trials may seem difficult, but the truth is they are merely human. It was Christ becoming human that went to the Cross, for how could He place an example before us we could not do out of our own humanity (just as Sheldon wrote in ***In His Steps***). It is the human in Christ that asks in the Garden of Gethsemane that the cup be taken from him, but if not, He accepts the Father's will. While later it is the even deeper human in Christ that says on the Cross: "*My God, my God, why did you abandon me?*". Who among us, in the trials and sufferings of life, has not uttered these same thoughts?

[Steiner teaches that from the point of view of esoteric Christianity (Gnosis), these statements of Christ on His way to His death have a hidden meaning. I here remind Steiner's students, who may read this book, that this does not change the meaning known by Faith (by Shepherds). Both the outer and the hidden inner meanings are true within the nature of their individual significance and context.]

It is here that Christ's teachings strongly diverge from the Wisdom of the Buddha (who came before Him), for the Buddha would have had us overcome suffering by learning not to know it or to leave it aside (one version of the third Noble Truth of the Buddha reads as follows: "*...concerning the Cessation of Suffering; verily, it is passionless, cessation*

without remainder of this very craving; the laying aside of, the giving up, the being free from, the harboring no longer of, this craving."), whereas Christ asks us to embrace our human pain so that we can *pass through the Narrow Gate of suffering* to then know our deepest self, the *i-AM*, and then through this burning trial of knowledge of the true-self, ultimately come to Him. If we would follow ***In His Steps*** then we too must take on ourselves the errors (sins) of the world, and the tasks of forgiveness and love, for every *love engendered free act of moral grace* takes up a small part of Christ's suffering, so that we too participate in the deepest creative acts of the Seventh Day of Creation - *the transformation of evil into love*.

[This is for Steiner students the teaching attributed to Mani, but the reason such a personality even knows this is because *the transformation of evil into love* is modeled for us in the deepest felt actions of the Divine Mother and the Son. When we know intimately these actions of the Divine Mystery, we know the true spiritual meaning of the Mystery of Evil, and that this Divinely Lived Mystery is the true source of the earthly doctrine connected to it that is sometimes called Manichaeism.]

Is this foolish? Of course, but we need not fear this *Way of the Fool*, for our Faith in Christ's Promises will always be fulfilled, as we ourselves can learn to become the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. Yes, this Way is full of trials, but whoever has lived life, and reflected upon their experience, knows that in the meeting of our biography's trials *with true courage* (willed Faith and Hope) we discover what it truly means to be human: *to struggle, to fall, to get up and to learn - and, through this process, gently and humbly, begin to take up along side and with Him, Christ's kind and light, Yoke of Love.*

Having said all this, it becomes necessary to make one last picture for the reader, for clearly, in that we read the news and hear of the horrors of man's continuing inhumanity to man, we ourselves face a terrible trial. How are we to understand a world seemingly so filled with Evil?

Picture, for a moment, the surface of the Earth. Below dense matter and fiery substance, while above, airless space. Humanity only lives out its Earth Existence in this narrow spherical band of Life (its about 3 miles from the solid surface up to that level of the ocean of air were breathing becomes difficult), which narrow band has a diameter of just under 8,000 miles. The total surface area of the Earth is 196 million square miles, and

the habitable land area 43 million square miles Over six billion plus human beings must find all that they physically need, which when we consider actual available arable land (land that could be cultivated for food), means that each individual only has a square 161 feet on a side from which to annually grow the food they need. This then is *the spacial aspect of the social organism of the whole world*.

Yet, we know that this space is itself often unwisely distributed, for human social arrangements, whether rooted in dominance and selfishness (*dominion over*) or generosity and sharing (*communion with*), seem to determine this social order. Because of our Freedom, a moral and/or amoral order moves and operates the physical one.

As to this *moral aspect of the social organism of the whole world*, it has reached in this time a kind of climax of development, and it will be important to appreciate the true nature of the *logos order* (the order from *Above*) in which Christ has set modern human existence, through His creative powers as the Artist (Lord) of Karma (the precise and love based placement of individual biographies in relationship to each other as regard the healing of wounds and the necessity of justice). Here is something Natural Science cannot do, for the *meaning of existence* is beyond the weaknesses of their fanciful and spirit-empty images. This will also help us to understand why so many (falsely, but with some degree of reason) believe we live in the End Times.

In the Twentieth Century the world was woven together into a single social organism, not just via the globalization of economic matters, or the personal interconnections offered by the Internet, but most centrally by the Media. At the beginning of the 20th Century, few knew what went on elsewhere the world, in any detail or with any immediacy. By the end of the 20th Century, at the same time that the returned meaning-essence of the new Kings were unfolding the New Revelations of Christ in connection with His true Second Coming, the world itself was woven into a whole in the sense that no macro social event was not to be almost immediately known everywhere the same day (if not the same hour) that it happened.

We live in a time when has arisen a World-wide Culture of Media - a kind of *knowledge commons*, in which vast resources are used to create for us pictures of the meaning of the world and of events. The more developed

the country, the greater our daily experience can be saturated with the messages coming from this Culture of Media.

Moreover, great effort and expense is gone into by those who would force us to believe what they want us to believe. Between advertising, political propaganda, outright lies, weak or lame reporting, and other similar *failures to seek or reach the truth*, this saturation of the soul by the Culture of Media would seem to fail to offer us any service at all. What is not appreciated is that Christ is far wiser than even the deepest believers imagine. Every evil is eventually turned to good, and next we will explore a prime example for our time.

Recall what has been pointed out many times now, that *the individual biography is the central reality of life on the Earth*. What happens inside us as we experience life is much more important and enduring than the outer events which surround us. That Stage Setting (*all the world's a stage...*) is but a distracting vanity to the *reality* of the life of the soul. To help us appreciate this then, let us explore these matters from the point of view of the biography.

In this time, there are over six billion plus of these biographies woven into the tapestry of the social organism of the whole world. Six billion lives held delicately and exactly within the Love and Divine Justice of the Mystery. Within these biographies, all the individual *i-AMs* experience that precise and personal instruction that hopes to lead them to the realization of their own divinity and immortality of spirit. [recall that the epoch (rite of passage) of the Consciousness Soul is 2100 years long, going from the time of the beginning of the *on-looker separation* (and the creation of Natural Philosophy - Science) in the 1400's, until the years around 3500 AD, when the first (moral) stages of *final participation* will have by then fully arrived.]

To understand this we need to think it from the inside out, and not from the outside in. The Culture of Media only provides context, never essence. True, life is hard, even harsh, even terrible. The naive consciousness wants to turn away from this suffering, and cannot understand how God (the Divine Mystery) could allow such things as torture, child abuse and the genocidal acts which are dumbed down by the terms: ethnic cleansing.

The reality is that what the Divine Mystery does is to allow for Freedom. This most precious gift is essential to the immortal spirit during its Rites of Passage we are calling: *Earth Existence*. Moreover, the Mystery also makes certain there is a true Justice through the post-death passages of kamaloka and lower and higher devachan, in a manner no human social structure can provide. Christ has told us this in the Sermon on the Mount: "***to what sentence you sentence others, you will be sentenced***". All this should be kept in mind as we proceed.

As a single ego, I wake in the morning. From the night I bring the remainder of yesterday, perhaps worked over. Surrounding me, as I live the day, are the lives of those with whom I have a karma of wounds - with whom I have a debt of meaning to creatively work over. This we carry together, each bearing a part, each bearing their own wounds. These are wounds from the past, from the present and from the future.

To observe the world of today, as we walk the walk of our lives, is to observe trials of fire and suffering - rites of wounding and being wounded. But not just this, for also there is healing. Where we let love thrive, wounds become healed.

Thus flow all our days, often too fast to even notice the beauty and wonder of the surging sea of personal relationships and shared trials. Yes, there is misfortune, and evil deeds. But do we really imagine Christ and the Divine Mother lets this evil happen without recourse or justice? We may not know this directly through *Gnosis*, but we also can have *Faith*. *Gnosis without Faith is empty of Life; and, Faith without Gnosis is empty of the Truth. Only when we join them together, do we get: the Way (the Mystery of living the Good), the Truth (the Mystery of knowing the Good) and the Life (the Mystery of union with the Good).*

This then is the wonder of the outer and inner biography, for often the wounds are not visible. Yes, sometimes the wounds are visible to our eye or ear for we see people too fat, too thin, too lamed in body, too poor, too physically or mentally deficient. Often, however, so many of us *suffer in silence* that we really do not know the nature and personal meaning of their wounds - only our own are visible to the eye of our heart, unless we first learn to exercise and unfold certain powers of soul and spirit.

Amidst all this visible and/or silent suffering, we find ourselves woven into the presently fallen Culture of Media. Images and sounds flow around us - pictures of a world on the verge of chaos and madness. Yes, we have the intimacy of our personal biography, but through the Culture of Media we are drawn into the painted backdrop of the whole world - a backdrop we all share. War in Iraq. Global warming. Governments out of control. Pandemics waiting in the wings.

What lives in this painted backdrop - in this Stage Setting - in the wise relationship of the Culture of Media to the unfolding of our personal biographies?

The answer is this: *the mirror of our own inner darkness and light...*

Inside us the double-complex - our feelings of judgment, our temptations, our addictions and our sense of failure. Inside us the darkness that belongs personally to us, while outside us, carried to us by the Culture of Media, the mirror of that darkness. But also inside us the Good that we would author.

Think on it. Do we not experience the images and sounds brought to us by the Culture of Media as something that is filled with what we like and we dislike? We live our biographies and the Culture of Media confounds our souls with pictures of dark and light to which we all respond individually. The great masses of humanity do not make the News. The great masses of humanity *experience* the News.

What is News? News is exactly what the reporters and television personalities call it: *stories*. The Culture of Media provides us stories (tales) of the world, which are often presented as if these stories are true, something most of us have come to know they are not. News stories reflect all kinds of bias, and in some cases the bias is deliberate. Moreover, news stories often reflect questionable conditions of commerce (the dark god Profit) living in the agency reporting them.

For example, it is well understood that in the last third of the 20th Century in American television, the news divisions of the major networks disappeared, and the entertainment divisions took over the responsibility for the news. The opportunity to inform and educate the receivers of news stories became secondary to the need to keep them interested so as to be

able to sell commercials and make a profit (see the film: *Good Night, and Good Luck*). In addition, the stories are mostly about dire and tragic events, and little is investigated or reported that is about the positive and the creative.

We are right then to wonder sometimes about the News, about its harsh nature and artless attention to the dark deeds of many. Humanity in general bears within it the *beam* that is not seen, while the *mote* is exaggerated. But the world itself is not this beam, is not this darkness. The greater part of darkness is inside us, projected onto the world, and the Culture of Media exaggerates this darkness further, at the same time it gives us much that also arouses our own unredeemed antipathies and sympathies.

Once more, if you don't mind...

The world in its reality is not this darkness, which we all project from within the soul - the beam. Yet, in the Culture of Media this whole process of dark projection is exaggerated so that the *mirroring* nature of the social world itself begins to bother us. The *logos order* of the social world is complex and rich, and worth a deep study.

Pictures of a distorted and untrue meaning of the world abound, and while we all share these pictures, we make personal our reactions. Just as the intimate events of our biographies have a personal meaning, so does the shared stage setting have a personal meaning. In a more general sense, for example, many Christians today are confronted, via the Culture of Media, with pictures of individuals whose actions as self-proclaimed Christians either inspire us to imitation or cause us to turn away in shame. The same is true in Islam. The terrorist who frightens us in the West, also causes the ordinary Muslim to turn away in horror. Everywhere fundamentalism rises, to continue the example, the great mass of humanity, that are not so tied to such arid rigidity, shrinks away in antipathy. Do we not assert inwardly to ourselves: *this is not me, I am not that - I will not be that!*

In our biographies then, we are confronted in the intimacy of our personal relationships with what are sympathetic and antipathetic reactions to that which we would choose to admire and imitate, and that which we would shun and refuse to be like (the karma of wounds). Via the Culture of Media, we are met with that which approaches us in the same way, yet on

a larger scale. Just as we as individuals have a Shadow (a double-complex), so nations, religions and peoples have a Shadow, and the Culture of Media puts in our faces these pictures and meanings with which we can identify or from which we can turn away, often in shame.

Christ has arranged, in this particular moment in time (the cusp of the 20th to 21st Centuries, which is also the Dawn of the Third Millennium) to place in the dying away hierarchical social forms of humanity, those biographies which do two main forming gestures within that history. This is all connected to a process in which social chaos arises in order to cause these old hierarchical [third cultural epoch] social structures to let go their no longer valid hold, and in many instances be eventually replaced with new social form arising out of the social commons [fifth cultural epoch].

In the first instance, these biographies living in the decadent social hierarchies (such as government, corporate and church organizations) portray strong images, via the Culture of Media, to which we react equally strongly out of our likes and dislikes. For example, one of America's wise women, Doris (*Grannie D*) Haddoch, has said that we should be grateful for such as George Bush, because he causes us to awake from our sleep as citizens. As a consequence, in our individual biographies we react to the extremes of these dominant religious, business and political personalities, and this brings about in us as individuals certain inner judgments and calls to action.

The second effect of these biographies is to drive the social order further into a needed condition of chaos, something all 6 billion plus biographies require in order to birth the moral dilemmas necessary for the Age of the Consciousness Soul. This social chaos sweeps traditional moral authority aside, and forces us as individuals into situations where we must rely on the own I in order to properly face the challenge. In that human beings are incarnating in massive karmic communities in order to have these sometimes shattering moral experiences, this causes the present world social organism to have the strong tendency to completely dissolve into a condition of near total social conflagration [thus my website: *Shapes in the Fire* <http://ipwebdev.com/hermit/>].

The *moral aspect of the logos ordered social organism of the world* requires crisis in order for the individual biographies to live, not just intellectually, but fully and dynamically and existentially into dilemmas

of moral choice. Only true moral choice can awaken in us what is offered in this Age to the development of the Consciousness Soul.

Nothing in the world is not touched by the Art of Christ, who as Lord of Karma - Lord of the Satisfaction of Moral Debt and healer of karmic wounds, arranges in majestic harmony all the biographies so that even from the smallest detail to the grandest historical event, *meaning* is put to the service of our development - the leaving behind of our spiritual childhood followed by our birth into spiritual adulthood.

The world historical crises of this time are a complex and rich Stage Setting, against which 6 billion plus spirits live out the dramas of their individual biographies.

Thus, in this birth from childhood to adulthood, the Time - the Age of the Consciousness Soul - is a Rite of Mystery, a Baptismal Mass for all of humanity, just as was told to us by John the Baptist. [in Matthew 3:11] *"Now I bathe you in the water to change hearts, but the one coming after me is stronger than me: I'm not big enough to carry his shoes. **He will bathe you in holy breath and fire.**"*

Consider now more closely what happens inside us as we experience the intimacy of our biographies, and the shared pictures that come via the Culture of Media.

Choice confronts us. Do I be like that, or like this? From what place inside do I choose? In a time so filled with chaos that rules no longer apply, I discover that I can rely only on myself. Out of myself I must author the Good in response to the world of meaning that surrounds and confronts me. So powerful, in its personal immediacy, are these experiences, images and meanings, that we cannot turn away from them. It is as if the World itself is on Fire, wanting to burn and burn and burn until we run from it in terror, or stand up to it and give the fullest of our *participation* to its moderation and its healing.

Yet by Grace, I contain the means to know the Good that my biography and membership in the shared fate of humanity draws out of me. What I source becomes a part of the world, and I know that this is so. I know my freedom to enact the moral grace that my heart comprehends in its deepest

places. Deep inside my soul my very own heart hungers to sing: *Love will I give. Love will I create. Love will I author.*

So now we think away the physical - the maya of the sense world, and let our picture thinking gaze only upon this inner, invisible to the physical eye, moral act (Art). An act more and more emerging everywhere, for while in America, and the Cultural West, the Consciousness Soul is first appearing, it will and must appear everywhere that human beings let the world touch their wounds, while they seek to share with others the trials by fire of their biographies.

Forced by an Art of Divine Circumstance to look within and to reach into the depths of our own being in order to source and author that Good which we know to be right, we touch something spiritual and are Touched by something Spiritual. In this time of the true Second Coming, in the inwardness of our souls and invisible to all outer seeing, a Second Eucharist is being enacted - the Good offers Itself - *Its own Being* - to us (*Moral Grace*). For the Good we know is not just known in the soul as a thought, but if we attend most carefully, it is true Spirit, just as the John Gospel writer told us that Christ spoke: [John 3:6-8] "*What's born of the flesh is flesh, and what's born of the breath is breath. Don't be amazed because I told you you have to be born again. The wind blows where it will and you hear the sound of it, but you don't know where it comes from or where it goes; its the same with everyone born of the breath.*"

[The existence of a Second Eucharist, to accompany the Second Coming, in no way means to diminish or change the Original Eucharist. On the contrary, we will find that via the Second Eucharist our *understanding of the meaning* of the Original Eucharist (the transubstantiation of matter) will deepen. See in this regard, the small pamphlet: ***Radiant matter: Decay and Consecration***, by Georg Blattmann. From the transubstantiation of matter we are being led onward to learning how to participate also in a transubstantiation of thought.]

Thus we are being truly and continuously born again today (each act of moral grace is another Second Ethereal Eucharist and birth), from out of our spiritual childhood and into our spiritual adulthood, baptized outwardly by the fires of the times in our biographies, and by holy breath within - a Second Eucharist where Christ gives of His own Substance that biblical knowing of the Good - His own Being. For us to truly know the

Good, requires we join our own soul to the Good. Our yearning to author the Good out of ourselves is how we participate in the Baptism of being *truly* born again, and how we participate in the sacrament of the Second Eucharist. Christ also participates by giving to us, out of Himself, this very Good - this Moral Grace. When having received within ourselves this sacrament of the Second Eucharist, an act that only arises because we seek it and form its actual application, we remain free - we create moral law - we author the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. Given to us within by Christ as a capacity, we then author its incarnate nature and pass it on to the world of our biographies, - from out of us thence into the outer world (or into the inner world), do we then ourselves author this Good: *love engendered free moral grace*.

The Narrow Gate opens both ways, making possible thereby the intimate dialog and conversation of moral deeds and thoughts that is woven between the *i-AM*, the Thou and the Christ, which intimate conversation leads ultimately to the *consecration* - the character development - of the soul.

In this way we now see the Meaning of Earth Existence in the Age of the Consciousness Soul: A macro-cosmic Rite, a Second Ethereal Eucharist, in which we take into ourselves in the most intimate way possible, knowledge of the Good, not as mere thought, but as the true ethereal substance of Christ's Being. The outer world is but a seeming, and what is brought by the Culture of Media mere pictures of the Stage Setting for the World Temple that is home to our biographies. When we think away this outer seeming - this logos formed and maya based *sense* world, and concentrate only on the *Idea* of the moral grace we receive and then enact as individual law givers, as the fulfillment of the law and the prophets, *we create* this *Meaning of Earth Existence*. Every act of moral grace received within in the deepest intimacy of our life of soul, is an ethereal communion with Christ, even though we may only experience it as a mere thought of what is the Good at some moment of need in the biography.

Christ gives us this Gift, by Grace, freely out of Love, and with no need that we see Him as its Author. We hunger inwardly to know what the right thing to do is (What Would Jesus Do?), and when this hungering is authentic, we receive Christ's Holy Breath. This does not come so much as a thought-picture of the Good in response to our questing spirit, but rather as the *contentless* substance of Christ's Being. We are touched by

Love, and at this touch we shape that Breath into the thought that we then know. The nature of its application and the form in which we incarnate this thought is entirely our own. We shape the thought completely out of our own freedom, for only we can apply it accurately in the individual circumstances of our lives.

