



The Forbidden Fruit's Perspective

Torah For Straight People

Book 1

The Genesis of Everyone

The Forbidden Fruit's Perspective

Torah For Straight People

Book 2

The Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy of a Moses Like You

By

Barry Emanuel Zeve

The Hebrew Testament is so couched in metaphor
that biblical scholars in the past
couldn't unpack its personal message to the world.
Rabbis unlocked The Hebrew Testament's wisdom for the Jews.
Jesus revealed its love for Christians in their Bible.
And the P R O P H E T Mohammed described
how the generosity of Abraham
applied to Muslims in The Quran.
But no one was able to reveal its message for everyone.

There's no reason to blame anyone for this.
God has a plan,
and we all do what we can in the time on Earth given.

The Hebrew Testament is the living document
that offers the world the
"Theory of Spiritual Relativity."
This will lead the world toward peace on Earth.
And every step in that direction
will reveal a message His is bringing
to all the world's faiths and philosophies
in their own mysterious ways.

Through your personal efforts
to unlock His plan for an introvert like you,
the nations will achieve peace with one another,
and we'll learn together
how to make peace with ourselves from within.

The spiritual secret for the 21st Century is:
self-love.
Your love for you is your paramount quest in life.
You can't give to others that
which you don't yet possess yourself.

You are the source of the good and evil you bring into the world.
You are the essential ingredient
metaphorically alluded to in The Hebrew Testament as:

Forbidden Fruit

This book is written to men.
It's mostly about men.
And it's especially for men.

But it's dedicated to women.
For no boy can become a man without the help of women.

Orthographic Key

	Religious Believers		
	Judaism	Christianity	Islam
Lord:	GOD	GOD	G O D
God:	I will only use this word in the context of the “God within”		

PURCHASING YOUR TICKET

Letter From The Author

I was a Jewish-American fruit who grew up in the 1950's. I looked scornfully down on my country as a teenager in the 1960's and 70's. America resembled the ancient Egypt the Israelites had to suffer through as slaves. I saw blacks, gays and women as Israelites toiling for pharaohs. And I, too, felt oppressed. But I saw no place to return to and nowhere here to hide.

I was the son of a slave. (My father was a concentration camp survivor.) So I recoil at the shackles all people are in. But it never occurred to me that I'd see my story elucidated in The Hebrew Testament. I never expected to feel picked like forbidden fruit, even though I felt picked on for being a fruit {gay man}.

I was a prince. I was privileged. I never expected to have to come down from my arrogant stance above it all to join the ranks of the common straight man. I was much too unique to be understood by anyone, and far too special to try to understand *them*. But all that suddenly changed when mental illness struck.

I was born a hotheaded Adam like my father. I couldn't admit I was mortal and would someday have to meet my Maker face-to-face, heart to heart and soul to soul. I was naïve to an inner Eve that was tempting me to know myself. The only thing I could say for certain was that I felt like a victim of circumstances beyond my control.

Somehow, deep within, I always knew I'd someday have to become a Moses who'd petition for the freedom of *my* people. I just never thought that gay-Jews needed my help because they never showed me any significant signs of wanting anything greater than anyone else.

If I was going to blame everyone for the plagues of modern society, I had to become willing to blame the woes of the world partially on myself. I was the Egyptian and the Israelite wrapped in one. I was some of the cause and some of the solution to it all.

Today there's a Moses within me who may spiritually stutter, but I've received a mission to set myself free with my own words, and I'm determined to do so. I have to let myself go! The journey I was assigned to lead required GOD at my side, although I didn't know that when I first began to look for my voice. Nor did I then believe in GOD. I walked alone for a very long time, shepherding no one but one black sheep in preparation of actualizing GOD's design.

The Old Testament is still a living document, but the Exodus has been democratized in the 21st Century. Each of us has become a Moses unto himself, taking himself on a journey to personal freedom. And each of us has the freedom in this country to take our trip in any spiritual direction we please. GOD is like air. HE's everywhere. You can't go for very long without thinking about HIM or uttering the words O.M.G.!

For me, Passover didn't occur once 3,400 years ago. I relive it every morning and arrive at the banks of my Jordan River overlooking my inner state of Israel every night. Every night I dream is another genesis of mystery, and every morning as I get out of bed, I'm reminded of my ongoing exodus through hardship on my journey to a Promised Land I've never seen.

This book is a new, psychological interpretation of Torah, which is the core of The Hebrew Testament. The Hebrew Testament is commonly referred to as The Old Testament. The Old Testament was written about 1,400 years before The New Testament. The Christian Bible is basically a combination of The Old and New Testaments.

This series is an interpretation of Torah, a workbook inspired by GOD/GOD/G O D, and intended as an accompaniment to the foundation of HIS/HIS/H I S other texts: The Christian Bible and Quran. After completing this workbook you should be able to approach the problems of your life with renewed vigor and deeper faith, regardless of your Abrahamic, religious background or traditions.

Publishers have told me that my books are much too long to ever have any hope of being commercially distributed. But they would have said that Einstein's 20th Century Theory of Relativity was also too long. They'd have insisted that "E=m" would have been about as much as any modern reader could bear. This book is "The Theory of Spiritual Relativity," and I am the German-American gay-Jew who's bringing it to you in the 21st Century.

Not a word of this book has been edited to satisfy anyone's need for brevity. If you don't have the curiosity to get to know yourself through my gay-Jewish view of reality, inspired by the three faces of GOD/GOD/G O D, stop now. Why learn about self-love when you could be spending your time doing something less valuable?...

I've eaten Torah {also referred to as The Five Books of Moses} like forbidden fruit, washed it down with the Christian Testament and the cultural influences in my life in America. And I've digested it all with The Quran and my travels around the world. Torah has been infused into every cell of my being. I hope to tempt you to take a nibble out of Torah in this personal and universal way even if you had a tendency to turn you nose up at it before.

In *my* beginning I felt like forbidden fruit, disobediently picked on by my parents and then discarded. I felt disconnected from GOD virtually from the start. But my thoughts of loneliness and separation weren't unreasonable or unique. I may be gay (abominable in the eyes of many) and Jewish, (an infidel in the eyes of many). But I still think I have a right to live, love and learn to be me just as GOD made me.

There are orchards of Trees of knowledge in the world whose fruits have been overlooked, or picked, tasted and then thrown away because they were judged to be tasteless or unappetizing for other reasons. There's a spiritual famine worldwide today, as I see it, despite all the information we've been given about the divine spirit in man.

But if you begin by entertaining the idea that you, too, were once like forbidden fruit, you're going to harvest an unending bounty of knowledge about yourself from this book. If you can get past the fear of picking yourself before all others, nothing in life will ever frighten you again.

In Genesis, the first of The Five Books of Moses, it asserts that GOD created the first man, Adam, but even before Adam ate from The Tree of knowledge of good and evil, he's

described as being lonely. He didn't even have WORDS to describe that experience himself. The narrator had to spell it out for us. Adam felt lonely even before he said his first WORD.

Everyone feels lonely sometimes. Everyone feels like Adam. Everyone feels like an Israelite in Egypt, in bondage to a capitalist system that's gone berserk. And those who are rich and famous must feel just as lonely as the rest of us. Fame and fortune have no effect on a man's feelings of loneliness and separation. Everyone should be able to identify with what it must have felt like to be a lonely Israelite slave in a vast and cruel ancient Egyptian, civil system thousands of years ago. Everyone should even be able to identify with Adam's loneliness. And everyone should be able to identify with the pharaohs today who perpetuate the system.

The pursuit of only happiness through material wealth leads to loneliness. We can only hope that our faith in democracy will lead us all to solitude instead. Being comfortable with yourself and not just with your finances is an art. We may have the best political system of governance the world has ever known, but the way we govern ourselves from within is affecting the way we run our country. You'll find the courage to fight City Hall when you find the courage to fight yourself, and win.

The joys of individualism that our American culture affords us gives every Adam the freedom to believe that realizing his dreams lies in his own hands. Never in the history of civilization has GOD shined HIS love more steadily and faithfully on any nation. But HIS love must be actualized in your heart before you can give it to others. You have to know and love your love before you can know anyone else's – and that includes Christ's love.

Let's Get Real

How often do you tell yourself that you love yourself? And if you haven't recently, could it be because you really don't like anyone telling you how you should feel, not even you? You know you should love yourself, but if you can't listen to yourself telling you to love yourself, you're in an emotional Catch-22. In order to love yourself you have to have been taught how. You have to have learned to listen to your intuition whispering within that you're beloved.

Being told by others that GOD loves you is useless. You don't need proof that HE loves you. You need proof that *you* love you. Once you believe that you're beloved by you, you can give the overflow of your love to HIM and then everyone else.

We hear with our head. We listen with our heart. Most people can hear others, but they can't listen to themselves. We were given two ears instead of one for spiritual, stereophonic reasons, but people don't use each ear differently. What they consider stereophonic sound within is a combination of hearing and listening. But they can't tell the difference.

If you've been figuratively wandering in circles in an inner desert between your head and your heart like an Israelite for what seems like 40 years, on a trip that could have been accomplished in four weeks, you may not be aware of the Moses within who's working overtime with GOD to get you to learn to listen to yourself. You may have passed over your own Passover without ever having personalized it.

You're actually on a journey to a Promised Land that flows with the milk of unconditional love for yourself and the honey of your own wisdom. Self-love {the wisdom of loving yourself unconditionally} is the only thing in life that is real, other than redemption before The Lord for not having known that from the start.

There's nothing I can tell you that you don't already know about yourself. I can only remind your heart to have a heart, and to treat yourself better. You may actually be the hardhearted pharaoh in your life that needs to be convinced to let you go. But your exodus had a genesis, and it's that, that you must recall consciously if you're going to appreciate where you're going in life. You must start at your beginning when you first realized that you were you.

There was a time, long, long ago, when you could easily get out of your head, through your heart and into your soul. So you secretly already know deep down inside that you can do it again. Once upon a time you thought, felt and sensed the world completely. You believed in everything and everything was real. This book will wake you up to the genesis of your belief in yourself. And with that belief in place, you'll be far better positioned to believe in GOD/GOD/G O D.

THE RIDE TO THE AIRPORT

Taking Our Bible Personally

In the past Torah was misused in the Western world to justify slavery and the inferiority of women. Today it's still being touted as the reason to think badly of gays. Many claim to know what GOD thinks of gay people based on what Moses quoted GOD as having said about men sleeping with men in the third of The Five Books of Moses: Leviticus. But when interpreted with wisdom, love and generosity of spirit, Torah tells a very different story.

If my interpretations of Scripture don't strike a chord that intuitively resonates in you, don't try to believe me. You can't *try* to believe. Belief comes from your soul, not your head or heart. You're either coming from your soul or you're not. And if you're not, don't worry about that either. I can get you there.

I'm not an officially ordained rabbi or psychologist. I'm a retired, gay, secondary school, English teacher with masters' degrees in Education and Linguistics. Before that I was a ballet dancer, so I've also learned a little about emotional grace and spiritual balance through lifelong communion with my body through dance, and with my head through teaching children.

