

Sahaja Newsletter

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APRIL 30TH '93

SAHASRARA PUJA

Sunday, 9th May - 11.30 am

* 10 Clarence Street, Burwood

Puja Duties

- | | |
|------------|-----------------------------------|
| Set Up | - Wollongong & Strathfield |
| Cooking | - North Shore & Roseville & Manly |
| Washing Up | - Western Suburbs & Hurstville |
| Dismantle | - Newcastle, Pelaw Main & Croydon |

DEAD SEA SCROLLS

(Vancouver, Canada - 24/06)

At the end of 1992 a book was published titled, "The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered" by Robert Eisenman and Michael Wise (Element Books). This book offers fifty excerpts from long-suppressed segments of these historic documents, placed in caves almost 2000 year ago and not discovered until 1947 and 1952.

In 1952 a team of scholars was appointed to piece together and decipher this wealth of material. But, instead of disseminating it to the world, these men withheld it, publishing only select portions.

In the autumn of 1991 this monopoly was broken by the Huntington Library in California. The library announced that it would release photographs of the scrolls, which it had secured from authorities at the time of the 1967 six day war. They had argued that at such an unstable time the scrolls could be in jeopardy of destruction - photographic copies should be held in America for safe-keeping.

The series of scholars, Catholic and Jewish, who previously had held exclusive control over the scrolls, long maintained that there was nothing of interest in the unreleased materials. They said that no light would be shed on the early days of Christianity.

They were wrong.

One portion, numbered 4Q266, is titled by Eisenman and Wise "The Foundation of Righteousness (The End of the Damascus Document: An Excommunication Text)."

It appears to be the excommunication of Paul from the Christian Community. The document was prepared for a convocation of the followers of Christ at the time of Pentecost "to curse those who depart to the right or [to the left from the] Torah," that is, the law of Moses.

The scroll fragments praise God. "You are all, everything is in Your hand and (You are) the maker of everything, who established [the Peo]ples according to their families and their national languages."

The words of the scroll fragments praise God and speak of the mariadas or "boundary markers laid down for us." Those who over-step these boundaries are those whose "soul has rejected the Foundations of Righteousness."

Paul was such a man. Elsewhere he is described as "the lying adversary," the "Lying Spouter" who "rejects the law in the midst of the whole congregation," "the Tongue" and the "Scoffer/Comedian" who "poured over Israel the waters of lying."

The authors of the book believe that "the priest commanding the Many" who delivers this excommunication judgement was James, the apostle often referred to as James the Just, the bishop of Jerusalem and the brother of Jesus.

In a twisted logic involving blessing and cursing, Paul defends himself in his letters to the Galatians (3:11-13). He is redeemed his transgressions against the teachings of Jesus, Paul argues, because Christ became cursed by the law. Paul is confusing the Law of Moses with the law of the Romans and his own law.

In the Acts of the Apostles Paul writes of hurrying off to Jerusalem to be on time for just such an annual Pentecostal meeting as described in the scrolls. Eisenman and Wise state that "Acts' picture of Pentecost can be seen as the mirror reversal of the Pentecost being pictured here." Rather than taking his contributions to Jerusalem, Paul was actually about to face excommunication from the community he sought to control.

The authors conclude, saying, "The implications are quite startling and far-reaching. One thing is sure: one has in these texts a better exposition of what was really going on 'in the wilderness' in these times so pivotal for Western civilization than in any other parallel accounts."

3.

The following are two excerpts from an earlier book, "The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception" by Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh (Corgi Books, London, 1991):

"...Paul is, in effect, the first 'Christian' heretic, and ... his teaching - which become the foundation of later Christianity - are a flagrant deviation from the 'original' or 'pure' form extolled by the leadership. Whether James, the 'Lord's brother,' was literally Jesus' blood kin or not (and everything suggests he was), it is clear that he knew Jesus ... personally. So did most of the other members of the community, or 'early Church,' in Jerusalem - including, of course, Peter. When they spoke, they did so with first hand authority. Paul had never had such personal acquaintance with the figure he'd begun to regard as his 'Saviour.' He had only his quasi-mystical experience in the desert and the sound of a disembodied voice. For him to arrogate authority to himself on this basis is, to say the least, presumptuous. It also leads him to distort Jesus' teachings beyond all recognition - to formulate, in fact, his own highly individual and idiosyncratic theology, and then to legitimize it by spuriously ascribing it to Jesus." (pages 266-7)

"As things transpired, however, the mainstream of the new movement gradually coalesced, during the next three centuries, around Paul and his teachings. Thus, to the undoubted posthumous horror of James and his associates, an entirely new religion was indeed born - a religion which came to have less to do with its supposed founder." (page 275)

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Lunchtime Programme - MEADOWBANK

Anna Potts will be holding a lunchtime programme at Meadowbank TAFE. The first one is at 12 noon, Thursday 13th May in J Block, Room 2-14. Anyone interested, please come along.