As the Age of the Consciousness Soul unfolds accompanied by this Second Eucharist, the Social World begins to light and warm from within. For each free act of moral grace rests upon this Gift of Christ's Being to us - an ethereal substance received in the communion within the Temple of the own Soul, freely given in Love whenever we genuinely: *ask, seek and knock during our search for the Good*. Our participation in this Rite, this trial by Fire leavened by Holy Breath, leads us to the co-creation of new light and new warmth - the delicate budding and growing point of co-participated moral deeds out of which collective action (of the whole of humanity) the New Jerusalem is slowly being born.

This co-creation is entirely inward, a slowly dawning Sun within the macro Invisible World of Spirit. Moreover, we do it collectively (as humanity). While each of us contributes our part, it is our collective conscious celebration of the Second Ethereal Eucharist (creating the Good) that begins the transubstantiation of the collective thought-world (ethereal world) of humanity into the New Jerusalem.

Thought is real, and it is as equally real as is matter. The Original Eucharist transforms the already divinely given now-dying substance of earthly matter into Life-filled Spirit through our *ritual invitation* of the active Grace of the Divine Mystery; and, **our participation** in the Second Ethereal Eucharist transforms dead thought into living ethereal Substance, through the mystery of our individual spirit's active and embryonic grace, that becomes collectively a co-creation of all of humanity that so chooses to participate.

In the Invisible World of Spirit, we co-participate in the Dawn of the New Sun that is to become the New Jerusalem.

Let us now wind down here for a moment, and take a deep breath, for these last *thoughts* above may seem almost too big - too idealistic - to be easily contemplated. To ease our understanding and gently ground it, let us consider this situation once again in its most ordinary aspects.

The world of our biographies places each individual into the *fires of experience*. These are remarkable gifts that can lead us toward moral questions - often deep and troubling. We yearn to know what to do, and in this circumstance we may *ask, seek and knock* (What Would Jesus Do?). What has been called earlier in this book, Moral Grace, is available to us, yet the *temple of mystery of the own soul* of this practice of inner activity is where we ourselves create moral law - where *we become the fulfillment of the law and the prophets*.

In the King's Tale, we saw that Rudolf Steiner's book ***The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*** showed how to come to this knowledge through the practices of Gnosis - to knowledge - in the form of moral imagination, moral intuition and moral technique. In the Healers' Tale, we saw how the 12 Steps helped us to master the soul through the elevation of the spirit, and in this way come to know God's Will *as we understand it*. Finally, in the Shepherd's Tale we came to understand that by asking *What Would Jesus Do* out of Faith, we could also come to the needed *individual moral beliefs*.

Three different paths (among perhaps many more) all leading to those individual depths that each of us must uniquely experience, which we have now seen to be properly called: *Holy Breath*. So we come now to perceive the Time - this Age of the Consciousness Soul - where, if we seek it, we have made ourselves available to be baptized with *Fire and Holy Breath*, just as John the Baptist us told Christ would do, 2000 years ago.

Even so, we still have to truly want to know the Good - to authentically ask, seek and knock.

*

*this then is the end of our main conversation in this little book,
which was mostly written in the Season of Easter - the Spring, 2004,
and then revised in a number of details in the Season of Easter
- the Spring, 2006, only to wait again to be nearly finished in the Season
of Easter, Spring of 2007, by a humble apprentice to Kings,
and a faithful, tho' flawed, servant of Christ*

Appendices

*(some matters requiring a bit of detail,
but which really didn't belong in the main text)*

1) Prayer and Meditation: *certain nuances connected to providing the i-AM some rest and time of reflection.*

We live modern life too fast. There is almost no time for reflection, and without reflection we acquire no wisdom. Yet, we cannot leave this situation as it is. We must make time for reflection, for contemplation, for meditation and for prayer - on a daily basis. It is an inner nourishment that the soul cannot live without. Without this time of reflection, the soul will wither and die; and, bereft of its spiritual partner (the soul), the *i-AM* itself will become lost and perhaps even consumed by the forces of Evil and Darkness (what Rudolf Steiner called: the Asuras).

Steiner thought this would be the only time we would be free - when we meditate. The rest of the time life's situations push and pull us with its demands that control our thoughts and feelings. Only when we meditate, he said, were we able to find the inner freedom of thought that we need. I agree only partially with this view.

Some time ago I heard some faculty from the Harvard Divinity School speaking in a panel on television. One speaker stated that the reason the Tibetan Llama Chogyam Trungpa required of his students that they spend several hours every Saturday in sitting meditation, was that Trungpa believed Westerners talked too much, and needed to slow down their mental processes. I agree only partially with this view, as well.

But neither Steiner or Trungpa are Westerners (Americans), and this then limits their understanding.

In the main body of this text, you may recall the story I told about Hefner, Presley and King, and about the will/limb impulse that characterized their activities. What appears as physical form, by the way, is a reflection of the structure of the soul. This means that the fact that we have limbs is due to the will in the soul, which then manifests itself into the plastic unformed nature of the living organism and gives it form. We walk and

reach as expressions of will. We have legs and arms as expressions of our will.

We also have *inwardly* the same functional capacity. We move in memory on *legs* of will, and we grasp thoughts with *arms and hands* of will.

To take the time to sit still, to pray and to meditate, is to begin the exercise of these *inner limbs* of will that we must awake if we are to face the coming trials. *The first act of will is to take the time to sit still.*

When sitting still mind will at first continue to rush about, as is its habit. This is then the opportunity for prayer. What we do is to pray out loud, not loudly but spoken, even in a whisper. The Catholic will cross themselves first and after, but everyone who aspires to follow ***In His Steps*** will want to *speak* the Lord's Prayer. In the Sermon on the Mount, before giving the Lord's Prayer, Christ speaks quite clearly about where and why to pray, and if you read this carefully it is also clear that He means for it to be *spoken aloud, and privately*. Rudolf Steiner is said to have spoken aloud the Lord's Prayer every day at the same time.

The necessity for the *private* element of true prayer life is something entirely overlooked today, with most Church Rites and many public situations being places where there is the practice of leading people in shared prayer. It seems a simple thing, and to some extent cannot be (and maybe shouldn't be) changed. At the same time, such a form of prayer is not (and cannot be) that which Christ had in mind. Prayer is the most intimate act possible between us and the Divine Mystery. We are urged to enter prayer in private, knowing there are no secrets from the Father. This mood of vulnerability and honesty is essential, and this is not a mood that we can sustain in our souls in public, regardless of how often or how passionate the leader will speak. In fact, if we carefully read this passage of the Gospels where we are given the Lord's Prayer, it is clear that Christ is telling us how hypocritical public prayer is. Public prayer is really a debasement of the true mood in which prayer needs to be carried out. Perhaps public prayer should not be any more called prayer at all. Perhaps we should understand public prayer as a kind of celebration, and the spoken words more like song and verse - anything but true prayer.

That said, there is nothing that will help better, than an honest and private practice of the Lord's Prayer, to still the mind.

I find it useful to say the prayer slowly, letting each petition (there are seven by the way) stand alone for a moment, and to let myself, after saying aloud each petition, briefly contemplate each petition's meaning. This helps us not fall into the bad habit of just saying the prayer automatically, without reflection on its meaning. From experience I can state that over time our understanding of each petition will grow and deepen.

If we have little time, then all we need do after the final petition and the "let it be so" (amen), is to let mind rest for a while, however long we have. If we have more time, we might expand our prayer, again quietly aloud, asking those questions that we need to ask. It is best to ask those questions which are honest and authentic, and which represent us as inwardly and as nakedly as possible, for the Father spirit in us knows before we even ask, what is true for us.

This activity creates a mood. Normally our life of feeling is dependent upon outside stimulus. This experience makes us angry, that one makes us sad. Prayer creates feeling (mood). So with prayer we not only still the mind, but we also evoke feelings of which those such as wonder, awe and reverence are certainly worthy. Yet, authenticity will also mean we are often afraid, angry, sad, filled with remorse or all manner of other moods which we have before we enter prayer. There is no reason to hide these.

The Lord's Prayer also helps us to be selfless, for all the petitions involve us, not as individuals, but as we, as the whole Body of Christ - the whole human race - in fact the whole "all that is". It begins, does it not: "**Our** Father...".

So we pray, until we are emptied of what lives in us that needs to be spoken. And, then we are silent. Regular practice will teach us how to still the mind and evoke ever deeper and deeper moods. Now, we meditate.

What is meditation? Meditation is concentrated intended and attended listening/observation. Prayer has led mind to stillness, and the mood

represents our intentions. Now we attend to (listen and observe - think about) what arises there.

Assumptions about what is to happen in the soul here are not useful. Nor should we too rabidly assume what happens there means a certain thing. We will bring with us desires: for enlightenment, for initiation, for visions, for satori, for personal (perhaps selfish) changes in our life. We also bring distractions - needs and wants of the day. These brought desires and distractions can kill the experience. We need to pray into stillness, by which we cultivate a mood of love (reverence, awe, wonder and mystery), and then we wait, maintaining inner silence. The more selfless our prayer life, the more the quality of the mood acquires the needed inner purity.

At the same time, no one but we ourselves is to find meaning here, because there is no experience in our lives as personal and intimate as opening ourselves up to the Divine Mystery in this way.

One advantage of praying quietly aloud is that sometimes when we ask quietly out loud a question, we will instantly hear inwardly, *in the silence*, an answer. What else have we been speaking of above in all those discussions of moral grace. We seek and ask and knock, and we will be answered.

Most often, in the beginning, it is the voice of our own spirit that answers (that aspect of the *i-AM* - the so-called higher ego or participated conscience - still unknown to us, still of the Mystery). We are the one who knows, and it is with our own inner voice that we answer. Practice will later show the light by which we receive this answer, but in the beginning we are entirely right to accept hearing what seems to be ourselves answer. *Prayer is our act of Faith, and Meditation our act of Gnosis.*

This daily practice will teach us how to do the same acts in any given moment, in life. A situation confronts us, and we make a small prayer and then listen (*See, do*). We whisper the prayer and then let ourselves silently answer within so as to know what to do in the face of the moral dilemma living in the situation. It is like learning to ride a bicycle. You can't do it reading a book. You can only do it by doing it, falling, and then getting up and doing it some more until the skills grow into craft and then art, and confidence comes in its proper time.

In daily life important intuitions are always present. Mostly they are so subtle that we don't notice them against the background noise of our ordinary daily mind. Prayer and meditation practice will, over time, bring clarity to our daily mind as well. So we practice inner silence, and we practice quieting the rush of thought when we take the time to sit still. We can practice this on the park bench during our lunch hour, or on the bus ride home. Don't we already let the mind drift or worry or day-dream in these situations? I keep with me always a pen and paper, for sometimes intuitions will pass by that need to be recorded and saved. They have only been able to come to me when I let my mind rest and be silent, even just for a moment.

In the beginning, various kinds of thoughts will arise when we are trying to be silent during prayer and meditation. Notice them, but do not worry about them. They are pictures of your own soul and spirit being reflected there for your appreciation and consideration. After time you will discover that you can control what appears here in ways that will surprise you. Wings (limbs) of inner will-on-fire (spirit) are being born in the soul.

Remember, we are spiritual children trying out our adult wings. Christ has promised: we can learn to fly (*the Kingdom of Heaven is within you*).

One final matter here, a bit personal. As my explorations of the Divine Feminine went forward, and I became more aware of all the help with which we are surrounded, it came to me to add something following on the Lord's Prayer. Christ could not ask us to pray to him, yet many do. And while Rites of Mary are strong in the Catholic Church, they are not so strong elsewhere. Here is an additional prayer that I have found helpful, again in setting a mood.

To give a sense of the structure, this is prayed following the Lord's Prayer (after a suitable reflective pause), and is (from my own heart) *a prayer of gratitude* to all those invisibles who also surround us in life. I simply name them, and then end this prayer with thanks.

"Holy Mother, mistress of the true Dark; my Lord Christ Jesus; all the hierarchies above and all the hierarchies below; the communion of saints; the communities of ancestors; our doubles and our angels - thank you for this day, and thank you for the fruits of yesterday."

Having shared this prayer, it was not so much my intention to suggest that others adopt it, but rather to show that we can with our own additional prayers, become creative artists in the temple of the own soul.

2) Sacrifice of Thoughts: *cleaning out the garden of the mind before growing new insights, and other unusual properties of our soul-spirit nexus.*

Sometimes we have mental habits that are quite disastrous, some, if not all of which, we eventually come to believe must be eliminated. I will next tell some stories from my biography, and let them serve as the main instruction that might be given here:

I told above the story of when I was involved with Group House, at which time I learned a great deal about nurturing love. One of reasons that I left, was that I had began there to have spiritual experiences and needed to reflect upon what this meant, for the paradigm which we used at Group House did not include the concepts soul and spirit. Upon leaving, I discovered that almost everyone I met and especially anyone I knew well, was immediately seen through the lens of the paradigm of Group House. My Group House experience had left me with a great log in my eye, one which put everyone I met into the categories of mental health which we used.

This caused me great inner distress. I didn't like it that I carried this set of boxes with me. So what I did was that whenever such a perception arose in my inwardness, that placed people in one of these Group House categories or boxes, I would push that thought away. The mental habits acquired during my Group House days had acquired a life of their own (become something like a wound, which pain thereby led to an almost independent existence in my mental life). Almost daily then I wrestled with the impulse to place people in these categories and boxes, until after several months I was able to subdue this habit of thought - to tame it.

I did not lose my Group House understanding, by the way. All that I did was accomplish the ability to only think in that way intentionally. I had learned to ride that bicycle, and could mount it again any time I wanted, but also rode it now only when I wanted, and not because of some unconscious habit.

When, a little time later, I had taken up a study of the work of Chogyam Trungpa, reading many of his books, attending lectures, and hanging out with his meditating students (I never did the Saturday sitting meditation practices), I again let live in my soul (not yet fully appreciating this) another powerful paradigm (point of view), and filled my soul with its concepts and nuances, such that once again after a time I seemed to see the world only through this Buddhist lens. Not long into this, however, I again experienced myself as unfree inwardly, and so once more I sought *to tame a self-induced habit of mind*, a process of several months duration. I was awake enough now to the process to give it a name: *breaking the chains of the teaching*.

The same happened when I later took up the study of Rudolf Steiner's works. Fascinated with this material I opened my whole soul to it, and drank as deeply as I could of all the conceptual content that was offered. I must have read fifty books in three years, and soon again found myself in this unfree state, where unbidden the categories and boxes of the teaching would come to mind, a great log in my own eye. Now, however, I knew even more, for Steiner had spoken of sacrifice of thoughts, and, more directly in his *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity (Freedom)*, had spoken of how the soul can become captured by the concept (its prisoner).

So once again, I took hold of my soul and emptied it of the unwanted habits of thought, until no Steiner-thought would appear there unless I consciously and expressly called it forth. When I had finished this process with Steiner-thought, I stood back and for a time contemplated the whole. Upon this reflection, I discovered that Steiner's Anthroposophy was a method, while the content could be called Spiritual Science). One was producing cause, and the other the product. It was *how* we did something, *not the what* that resulted. We thought (an *activity*) in a new way, and this disciplined and careful method of thinking then produced a precise content that one could experience as knowledge. Subsequent to this insight, I told a friend, who immediately pulled a book from his shelf, *Romanticism Comes of Age*, by Owen Barfield, wherein the same insight (Anthroposophy is a method, not a content) was given as part of a lecture in 1933, by Barfield, at the European center for anthroposophical work - the Goetheanum, in Dornach, Switzerland.

This then is the value of *sacrifice of thoughts*. It enables us to wrestle with the power we grant to undisciplined belief in our souls, in that we can come to be possessed by the belief, and not be its master.

Now I can say from experience that any belief we hold (or better yet, any belief which holds us) can be tamed and mastered, and at the same time never lost. We (as *i-AMs*) never lose what lives in the belief, we only gain the capacity to rule it, while it does not any longer rule us. In addition, this is an important means by which we begin the work of separating opinion (belief) from the True.

The inner practice of sacrifice of thoughts is not unlike any other sacrifice we make in outer life. It is a skill, craft and art that gains multiple uses as we grow in its practice. We can give it huge jobs that take months to accomplish (I once emptied myself of a whole book - in fact the book you hold in your hand is the third complete metamorphosis in my soul of an impulse that has now existed for over 20 years). After such an act I was able to freely reconstruct the whole thing in an entirely new way. We can also relate to quite simple soul changes in an immediate situation (give up a biased preconception we notice we have about someone, so that we can think them anew).

We can also work with our concepts, mental pictures and ideas about our self. In pop-psychology, we speak of self image and self esteem. Buddhist thought considers the ideal of achieving some degree of egolessness. The reality here is that we can be so free inwardly, that the very ideas by which we identify ourselves are up for grabs (so to speak). Consider the possibilities of being free of any conception or belief about our *i-AM*, our own or that of others. Some very unusual problems in our soul can be addressed just in this realm.

While it is best to work with sacrifice of thoughts on your own, for practice is the surest teacher here, a little light should be shed on some of those other disciplines that can be applied to our inner life.

One of the by-products of learning sacrifice of thoughts is the increased ability to control thoughts. This is a crucial work at the beginning of our self-education regarding the darkness within. We labor in the soul and this labor bears fruit - increased understanding of our own soul processes. For example, we might try to apply sacrifice of thoughts to the inner

problem of guilt. Let us consider this briefly, as such an example problem.

Most of us have experiences of guilt. Certain religions even have a reputation here, e.g. Catholic guilt and Jewish guilt. These are so well known that comedians make jokes about their own families and this experience of guilt.

Most of us sleep through the basis for these inner experiences, and really only live in the general feeling. We feel as if we did something wrong, and this feeling can be just for a moment, or can become something over which we obsess. Frequently there may be some justification for this feeling. We did do something wrong, something not moral in the sense of what our community or family thought they had a right to expect.

In reality, such guilt can come from a number of inner sources, and depending upon the source we will have a variety of guilt experiences. Inwardly there is not just one kind of guilt experience.

One common form is called pricks of conscience. Our inwardness has an instinct for right and wrong (our first sense of the potential of Moral Grace), and that part of the *i-AM* (what some call the higher ego, which is free of the doubles), knows this and this knowing is experienced in the part that is more earthly in its nature (what some call the lower ego) as a kind of inner sense of pain. This knowledge of wrong-doing on our part bothers us.

Another form of guilt appears as a consequence of the ahrimanic double, in that it prosecutes us. We find ourselves telling ourselves what a jerk we were, over and over again.

A third form appears in what is understood in ordinary psychology as a kind of incorporated value system from either the community or the family. The assumption is that certain experiences leave behind a kind of organism in the inner life, that makes us feel bad when we have violated the community or family rules.

A fourth form can appear as a consequence of a self-created wound. We have repeatedly succumbed to some kind of temptation, and now we have this bad habit, and when we indulge in this bad habit we know this, and

this knowing results in a guilt-like response. We will even do the action in spite of the feeling of guilt. In the face of such a habit, we feel powerless, and this is exactly where the 12 Steps start: with surrender to the truth of our powerlessness before our self-generated wound.

This does not exhaust the possibilities. Even so, the point is that we can *to a certain extent stand outside these feelings*. We can look at them and say: this is a feeling in the soul, but it is not my true *i-AM*. The soul and this feeling serve a purpose in my inner life, but they are not *my personal essence*. Since I can observe it, it is not me, but rather a phenomena of my inwardness that I can examine and relate to - I can *think* about it. Further, if I am practicing sacrifice of thoughts, I am developing the ability to dismiss the thought content connected to the guilt - to refuse to any longer consent to this appearing in my soul - in my inwardness.

I can be free of it. So it is with all manner of matters of inwardness - we are moving into that time in the Evolution of Consciousness when we are leaving behind our spiritual childhood, and this is one of the tasks of spiritual maturity. To observe, to understand and to master (something the 12 Steps can produce - the elevation of the spirit for the mastery of the soul), or *love engendered free moral grace*.