But if you insist it requires a degree in theology or psychology to interpret The Hebrew Testament soulfully, you're already searching for a reason to look on my ideas askance. I'm not an authority on anything other than me. But I am the world's greatest authority on that!

I can also boast saying with great authority that nobody knows "crazy" like I do. In fact, I'm a world-class expert on the subject. GOD gave me a post-graduate degree in the school of life on what *not* to major in down here. HE drove me insane. I was twice involuntarily committed to mental institutions in my youth.

One thing I learned from that is that there are some fruits from Trees that have harder shells than others. I may consider myself forbidden fruit, but I'm no peach. I may have started out like a plum, but over time I've turned into a prune. I'm wrinkled, I'm rotting. I'm old. And I'm going to fall like a fruit from my own Tree. I'm headed for death, and I know it. But I was also a nut...

I suggest you put on your thinking cap or "yarmulke" {Yiddish: Jewish skullcap} now because I expect you'll want to think very seriously about the concepts I'm about to present to you. They come from spiritual inspiration, not academic perspiration. They come from intuition rather than an institution. My ideas require self-scrutiny, but I hope you'll scrutinize them with love, not jealousy, envy or hate. The greatest enemy in understanding Scripture isn't emotional reactivity, but indifference. As you read my words you need only be wary when you *don't* feel a thing. So long as I can keep you smiling or frowning, you're doing fine.

I started studying Torah in middle age to see whether it might enlighten me as any other work of literature. But Torah turned into a spiritual mirror that reflected my life back to me as a *transformative*, not *informative*, experience. I could see myself on every page.

Torah revealed my adult, inner child to me, but it revealed my inner parent as well. And the two of them accelerated me through an emotional childhood that I'd been crawling through for decades. The boy in me mysteriously saw a man within he could depend on. And then I no longer felt like an orphan lost and alone in the world. When I became aware

of that older, wiser part of me, I breathed a sigh of relief because I realized that the arms I'd always wanted to feel well held in turned out to be my own.

I moved to Israel at the age of 18, where I explored life as a gay-Jew among Israeli Jews for two years, far from my mother and family in America. After that I moved to Holland where I spent three years exploring life as a gay man in Europe's gay playground. I went back to Israel as a middle-aged man with my boyfriend and his family in the 1990's. And I went again by myself as an older "gay divorcé," and married myself at the Wailing Wall on Friday night, April 11, 2008. I went back again in 2011 and ordained myself as rabbi at the same place at the Wailing Wall.

Calling myself married and a rabbi isn't something I do without a Mona Lisa smile on my face. But I don't just reserve these words for the written page where I can explain myself at leisure and without leers. I boast about this to everyone I meet. (still crazy after all these years...) Overcoming loneliness by wedding myself within was one of the greatest achievements of my life. And calling myself a rabbi without an official ordination requires that I constantly listen to what comes out of my mouth for fear of saying anything foolish. Such is the world of the extreme introvert.

First Unexpected Detour On The Journey

Once I could add to *thinking* about myself by *feeling* and *believing* in myself, Torah magically erased my perception of GOD as a grouchy, old man. I could dump my view of HIM as a heavenly Father who holds HIS children well when HE's happy and slaps them silly when HE's upset. But I had to clean up my feelings about my own father to do so. GOD isn't malicious or indifferent. Nor is HE crazy. It was my biological father when I was an inexperienced child who I had judged harshly for his idiosyncratic and sometimes cruel child rearing techniques.

When I relinquished the model of "the family of man," which had been instilled in me by my parents (who divorced), I heard a new family of voices emanating out from within me. I suddenly saw that my relationships with kin and clan echoed gentler, inner voices that I hadn't been able to acknowledge before. Once I could listen to these inner voices, I could talk to my family more like well-intentioned friends who made a lot of mistakes. By acknowledging the stranger in me, my fear of everyone else diminished greatly. Such is THE WORK of an introvert.

The metaphor 'GOD as Teacher,' not 'GOD as Father,' accelerated these changes in my relationship with myself. Now, even on days I don't happen to like the coursework GOD assigns me, the metaphor of life as a school with GOD as my Teacher frees me from my previous obsession with all the ways other people think my life should be lived.

I'm just as consumed as the next guy about outer fame and fortune, but today I'm famous because I've finally learned about a wonderful guy who loves me unconditionally: me. I've given up majoring in money. My real wealth comes from the inner occupation with myself that affords me the luxury of being authentic. Fame and fortune now come to me from within, not from the outside in. GOD has become my Coach. I no longer see HIM as my Kin. (BTW, I've got enough money, too...)

This distance between "Us" has actually improved "Our" relationship. I didn't want HIM breathing down my neck as my parents had done. I didn't want HIM training me like a small child. I wanted HIM to coach me as an adult would with another adult.

Although I care a great deal for those students in the school of life who are devoted to their spiritual education, I now see everyone as a fellow, spiritual *student*, not a spiritual *sibling*. It took me a long time to get to this place because I was so distracted by the class clowns at the back of the class who weren't working on getting good grades. They were only in school to make trouble, get stinking rich and rule the world. Nobody told me there was a way to get to the front row where I could listen more closely to The Teacher. Because I'd always been in competition with my classmates, I saw every test in life as graded on a curve. Somehow I thought my grades would be affected by theirs. That was a huge mistake.

Today my life is about learning about me, and I have to say, I love the subject. I love school. I couldn't be more pleased with the personalized tutorials from GOD I receive through everyone I meet. And when HE and I have office hours late at night or at those special moments when I know it's just HIM and me, I'm awed by HIS presence.

Before I wrote this book, I had deep reservations about using Torah as my textbook. I thought GOD had singled me out and was punishing me for my sexual orientation. Being gay felt like a tornado or flood that kept reappearing cyclically. And with all the suffering I'd been through as a mental patient, I thought it would be hypocritical, even crazy, of me to defend Torah, when in it there was such a rude comment by GOD about gays. But now I can sleep with a man as with a woman. I can sleep soundly some nights with myself and my boyfriend asleep beside me.

The problem wasn't with GOD; the problem wasn't with Torah. The problem wasn't with people. The problem was within me. I'd felt like a victim, a forbidden fruit picked before its time. I'd been a fruit filled with self-knowledge that hadn't ripened into self-love. I'd lost my mind without finding my heart. And I didn't know how to communicate what I knew about me to myself.

Operating Manual 101

Although Torah is ascribed to an author whose name is the same as the main character, (Moses), most scholars today believe that many men edited Torah over the course of about 600 years. (I doubt whether any of those editors were gay, but I'm going to demonstrate that Torah reveals how all men, gay and straight alike, operate identically from within. I'm going to prove that being gay is a great blessing from GOD and a gift to the world, not a deviation to be ashamed of. And whether you agree with me won't matter to me in the least. So hold your negative comments until you're dead. I'm not interested in them.)

No one, not even Moses, can literally quote GOD. HE speaks in WORDS that have a depth that can't be fully plummed with language. Quoting GOD through WORDS is like describing a sunset to the blind. GOD writes reality with a pen that's mightier than any man's imagination. HE writes HIS words with a devotion to our wellbeing that permeates our head, heart and soul. We may argue HIS/HIS/H I S intentions with one another from our head, while missing the depth of the unfathomably loving intentions that shine out from our heart and soul.

The author(s) of The Hebrew Testament described how GOD thinks about man, but it's up to us to glean as much wisdom as we can from that to then look for HIS love in The Gospels and H I S generosity of spirit in The Quran. If we in the Abrahamic faiths find the courage to use Jewish wisdom and Christian love to question Torah with our Muslim brothers' generosity of spirit, we'll be able to learn to believe in our Creator with our head,

heart and soul. And then all the world's sacred texts will reveal their greater truth; that GOD's/GOD's/G O D's intentions are a spiritual puzzle we're here to solve.

Nothing will be accomplished without (as Christians say) "The Keys to the Kingdom" {Heaven}. But, today, keys look more like garage door openers; passwords at websites; and cards you swipe to open hotel room doors. The world has changed; the keys have changed. I wouldn't be surprised if even the Kingdom has changed a lot since biblical times. After millennia of homework assignments turned in to The Teacher, lessons learned and tests passed – GOD's school here on Earth is graduating students who are far more knowledgeable than they were in the past. Even the Jews, the first class of students, have substantially changed. So naturally the rest of the class has learned a lot over time.

The Courage To Love The Gay Way

I wouldn't be surprised if GOD is exasperated with some gays for putting such importance on making love the gay way. I'm sure HE feels it's abominable of us to be so preoccupied with sex when there are so many other important subjects in HIS school yet to enroll in.

But when I recall all the men I knew who died of AIDS, I'm grateful to them for having contributed to the sexual freedom I now have which allows me to speak candidly about sex. You couldn't put a condom on a banana in the 1980's without upsetting people then...

When you make love with just your head, not your heart, that's called: sex. Sex is fun, relaxing and exciting, all rolled into one. It's a form of self-expression that adds to our interest in being alive in a human body. But using Scripture to tell people who they should or shouldn't have sex with is trivial. The message of The Hebrew Testament is far greater than that.

I wish my early sex mentors had been able to tell me that making love should begin in my heart, not between my legs. I went through a long period when I modeled my idea of lovemaking on my relationship to money; I couldn't get enough of it; I only thought about how to make more; and I believed that it was better to have it given to me freely than to go out and earn it.

Making love, like making money, frightened me because I knew I wanted it, but I didn't know how to get it, and keep it. I dreamt about being as rich as a king, and I dreamt of a love life that would make me feel like a queen. But I found myself surrounded by peasants...

Although they claim, "You can't give to others what you haven't first given yourself," nobody really lives his life that way. Most of us want our sexual encounters to feel magical, not spiritual. We don't want to think GOD is watching what we do in bed. We want to think HE turns a blind eye when we're having sex. When we aren't yet ready to make love with our head, heart and soul, we convince ourselves that GOD isn't watching. We think there are privacy laws that HE's subject to in that regard...

When we assume we're all alone with the person we're in bed with, we forget that GOD is the source of all love. We're playing with fire, and then we're surprised when we later get burned. We forget that fire also illuminates and warms. Sleeping with a man won't get you burned. Sleeping with anyone without acknowledging all your thoughts, feelings and beliefs is what will burn you.

The forbidden fruits of knowledge of good and evil taste like fire. First you have to find the courage to touch it. Then you have to consume it. You have to become a fire-eater. You

have to figuratively burn your hands and mouth on forbidden fruit. But nobody succeeds in doing that without also getting heart-burn as well.

People swear off forbidden fruit with myriad reasons why it doesn't agree with them. And in an effort to protect others, they try to convince themselves not to eat the same fruits a second time. But it's not the gender of the fruits you're eating that are so difficult to digest. People fear the self-knowledge that comes with it. They don't understand that becoming wiser, more loving or more generous from their experiences is what this fire is for.