******SHRI MATAJI******

*Dear brothers and sisters
all are welcome to a Laxmi Puja at 6.30pm on Saturday*

28 Greenbank St
Hurstville
570 8562

Janine and Laxman, Joy, Michelle, Paul and Robert all look forward to seeing you! (You wonderful hearts glistening with Glee!) Dinner and refreshments, Joy and Bhajans. A new location to spread Mother's love. Please phone us so we know the numbers. THANK YOU.

*******JAI SHRI MATAJI!!*******

For all those wishing to send greetings to Shri Mataji for Mother's Day,
She will be in Cabella then. Palazzo Doria
15060 Cabella Ligure
Alessandria ITALY

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S A H A J A Y O G A P R E S E N T S

Music of Joy



Featuring the Sahaja Yoga Music Group

A Vibrant presentation of music that has been created to bring joy to the spirit.
Drawing from both Eastern and Western sources, the music has been described by audiences as
'Heart opening', 'Joyful', 'Soothing', 'Uplifting' and 'sublime'.

Also featuring Asmira Woodward Page
(Violin)

Enjoy the popular Earth Mother Exhibition — A celebration of the wholistic principle of the Earth
from 7.00pm onwards.

Parramatta Town Hall

Friday 30th April • 7:30pm

Tickets \$10 & \$5*

Complimentary Refreshments

Phone & Fax Bookings: (02) 807 4730

*Student, Pensioner, Unemployed & Children. (Children under 5 free)



The case against a cult watchdog

SMH, Monday, April 25, 1993

IT IS an unfortunate coincidence that the stand-off between the FBI and the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas, came to such a climactic end just as the NSW Parliament was preparing to discuss the merits of setting up a committee to examine the activities and practices of local cults. True, the events in Waco are a reminder that cults can be unpredictable in their behaviour, destructive of individual personalities, and disruptive to the wider society. But the Branch Davidians under David Koresh were extreme even by the Twilight Zone standards of the more outlandish cults. And an emotional response to last week's tragedy in Waco could result in a cult watchdog that is just as offensive in its own way as the evil it tries to combat.

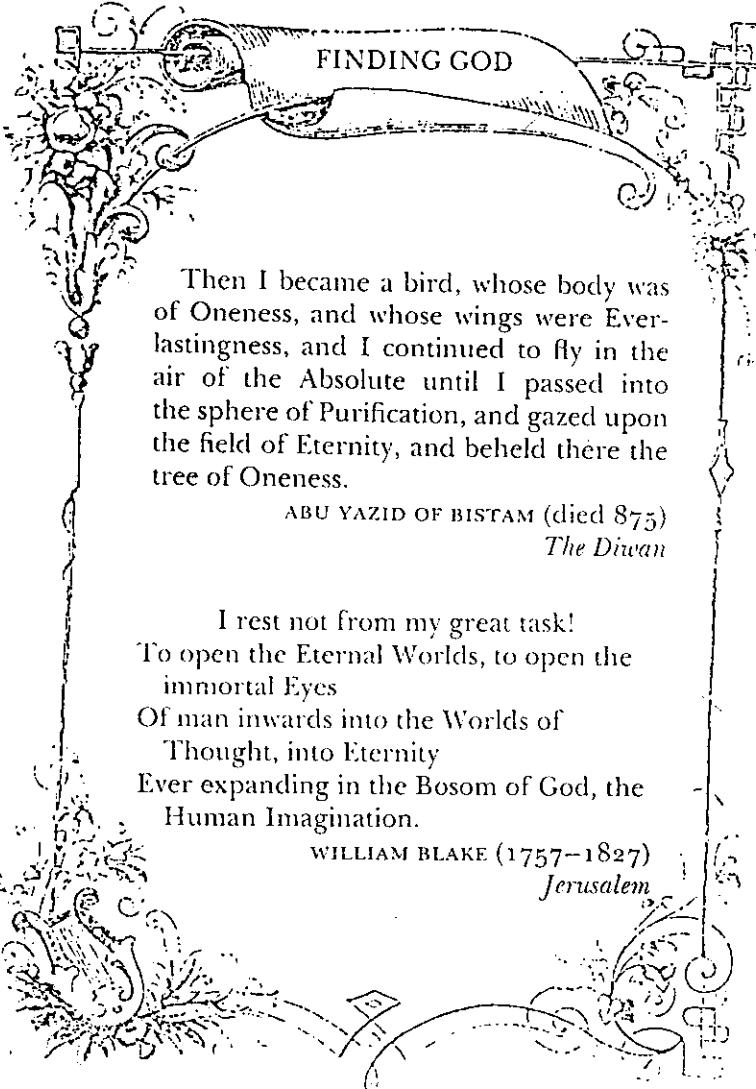
Consider the difficulty of defining a cult. One particular study of cults in the mid-1980s suggested that cults possessed a number of "distinctive" features: "These often are that they are authoritarian in structure, that they exercise forms of brainwashing and mind control, that they cultivate group pressure and instil feelings of guilt and fear." This study was undertaken by the Vatican but it wouldn't be hard to find some people prepared to argue that these features apply to the Catholic Church itself. Today's cults are often tomorrow's churches, as the Mormons or the Jehovah Witnesses attest. Moreover, eccentricity alone is not a sufficient reason for anyone's beliefs to attract the attention of the State. Only when there is evidence of abuse of cult members, of fraud, or of some tangible threat to the wider community has the State a legitimate interest in involving itself in a religious group's affairs.