Another inner phenomena that can be noticed in the mind (soul-spirit nexus) is the tendency to form distinctions. This arises almost automatically in our inwardness (mind), and it often appears in those cases of judgment-values that we make day to day. So we will experience something and evaluate it. It is better or worse than something else. We compare. This car is beautiful, that car is not. This person is moral, that one is not. We also turn this distinction process on ourselves. I am unenlightened, that Master is. Steiner is an initiate, I am not.

The mind makes such distinctions constantly. So we think: *now I suffer, and if only it was tomorrow I would not be suffering*. In a sense we are constantly rejecting the present. The Now (we assume) has something wrong with it, either in our outer experiences, or in our inner. Steiner spoke of this process, in a general way, by describing the soul having this inner gesture of movement between antipathies and sympathies. This we do not like, that we do like. The aspect of the soul that tends to *excesses* of not liking might find its root in the ahrimanic double, while the aspect of the soul that tends to *excesses* of liking might find its root in the soul in

the luciferic double. In the former case we are too much head, too calculatingly cold, so we evaluate something and find it wanting (this person is less than us). In the latter case we are too much will (too self centered), overly warm toward something, and too drawn to it (the blindness of puppy love).

It is a great wonder to learn to wake up to this process of distinction making, and learn to see in what circumstances it has value (which value we choose) and in what circumstances we need to see through it - to see that we are blinded by the distinction. Some speak of learning to set aside thinking in terms of either/or and learn instead to think in terms of both/and. This comes at the problem of distinctions from a different direction.

Here is another practical discipline for mind, that may also help with insomnia. It helps, by the way, to not use stimulants (such as caffeine) or depressants (such as alcohol) at all, and certainly not in the evening hours, if one wants to do this exercise. The soul needs to digest experiences, something we discussed above in the sixth stanza on the Absence of the Good. Here let us review this process of doing the following exercise indicated by Rudolf Steiner - that is to spend that last part of the day remembering it backward. First we recall our most recent experience, and then the one before that and the one before that and so on, until we reach what happened to us just upon awakening. This involves a kind of inner work, and can be done after getting in bed. By thinking backwards about our day we do a process that supports the soul's need to come to terms with (digest) our experiences.

Such reflection will aid us in appreciating moral dilemmas that may have arisen, which we did not fully notice at the time. This review will have many side effects, including the arising of wisdom. It is not an infrequent experience to fall asleep while doing this exercise (thus its value with regard to insomnia). The mind tends to rattle on, left to its own devices, and by doing this exercise we bring discipline where before there was none. Here, at the threshold of sleep, will be all manner of inner experiences that we will want to notice and learn from. This threshold of sleep is also the threshold to spiritual experience. In the practice of remembering we learn to stay awake instead of fall asleep. Thus we learn slowly how to be awake when we cross the threshold, instead of losing

consciousness. As with much else there is no hurry here, and certainly no goal. We live in the now and explore what lives within.

Sometimes, we will have had a somewhat shocking experience during our day. Perhaps a fight with a family member, or some unusual stress on the job. These stronger experiences take more time to digest, and we can learn to notice this digestive process in the soul, which often takes about three days. The first day we have a lot of chaos and agitation in our thought life. The second day our thoughts are calmer, but there is still a kind of after effect reverberation in the soul in the feeling life. Then, on the third day the digestion is taking place in the life of will, and is there almost unconscious. The soul appears quiescent, but this is not true. The work has gone deeply within, and it is hard to raise it consciously out of the more hidden inner realms. Finally, on the fourth day, we will find ourselves better able to act concerning the strong experience, because we will have waited for the soul to process its experience, rather than acting immediately while inwardly all is chaotic. In the end, as with much else, everyone has to make their own experiences here.

These matters are raised here only to point toward them, so that we can begin to notice such matters in the soul. We start to be objective about ourselves and about our inwardness - neither too cold nor too warm. We start to practice love engendered free moral grace both inwardly and outwardly, and the extremes of antipathy and sympathy begin to moderate, and we start to become empathic! We learn to see through the biases in the soul and find our way to the heart of things.

One final matter...

Rudolf Steiner spoke of what he called: *it thinks in me*, which is a kind of scientific, or *reasoned* introspective observation of something occurring in the soul; while Valentin Tomberg wrote of what he called: *thinking on your knees*, which is the same thing seen from the side of *devotion*. Christ, in the Sermon on the Mount, comes at it from this direction: *blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*, which means that when we are empty inwardly (*poor in spirit*), contact with the higher worlds is made more possible. What this has become in my experience, I will call the *mind feeling-sensation of fullness*. and which I will next describe in a little detail.

Many years ago I started to notice that various intuitions of an excellent qualitative nature (new thoughts) were accompanied by a unusual kind of soul-sensation. I would be thinking, and there would be this feeling, and with the feeling would come the new thought content. Often this arose when a certain question was living in me. I would be seeking, and the answer would be preceded by the *beauty* of this mind feeling-sensation of presence or fullness.

The essence of the feeling was that I was not alone inwardly. At the same time the presence did not advertise itself in the sense of saying something really weird like: *hi. I'm a spirit, and I'm here to give you a message from above.* The fullness was really only a sign that my thinking activity would be meet by a cooperative presence, who was not interested in credit, but rather only responding to my heartfelt question. Over time, whenever I began to hear this wind blow when I was thinking, more and more I would then stop whatever I was doing and write down what I thought. [John 3:8 *The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with every one who is born of the Spirit*]

For example, if I was driving a car, I would pull over to the side of the road. If I was in bed, thinking as we do, and this sense of fullness came, I would get up. Always, it was my own activity that inaugurated the result, and what was happening was only a kind of cooperation that I could not only sense, but I could count on the fact that when sensing it my thinking would deepen, and produce new content, new thoughts never before thought.

Sometimes the sense of fullness was quite strong. There were nights I could not sleep, or even write, but only be awake and think (these mostly were personal, in the sense of facing certain issues of my own nature and karma). Yet, the fact remains, that the more I honored this *presence of Fullness and the fullness of Presence*, the richer was my understanding of the world, and of myself and others.

Owen Barfield, mentioned above, describes this from another direction. In his book (previously mentioned), ***Saving the Appearances: a Study in Idolatry***, Barfield describes the Evolution of Consciousness using these broad terms: original participation; the on-looker separation; and final participation. We, many incarnations ago, were naturally integrated with

the world of spirit - that was original participation. With the on-looker separation (what we called above the enchantment into materialism, or the Ahrimanic Deception), we were finally set completely free of this prior given relationship to the Divine Mystery. Final participation is a choice we make. We are free not to seek reintegration. In the case of the presence of Fullness and the fullness of Presence (it thinks in me) we begin that reintegration by an act of will, in our own minds, in full consciousness and by our own choice.

For my part, the less I am there in a certain way (sacrificing my prior thinking - i.e. poor in spirit), the more room there is for the other-presence of Spirit (the kingdom of heaven). Then we think together (final participation).

All the same, we have to keep in mind that we are so individual in our nature and temperament, needs and capacities - that there is no common path - each Way is individual and unique. All that we really share is the struggle, the failures, the getting up again and trying once more.

Now, in order to circle around to the beginning of this discussion of sacrifice of thoughts, let me add this.

Sacrifice of thoughts is a form of *renunciation*. There are other forms of renunciation, such as giving up an attachment to something harmful, or changing an idea of our self that is too inflated, too grandiose. Renunciation is the general principle, so to speak. In various practices of renunciation, over the life of the development of our character, we can learn to move our thinking into a new Way. In a sense, when we renounce something, our will acquires a quality it did not have before, and this new quality then can be applied in the how of our thinking.

We start to climb a kind of ethereal stairway in the soul, wherein the *i-AM* rises not by *force* of will, but by surrender and renunciation. We forgo, and this changes the *quality* of the will - it becomes more spiritualized, more pure. Thinking then begins to move from thinking *about*, to thinking *with*. Instead of forming concepts about someone we have been judging, our renunciation of this judgment makes a space in the soul for us to think *with* their nature - to learn to walk in their shoes as the saying goes. We bypass the judgment and start to see them as they are - like us. The judgment is superficial, while the gesture to start to think *with* - to

understand them from the inside out - this gesture eventually carries us over into thinking *within*. We start to see them as they see the world, not out of the log in our own eye, but from inside them, and through their splinter. Sympathy and antipathy dissolve into empathy.

Renunciation then leads the cold thinking of the head *about* someone, through the gesture of thinking *with* (walking in their shoes), to the empathic thinking *within*, wherein we perceive/think as they themselves do - to thinking with the warmth of the heart.

[In appendix 7 below, I will write of this last again, in greater detail, and in the form of an essay I wrote primarily within the realm of Gnosis - of Anthroposophy: *In Joyous Celebration of the Soul Art and Music of Discipleship*.]

3) Some further thoughts about finding a healthy relationship to the fourth form of love, UnFallen Eros,

By the way, lest one think there is too much talk here of Eros, all you have to do is be truly honest about how much under the influence of Fallen Eros our Civilization is, in order to appreciate our desperate need to find the path to Eros's redemption.

Over eight years ago I began to have a relationship with a Native American woman. This relationship went through several phases, as such relationships want to do, and is now somewhat estranged. Nevertheless, it was her sharing with me, and teaching me, some of the traditional wisdom of Native Americans as regards the relationships of men and women, that lead me to those questions of spirit and soul out of which I have come to some of my conclusions regarding Eros.

Here are some of the things which she told me.

From her point of view, which she attributed to Native Americans in general, Anglo (White man's) ideas on sex and male/female relationships are basically insane. We look a little nuts to them. For example, Anglo women seem to not be able to admit to having sexual desire, or seem to have to use their sexuality as some form of bargaining chip in relationships. In our discussions, a very interesting question emerged, which eventually took the form *for me* of whether the Divine Mystery

would be so cruel to us, as by making of our most intimate needs some kind of war zone (the oft mentioned war between men and women that our culture seems to assume as a given and a necessity). The Western cultural ideas, as they live in our practices about the differences between men and women at the level of desire, seem entirely false in the face of such a question. The Divine is not cruel, although it certainly is true that we can and have screwed up the Divine's gifts in this realm.

She also suggested to me that once I began to rethink my own sexuality, I would undergo changes. My head, it seemed, was full of biases and misunderstandings, and that I really just needed to understand, from the inside out (not on the basis of what someone told me, and especially not on the basis of what my Anglo culture told me) what it was that a man was in the sense of his erotic and sensual relationship to a woman. The implication was that I already knew what I needed to know, if I just reflected on my own inner truths, carefully enough, outside the boxes of bad information previously provided by this same Anglo culture.

As an aide in this understanding, she described for me the ideas of *dominion and surrender*. Since our conversations took place over a considerable period of time, and occasionally involved our own confused passions, I will not try to repeat here what was said, but rather tell the story of these principles as I have now come to understand them. Should any confusion remain, it will clearly be on my own head, and not on hers.

We do recognize that the male principle is somewhat *active* in its basic nature, while the female principle is *receptive*. These are both profound powers by the way, and need to be appreciated for their sacred essence. What I was told happens in Native cultures then is that in marriage the woman offers to the man dominion over her body (not her soul/spirit nexus, only her physical body). It is a gift to him. He then is free to express his maleness, his natural hungers and desires toward her (evoked in the man's soul, as I described in the main body of the text, through the divine beauty of the female form). His arousal then leads to the expression of his dominion over her body (what I described above as the sensual element of Eros) through touch and similar acts, which then arouses the woman, and to which arousal she then surrenders. He can also express his hunger in words and ideas, coming at the situation from the side of the erotic, rather than the merely sensual. This as well can

bring about arousal in the woman, the surrender to which she again has committed herself as a free gift.

We can admire more than just the physical form, by the way. We can admire the character, what lives in the deeds of will of our intimate friend. This admiration and love for the will-on-fire of the other, the Thou, is what leads to the truly erotic, for it is an apprehension of the beauty of the soul and spirit of the *other*. We begin to see not just the form of the physical body, but the soul and spirit of this person who is so attractive to us. Some, of course, will come to their attraction to the other, the Thou, entirely beyond the physical from the very beginning. It is, in fact, in the nature of women to do this more easily - to see past the beauty (or not) of physical form to the beauty of soul and spirit, while men have been so beat up by our Fallen Eros culture, that they are led to believe that physical beauty is only of a certain type. Everyone knows these problems already, but they are worth repeating.

Instead of the usual bargaining that goes on in an Anglo relationship, which often leads to: "*not tonight luv, I have a headache*", the woman in a dominion and surrender relationship surrenders to the approach. She appreciates that her deepest sexuality (Eros) is felt when she lives out her *receptive* power, in response to his *active* power. The woman who surrenders, finds (oddly enough to our Anglo assumptions) that this surrender heightens all her sensual and erotic experiences.

The sensual and erotic nature of the female is a manifestation of divine harmony in relationship to which the male can be an *artist*, to the extent that he lives fully in (and here we get to some of the wonderful paradoxes of the whole situation) a *surrender* to his own hungers. Her surrender then becomes itself an *active* principle which evokes in him even greater letting go. While he is given dominion over her sensory erotic nature, she in surrendering, achieves dominion over his erotic sensual nature, to which he surrenders in return. As a result then, for the woman in surrendering, her receptive power increases and becomes an active principle by which she becomes an artist with the manifestation of divine harmony that is the male's hunger.

We could also look at this in the following way. Recognizing that both partners have active and passive qualities which they then express, we could see that both the active and the passive elements in their reciprocal

interplay can out of our freedom be done on the basis of *communion with*. This, such that we can understand that the older Native American traditional idea of dominion and surrender might today be better seen as a mutual *communion with* the partner.

Both male and female are each then active and receptive, and in the deepening of our understanding here, through experience, we also learn concerning these powers in the whole of Creation, for UnFallen Eros is a mirror of the *force nature* of the Divine Mystery, at least as much as such is possible to be known and understood while one is incarnated in a physical body.

You may recall above my description of the memory gift that was made to me by that individual who taught me, by his example, the potential for selfless human love. Included in this gift, was a brief memory of his pre-birth consciousness, just before he entered into incarnation. This memory, which I experienced very very vividly the first time I received it, was of an intense joy and attraction to Earth existence. His whole soul/spiritual nexus was inflamed with the greatest passion to leave behind the world of pure spirit, and enter into incarnation. It was a memory of the freely and intensely leaving behind of one form of union (purely spiritual), nonetheless filled with the greatest joy of the soon to come participation in another form of union (spiritual - social - physical).

This desire for union, present both in our hunger for incarnation, and in our hunger for re-integration (a return to purely spiritual experience), is found mirrored in the deepest experiences of dominion and surrender, between the male and female, when they engage in that face of love we call Unfallen Eros.

All that is asked is that selfless love live within Eros, so that the expression of sensual and erotic pleasure find its true moral center. Now tradition has tried to help this need for a moral center with its various rules concerning marriage and procreation. However, as we are now stepping out of the spiritual childhood in which tradition once enveloped us as if in a divinely authored social womb, it now and in the future becomes up to us to provide the moral center from within.

Some pragmatic and practical considerations are now called for...

The expression of Eros can be based upon love engendered free moral grace. At the same time, no one but the two partners has any business in what goes on between them. The Divine Mystery has made it only their business, for, truth to tell, they are the ones who will share the consequences of the choices that they make in this realm. Like prayer and meditation, which is a seeking after spiritual union with the Divine Mystery done in private, so the exploration of erotic and sensual union, at its human level, is only to be done in private.

Experience teaches that Eros can be 24/7, as the saying goes. We mistakenly assume that the whole point is the climax, although there is something special to what we might call the *afterglow*. In the afterglow all the barriers between two *i-AMs*, to the extent that is possible in the physical, have been set aside, which is why women tend to want to talk (grow closer) and men tend to want to sleep (rest content and at peace in the arms of their lover). Again, it is up to the partners how they want these things to be. The point I am trying to make here is that Eros is/can be always active and present. We can make love to our partner all the time, and that in a true partnership (where we explore the deepest potentials of love) nurturing love, comradeship and erotic and sensual love (when filled from within by selfless love) themselves become united, so that, for example, comradeship or nurturing among intimate partners can themselves be, at the same time, erotic.

Eros really runs between two poles, one of attentive tenderness and one of abandon. Washing and drying dishes together, while talking, can be enlivened with a touch of the spice of Eros, if the partners understand how to light that flame and keep it gently alive. For one to stroke the cheek of another, in tenderness, can be subtly erotic, yet need not imply that this moment should begin that path of deepening that leads to abandonment. At the same time, an earthy phrase, spoken teasingly, will arouse that small flame as well, yet too can be understood to be meant only for the moment. We can be always lightly erotic just for the joy there, without expectation or want that this subtle adult and mature play lead to the deepening we falsely assume is the only point.

In the daily exchange of soul nourishment of a loving relationship, touches of Eros are a spice that enliven.

The presence of erotic play, filled from within by selfless love, brings an increased *sense of life* to each partner. In fact, this is true for all forms (faces) of love when filled from within by love engendered free moral grace - vital life (a tiny flame of increased consciousness and intensity) is added to our every experience.

Let us consider this more closely, but starting from the other side. Think for a moment of our crowded cities, teeming with their millions of souls. Rushing past each other, oft times actually bumping into each other, such cities are made thereby a kind of boiling cauldron of aggressive stimulation. Crime abounds, and people lose the ability to be generous. There is no time to meet, no time to greet. Everything is fast and furious, as we rush through our days overstimulated by caffeine and similar unneeded substances.

The drive to consume, to work, to compete, to argue - all are variations of a need to achieve *dominion over*. This leads, as it must, to the conflagration - the burning up - of civilization. As the world burns to the ground around us we live into a question: What do we - what can we - do?

Here we find all kinds of people expressing the need to slow down, to disengage, to *drop out, tune in and turn on* (as the Hippie Movement prophetically expressed this need so succinctly). What did the Beatles write? *All you need is love*.

Think now for a moment about children at play. We can see this in any safe park-like place in the world, where children who are strangers to each other (and being children not yet polluted by adults in their thoughts about stranger-others) do a remarkable dance. It generally only takes a couple of minutes for those of like nature to discover who will be their friend. The communication of trust is mostly non-verbal - it is all done with movement, with circling around, and glances of the eyes - no direct looking, all out of the corners of the eyes. Then the electricity connects, the natural fear discharges, and the next thing you know they are finding a way to mutually make up a game. Here we see our natural capacity for cooperation - for *communion with*.

Adults do this too, at places of work, or other natural places of congregation. Its harder for us, though. We believe we bear too many wounds. Yet, if we go within ourselves, we will find that the innocence of

youth has not been lost, it has just been layered over. This then is the dance of love, whatever form it takes: selfless love, nurturing love, comradeship or Eros. Can I trust you, will you trust me. A friend suggests that the balance to a gesture of trust is responsibility - if someone trusts us, it is not our reciprocal trust that they need, but rather our responsibility. The reverse is also true - if we trust them, it is not their trust we need, but their responsibility. No doubt many of our wounds in life come from the gift of our trust not having been met with responsibility. Love in its highest sense is always trusting, responsible *and* innocent play, which is why Christ said: *lest ye become again as little children*.

To return to UnFallen Eros...

In American literature there is a wonderful example of this mature adult erotic play in the novels of Robert Parker about the private detective Spenser, and his girl friend Susan, a psychologist.

Above, in the main text, I directed attention to the gift of the word, and as well to the fact that the truly erotic (as against the solely sensual) partakes of romance and conversation, mostly for the female, and earthy speech, mostly for the male. Eros is really adult play, and dance (don't the better dance partners understand it as making love in the vertical?). Words are play too, but play of the most serious kind. Truth to tell we are most vulnerable here, most open and most exposed. This is why I spoke of *authenticity* as the key to the erotic. If erotic speech is merely faked, then great harm ensues, and we all know this. Once again it is human selfless love that needs to fill out erotic speech, and it is through erotic speech and the sharing of feelings of love and tenderness that Eros learns to be awake in the partnership all hours of the day and the night. So also with nurturing love and comradeship - conversation brings enlivening forces to all who are present.