I feel a little cheated when I think back to my youth because I only saw sex as a sport in those days. I thought sex was a game you played to win – until my heart got crushed on the playing field. It took decades for my emotional injuries to heal; for me to realize that there was more to sex than sex; that making love is a path to self-creation, not just recreation.

Making love sexually, sensually and spiritually turns lovemaking into something worth waiting for, not something to give away to just anyone who comes along. When I matured, I had to ask myself what had made me think I wouldn't get burned when I was young and immature? I was as susceptible to temptation as anybody else, including straight people.

It was impossible for me to love myself in my youth because I'd been so badly informed about the nature of forbidden fruit. I was secretly taught never to pick myself in the emotional sense, and so I felt forbidden. I was taught always to think about other people's feelings. I was never taught to recognize my own.

I was intellectually as bright as a light bulb, but emotionally my bulb was broken. And the more my head got filled with more information, the more my heart ached because it felt so empty and dark. I began to suspect that there was more to being me than I'd been told.

As I slowly learned to see some good in me, I also saw that I could rectify the evil in me {my mistakes} by correcting them. And in that way I began to harvest more of the fruits of self-knowledge than worldly knowledge. I became self-centering, not selfish or selfless.

Everything you do, not just sex, is a form of self-expression. Everything is a way for you to learn to communicate more deeply with yourself. If you're taught at an early age to desire self-love, you'll motivate yourself to improve yourself in your own eyes. And the more self-improvement you see day-by-day, the more you'll be motivated to contrast yourself to who you used to be rather than contrast yourself negatively to others.

You need to feel the undying devotion to the friend you have in *you*. That doesn't mean if you're Christian that you don't have a friend in Jesus. It just means that you'd be better able to befriend Him if you befriended yourself first. You can't befriend anyone if you don't know how to be a friend. You can't love HIM {GOD The Father} or Him {GOD The Son} if you can't say you love yourself even more. If you didn't have you, you wouldn't have Them.

Taking Care Of Business

I'll be using the pronoun "he" in this book {not "she"} when speaking in the third person singular since I've written this book for me. When I use the pronoun "we" I'll be referring to those of my gender. And, although I won't be using the feminine third person singular pronoun {she} to describe GOD or humanity until near the end of this book, that doesn't mean that I didn't have women in mind when I wrote this.

No man can succeed in unlocking his nature without the input of women and children. But history has shown that it's been man's lack of loyalty to his own humanity that has caused women and children such pain and suffering. I hope women and those in late adolescence will read this book, and will find in it some of the inspiration needed to help hoist themselves out of their suffering. But I can't do that for anyone. We need everyone working alone, together, to achieve peace of mind individually before we're going to achieve peace on Earth collectively.

I recommend this book for women interested in learning about the difficulties boys have in becoming men. It's so hard to become a man these days that I really believe the time has come for women to help us become men. No man can help a boy become a gentle man as well as a woman. And women will do a better job of it if they understand how we operate from the inside out.

If you've never read Torah, don't "shvitz" {Yiddish: sweat/worry} I've included summaries of the stories in with my interpretations of them. And I've written this book in language so simple that the child in me has been able to read and understand it.

I assume you have a cursory familiarity with the stories of The Old Testament since most of us were told them as children. I assume you know the traditional interpretations they were given. If not, don't schvitz about that either. When I was a junior high school, English teacher in East L.A. I created a curriculum for students who came from many exotic cultures and walks of life. I have experience in keeping a class interested in topics that are new to some of them.

I anticipate that there may even be voices within you that are telling you that you're not a "topic" you need to know more about. So I plan to address the topic of you being the main topic in your life in a way that should hold your interest.

The overarching principle of this series is that GOD/GOD/G O D loves you so much that HE/HE/H E wants you to love yourself, too. In fact HE/HE/H E may even *like* you, although that surely has more to do with your actions than your creation.

I'm sure HE'd/HE'd/H E'd really like it if you liked yourself, too. If you keep that in mind, you should be able to follow these stories and my interpretations of them without any difficulty. And who knows, you might even come away liking GOD/GOD/G O D more than you previously thought possible.

The basic premise is that I'm going to tempt you to come closer and closer, and eventually pick the most powerful and forbidden fruit growing on The Tree of knowledge: you. I believe your willingness to consider picking this fruit has been ripening in your subconscious for some time. I'll bet it's been growing from green to gold for years. If you're already ripe and ready to harvest yourself with a deeper sense of inner awareness than you ever before imagined, you already know how sweet, delicious and ready for picking you really are. The knowledge of your own goodness and intentions may astound you when you discover that, at the root of it all, your wisdom, love and generosity of spirit runneth over into the outside world we share. And I predict that this new experience of yourself will prove to be of biblical proportions.

GETTING ON BOARD

Introduction

Torah is ascribed as having been authored over 3,400 years ago, but there was no written record of it for the first 500 years. It was passed down as an oral tradition. The first recorded evidence of it goes back about 2,900 years.

Torah was first scrawled on scrolls made of parchment {animal skin}. There were no spaces between the words, perhaps to save space because parchment was so costly. Torah was recorded like a stream of consciousness, a waterfall of letters that only a scholar could keep from drowning in.

By the year 500 B.C.E., Judaism had surpassed all the mythologies of the Middle East to become the only viable “religion;” a view of one GOD who gives life to us all. Many in those days realized then that the Jews held a universal truth in their hands, and that the concept of GOD of the ancient Jews would simply need time to spread.

This religious revelation coincided with the Golden Age of Greece, so it should be of no surprise that the intellectually curious Greeks asked rabbis to translate Torah from Hebrew into ancient Greek about 400 B.C.E. And those Greeks were so wealthy that they requested the rabbis to spare no expense, by putting spaces between the words. And because of a recent invention from Egypt imported to Greece at the time, {papyrus}, money was no object.

Once the rabbis realized it was possible to write Torah on plant matter instead of animal skins, they decided to add punctuation and they even indented the first sentence of paragraphs. And before the Greeks knew what they were paying for, the rabbis got a hold of enough papyrus to divide Torah into chapters which they then presented in five books.

The translation was such a bestseller in ancient Greece that the rabbis could then afford to make those changes to the Hebrew version. And the modern layout of The Hebrew Testament we’re familiar with was born.

The study of Torah is prefaced with a prayer thanking GOD for *busying* us with THE WORDS of Torah. But I’d like to take this moment to bless the ingenuity of the ancient Egyptians as well as the intellectual curiosity of the ancient Greeks. Their influence on Judaism made it possible for us to read Torah as it’s been handed down to us today – with spaces between the words so we can swim through it, not drown in it.

We really ought to savor life for every word we add to our vocabulary. Each word we learn punctuates our purpose in being here. Life should even be celebrated for the pauses between our spoken words and spaces between our written WORDS/WORDS/W O R D S. Your name is probably made up of two or three words, each with a space between it. Look for gratitude even in the space between the words that spell your name. You’re a great mystery in history. You’re a mystery in the making. You need space to know yourself. You need space to grow. Let’s take a moment to pause and savor time and space.

Life unravels like a scroll, a river of meaningful words. This is a truth that the computer age has reintroduced with the modern, mechanical vessels we use to hold our numbers and words. They say that the Jews are the people of the scroll, but the computer age makes us all people of the virtual scroll.

Torah was once a spiritual document the ancient Jews shared with the ancient Greeks. Today modern Jews can share themselves with you everywhere, except in most of the Muslim world. Even Jesus was a Jew, a carpenter who spent His free time becoming a

rabbi so He could quote Torah. Why shouldn't you become a rabbi, too? You shouldn't have to be Jewish to become the revered rabbi in your life. If I did it, you can do it, too.

Regardless of your religious background, you've been deeply affected by more than 3,400 years of Jewish influence in modernizing the world. You probably don't realize how "*Jew-ish*" you already are. You're Jewish on the inside, even if you don't look Jewish on the outside. You, too, are a figurative descendant of Adam and Eve who ate the forbidden fruit in The Creation Story.

But by the end of this series on Judaism, after you've nibbled and snacked on yourself at my table, I hope you're going to feel like a spiritual citizen of the world, an angel in disguise from GOD's Kingdom in heaven who's here on Earth for a very brief, but precious, period in time. When you've digested all the wisdom and love you've given yourself, you'll discover that you're a V.I.P. on Earth - a very important pupil.

Book 1

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TAKE OFF - THE BOOK OF GENESIS

The Roots Of Knowledge

In The Beginning

The name of the first of The Five Books of Torah in Hebrew is “BIRASHEET.” BIRASHEET is also the first word of Torah. “BIRASHEET” means “IN THE BEGINNING.” The word “Genesis” is the later Greek name given to this book.

THE WORD, “BIRASHEET” can be interpreted with poetic license to imply “AT THE ROOT OF.” It intrigued me that Moses begins his first book with a word that suggests there’s something at the root of everything. I find this poetically compelling since Moses then describes a man alone in a garden who’s told by GOD that there’s a Tree in the garden that bears a fruit he’s forbidden to eat. It made me wonder what could be at the root of that forbidden Tree.

GOD describes that Tree to Adam, the first man HE created, as The Tree of knowledge, and the fruit from that Tree as the fruits of good and evil. This is, of course, a metaphor. The metaphor is ‘knowledge as coming from a Tree.’ And, like all metaphors it implies that the more you know about what’s on the right side of the metaphor {in this case, “Tree”}, the more you will learn about what’s on the left side of the metaphor {“knowledge”}.

As someone poetically inclined, my mind pondered what could be at the root of all knowledge. Roots support and nurture a tree, but the roots are concealed. People step over the roots unconsciously without regard to what lies beneath their feet. The roots of a tree are, in fact, almost as expansive as its branches. And we know that the roots mirror in shape and size the branches, even if we can’t see the roots and tend to take them for granted.

There must be something that connects the fruits of good and evil to a source deep, unseen and baffling that lies beneath the roots of everyday information. For that reason I decided to take the metaphor of a “Tree of knowledge of good and evil” to heart to explore it more. I decided to take the metaphor personally to discover what was at the root of all that I believe.

When I thought about my head as a Tree of knowledge branching out in many directions, I could then imagine the trunk of my Tree as the physical realm of this world that supports all that I think and know about the external world. But the emotional realm, which exists just under my everyday thinking, must therefore correspond to the roots of my Tree, the network of Bush-like branches that grow through soil and sand to support that part of my Tree that’s intellectually above the ground, in consciousness.

Because I try to use love to support all that I think and do, every action I take that isn’t based on love isn’t well supported by me for very long. Love is at the root of all that I know. My love wraps itself around GOD, my Rock, keeping me standing tall.

Even though I often feel misunderstood by others, and even hold myself carelessly at times, I was ready to dig down to find the root beneath the fruit. And after gathering the fruits of self-knowledge over many seasons, I discovered what it was I really believed about me, and saw that some of it was good, and some, bad.

Although people have been saying the same thing for millennia, I went on a quest of self-discovery to look for universal truth in the hopes that I’d find GOD.