But in those cases, the proper way for the State to involve itself is through the normal legal and police channels. Creating a spec-

ial watchdog committee to keep tabs on cults, risks tampering with religious freedom and civil liberties. As long as people obey the law, they have a fundamental right to believe anything they like, to join whatever church or religious group they choose, and to live according to their conscience without attracting attention or suspicion.

Of course, it could be countered that cults often do the most harm long before the police and the courts get a chance to become involved. Through cult membership, children may become alienated from their parents (and, in some cases, vice versa), and individuals may undergo lasting psychological damage long before any actual laws are broken. But it is impossible to provide a gilt-edged guarantee against that sort of thing. The British Home Office employs an academic to update a standard guide to New Religious Movements. Some such similar record of cults, their histories and their basic teachings could be started here with a minimum of fuss and cost and it could be made available to interested members of the public as a kind of basic shopper's guide to what specific cults have to offer.

A more elaborate oversight system would be dangerous without necessarily being any more effective. On the last point, the Branch Davidian experience is again instructive. During the 51-day siege at Waco, the US Justice Department consulted scores of law-enforcement, religious, social, psychological and legal experts, as well as former cult members all over the world, on how it should deal with David Koresh and his followers. None of them countenanced the possibility that the group would commit mass suicide. How much more is a parliamentary committee likely to be able to predict the behaviour of cults?



Then I became a bird, whose body was
of Oneness, and whose wings were Ever-
lastingness, and I continued to fly in the
air of the Absolute until I passed into
the sphere of Purification, and gazed upon
the field of Eternity, and beheld there the
tree of Oneness.

ABU YAZID OF BISTAM (died 875)
The Diwan

I rest not from my great task!
To open the Eternal Worlds, to open the
immortal Eyes
Of man inwards into the Worlds of
Thought, into Eternity
Ever expanding in the Bosom of God, the
Human Imagination.

WILLIAM BLAKE (1757-1827)
Jerusalem

LITTLE POEM
(Calin Costian - 27/04 - US)

Dear all,

Looking over some old Nirmala Yoga numbers, I have discovered a little poem written by Shri Mataji's youngest grand daughter, Anupama, who was then a very little girl. Here it is:

"I am a little cabbage,
Divided into two,
I give my leaves to others,
And my heart to you."

Jay Shri Mataji !

Love, Calin

* * * * *

Fly to Perth and back for \$399

Ansett SPECIAL offer includes 3 or 4 nights accommodation

This special is for all of MAY

Gardening Bee - Burwood Ashram

All are invited to help bring the beautiful garden back to its old glory.

A barbecue lunch will be provided on the day. So B.Y.O. tools on Sunday, 16 May, at 8.30 a.m. (or as soon after as you can make it).

For details, contact Ron Bullivant on 744 8113.

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"When you wake up in the morning, Pooh," said Piglet at last, "what's the first thing you say to yourself?"

"What's for breakfast?" said Pooh. "What do you say, Piglet?"

"I say, I wonder what's going to happen exciting today?" said Piglet.

Pooh nodded thoughtfully.

"It's the same thing," he said.

"What's that?" the Unbeliever asked.

"Wisdom from a Western Taoist," I said.

"It sounds like something from Winnie-the-Pooh," he said.

"It is," I said.

"That's not about Taoism," he said.

"Oh, yes it is," I said.

"No, it's not," he said.

"What do you think it's about?" I said.

"It's about this dumpy little bear that wanders around asking silly questions, making up songs, and going through all kinds of adventures, without ever accumulating any amount of intellectual knowledge or losing his simpleminded sort of happiness. That's what it's about," he said.

"Same thing," I said.

•THE TAO•
OF POOH

While Eeyore frets...

and Piglet hesitates

and Owl pontificates

...Pooh just is.