There is much here to be learned, for between two partners, who are active and awake in their explorations and play, a mere glance across a crowded room can bring a small flame of arousal. This is as explicit, by the way, as I intend to be, but I did want to leave no doubt as to what is being described here. A small touch can bring a quickening of breath, and there is no reason for true lovers not to become greatly skilled in these arts. At the same time, in order for such craft and art to enter into an intimate

relationship, there must be conversation. It is only through talking to each other that we find out how to be with each other in the best ways. It is conversation through which we expose the wounds and discover how to trust. As we have often lived many years before we meet, in any relationship in any of the forms of love, where we are learning how to bypass the wounds and discover trust (and thus authentic spontaneity - as little children once more), this requires time.

We can also see here that we really are having two kinds of conversation when making love. One is spoken with words, and the other is spoken with gesture (movement and touch). The interweaving of the two kinds of conversation, moved by our authentic desire for *communion with* then leads to that union of souls only possible in such an intimate relationship.

One of the other matters with which we need to come to terms is that we are erotic one way in youth, another in middle age, and a third in maturity. For example, we are mistaken when we call a lack of male potency (impotence) a dysfunction. I'll not go into details here, but just suggest that this phenomena of maturity needs to be rethought.

None of this means to suggest that couples are to have some rules to follow. Each partnership will, through conversation, find its own way to that which is mutual and most loving. The standard as it were, is that there is no standard.

Recall that dominion and surrender is really a two way street, and if we learn to sacrifice (renounce) the thought paradigms in which our old and tired understanding of Eros are imprisoned, we can then, opened up individually through individual prayer and meditation in conjunction with shared conversation, rediscover and reinvent the future of Eros in Civilization on the basis of love engendered free moral grace.

UnFallen Eros is the marriage of the active and receptive powers of the creation as enacted between two people. They belong together. Exploring them in an awake partnership, offers the opportunity to understand their presence in many aspects of existence, far beyond their role in UnFallen Eros.

Ultimately, the reader will want to make all their own judgments here. I have only written those ideas, and their related experiences, that have

come to me. What comes to the reader will belong to them and their biography. It will help, I believe, if the reader will keep this in mind: the best guide in human relationships will always be the warm reasoning of the heart, and not the cold and calculated logic of the head.

4) **A few words** for those whose faith is in natural science, and might consider themselves to be secular humanists

Here is the logic of the situation, as far as I can see it. God is either real (in the sense that natural science defines the real), or not. While I have some friends who love to say that we should avoid either/or statements in favor of both/and statements, in this case I would not find such a view applicable. Sure, I could spin it such that one could make it a both/and statement, suggesting that God is real if you want to find that, and not real if you want to find that. Such a view would place it in the realm of human freedom as to whether God is real or not. Problem is, having been graced with the Presence of the Divine Mystery, I can't really spin things that way without denying my own experience. We are free to know the Divine Mystery - to seek reintegration, or not, but we are not free to unmake the Divine Mystery.

Sort of like sex. If you are a virgin, you pretty much don't have a clue as to what making love is. Same with having intercourse with the Divine Mystery. Words can't any more describe making love, especially when the relationship is emotionally and spiritually rich, than words can describe meeting the Divine Mystery, where it has to be a given that the relationship is emotionally and spiritually rich beyond imagination.

Now my view, at least as regards those whose faith is in science, is this: Stick to your faith. If you really pursue the truth, you'll end up finding the Divine Mystery, try as hard as you might not to do that (*I am the Way, the Truth and the Life*).

The thing perhaps to keep in mind is something Steiner pointed out, with the concepts that in our time and on into the future, we are all, consciously or unconsciously, crossing the Threshold into the spiritual world. Lots of folks are meeting the Divine (and Her/His co-workers) these days, and lots also meeting the Other Guys as well. There's a reason there is all this spiritual stuff going on all over the world, and also why wars are breaking

out again over belief systems. And, the reason doesn't have anything to do with illusions of the mind.

We only can believe in illusions of the mind, as a reason for faith in God, if we don't know anything about mind from our own inner investigations. When scientists and secular humanists start to really explore their own soul (inner) life, then they will find there that it is exactly as described by previous visitors to the same territory. So, if you aren't going to make such a journey, and still want to run around mouthing off about your opinions in this field of knowledge, don't be surprised if more and more people start to tell you, you are full of it.

Got to walk the walk.

Why?

Life. The problem with science is that it can't explain the existential necessities of the human biography. Science can't explain the existence of evil, of suffering, or even of the more profound human emotions such as love. Oh science tries to explain these things, but reducing existential necessity to a biological and/or chemical determinism makes of being alive an almost meaningless exercise. People know better. We know life has meaning, and further that life is trans-logical. The sterile logic of the laboratory doesn't touch what we experience in the biography, and people go to religion precisely because it offers just that trans-logical explanation we need.

People believe (have Faith) in the Divine Mystery in spite of what science theorizes (fancies). Funny thing is scientists don't live life in the same sterile logical fashion of their hypotheses. In the movie ***Contact***, the priest asks the scientist if she loved her father, and then when she says yes, challenges her to prove it. She knows she loves her father, but this act is trans-logical, and toward such an end, an explanation - the idea of proof - has no meaning.

Please note I used the term trans-logical, not ill-logical. Love, being a moral impulse, defies logic, because love leads to personal sacrifice, which is an act in complete denial of our supposed dominant instinct to survive. Human behavior is itself a Mystery, and science (in its present

state, divorced from the Imagination) can yet form no honest connection with these realities.

Now if the scientist wants to go further, to take hold of the trans-logical, then Steiner's books on objective philosophical introspection [*A Theory of Knowledge Implicit in Goethe's World Conception*; *Truth and Knowledge*; and, *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity (Freedom)*] will show the way, being based on a scientific examination of our inwardness. Science's theories come from that inwardness, which contains that which we understand as thinking, and sometimes as intuition. The true and surest tool of science is the mind, and without a disciplined introspective life, the scientist uses a tool he/she does not understand.

All of which takes us back again - you can't just talk the talk about the mind, you have to walk the walk.

5) In praise of the virtues of ordinary mind

Years ago I read a book called Zen mind, Beginner's Mind, by Shunryu Suzuki. I don't remember much about it, but the title stuck with me, and during my own years (over 35 now) of introspection, prayer and meditation I kept finding myself facing a rather odd question. *Is there anything wrong or insufficient about ordinary mind or consciousness?*

This question would really come strongly to me, when I would be reading about, or being in discussions concerning, the ideas of enlightenment or initiation. The existential dilemma was basically that here I was in ordinary mind, more or less always, yet I had this idea of satori, or initiation, being some kind of permanent condition into which I would eventually arrive. In fact, the more I desired and struggled to reach a different state than the one I was in, the more I felt a kind of wrongness. Eventually I began to rebel against this idea in my mind that took any form of achievement over whatever was my true current inner condition. My state of being was what it was, and I saw no point anymore in viewing it as if it was defective, less than, or in any other *comparative* way of thinking, not quite right.

After a time, I began to realize that what was changing was not my ordinary state of mind, but my skill in exercising its natural capacities. My will became more and more capable of doing certain things, when I

needed (not necessarily wanted) it to do so, while at the same time the ordinary rest state of mind, with all its wanderings and confusions, was just fine. In fact, what *I* was slowly growing into was this will. Recall above that I wrote of the *i-AM* as a verb not a noun. It is in *doing* that we are most ourselves, for in doing we are expressing (being) our essential and true self.

Clearly we are each meant to go our own Way, so there is little to be gained by looking at some other person and thinking to ourselves that we should have some kind of inner state we imagine them to have. Far better it became, in my experience, to accept and love our ordinary mind, and just conceive that we are learning what we choose to learn and that those choices lie entirely in our arena of choice - such that the goals of others, or the state of being of others, is of little moment. We become and change in the manner in which we choose to become and change, and that is all that counts.

In the West, especially America, this becoming more takes the form of character development, than it does the reaching for enlightenment or initiation. Further on in the Evolution of Consciousness, I expect we will become more and more universally human, and as that process unfolds, character development, enlightenment and initiation will become themselves a unity. But that is for the future.

Just as clearly, for example and to experience, the Divine Mystery loves us as we are - unconditionally, and completely. In fact, the more we see through the vanity in the desire to be something else, the more we are able to stop judging others as needing themselves to be something different, or to meet our expectations of what they should be, or become.

One of the paradoxes of this view, is that it is also part of ordinary mind to make these exact kinds of comparisons. When we simply rest in the state of ordinary mind, it is full of its endless chatter, what Choygam Trungpa called discursive thinking (or sometimes the oscillations of the citta). We might call it the dialog between the spirit (the *i-AM*) which speaks, and the soul which hears - as in how the mother yells from the kitchen to the rowdy children in the living room: "Stop making that noise, I can't hear myself think!".

The advantage of ordinary mind is that this state is where we all naturally are. To be in ordinary mind is to be right where we are meant to be, while at the same time being in exactly that place where we are most companionable with others, most able to live in that face of love we call comradeship. At the same time, our efforts over the years have led to certain skills, which are always latent in the soul. Moreover, these are just those skills we have chosen to develop. This means that when we choose to act within ordinary mind in order to do something in the realm of our inner life that we have taught ourselves to do, this skill (capacity, gift, art) lies there always in potential awaiting our willing it forth.

It is in fact *the qualities of our personal character* that has given birth to these skills that become an aspect of our eternal nature and thus survive the passage at the end of life we know as the death or end of the physical body, although Rudolf Steiner has advised that we have to birth the actual skills anew once more in each life.

So, if we notice we are excessively judging someone from our ordinary mind, we also might have learned, in traveling the path through the Narrow Gate, to master this in the soul, should we so choose. Yet, we may well not want to master it. This feeling of judgment arising in the soul might actually belong to the situation and need to be expressed. Steiner spoke of what he called righteous anger, and gave as an example Christ's yelling and overturning the tables in the Temple. Much arises in ordinary mind, precisely because ordinary mind has a very appropriate and necessary part to play. In point of fact, entering the Narrow Gate only means to begin to wake up within - nothing more.

What we do through introspection, prayer and meditation is develop capacities that would otherwise lie latent in the soul. Moral grace, freedom and love are three of these presently essential capacities. It is *the will* that learns to do - it is the will which is the truest expression of our verb-ness, our *i-AM*. At the same time, ordinary mind is the truest and most important inner context for this will.

As a consequence, as we wake up and learn, our will will naturally more and more express and impress itself on this context we call ordinary mind. We are already active there anyway, and some of you who read this will be already waking up as to this wondrous landscape that lies waiting for us in ordinary mind.

There is no need to overthrow or get rid of ordinary mind. Rather we simply learn to appreciate and master its already existing virtues. However, the word master can give us some trouble here, so let me next elaborate on that.

The application of the forces of our will in ordinary mind is not meant to be like a sledge hammer. Rather it is more like what we played with as children - a kind of butterfly-kiss. In ordinary mind, soul and spirit intermingle, and to the extent we want to differentiate them, one from the other, we need to tease them apart. This is our own soul that our spirit is learning to master, and this mastery has to be as much an act of love, as are the acts of love from a parent toward a child. We are gentle with ourselves, we nurture ourselves, we forgive ourselves, and most important - most important - **we laugh at ourselves.**

Have you even wondered why some of the enlightened ones, and some of the true initiates, are always laughing and smiling? It is because being a human being is funny! There they are, with all these folks coming around and wanting advice and teaching, and the enlightened ones - the initiates - know that everything they know, you know. We just don't let ourselves know we know. So there we are, asking them questions we need to ask ourselves, and it is funny. Not because we are being funny, but because the real teacher is laughing at himself, for there he is indulging our need and giving us that which lies in his/her ordinary mind, that also lies, at the same time, within our ordinary mind.

Why? Because through the Narrow Gate lies the same realm, available to anyone who learns the practical meaning of: *lest ye become again as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.*

The truths we need to know at any given moment are right there available to ordinary mind. The only skill we may lack is how to frame questions, and how to keep these questions rooted in the real need of the moment. After that, its all about: ask and you shall be answered, seek and you will find, knock and it will be open up to you.

At the same time that I say the above, it will perhaps help to consider some differences between Buddhism, Christianity and some of the wisdoms of aboriginal peoples in America, or between the path of the the

bodhisattvas, the path of initiates and the path of seeking to be fully human on the Earth.

The path of the bodhisattvas is now a path that sacrifices the final goal (achieving Nirvana) in order to remain on the wheel of incarnations until all sentient beings can be enlightened. The path of the initiates is a path that sacrifices personal desire in order to serve the Beings of the higher world, so that Their contributions can manifest in the lives of humanity. The bodhisattvas develop and evolve the human (what the Buddha did), and the initiates bring in the voice of the Gods (what Moses did).

Distinct from these, the aboriginal peoples seek character, for whatever gifts one has, whether one is to become a teacher of mysteries or merely a good carpenter, it is out of our developed character that those around us, visible and invisible, will receive what they need.

Now the *i-AM* has both a Buddha Nature and a Christ Impulse latent within it, as well as a basic need to be merely human. Where the Buddha developed fully the human capacity for Compassion, the Christ brought to us the Father's teaching concerning Love. So the *i-AM*, as well, has capacities to develop the highest in the human, and to be open to and receive from above (and below - let us not forget the realm of the Mother) the highest which yet lies outside ourselves. At the same time we are always involved in becoming just ourselves - our individuality. This individual personality (in its highest and most human sense) is the real earthly core of our being.

Within ordinary mind these three capacities are latent (and always, at the same time, manifesting), and will express themselves even more as we enter the Narrow Gate, and begin to wash out the inside of our own cup, our own inwardness. Yet, it is also this third aspect, which we have begun to notice when we look at the biography (for in the biography - as Native Americans understand - character develops) that has its own special nature. This is the changes that arise in the will, especially in regards to how the individual *i-AM* treats and respects other *i-AMs*. As we know, this development of character unfolds in the biography through what Steiner called: "*trials of fire*". Out of trials of fire grows the *will-on-fire* (character) of the developing *i-AM*, and since the biography is overseen most closely by Christ, now we can see once more what John the Baptist meant, when he said, in Matthew 3: 11: "*I indeed baptize you with water,*

for repentance. But he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to bear. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." {Now I bathe you in water to change hearts, but the one coming after me is stronger than me: I'm not big enough to carry his shoes. He will bathe you in holy breath and fire.}. For Holy Spirit and holy breath we have learned to also use the term *gnosis*, and for fire we learned to also use the terms *the trials of life in the biography*. Christ approaches us from two directions - inwardly with the breath of spirit in gnosis, and outwardly with the challenges of life in the biography. And we? We think about what we are receiving, from both within and without. We, in this *thinking*, unite the inner and the outer into their natural unity (for a time forgotten under the aegis of science - the necessary descent into materialism, or the Ahrimanic Deception). Inner and outer are not separate, but rather are one, whole and complete.

What a grace given gift is ordinary mind!

6) confessions

It would be a mistake for those reading this work to consider that in anyway I have achieved something in the inner worlds of any note. I have many more bad habits than virtues. In my own view (let us make this the *Fool's Tale* part IV), I have many more failures than successes, and of those virtues I may accidentally demonstrate, it would be more accurate to attribute them to my Creator. I have been the recipient of many gifts in the sense of my own nature, gifts for which I cannot claim credit. Most of the qualities I may exhibit belong in whole to He who created me, and we are essentially lucky that I haven't managed to throw most of those gifts out through my own excesses.

I am an addict in recovery, and for too many years abused marijuana and hallucinogens. I suffered an egregious case of hubris in the mid-1970's , believing, at that time, that I had become enlightened. I love junk food, and currently weigh just over 300 pounds. I won't go into the details, but my interest in Eros comes mostly from being as much under the influence of a self-created wounds leaning in the direction of lust, and leaning in the direction of gluttony. I am lazy in the extreme, and spend a lot of time reading novels (many of the escapist sort, whether science fiction or mysteries), and watching television.

My meditative life is frequently sporadic. Sometimes I will be fairly disciplined for several months, and other times I go for an equal amount of time just indulging in my vices. In the Fall of 2003 I fasted for 45 days, mostly for selfish reasons trying to loose weight and gain some self respect as regards how I have most of my life abused the temple of my body. Incidental to that, probably due to my organism being relieved of working overtime with excesses of metabolic demand, I had several early morning Grace provided vision/understandings, which I wrote notes concerning, and which notes became the basic structure of this book. It was during such a time that I managed to lean a little more toward the light than the dark, such that my thick skull could be penetrated with fresh insights.

Most of my visions are acts of Grace, and few are the result of my own efforts. There are those whose gifts and efforts in this regard make them giants in comparison to my own quite modest and minor spiritual efforts. The Kings are such giants, and the most public, Steiner, was vilified and attacked while he lived. Even today he has many enemies. Tomberg, as time went on, became more and more quiet, leaving his masterwork to be published only after his death. Ben-Aharon is equally quiet and certainly not ambitious. I must confess to a bit of worry that my pointing him out while he lives might have unwanted consequences. Besides these, I have friends of many years acquaintance, who have gifts in this regard besides which my own pale, and upon whom much of my understanding is dependent.

In addition, I am not the main artist of my biography, although I don't doubt I made some kind of contribution. Somehow my biography was meant to contain certain experiences, and so I have had at least the decency to report what came my way, both within the outer biography and the inner one. Truth to tell I have mostly just stumbled along, and caused as much harm as good in many places (none of my relationships were/are perfect, nor was I ever any ones perfect employee, son, father, brother, husband or lover). We all, if we are honest, have much to feel remorse for, and I have my share in spades.

One should really not see me at all in what has been written here. I am simply a human being who happened to notice that the World had a certain organization, and who really only happened to notice this because the World hit him over the head with its Truth, not because he was any

great seeker of truth. I try not be here at all in this book, if you read it carefully, and most of my effort in writing this has been to get me out of the way so that you too could Listen to the World Song, and begin to see a bit deeper into the Divine Mystery.

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7) In Joyous Celebration of the Soul Art and Music of Discipleship -

This essay is a contribution of mine to the work of the Anthroposophical Society, a social community of students of Rudolf Steiner. Steiner sought to do two main things (in my view), which was to help us discover the Mystery of the New Thinking (something only potential in humanity in the present), and also how to bring alive the New Mysteries, which are no longer to be experienced in hierarchical form, but rather are to appear from out of the social commons, through individual acts of *love engendered free moral grace*.

Above, I had hinted at some of these inner dynamics (in accord with the intention of this book to be of special use to those who are more familiar with communities of Faith), while the below is the clearest statement I have been able to make in that community in which the New Gnosis is most dominant. The reader of this book, *the Way of the Fool*, will find in the essay below certain language conventions that may be unfamiliar, because this essay was written for a specific audience. If you are interested in more of my thinking on Anthroposophy and the Anthroposophical Movement and Society, then you should read my books: *American Anthroposophy* and *Dangerous Anthroposophy* (also available at www.lulu.com), just keep in mind that within that community I remain somewhat of an outlaw (rebel).

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In Joyous Celebration of the Soul Art and Music of Discipleship

*- a moderately serious introductory sketch unveiling
a mostly American way of understanding the New Thinking -*

first some necessary context

Recently in the News for Members of the Anthroposophical Society in America, was published a wonderful lecture given by Dennis Kloczek, elaborating the alchemical foundations living in Rudolf Steiner's spiritual scientific work. The essay below means to be something from just one voice out of another of the streams that seeks to find its home within the Anthroposophical Society and Movement - the stream of *discipleship*, of those who are karmically related to the original Twelve and the direct participation in certain aspects of the Mystery of Golgotha.

In the essay that follows, it might help the reader to understand that it is mostly written for, and out of, the American Soul. About this Soul, Rudolf Steiner spoke in different places and in the following ways, which I will paraphrase: The American comes to Anthroposophy naturally. English speakers are instinctively in the Consciousness Soul in their Life of Rights. There is a hidden and unique form of Anthroposophy in America, and one should look to Emerson and his circle of friends to appreciate it.