Adam, The Lonely, Modern Man

My attraction to the first man in The Hebrew Testament, Adam, was because he's described as lonely. Torah says that because Adam was lonely GOD created a woman to be his mate.

I knew loneliness as a child, and the feeling only got more acute as I aged. But women didn't alleviate the feeling of loneliness for me. They only mirrored it. My feelings of loneliness motivated me to seek answers within myself, and for myself. Loneliness motivated me to look for the answer to what it means to be a man, specifically a gay-Jewish man interested in self-knowledge as described metaphorically in Torah.

I soon discovered that loneliness was the feeling I often experienced before I experienced self-love. Loneliness triggered a sense of emotional loss that sent me looking further and further afield in the world around me for the wisdom in me having been created at all.

I now see that modern man is lonely because he's in search of himself, not because he doesn't have a partner to share his life with. When you learn to love yourself sufficiently, your loneliness ends. When you can replace loneliness with solitude you've achieved something very special. Through solitude you can achieve tranquility and even peace of mind.

Self-knowledge is revealed little by little, day-by-day. The more you can consume the fruits of self-knowledge, the less you'll identify as Adam, and the more you'll see yourself as the fruit in The Creation Story. But once you have the courage to pick forbidden fruit, you should nibble it. It shouldn't be greedily gorged.

To relieve Adam's loneliness, GOD removes a rib from him, and fashions a woman out of it. I've found no physical evidence for that bone ever having been in me, and no wound or scar as the result of its removal. I can only admit to having had the haunting feeling that there was something once missing inside that's now been fulfilled. What was missing was a feeling of someone there with me inside. I didn't feel lonely when I was a young man because I needed a wife. I felt lonely when I needed me, and I wasn't there for me in the emotional sense.

Although most men replace that missing bone with a wife, that wasn't an option for me. My mother had been that woman in my life. She was the one and only woman I ever identified with down to the bone.

Every time I watch a baby being born on TV, I'm overcome with tears and a profound sense of sorrow. My identification with birth is rooted in the emptiness and loneliness that something I once had, was taken away from me. Some peace of mind was missing that I needed to search for. Some hole inside still needed to be filled.

The trauma of birth must be a lonely experience for every newborn. From the point of view of the baby passing through the birth canal, the pain of birth must be so great, and the feeling of confusion so forlorn, that Torah describes this experience metaphorically from a man's point of view as the infant concluding that the birth of his mother is like a bone being ripped out of his flesh.

Adam isn't really the first man; he's the first stage of every man. He's the infant in the process of being born who interprets the experiences as his woman being torn out of his flesh. Adam is every man who thinks life is all about him.

Torah's description of the creation of woman makes perfect sense if you look at the story metaphorically and from the viewpoint of an infant – because, other than interpreting

the story psychologically from a male's point of view, the description of a man giving birth to a woman makes no sense at all.

The Small Picture

A fetus must perceive space and time differently from a newborn. The fetus has increasingly less space in which to stretch, and the sensation of feeling crowded must intensify over the course of the first nine months of its existence. As every mother-to-be knows, her unborn child kicks from time to time, surely in an effort to complain about the increasing lack of space as he grows bigger.

The heart begins to beat eighteen days after conception, at which point the fetus may be able to separate its own inner rhythm from its mother's heartbeat. This gives the fetus two ways to tell time before its born, one outside itself {it's mother's heartbeat}, and the other, within {its own heartbeat}. Once born, a baby recognizes its mother's heartbeat, and finds it consoling to be near her. But when does a baby remember to remember its own inner rhythm?

Our perception of space and time changes as we move through new spaces over time. During the passage from fetus to infant, the individual must be terribly frightened because the nature of space and time is reconfigured after birth beyond anything it could have previously imagined.

Death will be personal and different for each one of us, but birth is the universal terror we all once knew. Birth is when space and time changed so radically that we must have thought we were going to die. Birth is the death of space and time as we once knew it. And hopefully death will be the birth of a new space and time we can't yet perceive.

Eve, The Universal Mother

The woman in The Creation Story isn't mentioned by name until nearly the end of the story. At the introduction to the story, Torah just says she's Adam's WOMAN. But the words for WIFE and WOMAN are the same in Hebrew, so it isn't difficult to imagine this pun in Hebrew implying that Adam is an infant who thinks himself wedded to his mother after his unique relationship with her in her womb.

The sharing of her space inside the womb and the perception of her sense of timing in appearing outside the womb weds the infant to its mother. What the mother and child experience is the first match made in heaven after birth. The fetus found itself completely surrounded by his wife while he was in the womb. She literally held her little man between her legs, and wouldn't let him go.

No male likes to feel constrained by a woman even if she's providing him with food, shelter and all his worldly needs. He'll fight to get out from the clutches of a woman he thinks is restricting his movements as he grows. Some confront this fear through the physical experience of being born and getting away from that woman. Others spend a lifetime trying to come to terms with what they perceive to be some woman's emotional clutches.

Instead of facing this truth honestly and squarely, some men delude themselves by strutting around looking as though every woman came out of them. They do this dance when threatened, using their size and strength to try to give women the impression that they're too big to be caught and confined a second time...

It's easy for some males to come to the conclusion that the *raison d'être* of women is to serve them. It says in Torah that GOD created woman to be man's mate. But when it comes to serving males' emotional needs, many men lean on women to overcome their own loneliness rather than search for solitude, tranquility and peace of mind within themselves. If a man needs to rely too heavily on women emotionally, he may compensate by disregarding them entirely in other ways or by treating them callously out of spite.

Adam felt lonely long before he did anything to offend GOD. He felt lonely before GOD created woman. And modern men still feel lonely 3,400 years after the story was first told. But that's because of who we are, not because of anything we do or don't do. No woman can satisfy our desire to achieve solitude. It's simply not realistic to ask that of them through the mother/son bond or the romantic relationships straight males get into after puberty.

When looked at from the viewpoint of a male infant, The Creation Story reveals the first clues to the psychological truth in becoming a man. And its author(s) are of unparalleled greatness for having expressed their rendition of this psychological truth 3,400 years before the science of psychology was birthed onto the scene.

The Big Picture

I've made a case for interpreting Adam as every male infant, and Eve as every mother. But that begs many questions. The first question is GOD's reason for the creation of woman. I don't plan to answer that question. Not only do I have my hands full just describing the meaning of being me. It would be presumptuous of me to suggest I know anything about GOD's reason for creating anyone else. I'm sure HE could have dealt with man's loneliness in other ways had HE chosen to do so. The bottom line is that Torah tells us men are lonely creatures, and that GOD chose to deal with our loneliness by creating women.

As a gay man, women serve a great spiritual function in my life, even though I have no interest in having sex with them or making babies. For me, they serve the function of mirroring me physically, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. They reframe my existence in a mysterious way.

I'd now like to give you my interpretation of the biggest picture of all, the meaning of life, and then work my way back from there. I'm going to paint with broad strokes, and then go back to fill in the details with fine lines and shadows.

I believe with all my heart and soul that the purpose of life is to learn to love yourself. I think self-love is the most difficult love to achieve. Although we see more deeply into ourselves than any other person on Earth, paradoxically, we can't literally face ourselves without the aid of a mirror. And, even then, what we see is a reflection, not a true picture of who we are. This, I believe, is a poetic clue to the purpose of our life.

But there are three other meanings to life I've learned over the years. (1) The meaning of life is to give life meaning. (2) The meaning of life can be found in the ice cream aisle at your local supermarket. (3) The meaning of life is to learn not to fuck with GOD.

Life is surely a gift, but the greatest gift you can ever hope to get is the one you've always wanted. Not everyone wants to love himself. Not everyone wants to be able to face himself without a visual aid. Some people prefer to look at themselves through their portfolio; the long list of names in their address book; or the way their pet reacts to them when they come home from work at night.

But these are all visual aids to emotional truths. You have to look at yourself from the inside out or you're overlooking your "self" in favor of outside interests.

Self-love comes from self-knowledge, and self-knowledge comes with freedom, liberty and emancipation. That may be difficult to see, but it'll become more apparent by the end of my interpretation of The Book of Exodus, the second book of Torah, when the Israelites have completed the construction of the Tabernacle and the glory of GOD descends upon it. Freedom gives you a personal and spiritual sense of space and time that helps you conclude through thinking {freedom}; feeling {liberty}; and believing {emancipation} - that your creation was the most important act in the whole universe up until now.

If you grew up in a family that allowed you the freedom to be yourself, you experienced your world as accommodating and benign. Your world expanded like your mother's womb expanded when you were still a fetus. But even then, you had to kick and punch at times to make more room for yourself. There is no perfect inner space. There is no perfect outer place.

Liberation comes with learning to love yourself above and beyond the love of all else in life. This internalization of love is, for most people, a process, not a conscious decision. It requires that you acknowledge that love passes from within you out into the world.

And emancipation is the quest for GOD that soulful people seek as the byproduct of learning to know and love themselves. Once you know and love yourself, you're probably going to want to seek greater understanding of our Creator. You're going to be so amazed at the body you've been given as the vehicle for your particular journey that you're probably going to want to question where you're going with it. Surely you're not just going to die.

Adam and Eve are the biblical models for a universal view of the first mother and child as seen through the eyes of the infant boy {Adam}. The GOD in this story is a personification of every man's conscience, the more mature part of the self that mediates over his actions, and judges them afterwards for being right or wrong. The serpent is an anthropomorphic representation of his father's penis; the symbolic tool his father used to express his passion for life; and the delivery system of the life-giving power his father employed to bring his son into existence.

If you can't accept one or another of these concepts as they've been laid out here, try to be patient with yourself as well as with me. I can't respond to your doubts directly. But I will respond to them in the order Torah responds to them.

Adam represents the infant-like mind of man that has to be tempted to learn about himself because birth has been such a traumatic experience that he's virtually shut down after the experience of entering this world. Every Adam needs to find his own way to awaken, to explore self-love and GOD-consciousness. The generalities are the same for everyone, even if the specifics change from person to person.

Adam has come to the conclusion that GOD {his conscience} has forbidden him and will punish him for learning about himself and the meaning of the metaphor of Eden, 'life as a garden of opportunities.' Adam, at the stage of the fetus in his mother's womb {alone in the garden}, was willing to obey GOD. He didn't explore much of anything. He just did what he was told. But when that woman came of him {birth}, all hell broke loose, and his conscience was awakened by his first misdeed.

The forbidden fruit is the silent victim in the story, that part of man that's disowned and projected out onto the natural world. The forbidden fruit is anything we explore to

come to know and love ourselves. That exploration begins internally in infancy. It becomes external. And it eventually returns, usually later in life, as an internal journey that has external consequences.

When alone, a grown man may look at the world of men and sense something sad about it, but he may not find words to describe what he's feeling because it's a part of himself that he's also projected out and may still be unconscious of. To give voice to the forbidden fruit in The Creation Story gives voice to the silent victim in each one of us who knows such sadness that we cringe at even being given the opportunity to relive it in story form and then talk about it.