The reader, of whatever Soul background and gesture, who would seek inner stimulation from actively engaging this essay, should understand that for the American Soul much of what is described below is already instinctively present. This instinctive relationship to the art and music of discipleship appears first in the American Soul in the dominant tendency to be directed outwardly toward the world, fully engaged in social reality, and sometimes (often more frequently than appears on the Evening News) seeking to heal the social world's wounds. Part of the hidden mystery of this Soul is that it is possible to take what is so present instinctively, and awaken it by gradual degrees into full consciousness. This task may turn out to be far easier for the American Soul, than has so far been imagined within Anthroposophical circles

To fully inaugurate this gradual awakening, however, does require turning from the outer world and its worries and wonders for a bit, and to look within - to practice introspection. When looking within becomes a normal part of soul life, American Anthroposophists should not be surprised to find that they already live instinctively in their wills in ways with considerable kinship with *the path of discipleship - the path of moral action in the world through renunciation and love*. With the addition of this introspective looking within, we add to the thinking we already do

about the field of outer-world social moral action, a complementary and much needed thinking about the soul-field of inner moral action. Outer world thinking and action are enhanced by everything we learn from the practice of looking, thinking and acting within.

By the way, it is not the point of this essay to encourage any divisive distinction, such as might be assumed because of the emphasis on matters American. Nor is it being suggested here, for example, that Americans are any better at Anthroposophy in any way. On the contrary, we are just different. Each Soul gesture in the Threefold World has unique gifts to offer, and this essay means to serve the potential freeing of those yet untapped American gifts from a kind of child-like imitation of things European. The tendency, to model our soul practices on a kind of European Anthroposophical idealism of the soul, was a natural impulse connected to our admiration of the work of our European brothers and sisters. It is time to grow past this however, to discover our far more earthly and pragmatic way to the Spirit. And, to do this not only for the benefit of the American Soul Itself, but also for the benefit of the Anthroposophical Movement world-wide.

There are then two themes, which while related are also quite separate. The relationship of the Alchemical stream and the Discipleship stream is one theme, and the relationship of the American Soul to the wider world is another. The point of intersection, between the Discipleship stream and the instinctive capacities of the American Soul, shows only that the Rosicrucian and Manichean streams of the Old World, and their connection to Initiation, does not quite have the same meaning for the American Soul as does the natural Christ Impulse inspired in Americans, and revealed by their relationship to the outer world of social need (in part a consequence of the fact, that due to its rampant individualism, the Consciousness Soul is developing faster here - See Ben-Aharon's *America's Global Responsibility: individualism, initiation and threefolding*).

The Alchemical stream is a stream of studied spiritual knowledge and of initiation. It is more of the Kings and of Gnosis than of the Shepherds and of Faith. The Discipleship stream is more related to that moral work in life that comes from following the Teachings of Christ, and thus is more of the Shepherds than of the Kings. The disciples, who were meant to be fishers and shepherds of human beings, were not of the old mystery

streams as were the Kings. The Shepherds belong to what was being newly created - to the future Mysteries that are to arise, not from the old, now impotent and dysfunctional hierarchically organized Mystery Centers, but from finely and homeopathically distributed Branches and Discussion Groups - that is the New Mysteries are to be born out of and in the social commons.

At the same time, while the America Soul is more naturally of the Shepherd stream, - of the discipleship stream, because of its orientation to outer world moral action, it can by turning inward and seeking a pragmatic introspective life, begin to draw from the wisdom-well of renewed European spiritual life. Rudolf Steiner, in his works on objective philosophical introspection (*A Theory of Knowledge Implicit In Goethe's World Conception*; *Truth and Knowledge*; and *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*) gives us a quite useful generalized map to this introspectively investigated inner territory - a territory that for the American Soul has many different and unique characteristics. With Emerson, we get a similar map, not as exact and scientifically rigorous, but one which nonetheless is more in harmony with the actual landscape of the American Soul.

We can read Steiner to initiate us into our introspective soul voyages, in the most objective and scientific fashion; and, read Emerson for that travelogue, which is more attuned to the unique scenic beauty to be actually found there, given that the American Soul, like the other soul-gestures of the Threefold world, is differently oriented in its fundamental nature.

I have tried here to distinguish two problems that ought not to be confused. This article is not saying that the American Soul and the Discipleship stream are identical, only that there is a definite kinship. What is also being said is that for those in this discipleship stream (of which there are no doubt many - Americans and otherwise - within the Society and Movement, and for whom this article also aims to provide greater self-understanding), they will tend to be less attracted to exercises aimed at spiritual development, and more called to moral action in life, which incidental to its true deeds, produces the after effect called: *character development*.

"For every one step in spiritual development, there must be three steps in character development". Rudolf Steiner: ***Knowledge of Higher Worlds and How to Attain It***.

[Keep in mind, when thinking about character development, this question: To what aspect of character development do we relate a good sense of humor, laughter, foolishness and dance? Please also note that at one time the word *silly* meant to be possessed by the sacred.]

This is not to suggest that specific spiritual developmental exercises are unimportant, but rather just to point out that if the moral (character) development lags behind, it more and more becomes a danger that spiritual experience will come toward us in a one-sided way. Further, *we need to understand that true heart thinking is almost entirely a consequence of the extent to which the will to do the Good (that is to be moral) is the foundation for all feeling and thinking activities.*

To make some of this a little more concrete, we might notice that it would not be uncommon for those drawn to the Discipleship stream to find that their biography involves a need to encounter the 12 Steps of AA, or to have to undertake some similar deep *moral-Trial* work. Challenges to character development are common in biographies with a strong kinship with the discipleship stream. Which thought then leads us to the essential point. Moral or character development does not result from spiritual exercises, but only from inner and outer actions in the biography, and their related moral dilemmas. The practice of exercises *builds capacities* in the Soul, while moral actions, both inward and outward, apply these capacities in life (which then *purifies* the Soul). Christ puts it this way: *Blind Pharisee, wash out the inside of the cup and saucer first, if you want the outside to end up clean* [for the whole theme, see Matthew 23: 25-28]

Let us review a bit: From a certain point of view, the Alchemical stream is very European, and thus has a tendency to put forward the incarnation of an Ideal as a goal, leading to the emphasis on spiritual exercises, knowledge and initiation. Americans, on the other hand, tend to face the social as a problem to be solved through moral action. This is very pragmatic, for it is not the purity of an ideal that matters as much as being able to do something to help others. In this sense, the stream of Discipleship is more natural to Americans because, in harmony with our engagement with and in the world, as social helpers, discipleship is rooted

in moral action - in doing the Good ("*...and crown thy Good, with Brotherhood...*").

[Isn't this Brotherhood also partly related to our ability to help each other experience the katharsis of laughter, especially under dire circumstances. Conversation does have a higher function than light, but then what about a well encouraged giggle? The Shadow cannot abide humor, and runs away when we make fun of it.]

In a sense, the idealism of the European anthroposophist has blinded the American anthroposophist, first by suggesting there is only one way to be anthroposophical (a European soul idealism), and second by failing to appreciate that the American Soul is considerably different. The result is that instead of coming to true self knowledge, we (in America) have been pursuing what is at best a temporary illusion - a goal we really can't achieve, instead of our developing, more consciously, the earthly (including humorous and joyous), socially oriented and pragmatic instinct that is our given nature.

I hope the above has not been too confusing. Mostly I just wanted to point out certain contextual themes, and leave to the reader's own thinking precisely what to make of these ideas. In what comes next, where we get more deeply into the pragmatic and the concrete, I hope then that these contextual matters will, as we proceed, begin to make a more practical, and a less abstract, sense.

*

[a brief biographical note: My interest in introspection began around 35 years ago, in 1971, as a result of a kind of spontaneous awakening in my 31st year. I didn't call it introspection at that time, but I had become quite awake inwardly, and was only able to orient myself to these experiences using the Gospels. Seven years later, in 1978, I met the work of Rudolf Steiner, and gravitated to his writings on philosophy, particularly *A Theory of Knowledge...*, and *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*. I also became very interested in Goethean Science, projective geometry and all the Steiner material on the social problem, which was my own main outer-world interest. It was over 25 years later, in 1997, that I wrote my first effort at describing what I had learned about the moral nature of the Soul under these two influences: the Gospels and Steiner's writings on objective

philosophical introspection. That essay was called *pragmatic moral psychology*. At that time, however, I did not yet know enough about the Shadow, and only now, almost 10 years later, can I write the immediately below with some confidence in my appreciation of the intricacies of these problems in the light of the double-complex.]

*substance, or better yet,
selling water by the river**

*[The river of the soul lies inward in everyone. To teach, as it were, about the soul, is to sell water by the river, to give to someone something that is already right in front of their own true face. In spite of all that exists, for example in our home libraries, of Steiner texts etc., there are really only two essential books for the study of the soul: the Book of Life, and the Book of our Own Soul. Learn to read those, and you'll know the core of what you need to know. A text, even this text, can at best be a word-map describing a territory you'll only really know by direct experience, however many other books you ever read. *The reality of matters spiritual is, however, not found in reading, but only in action.* We can acquire a lot of concepts by reading, but we need *experience* more.]

We should keep in mind as we begin, that what is described below is essentially very human and very ordinary. It is one possible descriptive word-map, as it were, of the soul engaged in the dynamics of inner awakening via the path of discipleship. As a map, it will be somewhat abstract and defined. The actual territory is something else altogether - human, messy, inconstant, prone to emotional ups and downs - that is all the wonders of ordinary consciousness. All a word-map tries to do is to point out various significant features. Look out for these mountains, notice those valleys. Here is a pure spring, there is a hard and dangerous rock wall. It is my hope that the reader will find below some guidelines which will help them to chart their own path through the pristine forests and dark swamplands of the soul. Keep in mind it takes courage to explore there, but at the same time there is no other adventure quite like it.

Recall then what Dennis Klocek gave in his lecture to the 2005 AGM, and then published shortly thereafter in the News for Members (or if you didn't hear or read it, try to find a copy as soon as you can): On the blackboard a mandala: a circle, expressing a series of alchemical relationships: earth (freedom); water (phenomenology); air (silent

practice) and fire (dialog). The circle form suggests a return to earth (freedom) at some new or higher kind of level. But before considering that, first some deep background.

If, from a certain point of view, we think of the above four elements in Dennis Klocek's lecture as notes in a rising scale, we could also find that in between each note is an *interval*. While the note is in itself more of a step in spiritual development supported by spiritual exercises, the use in life (the *interval*) of the acquired spiritual skill/capacity is more of a moral act - an aspect of the process of character development. The soul is fallen - it is an out of tune instrument, yet we hunger to return, to rise up and to experience reintegration, and to give voice to the joy, which the *Story of the Return of the Prodigal Son* tells us leads to celebration and feasting.

Because the spiritual development exercises are so well known, and so completely covered elsewhere in Steiner's basic books, as well as Dennis Klocek's books, I will not be discussing them here. This essay assumes a general knowledge of that work, and some practice in their use. Here we are looking at the development of the Soul, solely with regard to its struggles with the so very messy, personal and human *moral questions* of the biography.

In case there is some confusion here, in Steiner's ***Knowledge of Higher Worlds***, the moral is approached mostly through a series of admonitions, encouraging the student to orient him or her self in life in certain ideal ways. Only in ***The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity***, with the discussions of *moral imagination, moral intuition and moral technique*, did Steiner confront the moral problem directly and exactly.

The details that follow I have derived from my own (naturally messy and human, stupid and silly, and when I really get serious - pretentious) introspective investigations of the moral dimensions of the soul, but it should be kept in mind that while it is prudent to describe these phases and Trials as if separated in time in the soul, they are much more likely to be layered over each other - and often simultaneous in a variety of ways. It also needs to be clear that what is to follow wishes only to add another dimension - another view from a different direction - to what Dennis Klocek gave, and not to contradict it in any way whatsoever.

It is particularly crucial to note here that we are mostly discussing those moral acts that take place *in the Soul*, not those in the outer biography. There is a relationship to be sure, but it will help to understand that we are moral in both worlds: the outer world of our biographies, and the inner world of Soul practice and art.

I emphasize the word *Trial* to add another quality to our understanding. Moral development takes place in the biography through Trials. These challenges to the life of soul and spirit are meant to be difficult. We become deeply engaged in our *karma of wounds* with others in these Trials. Moreover, these are called Trials precisely because there is great pain, suffering and effort (as well as not enough fun) connected to them, and because the *Shadow* plays such an important and often decisive role. Furthermore, various aspects of the *Seven Stages of the Passion of Christ* (as described in the John Gospel) are enacted in the Soul via these biographical Trials: *the Washing of the Feet, the Scourging, the Crowning with Thorns, the Carrying of the Cross, the Crucifixion, the Entombment, and the Resurrection*. There is nothing abstract about these difficult processes of soul transformation, and this should be kept in mind as we go forward, namely that: every time I use the word Trial I am speaking of quite human, difficult and sometimes years long life-crises.

There is, in this regard, something of a kind of spiritual law involved. Just as the world of the senses has its laws of gravity and color, so the soul world has its laws. The ones to keep in mind here are the karma of wounds in the outer biography, as well as the outer and inner moral Trials to be faced there, which bear an exact and direct interrelationship. To face a challenge in life, to face a Trial, means to engage in just that personal teaching which belongs specifically to our individually most needed developmental task.

Consider a marriage for example, or the children to be raised there. These relationships are not trivial distractions to any spiritual development, but rather are precisely those riddles and mysteries of life belonging particularly to our own ego's character developmental needs. One can read all kinds of spiritual books, practice all manner of spiritual exercises, and still not advance because the biographical tasks are ignored. To begin to awaken within, and to appreciate that we are surrounded in our biography with just those moral tasks and Trials we individually need, is to recognize just how precisely and miraculously has Christ, as the Artist

of our karma of wounds, woven us into the world of personal relationships. So when Christ advises that unless we become again as little children, we cannot enter the kingdom of heaven, He is, among other matters, telling us precisely who our deepest spiritual teachers in life often are.

This world of personal relationships, and their corresponding moral Trials, whether of family or work, or even wider world challenges, is also very elastic in a sense. We are quite free in it, and it has a quality that can respond rather exactly to only those tasks which we choose to take up. Part of true Faith is to accept what comes to us as challenges, yet at the same time to recognize that our freedom also allows us to choose at every juncture, which way to turn, what burden to carry and when to laugh at ourselves.

For example, the interval from earth (freedom) to water (phenomenology) involves the skill: thinking *about*. This skill we receive as a natural aspect of living in this age, in that we are inwardly free to decide what to think; and, in accord with the Epoch of the Consciousness Soul, we are also becoming more and more able to form individual free moral ideas as well.

The Consciousness Soul really just means that if we inwardly wish to know the Good, in any particular moment of moral demand, crisis or need, we can in fact know what the Good is. Yet, in order to have this knowledge, we first have to *ask, seek and knock*. We have to inwardly form the question, and struggle there to let ourselves answer from the higher nature of our ego. The Good is what we make it to be, and as this essay proceeds, we will get deeper and deeper into this Mystery. This is why my book (found for free on line at <http://ipwebdev.com/hermit/twotf.html> or which can be purchased at www.lulu.com) ***the Way of the Fool*** calls this capacity to know the Good: *Moral Grace*.

Now in this thinking *about* there is the object of our interest, in relationship to which we are the subject. As subject, we think *about* this object. This thinking is also essentially (and initially) discursive to our inner experience. We appear to inwardly talk to ourselves. Our spirit seems to inwardly speak that which our soul then hears.

It is with the skill thinking *about* that we first enter on the problem of the Water Trial of phenomenology. Thinking *about* naturally contains something of the shadow forces of the soul, in that our feeling life is, in the beginning, dominated by antipathies and sympathies. These natural likes and dislikes of our individualized soul color all that we think *about*. Through them what we think *about* acquires an individualized (non-objective) meaning for the spirit - the *i-AM*, in the soul.

[The use of this form of the term "*i-AM*", is meant to lessen the emphasis on the being nature of the ego - its noun-like aspect, and to place more emphasis on the action nature - on the verb-like aspect of the ego. The being nature of the ego tends to be more related to the teachings of the Buddha, while the action nature of the ego tends to be more related to the teachings of Christ.]

In the light of Steiner's *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*, the experience (the percept) is, in the beginning, distorted in its meaning (the thought, the concept) by the shadow elements lingering in the yet unredeemed antipathies and sympathies. By the way, the reader should be clear that only their own personal introspective observations can adequately discern what is going on within ones own soul. We have little business believing we can make such determinations about, or for, another.

Noticing these excessive and unredeemed aspects of antipathy and sympathy will give us our first vague perceptions of the work of the double-complex, the Shadow in the Soul. *Thought is a flower rooted in the soul-soil of feeling, and filled with the blossoming life of the will-in-thinking*. Where an excess of unconsciousness infects this soil and this life, the Shadow is given free play.

In order to progress properly through the life passages that comprise the Water Trial, we have to learn to renounce the unredeemed antipathy and sympathy. This is the central moral act that makes possible the transformation via the Water Trial from thinking *about* to thinking *with*. We enter the Water Trial knowing how to think *about*, and we can leave the Water Trial knowing how to think *with*. The essential moral nature of this Trial is outlined in the Gospels in the Sermon on the Mount, in the teaching concerning the mote and the beam. In the biography, when we learn to struggle with the covering over (or painting in thought via the

unconscious Shadow driven creation of mental pictures) of the persons that we meet, with our individual unredeemed antipathies and sympathies, we are learning about the beam in our own eye. We see not the person, but our own soul as that lives in our projected sympathies and antipathies. To learn to see past the beam, to meet the true phenomena of the other, to learn to think *with* them rather than *about* them, this is the moral *craft* to be discovered during the Water Trial.

The biography gives us just those experiences that challenge this learning. The spouse, the child, the co-worker, the boss, the neighbor, the relative, or the stranger-other, all will evoke the beam, the unredeemed mental pictures. We must learn how not to paint our experience with this already unconsciously given thought content, and instead learn to let the *experience* itself speak into the soul, and to become consciously active as a creator of the *free thought* in relationship to the *experience*.

Again, one way to banish the Shadow influence here (when we discover our thinking to be possessed by the beam) is to laugh at ourselves - to see the essential silliness of our dark inner depictions of others, as well as those depictions which are too sympathetic (that is where we raise another up to the level of a kind of minor deity, such as how too many view Rudolf Steiner - and others - out of a soul mood of ungrounded and unrealistic admiration).

Sobriety, for all its virtues, must be balanced with play, otherwise the soul becomes an arid desert.

So, for example, when we look at another person and recognize that they are, in themselves, not just that which we observe in the moment, but rather that they are their whole history - their whole biography (in fact a sequence of biographies), and when we learn to consciously set aside the reactive feelings of antipathy and sympathy, only then can we start to think *with* who they truly are, and not just *about* them. Our folk wisdom calls this learning to walk in another's shoes.

This thinking *with* can of course be applied to anything living, anything that has a life element to its nature, not just human beings, plants or animals. This includes the history (the story) of a social form, such as a family, or even an Anthroposophical Branch. *When we recreate in the*

imagination, free of antipathy and sympathy, the story-picture of something, we are then learning to think with the object of our thought.

Goethe taught himself to think *with* the plant, and to this organic way of thinking Rudolf Steiner later gave the name: Goetheanism, which is a thinking that leaves behind the discursive aspect of thinking *about*, and replaces that with a thinking *with* - a qualitative characterizing picture thinking (Tomberg's formulation). We do this by learning to make inner images (mental pictures) consciously. We still retain the ability to think discursively *about* these inner images - thinking *about* does not disappear, but remains a skill which can be applied when we choose and where we feel it is appropriate (which is why I wrote earlier of the layered nature of these soul phenomena).

Two additional aspects of soul phenomena need to be understood here - the *attention* and the *intention* and their relationship. The moral act of renunciation is more related to those actions of the *will-in-thinking* that determines on which particular object we focus our attention. When we are lost to the beam in our own eye, part of our attention is unconsciously focused on our own soul's reactive feelings of antipathy and sympathy. To the act of renunciation of these interfering aspects of our attention, we need to join the intention to love the object of this phenomenological (story-picture) thinking. After subduing the impulse to live imprisoned and in the thrall of the beam in our own eye (reactive feelings of antipathy and sympathy), we use our first stage (necessarily awkward and tentative) understanding of how to love the other in such a way so as to redeem them in thought. We consciously create a new picture to replace the old unconscious and reactive one.

As part of the Water Trial, we don't just set aside the reactive feelings, but we learn how to create in the soul *cultivated* feelings. We create freely chosen cultivated moods of soul - that is intended feelings of reverence, wonder and so forth, which then have a salutary effect on the thought content that is to be produced according to where we let our attention come to rest. This is an example of where the exercises bear fruit. If we have practiced these exercises, this will be a great help when we then need to apply the newly learned ability to form cultivated moods of soul, as a prelude and foundation for thinking *with* someone in a new way.

With a cultivated feeling we transform the soul-soil from which the thought is born and then flowers (which is also why the ideal is expressed as: thinking with the heart).

In a certain sense, what is renounced, love replaces. What is given up, becomes transformed. What is dark, is turned to gold. What is evil - our dark habits rooted in the unconscious fear and mistrust of the other - the Thou, are beginning to be transformed into love. And, best of all, what is too sober, particularly in our Self, can as is necessary be made silly.

The renunciation of unredeemed antipathy and sympathy does not, however, mean their elimination. The will acquires the capacity to master this somewhat base song of the soul. We cease attending to it unconsciously, and turn that attention (and the related intention) elsewhere. We master the unconscious soul gesture that leads antipathies and sympathies into the forefront of the soul, and like a good choir director, silence it so that we can concentrate on other instruments of soul potential, other voices. Transformed and conscious feelings of antipathy and sympathy become a valid means of discernment. But we need to be awake to the arising and becoming of these feelings, if we wish not to give the shadow element free play.

The will-in-thinking (an awake and more and more morally pure intention and attention) fills the thought with life (which is why I add to the ideal of thinking with the heart, the ideal also to will the good).

In this way we also refine the gold that is latent in antipathy and sympathy - their capacities for discernment and truth are enhanced, because we apply them with more consciousness - a more awake attention and intention. In the teaching on the beam and the mote, Christ, in Matthew 7:5, ends it this way: *You fake, first get the log out of your own eye and then you can see about getting the splinter out of your brother's eye.*

Again, one of the best ways to eliminate the log is to learn to laugh at it. The log arises from the Shadow side of soul life, and in the light and warmth of our learning to laugh at ourselves, the Shadow's hold dissolves.

In Steiner's *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*, we are taught the importance of the moral basis for our actions, whether outwardly in the sense world, or inwardly in the soul. Only that action, which is preceded

by a self-determined moral reason (intention), is truly free. Even so, no one should be surprised to discover that they are already trying to do these activities in some fashion or another. Emerson said this: *In self trust all virtues are comprehended*. The purpose of this essay - this word-map - is to help us raise out of the realm of instinct, step by step into full consciousness, our already existing natural goodness.

[Another brief biographical note: As I shared previously, I underwent a kind of spontaneous awakening at age 31, and one of the by-products of this inner infusion of light, was that I became hyper-aware of judging people. I could see myself putting them into various boxes and categories, and being now awake to this beam in my own eye, I could also see that this was not right - it violated conscience, so that I struggled to learn how to not do it. That said, learning how not to do it, does not mean that we always apply this newly learned moral craft. On the contrary, I often fell back into old ways many times over the years, although there did slowly dawn a kind of sensitivity, that let me see that I had been again in thrall of the beam. Stepping outside the prison of the beam does not become automatic - a habit, but must always be applied, in the moment, consciously, with intention and attention (the will-in-thinking).]

After we have learned to renounce (consciously and for specific and individually freely chosen moral reasons) our soul gestures of yet unredeemed antipathy and sympathy, in order to learn how to think *with* that object of thinking which we are learning to love, do we then move out of the Water Trial, via more necessity, to the life passages of the Air Trial. This movement from water (phenomenology) to air (silent practice), which before (at the entrance to the Water Trial) began with thinking *about*, now begins with the newly learned craft of thinking *with*. We start with that which we have now discovered as a spiritual development in the course of the Water Trial, and then apply that new level of moral craft (capacity of the will) of renunciation and love to the Air Trial. The will-in thinking, which has learned to master the unredeemed aspects of feelings of antipathy and sympathy, and to replace these with thoughts born out of cultivated moods of soul, is now strengthened. It is this strength that then lends itself to the life lessons of the Air Trial.

Dennis Klocek described the Air Trial as a learning to think backwards - of unraveling, or unrolling, the thought content produced by thinking *with*. The Discipleship stream sees it from a slightly different direction, one

which, however, is not in opposition, but which instead is once more intended to be complementary.

Via the Water Trial we have learned how to think *with*, and that has produced a thought content in the soul. *It is this content that must now be renounced in the Air Trial.* When Steiner wrote of this he called it: *sacrifice of thoughts*. We learn how, again in meeting people, to not have a thought content at all. We become inwardly silent. Strong forces of will are needed in order to subdue the already achieved thought content, which we have wrapped around another person (or any other object of thinking), even if this content now lives free of unredeemed antipathies and sympathies. We can also renounce, during the life passages of major aspects of the Air Trial, those thoughts produced only by thinking *about*.

Further, in the feeling life there live *attachments* to the thought content. We have, after all, produced it. It is our creation, and we like it (most of the time - where the Shadow has unconsciously produced the thought content, we can learn to relate to this soul phenomena out of a *healthy antipathetic discernment* - we can come to not liking it that we have such a thought). Sometimes, however, we can't even separate our own sense of self from this thought content. Nonetheless, to traverse the Air Trial we need to renounce our collection of mental pictures (thoughts). Remember, the self development that accompanies the sequence of alchemical Trials is not just related to spiritual exercises, but also to moral or character development; the chief features of which are acts of sacrifice - acts of renunciation, and acts of love (the beginnings of: *Not I, but Christ in me*).

Steiner also calls this attachment to our thought content, in certain circumstances: *being captured by the concept*. It can be a savage inner struggle - this Air Trial - to learn to forcefully set aside our favorite ideas of the world, a seemingly negative artistic act, sometimes taking months to accomplish. At the same time, their essential nature does not disappear, for the very same qualitative aspects of our true nature - our true *i-AM* - can once again call them forth. Thought does not disappear, it only becomes latent and goes into a kind of *pralaya*. The will-in-thinking is strengthened by this act of renunciation, and when we choose to think again concerning this same object of our thought, the penetrating new powers of the will-in-thinking (attention and intention) can call forth from this *pralaya* an ever deeper understanding of the underlying meaning and truth of that about which we have chosen to think.

[another biographical note: I first explored this process during my many long years of the Water Trial, which really began when I discovered that I had become captured by a psychological paradigm, or world picture. I had come to view everyone, after a time, through the lens of this psychologically based world picture. I discovered that the best way to become inwardly free of this capture, was to undo any relationship to this paradigm, an activity that took several months. A year or so later, I let myself be captured by a similar world picture, this one connected to Tibetan Buddhism. Again, many months were needed to become inwardly free - to break the chains of the teaching - to be able to only experience these thoughts when and if I consciously called them forth. Subsequently, upon encountering Anthroposophy, I gave myself wholly to it - became intoxicated with it in a way, and spent three years drinking in all that I could manage, eventually once more finding myself inwardly lacking the spiritual freedom before the concept that I knew by then was essential. Only after many months of work, was I able to stand in relationship to the massive and marvelous thought content of spiritual science, inwardly free. I could then see that Anthroposophy was not a thought content at all, but rather just the method of awake, and fully conscious (intended and attended) free thinking I had been instinctively seeking for many years.]

As the shadow elements (unredeemed antipathies and sympathies - Water Trial, and emotional attachments to our self-created thought content - Air Trial) are being let go, we now begin to have another experience connected to the Gospels. This is again related to the Sermon on the Mount, specifically the beatitude: "*blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*".

The rolling back, the sacrifice of, the renouncing of the previously created thought content, makes the soul inwardly *poor in spirit*. As we empty out the soul, we begin to learn a new spiritual activity, which might be called thinking *within*. The Air Trial passages of life are taking us from thinking *with* toward thinking *within*. This opens us to the delicate first stages of the conscious experience of the *kingdom of heaven* as *It* begins to appear with greater clarity out of the general background noise of the soul, and on the wings of our natural instinct for the embryonic New Thinking. The Air Trial is developing that which is meant to take us upward and onward to the Fire Trial, or dialog. When we are poor in spirit, empty of the previously given thought content (and master of silent practice), then we

can, to a degree, experience directly the inside of the object of our thought. In personal relationships, this is the capacity for the beginnings of *true* empathy.

In a sense, the base elements of unredeemed antipathy and sympathy are a foundation in the soul. They are of the earth. In the Water Trial, we rise to a more subtle and plastic condition in the soul. To think *with*, to know the phenomenology of the object of thought, is to bring the thinking into movement *with* its object. The earth aspect is more solid and crystallized, while the water aspect more fluid and more mobile. The discursively produced thought is dead (the instinctive living element necessary for any thought remains in the unconscious), while the consciously created picture-thought is more living. With the air element, the soul becomes more expansive. Thought that is renounced in the Air Trial dissipates, disperses and dissolves into the general spiritual background of the soul - the previously noted pralaya condition. The will-in-thinking does not any longer call it forth, nor does it let the thought call itself forth. When we are captured by a concept, it calls itself forth, and the Air Trial teaches us to break the chains by which we have let our unconscious feeling attachment tie us to the concept. We break these chains of feeling by dissolving them, and Dennis Kloeck's metaphor of rolling back the thought is quite apt. We untie it from its attachment to the soul, and without doubt the practice of the spiritual exercise of the Ruskshau is a great help here.

Only then, when we are truly empty, can thought, in the sense that it is the true inside of our object of thinking, come toward us. The true idea of the object moves toward us, as we learn to open ourselves to it, such that *it then thinks in us*. As Christ says in Luke 17: 20-21 "*Asked by the Pharisees when the the kingdom of God was coming he answered: "The kingdom of God doesn't come with the watching like a hawk, and they don't say, Here it is, or There it is, because, you know what? the kingdom of God is inside you."*"

Steiner writes at age 25, in "***The Theory of Knowledge Implicit in Goethe's World Conception***", published in 1886, that: *What takes place in human consciousness is the interpretation of Nature to itself. Thought is the last member in the series of processes whereby Nature is formed.*

While Emerson writes at age 33 in the essay "*Nature*", published in 1836, 50 years before Steiner wrote the above: *Nature is the incarnation of a thought, and turns to a thought again, as ice becomes water and gas. The world is mind precipitated, and the volatile essence is forever escaping again into the state of free thought.*

Thus, having mastered (to a degree) silent practice (learned how to be poor in spirit), we are at the beginning of the Fire Trial, and similar in kind to our previous renunciations, the soul now begins to discover how thinking can be in deepest kinship with its object, by abandoning the Self - by no longer seeing ourselves as the center of the universe. Instead we begin to love the object of thinking more than we love ourselves. This deepening intention to love, in that our own *i-AM* learns to stand out of the way, allows the *i-AM* of the other more room in the soul - we begin to see them not just from their inside - true empathy or thinking *within*, but *as* them, united with them. Again, anything living that can be thought empathically, can also be even more deeply known when we learn to unite with it in thought. But this requires more than our own action. The art of true empathy, or thinking *within*, now, as we let go our own centrality of being, becomes the chalice in which It can think in us - and the life passage of Fire Trial begins to unfold.

This is the fruit of the Air Trial now carried further - the spiritual developmental capacity to have dialog with the realm of the invisibles, for true empathy free of self importance and rooted in inner silence, now lets the inner being of the other - the Thou - speak. Having understood how we become captured by the concept, and emotionally attached to it, we no longer repeat those actions, with the result that thought tends not to come to rest in the soul, to coagulate there. Instead, thought now passes through the soul - flows like a living stream.

[In 1999, seven years ago, I wrote this: *My method basically now consists (when life circumstances allow it) of sitting at my desk and writing descriptive passages of social and political realities. Inwardly the experience is analogous to looking at a clear stream. The surface of the stream results from my inner activity in sacrifice of thoughts, fact gathering, picture forming and artistic expression (more or less done simultaneously). At the same time as my thinking sees this clear surface, I can perceive that there arises, on the other side of that surface, activity which does not belong to my own will, but which appears there*

spontaneously of its own accord. The clear surface is then a product of two activities acting in concert. With my writing I record what appears there.]

With this **art** (thinking *within*), which was earlier merely a **skill** (thinking *about*) and then a **craft** (thinking *with*), we now are in the midst of the Fire Trial. But before discussing this Trial more deeply from the point of view of Discipleship, we need to look ahead a bit and understand what lies on the other side of the Fire Trial. We need to have a picture of what happens in between - in the moral interval between fire (dialog) and the new earth (new freedom), as the circle gesture spirals around in a kind of completion, before moving on to a new level of experience.

[a bit more biography: the material next to be presented, regarding what can happen after the life passage of the Fire Trial, is a little bit speculative on my part. While I have had quite definite experiences of the kind: Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition (mostly by *Grace from Above*), I am neither clairvoyant nor an initiate. I am not even sure most of us need anymore to strongly seek such a goal, at least certainly not in a single lifetime. When I get deeper into the Fire Trial material itself (below), especially given the layered nature of the soul capacities and experiences of all the Trials, and as well the true mystery nature of ordinary consciousness, why I encourage a consideration of the more modest goal of a kind of *sacramental thinking* (as against initiation), will be made more plain.]

This culmination of the Fire Trial is described in Steiner's John Gospel lectures, in lecture twelve, as: *The Nature of the Virgin Sophia and of the Holy Spirit*. The previous spiritual developmental tasks, interwoven with the moral and character developmental intervals, or Trials, produces a *katharsis, or purification of the astral body*, such that the Rite of Initiation may now be enacted, and the seed organs of clairvoyance may now be impressed on the etheric body. I emphasize the term *may*, because while a great deal of the development leading to this stage is rooted in our own actions - our own will-in-thinking, as the Fire Trial progresses we become more and more interdependent with the will activity of the invisibles.

We do not, as I understand it, initiate ourselves, but instead are initiated by Another.

On the other side of the Fire Trial, if initiation is to be the result, we have acquired new faculties of perception. The spiritual world is now there to be experienced directly, and the soul has fully developed that spiritual freedom, which *The Philosophy of Freedom (or Spiritual Activity)* contemplates, for we have renounced unredeemed antipathy and sympathy, we have renounced our emotional attachments to a given thought content and we have renounced even the significance of our own *i-AM* in relationship to others; all the while learning to love ever more deeply the objects of our perception and thinking.

Now before us stand new perceptions. The world of Imaginations is faced with this new freedom, but it stands inwardly over there, as it were, such that once more we have something which we think *about*, only this time it is not a sense object but a spiritual object. Moreover, the perceptual element of an Imagination has required our co-participation. Contrary to a sense object, which has as an aspect of its nature what Steiner called *the necessary given*, a spiritual Imagination as an object of clairvoyant perception does not exist independently of our own will-on-fire in thinking. We have *authored and sourced* (for this language, grateful thanks to Harvey Bornfield) it in cooperation with spiritual beings.

Our new thinking *about* has participated in the creation of the Imagination. We experience the Imagination in infinite internal space (ethereal and peripheral space) as an object, whose existence comes about because our own activity is coupled with the by Grace activity of higher beings. The intention and attention are involved in a Parsifal question to which the Imagination is an answer. Subsequent in time to this experience, cognition then produces the word forms, either written or spoken, in which the living Imagination dies into a crystallized word-picture, such as what is given to us in many of Steiner's lectures and writings. When we actively (not passively) read these word-pictures, recreating them in our own picture-thinking, the soul harmonizes with the Imaginative aspect of the world of spirit, creating out of this harmony a rudimentary chalice in which later spiritual experiences can arise.

So we begin then to repeat at a higher level the previous Trials, but this time facing experiences we have never before had. We travel once more around the mandala of the circling spiral of soul metamorphosis, learning in new ways to think *about* (Imaginations), then on to new thinking *with* (Inspirations) and finally to new thinking *within* (Intuitions). [There

would seem to be here a great mystery, about which I have not (yet) any experience, but at the same time a great curiosity: *do angels etc. tell jokes or laugh and dance?*]

This full new thinking, however, is itself at a higher stage. It is thinking transformed into willed creative and participatory beholding (perceiving). The normal thought content, which we know as an aspect of our original state of consciousness (earth and freedom, in discursive thinking *about*), only arises in the soul after the clairvoyant thinking perceiving (beholding). This thought content falls out, as it were, during the period of time the spiritual experience is fading away. The spiritual experience does not continue in earthly memory, but at the same time, the thought content produced (that is, how the experience was initially cognized as it fades away) does remain in earthly memory.

Let us now return to a deeper appreciation of the life passages we are calling: the Fire Trial.

All the work we do, through the various Trials and passages of our biography, more and more purifies the soul, making it ready for clairvoyant spiritual perception. At the same time, there is constant spiritual music in the soul - the song of the wind and of the breath - even as far back as when we are only being newly born out of the first Trial of earth and freedom.

Ordinary consciousness is already full of spirit. Our problem is how do we pick the gold out of the dark shadowy and leaden dross of the soul, normal to its given fallen state of earth and freedom. Two factors are clues. These are discovered during the early stages of introspection in the idea of needs and the idea of choices. The wind - the breath - the living river of thought - blows through the soul constantly, but *always in accord with need and most often in accord with other-need*, that is the needs not of the Self, but of the Thou. To live into this Grace given always present intuition-like breath, we need to choose. *When we do choose service to other-need, then true, good and beautiful intuitions flow on the wind of Grace into the soul, even in its ordinary and fallen state of consciousness.*

Other-need also helps keep our ambitions in check. One of the temptations that the Shadow offers to us is to let us believe we can, for example, out of reading a Steiner text speak with authority about matters

concerning which we have had no other experience than the text. Absent the real experience - the percept - true thought (the concept) cannot arise. Only in conjunction with actual clairvoyant experience can we, in full conscience, speak of such matters with the same confidence as did our Teacher, Rudolf Steiner. Yet, in the face of other-need, and our choice to devote ourselves to this need, spiritual contact (experience) does appear in the soul. *The spiritual percept (experience) arises within the soul as a response to the Parsifal question which our intention and attention have created out of our relationship to other-need, and the modest nature of our choice to serve this need makes our soul a suitable chalice to receive that thought content which then serves this need.*

For example, we have no need (besides a vain curiosity) to know who was the 20th Century Bodhisattva incarnation of the future Maitreya Buddha. Yet, on the other hand, there is a deep need to know how to love those intimate others in our biography, so that we can learn to heal our shared karma of wounds.

With this in mind (and also keep in mind the layered nature of soul development, as against the one-sided idea that it is a mere linear progression) let us look at the Fire Trial, which Dennis Klocek has described also as: *dialog*; and which he related to meeting with the dead, who come to us through our encounters with others. From the standpoint of the Discipleship stream, this is once more perceived a bit differently, yet again in a complementary fashion.

Having passed through the previous Trials, our will-in-thinking now possesses certain capacities, certain inner arts, the essence of which are moral in nature. The self development spiritual exercises are secondary to, but supportive of, the character (moral) developments. We have learned in the Water Trial to renounce unredeemed antipathies and sympathies and to replace those with a redeemed thought content produced in a chalice of freely chosen cultivated feelings. In the Air Trial we have renounced as well even this self-produced thought content, in order to live in the silence, that is poor in spirit.