Despite all that's been said in the past about the first man and woman GOD created according to Torah, no one really identifies with Adam or Eve anymore. No one today identifies with the perpetrators of the first crime against humanity. Good men everywhere identify with the innocent victim. We all unconsciously think of ourselves as forbidden fruit picked without our permission.

Each of us is a mysterious, living, breathing metaphor of the man who identifies more with a tree than with human beings. Each of us is an Adam in an Eden. We don't know why we're here, or how we're meant to spend our time. We don't know why we feel expelled from our internal world from time to time, or what to do about it.

The Instinct To Learn

It's not a coincidence that a snake looks more like a penis than any other creature on Earth. But the serpent in The Creation Story is a disembodied penis that talks. This is the psychological view the infant boy holds of his father. The conversation Eve will have with the serpent will represent a reenactment of the conception of the infant by every father and mother throughout history. I'll go into that in detail later.

Most people instinctively recoil when they see a snake. They even recoil when they simply think about a snake biting them or someone they love. When the evolutionary ancestors of humanity were still living in trees, the snake was the only carnivore that could stealthily creep up on a mother and her young. The fear of snakes goes back to the dawn of the human psyche. Our fear of snakes may not be instinctual, but our desire to recoil at the sight of them, is.

That which is instinctual is based on evolutionary evidence that's been learned at the deepest level of our being. Although some instincts are positive and improve the quality of life, it's the negative instincts that are the most powerful because they have to be relived time and again to keep us from getting killed. A grown woman may or may not know what it feels like to have a penis in her, but she's psychologically wired to recoil at the thought of a snake coming so close to her that it might penetrate her in any way.

Instincts are evolutionary, survival skills that were hardwired in us a long time ago. Instincts may not be in our DNA, but they've been psychologically tattooed onto our bones through evolutionary experiences of the survival of the fittest. The collective unconscious of humanity provides us with instinctual, survival skills that Torah acknowledges in the "talking snake" as imperative to our survival, physically (and even spiritually) as a species. The Creation Story employs this instinct to assert the need for moral conduct.

Men recoil at the thought of a penis penetrating them unless they overcome that fear with sexual arousal. Excitement and the anticipation of great pleasure from being penetrated by a penis is rare (by not that rare) in men.

But there's another instinct that differentiates all men from women. It's the instinct in men not to want to penetrate their mother with their penis. In that sense, men are like snakes that have been trained to recoil from one woman in particular.

This is the most universal and horrific of all taboos tattooed into the psyche of male, human beings. This is the instinct in man that differentiates him from all other creatures in the animal kingdom. (And this is, incidentally, the instinct that rogues have been unconsciously using to manipulate the righteous since the beginning of civilization.)

The only thing we can be certain about the serpent in The Creation Story is that "it's" physically disassociated from Adam and that "it" has a mind of its own. Although the serpent has been associated with the embodiment of evil {the "devil"} since the dawn of time, from a psychological perspective it's well understood that this "serpent" is beguiling, especially to women, and therefore potentially dangerous to men.

Our mother not only had our father's penis inside her; she once had our penis inside her as well. Although our father's penis went into her, our penis only came out of her. And a normal male will recoil even at the thought at being that close to his mother's vagina again. Birth was the death of our "marriage" to our mother. Our birth signified the beginning and the end of our physical relationship with her vagina. Once out of her body we entered the journey of life to be on our own. And the thought of physically returning the way we came is abhorrent to us. A man must move forward, and not go back to where he came from.

The trip we made out of the womb was a one way road, and no man wants to take that road the other direction. Millions of years of physical evolution combined with religious hardwiring has taken us in one moral direction only; and that direction is out into the world, and away from our mother's womb. Going the other direction is the greatest taboo. The idea alone is the embodiment of evil. Not even the Nazis forced Jewish mothers and sons to have sex with one another. Not even Nazis could sink to that level of moral depravity.

Man may want to shape his experiences out in the world so as to make them so comfortable that he figuratively feels as well held as he was in the womb, but he doesn't want to literally return there. The topic of incest with our mother goes to the core of our being. It brings meaning to the words, "obscene," "vile" and "degenerate."

The serpent in the story sets up the most primal, instinctual taboo in mankind, not to "converse" {have sexual relations} with your mother. Although this ban is only implied at the deepest levels of scrutiny of the psychological meaning of The Creation Story. This will become the moral underpinning for the authority of the conscience that will guide every man.

A woman can't literally infuse her life giving essence into her mother. She can only do so figuratively. In that sense, Torah was written to men, for men and about men. The core of The Hebrew Testament {Torah} therefore speaks to men in a whole other way than it speaks to women. And if we're to understand Torah in its entirety, we're going to need much greater input from women's points of view; outside of women, that gay men are best equipped to do.

Serpent As Vehicle To Guilt And Love

Although it's easy to see the physical similarity between the serpent and the penis, the serpent is also physically analogous to our intestines, which snake their way through our belly. In that sense man is a Tree of knowledge with a snake *in* The Tree, not just hanging

from The Tree. Our mouth is the head of the snake, and that which we literally consume then winds its way through us giving us the sensation that there's some forbidden fruit snaking its way through us. You can literally see a snake's meal making its way through its body, but you can also imagine good and evil making its way through you as you digest the moral meaning of life.

All that we think, feel and believe about ourselves also snakes its way through us. Man, like a snake, sheds his skin from time to time by removing old ideas that no longer serve him. He doesn't just sense that he's like a snake. He thinks, feels and believes it on some level, as well. There are moral judgments and mysteries that man makes about himself because he compares himself to a snake. He even contrasts himself to someone he doesn't like by calling him a snake.

The ability to overcome the feeling of fear is associated with intestinal fortitude. Incontinence implies weakness of character; it signals that you can't take control of the world around you. And constipation is likened to the inability to get your thoughts out.

Our intestines are the organ that we most deeply associate with a sense of knowing ourselves, getting past fear of the world within. Fear lies in the belly of the beast. And the two extremes of that organ, our mouth and anus, are deeply private areas that we don't share with others easily for fear of being exposed to the world in ways that might make us uncomfortable.

It's the voice in our belly that calls out from deep within us to eat when it experiences that strange sense of emptiness inside called: hunger. But, as we know all too well, our hunger isn't always for food. Late night eating is almost always an effort to assuage feelings, not physical appetite.

The concept of assuaging man's hungers is embodied in the character of the talking serpent in The Creation Story. Hunger looks like a penis. Hunger talks, and it spits its words out without care whether what it's saying is true or false. The Creation Story implies that hunger for knowledge is so carnal an appetite that men will defy everything they were told by the highest of authorities to satisfy their appetite for knowledge. They'll even defy GOD.

Hunger is difficult to describe because it's coldblooded. Hunger can be seen in your eyes, your heart, your belly and even in your penis when it swells with desire. Some men have hands that are hungry to work. Others have a heart that's hungry to be heard. Some men have feet that are hungry to crush others beneath them. Some men are so hungry that their hunger expresses itself through their anus...

Grandpa GOD

The "Old Man" in The Creation Story who walks around the garden with such heavy feet that Adam and Eve can hear HIM coming is the personification of the conscience of man. GOD shows up noisily where and when HE wants to. The conscience arrives too late to prevent the mistake of consuming knowledge and feeling its effect in The Creation Story. If the conscience is going to control the appetites of man there have to be consequences. Man has to know how and when to distance himself from the temptation to learn.

I'm going to use THE WORD "GOD" to describe the Creator of the human being. This is the One who manufactured man in HIS image. This is the One who gave us clues to the mystery of our being through the shape and function of the human body we were given. By taking all the characters in The Creation Story personally, we get the main metaphor of Moses that's constructed on the male, human body. Man becomes a Tree of knowledge in

a garden planted here to grow. And he must learn when not to pick the fruits of his own Tree.

The interactions between the characters in all the stories of Genesis with GOD will express the development of man's conscious control over his thoughts, feelings, desires and beliefs. It will imply a waking up to GOD's participation in his life. As each of us learns to understand how we were made individually in HIS image, we evolve spiritually. We grow like a tree with a majestic view of the orchard of civilization. We rise in our own esteem, and thereby come closer to our Creator than we once were.

From Exodus through Deuteronomy the concept of The Lord comes into play. A lord was a sociological concept of an authority figure with greater power than those around him. He was the ruler of a territory, which included a court of independent men and women as well as serfs who came with the land. The lord of a manor was expected to rule with regard for all those in his domain. GOD controls HIS creation, but The Lord guides HIS servants.

The realization of GOD's presence begins as a psychological force in infancy that never stops growing in meaning. GOD is the force of our conscience that controls us as we unconsciously break through spiritual darkness into spiritual light just as a sprout would physically move out of the ground into the light of the sun.

The Lord is that inner aspect of ourselves that we come to know later. He has our best interest in mind vis-à-vis others. Apart from The Lord, there is "the God within who doeth THE WORK/WORK/WORK."

Whether we feel like a serf tied to the world around us or like nobility who's free to come and go as we please, The Lord is that aspect of moral awareness that we bow down to with awe and respect. The psychological concept of Lord doesn't enter into Torah until the second book {Exodus}. It will be The Lord who'll guide the Israelites to their Promised Land.

GOD is the Creator of man in Genesis in the psychological sense. The Lord is man's King in the sociological sense. He shapes man by giving him a mission. But it's the God within who will work with you in teaching you to love yourself.

The first book {Genesis} is all about the awakening to GOD in man's mind. In psychological terminology today we call that aspect of ourselves the conscience. But Genesis goes beyond the description of the creation of man's conscience. It will leave us in awe of the stages of a man's early life that hold a mystery and intelligence he'll later yearn to understand. As he grows psychologically, he can do more to help his children and others do the same, without making the same mistakes he made.

There are three aspects of GOD described in The Hebrew Testament. The first is "ELOHIM" {GOD (pl.)}, the millions of aspects of our Creator who made the universe and then planted us here like seeds to grow with conscious awareness of ourselves. The second is "EL SHADDAI" {the breasts of GOD}, the aspect of HIM that reminds us more of our mother. And the third concept is "Y.H.V.H." {ADONAI, The Lord}. This is the aspect of GOD who'll give Moses HIS name at the Burning Bush in Exodus, thus making the experience of HIM inter-Personal. The knowledge of GOD by name brings with it conscious awareness of HIS presence and mission for you alone.

The serpent's relationship to GOD {ELOHIM} in The Creation Story could be described as nebulous, at best. The two of Them never speak to one another, but each makes claims to have knowledge about the intentions of the other. The serpent has an understanding of GOD that we indirectly come to know from what our father told us about HIM. Both the

serpent in The Creation Story and our father talk about GOD as though the two of Them had met, although we've never had any evidence of that ever having happened, either.

The serpent is the aspect of everyman who has desires for power and penetration. The serpent represents the part of us that hungers for something we don't have without giving thought to the moral implications of our passions. To the end, we come to see that our thoughts {Adam} and feelings {Eve} have to answer to our conscience {GOD} for the desires {serpent} that instigated us to act.