In Fire Trial, which begins with its capacity of thinking *within*, won in the Air Trial, we now enter into dialog on the wings of a renunciation of self importance. That which is not-Self is to become more important than that which is Self. *Love of the other fills the attention and intention, and the*

work toward Not I, but Christ in me matures. In this case, the dialog element for the Discipleship stream is more accurately characterized as Steiner's "*it thinks in me*", albeit this form of expression is lacking a certain artistry. A more beautiful phrase would be: *the delicate and subtle presence of Fullness and fullness of Presence.*

[another biographical note: I learned, over many years of hard experience, that the essential matter was the Parsifal question - the deeply felt question, coupled with the absence of personal ambition in this question. The knowledge I seek must be consciously intended to serve others, not to serve my vain curiosity. In fact, my success in my researches into the social, seems to have been entirely related to my renunciation of the possibility of initiation in order to more deeply be led to an understanding of the social, an act which occupied my prayer life for a number of years in the mid-'80's. As a consequence, I began to experience this wind, this delicate and subtle presence of Fullness and fullness of Presence in response to my Parsifal questions concerning an understanding of the social, which I had sought in order to serve other-need. My biography led me to working, from my mid-thirties onward, as a member of the working poor. I cleaned toilets, washed dishes in restaurants, worked in mental hospitals, and the last three years of my work life (59-62), I worked in a factory. This led me to not only a personal, but a shared experience of the suffering in the world due to the Age of Materialism, which has led the *i-AM* not to appreciate itself or the causes of its suffering, and which gave me such pain that the only way I could think to alleviate this was to seek, via the new thinking, the ability to tell a new story of the world and of human meaning. This was my Parsifal question in its broadest form, and the wind would come at anytime It choose as I lived out these experiences, so that I had to learn to be sensitive to this *wind*, and to serve It, even by pulling off the road when driving and taking notes, or getting up from bed at night and writing when called. The success of this inner work also made me on more than one occasion, an obnoxious moral nut case, filled with excessive moments of grand hubris - my own Shadow intoxicated and inflamed. Fortunately, the Trials would knock me down whenever I got too drunk with the seriousness of any luciferic fantasies of having a mission.]

The moral art of thought not only comes to the truth of the object of thinking, but also knows its goodness and its beauty. In intimate relationships, where we learn to love the will of the other - the Thou, and

to see the beauty, not of their physical appearance, but of their deeds - in this selfless perception we then start to live in their true Fullness and Presence.

Thinking *within*, as it traverses the Fire Trial, begins to experience the spiritual world as a thought world, via a pure thinking, which is a cooperative art - Grace will be present. This purity is three-fold. It is pure in the sense that it is only thought - that is it is sense free. The attention is so focused only on thought, that the outer sense world recedes far into the background of consciousness. That is one aspect. The second kind of purity is moral in nature. The soul is pure in its intention and attention. The intention and attention are chaste, as it were. Modest, or moderate. Without ambition of any kind. Not even seeking initiation or enlightenment. Insight increases in the soul, but each time as a surprise - as a wonder.

The third kind of purity is as regards the thought - the concept itself. It is *only* pure concept or idea and in this it is *thought as Being, as Presence and Fullness*. Our earthy grasping of the thought, which in the beginning tends to render it into mere mental pictures or generalized concepts, has been gone beyond. We have sensed thought unconsciously in this beginning, and caused it to fall into our earthly and darkened consciousness from out of its original living environment. When we learn how to return thought to its true realm and nature, then our sense-free thinking, and the purity of our intention and attention now lets the pure nature of the Being of the Thought *think in us* (dialog).

At the same time, this conversation has what seems at first blush an odd quality to it, in the sense of our freedom. As discussed in the essay on ***The Meaning of Earth Existence in the Age of the Consciousness Soul***, just as Christ gives his Being to our need for knowledge of the Good as an act of Grace in such a way that the thought of the Good is entirely ours to shape, so also that which *thinks in us* does not answer our knock with any authority whatsoever. This Holy Spirit (the wind in the soul) *spends* (exhausts) *Its* will into us in a way. Its participation with our *i-AM* in the nature of the thought's form is such that, while the Holy Spirit elevates our perception of truth, we remain the final author and source. The Holy Spirit's participation is also a gift and becomes the wind to the **wings** of our soul. Borne on this wind we see from whatever height, depth or

breadth that must be there for *other-need*. We serve the Thou and the Holy Spirit serves us both.

The soul is now grateful for whatever wills to *dialog* with it, and has no need for anything other than the occasional, but profoundly nourishing, experiences of Grace, all of which it had already begun to know, even coming in the beginning in the wonderful mystery of ordinary consciousness, and in accord with *other-need* and choice.

Yet, in this same beginning, the karma of wounds, and the unredeemed aspects of the astral or desire body move us forward in life, and we are guided by the Shadow into and toward our necessary biographical experiences. In the processes of the Fire Trial, we learn to let go these drives, to move with and within the stream of Providence in Life. The soul now tends to want only to be content and at rest, no long driven. We love the necessity that Providence brings us, and devote ourselves to that task, recognizing that the Great Whole of Life is in Other and far more competent Hands (Christ's Love).

There can be, by the way, either (or both) an outer necessity and an inner necessity. *Self observation, with an evocation of conscience applied to whether we are being truthful to ourselves, will reveal whether an inner necessity is to have the same weight as an outer one.* This essay, in fact, was very much produced out of an inner necessity in connection with the delicate and subtle presence of Fullness and fullness of Presence, brought into the stream of Time, because of a Parsifal question that occurred to me regarding the pending conference on Ben Franklin (August 18-19, 2006), where I live in Fair Oaks, California. Yet, even in this work, I encountered Fire Trial elements, for latent and unredeemed ambitions limited and distorted my first versions of this essay. Only after I had recognized these ambitions and laughed at myself for them, did matters acquire a satisfactory to conscience moral clarity.

We need to keep in mind that we remain of the earth, even when the wind - the kingdom of heaven - is blowing through the soul. In our earthly dialogs, one with the other, we need to learn to just listen and not to always impose our own opinions upon the others freedom of thought (for parents of children and others in a teaching necessity, this will be different, sometimes). We can let the soul rest in wonder at what the Thou will say and do. So also with the invisible *other-presence* in the soul. In

this way the outer biography and the inner biography more and more consciously harmonize their naturally interwoven music.

Life itself - the biography - will demand of ordinary layered consciousness, and in harmony with the necessities of our karma of wounds, those experiences to be faced in which other-need and choice appear. If we think with the heart and will the good, Grace will come in the form of those other-needed intuitions - the deepening consciousness of what other-presence wants to say into our inwardness, in concordance with our slowly growing and developing capacities, as is necessary for service to the Thou.

This is the essence of the Fire Trial - a burning away purification of self for other. Just as in the Air Trial we set aside attachment to a given thought content, so in the Fire Trial we give away our attachments to our own meaning - we dissolve the self descriptive concepts with which we previously adorned our *i-AM*, as if wearing a costume. Instead, we just are. We no longer are this or that, but just are. Each favorite self-name: father, mother, Anthroposophist, alchemist, lawyer, ditch digger - all these names of self are let go, using the craft and art acquired in the Air Trial. We do this in order to get ready for the first part of *Not I, but Christ in me* - the *Not I* part. We burn away the I concepts, which by their very nature are limiting and mark us as not-free and are a beam in our own eye-inside, directed at ourselves.

We don't have to think of ourselves as a father or mother, for example, since the necessity of the biography places those tasks before us already. The inner biography too, with its ambitions, hopes, dreams and wishes, pulls us forward as well.

There is as yet no traditional clairvoyant spiritual perception - the astral body is still being purified during the Fire Trial. What was the lower ego, or that which begins its path accompanied by the Shadow or double-complex, has more and more merged and identified itself with the higher ego - the self-participated aspect of conscience.

When we live purely in Parsifal questions (that is, poor in spirit), in the artistic mastery of our antipathies and sympathies, having set aside self importance and attending to the object of thinking with the intention to love, then thinking is meet with *other-presence*, as needed. This is the

quite definite inner experience of the delicate and subtle presence of Fullness and fullness of Presence, which is described in the John Gospel as follows: *What's born of the flesh is flesh, and what's born of the breath is breath. Don't be amazed because I told you you have to be born again. The wind blows where it will and you hear the sound of it, but you don't know where it comes from or where it goes; it's the same with everyone born of the breath* John 3: 6-8

This Fire Trial is all the more painful, because we have become exposed via the previous layers (stages) of spiritual and character development, to a much deeper introspective understanding of our own desire body - our own astral body. We can now not only think *within* the other - the Thou, but also we can now think much deeper *within* our own soul - we are naked before our own introspective clarity of perception. That which remains unredeemed, and still yet outside the full and completed Fire Trial of purification, lies inwardly exposed to us. The descending conscience (like the descent of the dove in the Gospels) meets the rising lower ego, both seeking union and marriage; and this light from above, a kind of deep moral Grace, illuminates and warms all that is yet shadow in the soul. Emerson has put the bare bones of it like this in his lecture, The American Scholar: *"For the instinct is sure, that prompts him to tell his brother what he thinks. He then learns that in going down into the secrets of his own mind he has descended into the secrets of all minds..."*

*

Just as we learned to think *about*, *with* and *within* the other - the Thou, so we learn to think *about*, *with* and *within* ones own soul. Each *skill*, *craft* and *art* of thinking emerges from its corresponding Trial. The Earth Trial is a given, it is where most of us start. The Water Trial requires our first struggles with renunciation and the beginning, and delicate, expressions of love. The Air Trial takes us even further, to the abandonment of our favorite thoughts. Then we also renounce our excessive sense of Self, in the process of facing the Fire Trial. There we are also most exposed to our own other-Self, - the Shadow - which is now fully illuminated - no secrets whatsoever.

Let us consider, briefly, some hints on the encounter with the Shadow, from the point of view of the Discipleship stream.

When Valentin Tomberg was writing as an anthroposophist, he described in his book *Inner Development*, three aspects to the Shadow: a luciferic double, an ahrimanic double and a human double. Later, in his profoundly Christian *Meditations on the Tarot* he wrote of the tempter, the prosecutor and of egregores - that is of self-created psychic parasites in the soul (Steiner called these latter creatures, in *Man as Symphony of the Creative Word*: cancers or tumors of the soul).

When we think discursively - talk inwardly to ourselves, the unconscious works into the soul. That is, both the higher and the lower unconscious are present. No true thought, for example, can arise in the soul except for its having come to us via the living stream of thought (see Kuhlewind here). But, because in ordinary and fallen soul consciousness, we are bound (intentionally by the Gods so as to give us true freedom on the earth) into an inner darkness of spirit, we only can know thought as it falls out and down into the soul from its original living element. In discursive thought the living element has died.

Conscience, another higher element of the unconscious, also speaks into the soul via discursive thought, as that whispering still small voice.

At the same time, the Shadow is active here as well. When we struggle with our own temptation or tempt others (the luciferic double), or when we hurt ourselves, or others (prosecute ourselves) with mean thoughts (the ahrimanic double), these too come from the unconscious into discursive thinking. When we fall, over and over again into temptation such as addiction or alcoholism, part of the soul becomes excessively free of the ego, for the ego is weak in many ways. This part can be called an egregore or a tumor of soul.

However, since all manner of bad habits (an ill temper, an abusive tongue) are also connected to tiny tumors of soul, I have begun to feel that this language lacks what art and a sense of beauty needs to give to our conceptions, so above I wrote only of wounds, of our karma of wounds.

What the life passages of the Trials give to us is ever greater consciousness. We draw out of the unconscious, through a more and more awake intention and attention, not only its lower elements, the Shadow and darkly cold side of temptations, prosecutions and wounds, but also the

Light and heart-warmed side, the stream of living thought and participated conscience.

So, in facing the Water Trial of the mote and the beam we begin the work of discipleship, the work of seeking reintegration and reunion with the Divine Mystery Itself. So also with the Air Trial and the Fire Trial. Bit by bit we perceive and then let go what is dark in the unconscious, thereby separating and drawing into the light the gold of our growing will-in-thinking.

The fruit of each Trial remains with us, and at each passage becomes deeper. The soul becomes a rich texture of layers of inner song and music in the form of ever unfolding capacities of will, in the corresponding creative cultivation of sublime elements in the feeling life, all interwoven with the arising and passing away of the breath stream of living thought.

The purified will (an appropriately moral intention and attention) creates heart warmth in the soul-soil of feeling, out of which the light and life filled flower of thought is born. And, because we are first born into this process out of the Earth Trial of freedom, our whole passage in these Life Trials goes forward in freedom. It all evolves out of our choices. Recall Emerson: *In self trust all virtues are comprehended.*

Nothing renounced has disappeared, but rather the soul becomes an instrument, which the *i-AM* in freedom learns to play. The notes and intervals become primal dynamic expressions of soul forces and capacities, many generated out of spiritual exercises. Just as we must practice the use of a material musical instrument, so we must practice the capacities of the soul. At the same time, many forces and capacities (if not more) have a quality that comes only from the moral tone of the soul. We purify the instrument of the soul as much as we learn to how use it. Both are needed, both are necessary. The spiritual exercises, that is the *how* as in technique, has more kinship with the teachings of the true Alchemists - the stream of the Kings, while the moral purity of the soul has more kinship with the teachings of Christ - the stream of the Shepherds.

Steiner's *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity* is the modern transformation of the Christ in me moral essence of the John Gospel, while *Knowledge of Higher Worlds* is the modern transformation of the Rosicrucian Ideals of spiritual developmental exercises. While the latter

has more kinship with the soul nature of Central Europe - the seeking to incarnate the Ideal, the former has more kinship with the soul nature of the American - the need to act morally in the world. Both are present everywhere in the world, it is just the mix and their proportions that vary from one soul gesture to another, in the wonder and mystery of the Threefold World.

Let us make a whole.

We become more and more free as we renounce and transform sympathies and antipathies, then as well the very thought content itself, until finally we sacrifice our own importance. Each act of renunciation is accompanied by a corresponding and deeper capacity to love. Each act of love, beginning with the most simple appreciation of the other - the Thou, creates inner purity - inner light and warmth. We are in the process of learning to make of the soul a temple, and to fill it with created and cultivated feelings of reverence and wonder at not only the world of nature, but also the world of social community, the stream of karmic wounds and free destiny meetings with our companions in life. Ultimately, this inner and outer moral work leads us to becoming fully inwardly naked to ourselves in the Fire Trial (where there is no longer the possibility of escaping the Shadow), and as well fully and consciously naked to *the other-presence* (the kingdom of heaven is within you). But even in the face of *the other-presence* we are nevertheless completely free. The nature of the breath (*the other-presence*) is to bring not only a new depth of comprehension, but ever more freedom, for we never stop being the principle willful agent of the thought content that arises in the soul. Overtime we become even freer and more creative - a true artist in thought.

The creation of a human thought content is the sole province of the 10th Hierarchy. Only in us, and through our love, does the Cosmos know Itself in the beauty of human thought. We were told this as long ago as Genesis 2:19-20, with the symbolic picture that unto Adam is given the power of naming every living creature. We name the world, give it its human meaning, with every thought we source and author.

Here we can now come to understand more deeply the truth, beauty and goodness hidden in Christ's comments in response to the question of what is the most important commandment: He said to them, "*You are to love*

your lord God with all your heart and all your spirit and all your mind. That is the important and first commandment. [love other-presence] The second one is similar: You are to love those close to you as you love yourself. [love the Thou, the companions in life] All the law and the prophets hang from these two commands" . Matthew 22: 37-40.

What we really learn is to participate sacramentally in the arrival of the thought content in the soul, which becomes then ever new each time we truly think. We are, in this, inwardly born again and again and again. This living thinking is a perpetual rebirth of thought, which comes into being and dies away - a constant dying and becoming. We learn to unite with this living stream of thought, the living stream of breath within. We give ourselves over to it, in a participatory Rite - an artistic soul dance of sacred-heart thinking, and then discover the true secret of the Fire Trial, which has been hidden out in the open in the Gospels, just in this: *Now I bathe you in the water to change hearts, but the one coming after me is stronger than me: I'm not big enough to carry his shoes. He will bathe you in holy breath and fire.* John the Baptist: Matthew 3:11

*leading us, through His Grace (holy breath within)
and His Love (as Artistic arranger of the Karma
of the Fire of Trials in our biographies), to:
Not I, but Christ in me.*

*

"are we having fun yet?"*

(*many thanks to Bill Griffith's, Zippy the Pinhead,
for one of the best statements of the current Zeitgeist ever)

Epilogue: Concerning the Immediate Future

I don't believe anyone, who is seriously thinking about what is going on in this climactic phase of the end of the first third of the epoch of the Consciousness Soul (the Dawn of the Third Millennium), will not be noticing that everything seems to appear to be getting worse and worse. History shows that Civilizations do undergo periods of intense crisis, and clearly we are in such a phase. In this part of the Seventh Day of Creation,

where we stand on the cusp of leaving behind our spiritual childhood, are we to imagine in some fanciful way that such an Event is going to happen without a great deal of upheaval and change?

We live in a epoch where each individual *i-AM*, in its own biography - both inner and outer, is able to pass through that baptism we know as trials of fire that can arise only in this particular way and only at this particular time (this is the true cause of the so-called population explosion, as an acquaintance once said: "*the reason so many have incarnated is that everyone wants to be at the party*"). It is as if a Great Dance is now to go through a very special Moment of Transformation, with all the partners in the Dance having their individual roles (their biography), while the Whole Artistic Rendering, which really is only a backdrop (or context) in which the individual biographies appear - this Whole, when viewed as a Whole, seems to many to be some kind of potential end, to the Earth and to all humanity (as I wrote the first version of this Epilogue, the crisis connected to the discovery of acts of great evil, torture and humiliation, by Americans in Iraq, is just in its first stages of unfolding). But this hint of an End is just a seeming - an easy way for many to misinterpret this rise of chaos that challenges us to discover, out of our own thinking, the true meaning of Earth existence. There is a danger, however, to believing this time is an End Time, and we know this danger in the phenomena modern psychology calls the "self-fulfilling prophecy". The danger of such beliefs then (besides just being plainly in error) is that we will form a belief and then act so as to see the fulfillment of that belief, thus bringing it about ourselves, while it would never otherwise have happened on its own.

In order for us to have the greatest opportunity to discover moral grace, freedom and love in a clear existential fashion in the biography (that is wake up to the consciousness soul, the Christ Impulse and our own true character - or love engendered free moral grace), it is only in such Massive Historical Chaos that this possibility can arise in a concrete fashion before the billions of *i-AMs* that have chosen to incarnate just in this time. To help make this clear, let us imagine a couple of specific examples.

In America there is a common experience in this time of economic globalization, namely the loss of jobs. Many people in America are undergoing big changes in their work life, such that their previous life style, in its economic aspects, is changing. This has actually been going

on for some time, and in the present and immediate future appears to be accelerating. People are being torn out of their comfortable ways of life, and confronted with large changes in circumstance. Pressure is put on marriages, and families are under increasing stress (this has been true in minority communities far longer than in Anglo - white - communities, a fact not to be ignored).

Let us review once more this deep Mystery of the Gospels: Matthew 10:34-40: *"Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes will be those in his own household. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it. He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me"* ***{Don't think I came to cause peace across the land. I didn't come to cause peace, I came to wield a sword, because I came to divide a man against his father and a daughter against her mother and a bride against her mother-in-law, and to make a man's servants his enemies. Whoever prefers father or mother over me is not worthy of me; and whoever prefers son or daughter over me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. Whoever found his life will lose it, and the one who lost his life because of me will find it. Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me, receives my Sender.}***

Families are not meant to impede the unfolding of the *i-AM*, and as individuality increases, so the cohesion of the family must decrease. It is Christ in us, that needs to unfold, and it is Christ in between us that is the sword. Many Christians have believed that what they called the family values crisis was caused by outside evil in Society, but this view is false. The true cause is Christ, within and without, Who, in order to bring us out of our spiritual childhood, must first separate us - help us know ourselves as independent individual human beings. Rudolf Steiner put it this way: ties of blood are passing away. And now, whatever relationship there is to be between individuals, must arise through the love engendered free acts of moral grace, that learns to see not the mother or the father, or the wife or the husband, or the son or the daughter, but instead the Christ

Impulse within each individual *i-AM*, in spite of the natural blood relation. *We must learn to love the Christ within the Thou, to be worthy of, and evoke, the Christ within our own inwardness.* Did He not teach us: *whatsoever ye do unto the least of these my brethren ye do so also unto me; and love your neighbor as yourself.* When we combine these two teachings (as we must weave together all that He taught) how can we not know what He meant?

Yes, troubles are everywhere. The school which is Earth Existence is not only difficult, its also a *Mystery*. All we need do is think of the ordinary people trying to survive in the war zone that has become Iraq. Each day brings to each biography moments of moral crisis. The *i-AM* must make choices, and more and more frequently the choices will set family member against family member. The father will urge the son to help the family survive, fetching water, finding work and food, but the son may find his moral response in opposing the occupation. The mother will want the daughter to help with the cooking and cleaning, but the daughter may instead want to care for the stranger other, the wounded outsider. That many live under the religion of Islam (or any other Cultural influence), only means that the Stage setting experienced outwardly, and the given paradigm (collection of mental pictures and generalized concepts) experienced inwardly, have a special significance in the biography of those incarnated in such Cultural regions and backgrounds.

Some may have noticed that little has been said here regarding any deeper relationship between Islam and Christianity, in a way similar to the obvious similarities and contrasts as regards Christianity, Judaism and Buddhism. This is made all the more needed (some kind of understanding of the nature of this relationship between Islam and Christianity) due to the apparently huge conflict in the present between these two cultures. As near as I can tell, this needed understanding of the deeper relationship of Islam and Christianity is in preparation. I have a friend (the one who sees Angels in playgrounds - remember "*see, do*"?), who must face the trials connected to living into this great question. From my own experience, I am well aware that a great deal must first be lived and learned before one is ready to stand before the world and illuminate such a thorny question. Let us all hope that she will be free to do so soon.

Should there be any doubt that such an inner relationship is possible between Islam and Christianity, let me quote from the Quoran (keeping

what I have been writing above about *the double* in mind): "*Qul a'udhu birabbin nas. Malikin nas. Ilahin nas. Min sharril waswasil khannas. Alladhi yuwaswisu fi sudurinnas. Minal jinnati wannas*", or in English: "*Say, I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind, the King of mankind, the God of mankind, from the mischief of the sneaking whisperer, who whispers in the hearts of mankind from among the jinn and mankind.*"

We share a great deal just being human beings, in spite of our outer religious and cultural differences

The biography is lived day by day, moment by moment. The Great Historic Moment in which modern biographies unfold is just a Painted Backdrop on a Stage. Wars, conflicts, corporate corruption - all that we see as evil is merely context. Yet, let us be grateful for it, for this context of apparent evil is what enters our souls and leads us to choices. If we all lived idyllic lives on tropical isles, the *i-AM* would forever remain the same - a child.

Macro induced Evil exists in the world to force us to face the differences between that and the Good. The World is a great Pictograph, on a scale we can hardly imagine, and the tempters and prosecutors within induce us to give into our karma of wounds as part of the Play, so that the Not-Good can be clearly seen and distinguished. The sooner we get it, the sooner Marco Evil will cease to be necessary. We hold the near God Ahriman in a kind of bondage, as well as his aide Lucifer, to the extent we do not cultivate the garden of the soul. And, by the way, if people think this is hard to swallow, just wait a few incarnations.

Over the next years conflict and chaos will increase until some kind of peak is reached and everything (and everybody) wants to rest (there are suggestions in various other-visions that the peak will occur about 2012). We are in a Divinely Orchestrated Rite of Passage, whose meaning is the emergence of the *i-AM* from out of its spiritual childhood. Yet, the tapestry which serves as the backdrop to our individual biographies is not the essence, in spite of what news readers believe. What is in the news is only a vain confusion of the foreground and the background. So don't pay that much attention to what Media thinks it all means. The modern folk wisdom *Think Globally, Act Locally*, has it exactly right. Do understand the World, the Tapestry of Conflict and Disorder (*Think Globally*), but

behave in your biographies out of your own love engendered free moral grace (*Act Locally*), or as the Angel said to my friend: "*See, Do.*"

The Moody Blues, an English rock group whose works I have described on my website, *Shapes in the Fire*, in an essay there called: *Hymns to the Consciousness Soul*, have this line of verse in their collected works: "...turn the Earth to ash and still commit no crime...". In the Seventh Day of Creation, we grow and become, wild flowers in a Garden we have yet to honestly appreciate for its real Truth, Beauty and Goodness.

Let's come at this once more, from a slightly different direction. The above mostly concerned the teaching function of the Seventh Day of Creation as regards the individual biography. Now let us look at the more dramatic elements of the stage backdrop, or historical context.

A lot of people are concerned about what they call Earth Changes. So, for example, we have some people paying attention to the changes in the features at the bottom of Yellowstone Lake in the Western United States (the bottom, according to some, has risen over 100 feet in a couple of decades, suggesting a new period of volcanism is pending), and similar kinds of phenomena. The geological history of the region suggests that if volcanism were to return to that region in a dramatic fashion, the area of immediate devastation might be as large as 600 miles in radius. Many of the same people are also concerned about global warming, and/or the possibility of an new ice age.

Most of this thinking assumes either a living Earth Being that is responding to our activity, or mechanical features of the Earth organization, suggesting a kind of cause and effect relationship between pollution and climate changes. My way of seeing this is a bit different.

First, when we look at complex phenomena that aren't behaving in accord with old patterns, this makes me think in the following way. Complex systems occasionally change their basic parameters. When they do this they usually first begin to oscillate rather wildly, with various factors getting increasingly out of tune, until a kind of climax is reached, after which a new equilibrium arises. The Earth's climate and geological features are clearly complex systems.

In my view we have to expand the factors we include in the complex system of the physical Earth and climate to include our moral life and our life of thought and feeling. My view is that collectively, this aspect of humanity actually is the dominate feature of the whole complex system. Our morality sits at the upper (spiritual) level, and this quality descends through thought and feeling until there is a collective impression made on the level of material climate and geology.

We have to include our own moral activity - our way of life - as an aspect of the physical complexes and potential changes. And, given that everywhere we look it is clear we live too fast - too far outside wisdom and moral restraint - the possibilities do not look good. The Hopi have a word for our current situation: ***Koyaanisqatsi***, or *life out of balance*.

In his remarkable book on the Second Coming, ***The Spiritual Event of the Twentieth Century***, Jesaiah Ben-Aharon writes: "*Now when they identified themselves with the situation of earthly humanity, the souls who remained true to [Archangel] Michael prefigured, in their planetary Earthly-Sun life, the great Sacrifice of Christ. They walked again in His steps as they did in former earthly lives, only now the order of following was reversed. They went before Him, showing Him the way, acting out of free and self-conscious human decision, and He followed in their steps only after they fully united themselves with the divided karma of Earth and humanity. Only then could He offer His sacrifice as the answer to the new, future question of human existence: the question concerning the mission and fate of evil.*"

What this means in practice is that climate change and other Earth changes are going to come about because of our collective activity at the level of morality. We now decide, and the higher worlds will follow. This is what leaving our spiritual childhood means - what freedom truly means, - ***we are now responsible for what happens on the Earth.***

The seer-singer Bob Marly has an interesting line of verse: "*total destruction the only solution*".

This then is how I see these aspects of the future. The Hopi Prophecy and oral history speaks of evil two-hearted people, whose activity then led to the destruction of the lands the Hopi lived in before their great migrations that led them to where they live now. When human evil comes too much

to the fore, ordinary people can no longer tolerate this excess, and become then willing for the climate and Earth changes to occur. We don't exactly will the Earth changes, but we do permit them. This is the qualitative and moral aspect of the near future.

Recall Emerson's remarks in his essay Nature: "*Nature is a thought incarnate and turns to thought again as ice become water and then gas. The world is mind precipitated and the volatile essence is forever escaping into the state of free thought.*"

Human evil is rising. More and more people are choosing to be evil, and to deny the Good and the True. Their excesses grow as well. Greed, fear of death, Fallen Eros, these and other dark impulses of the *i-AM*, living in the soul as nearly independent self-created wounds, more and more prey upon ordinary humanity. Since it is the goodness instinctively living in the meek (ordinary humanity), which holds in balance the world (from above through our collective moral nature), the more excessive the activities of those parts of humanity consciously choosing evil, the more we collectively are willing to allow great destruction to arise in order to stop these excesses. (*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the Earth.*)

At a certain point, we may collectively consent to deep Earth changes, and we also may consent to many many millions crossing the threshold of death (into the afterlife) at the same time, in order to hold back the excesses of the evil two-hearted ones. These would destroy the Earth and humanity, with their arrogant ignorance, their weapons of mass destruction, their toying with the DNA of the food supply, and the thousand other completely unwise and grave errors common to our time. [At the time of my last revision of this part, the loss of 60% of the bees in the United States has just entered public awareness.]

At the same time we don't seem to be in full crisis mode yet. The moment of decision has not yet been reached. The peak of chaos will apparently arise about 2012, and if we follow the various cosmic clock features of Creation, that seems to be the time in which the oscillations will reach their wildest swings. All the same, nothing is set. We can still reach into the situation on an ordinary level, and make course corrections in the nature of civilization so that this crisis doesn't have to mean: *total destruction the only solution.*

We all, those who dream dark dreams as well as those who dream of the light, need to keep in mind the folk wisdom: be careful what you pray for, you just might get it. Again, I speak from experience here.

Is there a point?

Christ comes not to bring peace, but a sword - a sword that separates us one from the other, so that our individuality - our *i-AM* - can find its center. In aloneness we learn to stand. But then what?

Again it is all about choice. Do we remain in our individuality, or do we find ways to work together, until we discover how to build communities, not on the basis of mere tradition, but out of love engendered free moral grace. This too is then the nature of the times, the context in which the biography unfolds. Do we stand alone against a sea of troubles, or do we stand together? Which do you think will serve all of us best?

Now perhaps, one can see even deeper into why the Lord's Prayer begins **Our** Father, and why the Twelve Steps are all about community.

Recall again, the well known final words of St. Paul from I Corinthians 13: 13: "*So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*"

Faith is a profound and quite real force, as is Hope. But Love penetrates and rules them all from within, and there is no love without a Lover, a Beloved, and the Love in between them. Not I alone, but we, with Christ within and about us.

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Acknowledgments

The temptation is to list everyone I ever met, since I have been influenced and taught by all. One could begin, as they do at the Oscars, with my mother, Dorothy Lillian Wendt (Olson), and my father, Wallace Edwin Wendt, then my brothers Doug (eight years younger) and Lou (five years older). Certainly my wives, Tina (first and second wife) and Dawn (third wife). Our children: Marc, Doren and Jennifer by Tina, and Adam and

Gabriella by Dawn. These children were and are all very special teachers, and I could write a book about what they have given me. There are all the class-mates at high school, such as Mike O., or the friends at Law School, especially Mike C., the friends at the Air Force Academy, Bob H. and Barry W.; and, then there are all the people I worked with over the years at my 30 plus jobs, which would have to include Rita B. and Karen N., who worked the graveyard shift with me at Brookside Hospital for many years. {you will notice I am just using last initials, to keep for them some privacy}

There are girl friends, Sue B., Carla H. and Candace C., who gave me much and did not always get back what they needed. Or the spiritual influences mostly through books, such as Steiner, Tomberg, Trungpa, Barfield, Lehrs, Bardón, Adams and on and on and on. A special mention for the writers Orson Scott Card and Ursula K. LeGuin is also in order. Then there is the Moody Blues (Graeme Edge, Mike Pinder, Ray Thomas, John Lodge and Justin Hayward) ...what can be said? They held me together in all manner of periods of darkness, and still provide a great deal of peace and joy.

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Latest, but not the least by any means: Earlyfire (Harvey B.), who taught me that insight sings and gave me the words source and author as verbs. Finally, a reminder to the reader of the dedication of this book to Kelly, life partner.

This is not to overlook the many spiritual companions one has a such a journey as mine (Christ, the Mother etc. etc. etc.). They don't seek either recognition or credit, but at the least I should write here how grateful I am

to all that they have given, most often quite anonymously. And of course, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John certainly had something to contribute.

Then there's the man with clear eyes... :-) [See the Moody Blues album *Octave*, song: *Steppen' in a Slide Zone*]

* * *

One last thing...hidden here at the very end for whoever has stuck it through this far. This book is, if you read it carefully, not about what the world should be in the future, but about how the world is now, if you just lift up your head and look around and actually look at it...don't quite believe me? ***All you need to do is will the good, and think with your heart (and laugh at yourself at least once each day).***

John 16: 12-15 *"I have much more to say to you, but you can't bear it just yet. But when the other comes, the breath of truth, he will guide you in the ways of all truth, because he will not speak on his own, but will speak what he hears and announce to you what's coming. He will glorify me, because he will take of what is mine and announce it to you. Everything the Father has is mine: that's why I said he will take of what is mine and announce it to you."*

Oh, and by the way, if you are concerned about the future and surviving what seems to be coming, try this website as a opening investigation of the survival web ring: http://www.standeyo.com/News_Files/Hollys.html

end story

BICYCLES

- a Children's Christmas Story for Adults -

This story is dedicated to Gabriella, Catherine Rose, Ross Gregory, and Adam, who were on my mind Christmas Eve, 1996, as their fathers (of which I must confess I was one) were absent from home for the Season. It was written the following Christmas Morning. It is best received read aloud to others, or have others read it aloud to us.

There once was a girl, who found herself weeping in the dark, alone in her room.

This is nothing unusual. Many people, not just children, can be found weeping, alone with their pain in the dark of the night.

But there was a difference. Although it was not a difference as infrequent as we might imagine.

And the difference was this. While she was weeping an Angel appeared, sitting quietly at the end of her bed.

It was quite a while before the girl noticed the Angel. Yet, this did not bother the Angel, who had been, if we do not mind, created out of patience and joy.

After a time the girl stopped weeping, and the two simply looked at each other for a while.

Finally the Angel reached out and touched the girl on the shoulder, and asked: "What is troubling you child?".

Now it is true that the Angel already knew the answer to this question, but the Angel also knew that the girl needed to talk about her grief.

This was the girl's answer.

"It is Christmas Eve." she said, "My father and mother have quarreled and my father is not here. I don't even know when, or if, he is coming home."

At this the girl, who was at that very awkward age between being a child and being a young woman, began to weep again, even more deeply than before.

After a while she stopped, looked at the Angel and asked: "Why?" and, then began weeping again.

Now you may wonder why the girl wasn't troubled or confused by someone being in her room at night. The fact is that when you meet an

Angel there is no question about what is happening. No doubt, no confusion. Angels aren't like anything else except Angels.

This is how the Angel answered the girl.

"Are you ever bad?" asked the Angel.

"Yes", she said, a bit hesitantly.

"Are you ever bad on purpose, knowing you are being bad?"

"Yes", she said, almost whispering now.

"Are you ever bad by accident, not having thought about what might happen?"

"Yes", she said, a little more confident.

"Do bad things ever sometimes happen even though you were trying as hard as possible to do something good?"

"Yes", she said, back to herself finally.

Then they sat together for a while. She was thinking and the Angel just was.

"O.K.", she eventually said. "Mother and father aren't trying to hurt me, and I didn't do something wrong."

"Right", said the Angel.

"But", she said, having just reinvented philosophy, "Why is the world such a terrible place?"

After a very long pause the Angel said, "It's because of the bicycles."

Now this was said with a straight face, as much as an Angel can be said to have a straight face, their normal countenance being filled with patient joy.

Even so, the girl's dark mood broke and she laughed, and then caught in this odd feeling she tried to stop and ended up almost falling out of bed because she was giggling so much.

Again there was a passage of time, so that the girl could ask her next question without breaking up. It actually took several attempts before she could get the question out.

"What do you mean by 'it's the bicycles'?" she said, pulling up the hem of her nightgown, as much to distract herself as to dry the tears of both suffering and mirth.

"Well", said the Angel, "As you have guessed the bicycles are invisible, being made out of ideas and dreams, hope and despair, all stuck together with bits of conscience and just plain stubbornness.

"Everyday people wake up and ride around on their invisible bicycles, forgetting the bicycles are there and then because they have forgotten them, people just keep banging into each other.

"Soon all the bicycles are in great disrepair. Some with flat tires, some with crooked wheels, and some without even handlebars to steer by.

"It takes a great deal of courage for people, for mothers and fathers, to get up in the morning and ride their bicycles out into life each day. A great deal of courage."

Then the Angel was quiet again and so was the girl.

After a while the girl, having graduated from philosophy to theology, asked: "Why does God let this go on? Why doesn't he fix the bicycles or make people learn how to ride them without banging into each other?"

"Hmmm." said the Angel

Now before you imagine the Angel is pausing to think, I should tell you that is not what was happening. Angels do think, but when they do something happens. For Angels thinking creates. The reason the Angel said "Hmmm" was so the girl would first reflect a little about what she had said, before the Angel answered her.

"Do you ever talk to God?" asked the Angel.

"I think so," said the girl, tentative again, and rightly so.

"You should you know.", said the Angel. "You can't interrupt him, or bother him when he's doing something else. He always listens. Always. And when you talk to him he never interrupts you, never tells you he's heard it before or done it himself or knows more than you. You couldn't ask for a better listener. And when you're done he doesn't give advice, or tell you what to do, or criticize what you've done or tell you, you aren't adequate. He just listens, and accepts you and loves you, whatever you have to say."

Then the Angel asked another question.

"Do you ever get angry at God?"

"What!" exclaimed the girl. "Get angry at God !?!"

"Of course." said the Angel. "God loves you and wants your love. People who love each other get to be angry with each other. It's a way to care. God doesn't mind your anger. Now your indifference? That's another matter."

"O.K." said the girl, now a little more in touch with her own frustration. "But you still haven't said anything about repairing the bicycles or giving lessons on riding them."

"Didn't need to" said the Angel. "All kinds of excellent repair and riding manuals already out there. There's the Bible, and the Vedas, and the Torah, and the Koran, and the Sutras, and the..."

"O.K.. I get it." she said, interrupting the Angel, who didn't mind at all. Then she paused and thought a little.

"All right." she said. "This is what you've said. The reason the world is so difficult is because we all have our own ideas and dreams and conscience and stubbornness, and when we go out and ride these "bicycles" in life we bang into each other, or ride over each others feet, because we have

forgotten about these invisible things. But if we want riding lessons and repair instruction, that information is already there. We just have to use it. Right?"

"Right." said the Angel.

"O.K." said the girl, after a very deep sigh, "Just one more question."

"Granted God is the best listener in the world, always available and never critical. But how come he never answers me?"

This last was spoken with a great deal of anguish, as only the very young can feel at the impossible burdens they sense when they contemplate growing up and being really free and responsible for themselves.

Again the Angel waited for a while, as silent and beautiful as a starry winter night.

"How well do you listen?" the Angel answered. "He always answers you, always. You just don't always hear him. He answers in many ways. With the continued breath of life, or with a fading sunset. With the touch of a breeze on the cheek or a crash of thunder. In the most quiet place inside yourself he whispers to you. More softly than the endless beat of your heart he sings to you in the voice of the dancing colors that delight the eye. You eat his answers for breakfast and when you walk barefoot through the dew wet grass his answers touch your feet.

"Do you have eyes, ears? Or if not even these, you have the thoughts you choose. You believe or not. Is that not a great gift itself? To have faith or not, hope or not, charity or not, according to your own will. God does answer. With life, with freedom. And yes, with sorrow and with pain. Are these not gifts as well?"

Again there was a harmony of silence between the two of them. Then the girl smiled and looked mischievously at the Angel.

"Do you have a bicycle?" she asked.

Then the Angel laughed. And outside the girl's window the birds sang to greet with joy the first hints of dawn on Christmas morning.