The serpent is the delivery system of every man's desires. "It" doesn't have to answer to our thoughts {Adam} or feelings {Eve}. "It" doesn't even have to answer to our conscience {GOD}. Man's serpent simply does what it does, and our head, heart and conscience have to deal with the outcome.

Every Adam has to answer to his conscience and take responsibility for the talking head between his legs that often connives with his feelings to get him in trouble. In this sense The Creation Story is relived many times in every man until he comes to understand and appreciate that all men are spiritually manufactured by GOD in accordance with the exact same spiritual principles.

Adam later blames Eve for what he did, but that doesn't relinquish him from his responsibility before GOD. It doesn't matter what a man thinks. His conniving penis will always come up with excuses if he gets caught.

Adam is the personification of the conniving mind of man. Peace of mind is so difficult to attain because peace on Earth hinges on men achieving it from within after a man's thoughts, feelings, desires and beliefs have all had their say. We ought to stop making excuses for ourselves, and start recognizing the various forces within us that should make us curious to learn more about how we were made in GOD's image.

The conversation between the serpent and Eve is sexual, deeply psychological, and it also holds vast sociological implications. The fact that the serpent has a body and voice, but no arms and legs, is telling when it comes to how desire motivate our hands and feet to do "its" bidding.

Adam is every son who sees his father as a disembodied penis who had a relationship with his mother that left him {Adam} holding the bag. And Adam represents the mind of everyman in infancy who concludes that his mother came out of him instead of the other way around. Clearly, man's mind cannot be trusted when it acts on its own because of inner forces that collude with it.

The conscience {GOD} in The Creation Story created man's mind {Adam}, but the mind doesn't have the experience in infancy to differentiate itself from its own conscience. Good and evil mean nothing more to an infant than contented or discontented. It takes an experience in which the newborn colludes with its mother {Eve} for him {Adam} to realize there's greater moral purpose in life than just being comfortable. He has to develop loving feelings for his mother before he can initiate a connection to his conscience, something Adam expresses for Eve at the end of the story.

Adam and Eve's collusion in The Creation Story holds psychological importance to man's relationship to his mother that must be decoded for its moral intention. If Adam is seen as the mind of the infant, then Eve is the infant's heart. But the mind of the infant projects its heart out onto its mother, that other heartbeat it grew so close to in the womb.

Learning is a process of bringing new information from the outside world in. Learning is like eating. Food nurtures the body; learning nurtures the soul. Eating requires biting,

chewing, swallowing and digesting to break food down into smaller and smaller morsels that the body can process. Learning is an experience that does the same with knowledge.

Learning is a humbling experience. Learning requires a heart that's been properly prepared in order to activate learning, or a child will be too arrogant to learn very much about himself in the course of drawing conclusions about the world around him.

Learning can only occur if you open your mind like your mouth to fill yourself. Learning is about receiving. In the same way that a mother suckles or spoon-feeds her child, she should want to teach her child. And the child, in return, should receive every morsel of new information with delight.

Knowledge, like food, should be consumed because it's appetizing and mentally, emotionally and spiritually nutritious. Learning to eat on your own and, later, earning a living are physical survival skills. But learning is an intellectual, survival skill that becomes a moral, survival skill for those who are educated enough to realize the progression from food to "food for thought." Torah teaches us that learning parallels eating. Both are breaking down and rebuilding enterprises, first to survive; then to thrive.

The Birth Of A Thought

Birth is the beginning of life. But to understand the birth of self-knowledge, we have to go back before the beginning of words. Words are a symbolic system of communication we learned from others. We think in words, but we can think and communicate without words, too.

Man is born wired with two communication systems. Man is born figuratively bilingual, and he speaks using both communication systems his entire life. The one system is called thinking; the other, feelings. We often communicate with our feelings without necessarily putting them into words. Women often complain about the lack of feeling in men because expressing feelings without consciously thinking about what they feel is so common a practice among men.

Language isn't the same as thinking or feeling. Language is the verbal communication system that combines the two. Women prefer men to communicate using verbal, language skills because language is an extremely accurate method of discernment. But many men often only want to communicate with women using their feelings and sensations. This is predominantly expressed with body language {sex or violence}.

Some women (and gay men) become intensely excited when men communicate using body language. But some of us become even more excited when we meet a man who can communicate well using words. For modern man, it's the combination of both communication styles {body language and verbal skills} that are signs of real power and potential for success.

There's no oral language that can claim to be a man's mother tongue. Our first language is body language. Our body told us everything we knew about the world when we were infants, and we then used our entire body to express our, as yet, undifferentiated thoughts, feelings, desires and beliefs.

The first, universal trauma we went through in life was the act of being squeezed through our mother's vagina. {Those, like myself, born by Caesarian have a unique variation on the theme to speak of.} But birth will always be everyone's first experience of life; one our entire body went through whether or not we entered the world through a birth canal.

Torah doesn't offer a reasonable, scientific explanation for the beginning of the world in The Creation Story. It presents us with a psychological explanation for the beginning of our inner world. And Torah tries to do so using verbal language and body language. The Creation Story is describing something that happened before our thoughts and feelings were ever entwined into words.

We added to the vocabulary of our body language after birth while feeding at our mother's breast. When we looked up at her face as she held us in her arms, our body and hers communicated in ways that we can still remember, but only in echoes of sensations within. We didn't have words to describe that experience at the time, nor will we ever. We'll always be dependent on metaphor to describe the indescribable and unconditional love of being a baby in our mother's arms. And metaphor is precisely what Torah excels at.

Unconditional love is an indescribable concept that lies within the vocabulary of body language. Unconditional love began as the experience we had in the womb as we grew in an expanding world of flesh before we could put any of our experiences into words. And it developed into a combination of symbols outside the womb that came to stand for warmth, food and the sensation of our heartbeat merging with our mother's.

Body language is the first method by which we acquired knowledge. Before we were born, we weren't selfish or selfless. We were self-centering at all times because our life was centered only on ourselves. Our body was entirely protected, nurtured and enveloped by our mother's womb. There was no one else for us to deal with. {In the story of Jacob and Esau, Torah will address the concept of twins still in the womb to metaphorically describe our struggle within ourselves even before birth.} Unconditional love is something every mother gives her baby while it's in the womb. After that, every woman's standards of child rearing are her own.

Body language was our first source of knowledge. It's a language we still speak naturally and fluently, even if we're consciously unaware of the effects of other people's body language or our own. Body language still accompanies our words even when we speak on the phone.

Body language holds the answer to the mystery of Adam's loneliness, the feeling of being alone with GOD while having other life forms around him. The transition from body language to words is the first key to the Kingdom. You can't unlock awareness of GOD's presence in your life if you're out of touch with your body.

Before we can understand the depth of the message of Torah for this time in HISTORY/HISStory/H I S T O R Y, we have to be absolutely sure we can agree on the process of perception all human beings held in infancy (and even before infancy) through the language we used before we learned words.

In the beginning there wasn't a word. In the beginning there was THE WORD. And there's a world of difference between the meaning of these two written concepts. Those of faith don't need that difference explained to them. THE WORD of GOD is real for us. Faith is a word that corresponds to an experience of GOD's/GOD's/G O D's presence throughout our whole body that can't be translated into words.

Faith is a sensation mixed with a thought and a feeling of wellbeing. Faith might best be described as the unconditional love you had in the womb, or the feeling a baby has while suckling at its mother's breast. Faith is knowledge of being loved that permeates your

whole body with a sense of safety and security. Faith is the experience of your life being in GOD's/GOD's/G O D's hands.

The personal and psychological purpose of Torah is paramount to understanding the meaning of faith because all Western faiths begin with Torah, GOD's first WORD before it was separated into many words when written on papyrus. Words are generally used with personal and private meanings to include sensations, thoughts, feelings, desires and beliefs. Our words are different from THE WORD of GOD. But you don't have to take that assertion on faith. I'm going to prove to you that GOD/GOD/G O D uses WORDS/WORDS/W O R D S in ways that surpass anything we can utter.

The first clue as to why the fruit in The Creation Story says nothing when it's about to be picked, when all the other characters have been given voices, is that it's just watching the story unfold. If we're going to try to identify with all the characters of Scripture, then, from a personal and private point of view, that aspect of the self that doesn't know what's going to happen next needs to watch to see what happens. Time will tell us what GOD wants to have happen.

Every baby is ignorant and innocent. It can only experience sensations. The body of the infant can only differentiate between comfort and discomfort. It can act and react, but it can't control anything. A baby can't even use words to communicate. Like forbidden fruit, it simply watches and learns from the world around it.

The words you use today have their spiritual origins in Torah, whether or not you recognize THE WORD of GOD as part of your spiritual foundation. You don't have to know about THE WORD of GOD to use words, any more than you need to accept Jesus as your Savior to express love. The source of moral understanding and love is useful, but not essential.

You should be able to identify with the fruit in The Creation Story if there's a part of you that has ever felt like a victim. The victim has no voice. The victim is singled out, picked against his will. The victim feels there's no one on his side to speak up for him. The victim can even feel stuck in the present where he's squeezed between a past he can't change and a future he can't control.

The forbidden fruit symbolizes the victim who knows all the primary feelings {anger, fear and sorrow}. But the victim doesn't know what his feelings are for. When you feel that not even GOD is on your side, that even HE is conspiring against you, you sense an emotional truth that cannot be put into words. You know what it means to live without faith – like an apple hanging from a tree, like an infant hanging from a nipple.

The Human Experience Of Victimhood

The human body is a bag of bones covered with a thin skin that's literally and figuratively easy to penetrate. We're physically vulnerable to injury, and we have to develop an emotional shell, or we'll feel emotionally porous and easily pierced by people's sharp tongue.

You might say that the sensitive man has to protect himself by becoming more like a nut than a fruit. His emotional world has to be realistically hard, or he'll feel crushed into pulp in a world such as ours.

Each story in Genesis is a path of inner awareness through one to another of these layers of man's emotional shell. To appreciate this mystical and dynamic, emotional field that

surrounds us requires us to investigate where exactly our inner, emotional world ends, and outer reality begins.

Your skin is the physical manifestation of that edge. Your skin is the literal border between you and the world. Everything outside yourself is “other.” But there’s a thick skin, a shell of sorts that separates the two. That skin, peel or shell in psychological terminology describes your personality. Your personality is the layer of protection you developed to protect you from the world. Not even you can easily penetrate that peel from within once you’ve decided you’re ready to face yourself.

Your true “self” is your persona, the forces that came together at the core of you that are concealed by your personality. These forces have been given names in The Creation Story: Adam, Eve, GOD, serpent, and the fruits of knowledge, one good and the other, evil. You’re not a mystery in the making; you’re a mystery that’s being disclosed to you gently over time. You’re a combination of forces that come together at your core {persona} that produce a meat {self-awareness} and skin {personality}.

People who suffer mental illness are opened to this mystery more quickly than they can intellectually absorb it, and so they come away with terribly distorted and hateful impression of themselves. But when you move slowly and cautiously through your experience of yourself day-by-day, over the course of a lifetime, the meaning of your life usually becomes personal, positive and spiritually meaningful.

Your personality produces the thickness of your skin, peel or shell, as well as the outer colors and shapes that metaphorically describe what others see of you. Your persona is the interaction of the forces at play at your core that hold the seeds of your being: your essence. Sharing yourself with others is a breaking open of your core to expose your seeds to the soil in other people. Sharing yourself with others replants your essence in them.

Learning to listen to yourself at the core of your being is both an art and a science. Learning to listen is a psychological experience that shares you with yourself. Learning to listen to yourself is the essence of the subject called: spirituality.

A Metaphor To Understand Language

Because the body of the infant experiences the sensation of greatest comfort in its mother’s arms, its mind projects its feelings onto its mother. And then it concludes love originates outside itself. If this relationship is particularly intimate, it produces an individual with a thin *skin*. If this relationship is moderately familiar it produces a *peel*. And if there’s a great distance between mother and child, it produces a *shell*.

Eve is described as Adam’s woman, but the heart of the infant after it’s been projected out is reflected back to the infant from his mother to create its personality. “Mama” is the first expression of every infant’s heart when it realizes it’s physically separate and psychologically distinct from her. It’s not the mind {Adam} that dislodges this first verbal fruit from his Tree of knowledge. It’s his heart {Eve}, his feelings, that initiate the deed. It’s his naïve, inner Eve that picks the first forbidden fruit and then gives it to the mind to put into a word.

In this way the core of the new individual ascertains the psychological distance from his mother to produce the kind of personality he’ll need to relate to her successfully. In this way a baby’s nature {persona} produces the necessary personality to survive with that particular mother {nurture}.

The infant mind assumes its own innocence. It produces the kind of fruit {peach, orange, nut} with the kind of skin, peel or shell needed with that particular Tree of life {mother}.

He may blame his mother (or other women) later in life for turning out to be the kind of forbidden fruit that he is. But the process is identical for all human beings, even if the variations on the theme are infinitesimal.

It's not only psychologically tempting, but imperative, that the mind of man expands that blame out onto all women at some times during his spiritual development. Females are mirrors of male expressions of emotions that must be tested to be proved and disproved.

When boys identify emotionally only with males, they're rejecting Trees of *life* in favor of Trees of *knowledge*. They're confirming Adam's conclusion that Eve came out of him, and not the other way around. They're expressing their rejection and denial of the projection of their love onto their mother. In essence, they're rejecting their own 'x' chromosome in favor of their 'y' chromosome. They're acknowledging only half of themselves.

It's very easy for anyone to blame his mother for the unrealized, unconditional love he projected out, but didn't get reflected back. It's easy for an Adam to blame his own Eve for being so naïve. It's much harder to see that you can't love the 'x' side of yourself, your heart, until you've compared it to others' with experiences that teach you to accept this side of the human experience as female.

Some see through this "trick" quickly, and realize that the search for truth can't be achieved through anyone other than themselves. It's not an external expression of femininity. Most young, straight men today see that no woman can be blamed for the lack of unconditional love in their life. Some gay men discover the same truth by exploring male and female stereotypes in the men they date or marry.

The search for the most mysterious person in your life will eventually lead you back to yourself for going within is the ultimate direction away from the womb and toward GOD. Discovering what kind of forbidden fruit you are is the first question you're going to want to ask yourself. And, of course, only you have that answer.

Body Language And Forbidden Fruit

The best, modern metaphor I've found to describe the concept of language is, 'thoughts as trains.' The expression "a train of thoughts" illustrates how the heart and mind of man can operate in sync one with the other without us even knowing it.

The way man thinks and feels isn't comparable to the movement of an airplane, bus or car. Man thinks like a train. A train is a line of boxcars linked together and pulled by a locomotive along a track. And it's the concept of locomotion held in place by a track that attracted me to trains to describe the nature of spoken language in this way.

A sentence even looks like boxcars linked together. The subject of the sentence is the engineer who runs the idea; the verb is the locomotive that powers it; and all the rest of the words are boxcars loaded with information to be transferred from one station to another.

Thoughts are the intellectual transportation that crisscrosses the landscape of our mind. A train of thought is a vehicle of self-expression; the railroad system by which we make our communicative needs happen.

By extending the metaphor further, the track on which a train of thoughts runs are feelings. Your feelings run under your thoughts, guiding them, keeping them moving

without impediment. When you look at your thoughts as a stationmaster would look at each train going through his station, you see yourself also as the engineer of each train of your thoughts. You're not only on the platform waiting for the next good idea to show up and carry you elsewhere. You're also in the locomotive observing all the tracks you have to choose from as each thought moves through your mind.

It's up to you to make sure your thoughts stay on track. When your mind races, it jeopardizes you getting to the destination you're headed for. From the vantage point of the engineer at the front of the locomotive, you can look ahead to see where your thoughts are headed, and you can choose which emotional track you want next to take.

Integrity isn't only based on the contents of the boxcars of your trains of thought, the good thoughts and deeds you perform. Your integrity is also based on the track you choose to get your products to market. Integrity requires truthful feelings for yourself, regardless of how you may feel about others.

When your feelings for others are more secure than your feelings for yourself, you open yourself up to train wrecks within. Granted, you can naïvely take your thoughts in the direction of people who may cause you to jump the tracks as well. But you're much more likely to get where you're going if your feelings for yourself are unimpeded.

Some people believe society encourages us to live in our head more than our heart. Some say they're more in control of their thoughts because their feelings are difficult to talk about. In fact we're in control of both; and we're responsible for both. But when you identify as the engineer of your trains of thoughts rather than just a passenger on board, you can identify more closely with the tracks rushing beneath your thoughts as well as the ideas you're transporting.

If you look carefully at your feelings you'll see that you experience these tracks in the landscape of your imagination. You sense your feelings inside even if you aren't thinking about them. But when your behavior ends up getting you in trouble, society acquiesces responsibility for helping you learn how to control your thoughts and feelings.

The purpose of society is merely to use you to transport its own goods to market to the best of its ability. It won't tell you how you should operate your trains of thought. It'll only tell you where you need to arrive and what you need to have with you when you get there. Society rewards you for productive thoughts and cooperative feelings, but it's up to you to figure out how to become productive and cooperative. You ought to develop these attributes within yourself and for yourself before you try to share them effectively in society.

But this is a project that most people do unconsciously because they haven't learned how to talk about this process. They separate what they think and feel from how they want to be perceived. And then they wonder if they're really being dishonest and insincere.

Society is, in a way, actually working against your greater good. It puts pressure on you to act more like a passenger on a train. It encourages you just to take your seat, look out the window, and enjoy the ride. Society has a responsibility to keep everyone on track for the greater good.

But from the seat you may have casually and habitually chosen on your own trains of thought, you may only rarely look out the window to notice the direction your tracks are going, to determine for yourself whether you're headed where you need to go.

If you rarely think about what you're thinking about, you may also not be concerned enough about what you're feeling. And then there will come a point in time when you'll

look back disappointed at where life took you. You'll feel like a victim of circumstances. You'll feel that time has passed you by.

Society promotes obedience to authority. But if you, in turn, become overly obedient to your own inner authority, you may not be engineering your future in the world around you with as much insight as you otherwise could. If you don't question who's really in charge inside of you, you may end up overindulging yourself or embarrassing yourself from time to time because of unconscious decisions that lead you to destinations you never wanted to go to, like the hospital; rehab; the unemployment office; or jail. You may even routinely find yourself at a particular Thanksgiving table wondering why you're there surrounded by people you don't identify with.

Society isn't trying to brainwash you. It isn't trying to make you consume mindlessly. Society is trying to train you. It doesn't have the ability to tell you in metaphor what it's doing, but it's actually trying to help you by railroading you in certain directions.

Society is like a humungous Chicago railroad system. It's only interest is to develop better systems to keep people moving efficiently and effectively in and through its central station. Chicago is like the center of your heartland. Society brings products to market from all across the land to benefit its citizens.

You are America's rails magnified metaphorically. Every man is like a transcontinental railroad that he constructed in infancy and childhood. Every man mirrors America. But your America may be stuck with a 19th Century system of thoughts and feelings, yearning for a 21st Century understanding of how to transform yourself into a bullet train or monorail. Today's American mind needs to be like a sleek, automated, people mover with automated thinking running on tracks high above the ground.

My exploration of Torah with you is going to be like a train trip we're going to take into your past that will show you how to modernize your internal infrastructure while you keep it operating. Torah begins with The Creation Story, which will map out the forces within you, and how they can be applied to the world around you. Once you understand the main metaphor of Moses 'man as a Tree of knowledge' you can apply it to other metaphors, like 'thoughts as trains.' The serpent in The Creation Story is beguiling because it's like the railroad switch that enables trains to change from one track to another.

In this kind of way, we're going to look at faith in GOD using a telescope to reveal the big picture. And then we're going to switch to focus in on faith in yourself as though looking through a microscope at the little picture.

Exploring Your Relationship To Yourself

Self-reflection is the method used to make your way from one passenger car of a train of thought to the next, until you arrive at the locomotive. In taking time each day to contemplate what you think about, you encourage yourself to get up from the seat you're accustomed to, and move to the front of the train. As you move from one car to the next, you get the opportunity to observe the tracks between the cars flashing below your everyday awareness. It's scary, but you can get used to the enormous power with which your thoughts engage with your feelings.

When you participate in the discipline of self-awareness through metaphor you can get your consciousness to the front of your trains of thought, and from there you'll see that the same inner forces and principles operate the communication system in every human being.

Torah is more than Hebraic. Its principles go beyond language. The message of Torah is universal. It truly is THE WORD of GOD given to the Jews to share with the world to help understand the human condition. Christianity and Islam carry messages from GOD/G O D of their own, universal truths from HIM in Torah through HIM in The Gospels and through H I M in The Quran.

The role of the head and heart from the vantage point of being taken to each and every destination you choose is like the role of passenger on a train ride. At whatever station you choose, you can get off your trains of thought and simply live without giving the process a second thought. You don't have to get stuck in either the world within or the world around you so long as you don't reflection on what you're doing.

But if you observe yourself with the curiosity of a child, you'll not only come to see the way you're made, but the unlimited power you've got within you. If you look at yourself lovingly and curiously, you'll be amazed at the way GOD made you, and how HE might decide to use you as the purveyor of HIS marvelous plan.

You don't need to do anything to go inside yourself while reading this book. You don't need to improve yourself to enjoy this adventure. You only need to look better than you've been doing until now. I realize that's a provocative statement because it's laden with shame, but just hold that thought for the time being. It's actually much easier to *be* good, than to *do* good. And if you really are good with a desire to be better, you'll *do* much more in the long run for everyone: society, those you love and especially for yourself.

Most of the train trips you take in your imagination move ideas internally, not externally. But there's nothing incidental or accidental about what you think about or end up talking about. Thinking and feeling are parts of an enormously complex transportation system in which the heart serves the mind in the same way that tracks serve a train. And yet, common sense will tell you that your thoughts meander anywhere they want and that your feelings are the consequence of what you're thinking. That's simply not the case. You're meandering because your desires are switching you to different tracks.

Ask any passenger in a train if the train is going wherever it wants. Ask any conductor to verify that answer. And look out the window. Normally, you can't even see the tracks the train is on. But you know the system is working properly for all those who aren't insane.

It's common knowledge that people around the world demonstrate that they're different from people like us just by speaking other languages and living by other rules of social conduct. That's also not true. People everywhere are united as human beings in their ability to think, feel, desire and believe; we all have tracks on which trains are traveling to various stations. It's only what we fill the boxcars of our trains of thoughts with that's different. People have different opinions because of different access to information and different experiences. They carry the goods to market that are available at the stations their trains go to, given their inner political environment and the mirror of that around them.

Add more tracks and other people's trains of thought will be able to go to more destinations. Transform the way people *feel* about themselves, and they'll start to *think* differently. Then add more destinations, and they'll have new experiences that will bring them more power over their life. That will change them from the inside out, and you'll be able to see those results from the outside in.

People believe what they believe because they don't know any better. And they don't know better because they aren't humble enough to question any deeper than they do.

Learning is a humbling experience, but you have to be humble to learn. This is a spiritual Catch-22.

Muslims worldwide are coming out of a deep sleep, a deep sleep Christians came out of after the Holocaust when they realized that the love of Jesus wasn't what had motivated some of them to attempt the wholesale murder of the Jewish people.

The goal of Islamic extremism isn't about stealing Israel out from under the Jews. It's not even about world domination. They're no different from the Nazis. The Jews are just their first targets. They really want to be GOD's/GOD's/G O D's only beloved. But that won't happen. HE's/HE's/H E's in love with diversity. HE/HE/H E wants to keep the Jewish people relevant, even though we're so insignificant in numbers.

The same can be said of gay people. The same can be said of blacks, Hispanics, the disabled and the Micronesians of the Pacific island of Nauru, the smallest nation in the world.

What makes America great is the humility of its people. America is the most humble nation on Earth, past, present and probably going forward into the far future. America is a place where people learn, and they learn more quickly and deeply than elsewhere. This statement may come across as emotional because it says something about my emotional tracks and where they're headed, not the speed or length of my trains of thought.

There are plenty of people in this country who think like 19th Century "speeders" {railroad crews of two men who pumped hand-driven maintenance carts down the tracks of the barren landscape of the 1800's}. Such people in America today have excellent tracks, but their trains of thought are totally antiquated and useless for today's modern lifestyle.

Those with bullet trains that can move through the dark, inner landscape of their imagination without impediment thanks to tunnels of reason and bridges of rationality are well poised for the future. When your thoughts can race faster, smoother and with greater efficiency than anyone else's, you're going to be in high demand because of how you are, not just what you do.

Everyone's inner transportation system is far more intricate than you may be consciously aware of, but from the position of engineer of each of your trains of thought, you have the ability to observe both your tracks and inner countryside as they unfold before you. You'll know yourself better and better over time, the more you observe yourself from the locomotive within.

When women say that men think with their penis they're really describing the shape of our thoughts, not just the switches that move us toward the destinations our mind likes to go to. We can't help thinking about sex. The very nature of the way we think sexualizes what we think, feel and do. When a little boy gets excited about trains, it's because he intuitively realizes that a train is a mysterious mental projection of his own delivery system that includes desire. As he matures, he'll be able to intuit that trains symbolize penetration of the natural world with something made by man, incredibly powerful and mysterious. Men shouldn't try to think less about sex; we should simply think like the engineer of modern bullet trains, and look closely at where we're going with regard to the big picture.

To move off the ground and into the air spiritually, man must first learn to perceive himself as well grounded. To move out of the 19th Century metaphor of man's thinking like a steam engine, and get onboard the idea of him floating on thin air, he's going to have to train his mind to move thoroughly through one metaphor before he tries to tackle the next.

This book is about the core of The Hebrew Testament where the instruction manual for all GOD/GOD/G O D-consciousness can be found in Torah. In my next book, I'll introduce the way Jesus used GOD-consciousness to illuminate His own relationship to our Father. Let's call that form of spiritual transportation: cruising. And in the book after that on Islam, I'll describe in detail how man can learn to figuratively fly. But in this book we're going to learn how to come to GOD by becoming grounded.

Falling in love for the first time can be compared to clinging on to the roof of a bullet train. It gives you the experience of seeing vast tracks of joy in a panoramic inner landscape that's amazing, without the impediments of the window that the engineer or a passenger onboard has to look through. Puppy love leaves you in awe of the beauty and majesty of being totally unconfined. First love is instinctive, impulsive, impetuous and reckless; it's a state of drunken stupor; an irresistible way to get a thrill out of the journey of life. Adolescent love, or "free love" leaves you with a view of life as nations being crisscrossed by trains going in every direction without having to stop at borders.

Until you're in a wreck... Then it's as though your thoughts have been dislodged from your feelings, and all the boxcars loaded with good intentions lie spilled out and mangled everywhere. Then all those tracks of joy end up in a twisted heap.

Love lost is life's way of teaching us to give up riding the rails recklessly. It teaches us to strive to become the engineer in charge of our trains of thoughts, to give greater consideration to where we're headed. It teaches us to think about how fast we're going, and how to switch safely from one track to another, and when. Lost love is a very sobering experience in learning to move through our inner world more cautiously.

Our parents figuratively helped us learn the subtleties of language when we were a child by constructing moral traffic lights of red {stop} and green {go}; ethical railroad crossings to allow others to go first; and junctions to help us manage our thoughts and feelings safely in public. But in today's incredibly fast and complex world, we need more automated systems around us and greater understanding of where we're at within.

Torah is the Jewish operating manual that explains this inner rail system, written long before the invention of real trains. Torah metaphorically answers the big questions of life in ways that can be interpreted anew in every generation. Its author {Moses} and editors were the world's first and finest engineers and passengers on board the human experience. They knew about man's need for critical thinking skills, but, more importantly, they knew that ignorance of the power of language would cause accidents and fatalities. And so the editors of The Hebrew Testament made sure that every Jew could read, including women, to help them use our operating manual to help them survive in good times as well as bad. After 3,400 years of studying Torah, it appears to still be relevant.

We, Jews, can say that we avoided annihilation many times, and always because of the next, great lesson Torah reveals about the meaning of life that GOD gives to us when we most need it. Now, with Islam in such disarray in Europe and the Middle East, and Christianity undergoing a housecleaning here at home as The "Religious" Right finds itself so out of touch with America and reality, the time for a new interpretation of Torah is at hand.

Knowledge Of Pain And Suffering

Torah states that GOD created the world in six days, and on the seventh day HE rested. It says GOD was pleased with what HE made each day, and on the sixth day when HE created man, it states that HE was very pleased. But when interpreted from the selfish perspective

of the infant, every baby might well conclude that the world was thrown together just days before he arrived in preparation of his blessed event.

No baby I ever saw being born ever looked at all pleased with his arrival on the day of his birth. It's natural to resent pain and suffering, and to react to it with anger and tears. It's realistic to assume that a baby holds everyone and everything accountable for the pain and suffering it has to endure in being born. Therefore Torah implies in the creation of the world, the birth of blame.

What we know from Torah, coupled with common knowledge, is that the serpent didn't lie when it told Eve she'd be like GOD if she knew the difference between good and evil. And over millennia, it's proved true that knowledge is the key to power. There couldn't possibly be anything bad about being like GOD since GOD is the source of all power. If the words of the serpent are examined in and of themselves, they make a lot of sense. Our objection arises only when we imagine the tone of voice the serpent used when it said it. Experience teaches us to question every snake's sincerity.

Parents know that the power of information alone isn't sufficient for their little boy to grow up to become a man in this world. A boy must have more than data to survive morally intact in society. To be successful in life he has to learn how to use his thoughts and feelings in tandem. Only this will teach him to use his knowledge ethically. Only by building his system of thoughts and feelings with ethical intention will he come to believe in himself and succeed in life in his own eyes, let alone in GOD's.

Our parents tried to create an atmosphere of trust for us in which we could learn how to coordinate our thoughts and feelings with language while in the pursuit of knowledge. But our parents weren't the source of our trust. We were. Trust begins within. When we trust another person, it's because we first feel our own trust for ourselves, and then give that trust to them.

Trust isn't an emotional track we laid in early infancy because we wanted to. In order to get our needs met, we had to trust others. Trust was a track we laid after the trauma of birth despite the inexplicable pain and suffering we'd been through. Trust was built over rough, inner terrain that we never could have moved across without the help of others hammering ties into the ground of our being on which we added rails. We had to trust others and put our faith in them just to survive.

"Trust" and "faith" are words that describe something you know in your bones. They're feelings that imply a state of being that motivates your whole being. Trust and faith were the first tracks you ever hammered into the core of your entire belief system. They're aspects of personal truth that were assembled by you in early infancy to one day take you from your conscious sense of self into your soul.

As a baby, when we realized we'd survived birth and gotten our first meal, we concluded we could trust ourselves. When we got hungry again, we credited ourselves with self-love and inner devotion for finding food once again at our mother's breast. We gave ourselves credit for the instinct of suckling, and then decided of our own accord to appropriate her breasts as our property, which we concluded was a very sensible thing to do. And whenever those breasts were taken away from us before our hunger was fully sated, we discovered we could trust ourselves to let everyone know of our displeasure. Being an infant is the time of life when we had the greatest sensation of self-love and the fewest rational reasons for feeling that way.

Into the ground of our being, we hammered down ties on which we built the track of trust. We then sent trains of thought about the liquid love we anticipated at our next meal down that track. Those thoughts may not have been created in words, but they existed as thoughts without words, something you can still see remnants of in your imagination. We loved our mother for that liquid love she provided in a timely fashion, thinking she was a part of us, and thinking all our thoughts, feelings and successful outcomes in feeding and maintaining comfort emanated out from ourselves.

So, in our glee at our success, we appropriated more of the ground of our being to build tracks from the first station where there was a restaurant {mother} to other stations that held other outcomes, like the “car wash” where our diaper was removed and we were washed in warm water. In this way, our mind branched out in new directions. In this way, we developed faith in ourselves and had hope that we’d be able to build trains of thought on tracks of feeling anywhere we went in this new experience called: life.

The first track {trust} led us in the direction of food. The second track {faith} led us to overcome the discomfort of soiled diapers. The third dealt with loneliness, and so on, and so forth. Life was simple then; life was good. Such was every infant’s Eden when his transcontinental, inner railroad system was first under construction and his inner world was his whole world.

But when we got sick and our mother didn’t abate our pain and suffering on the spot, we began to suspect that we couldn’t trust her. When she didn’t entertain us with smiles in the middle of the night, we began to lose faith in her. When she didn’t feed us or clean us at the exact moment we wanted what we wanted, we began to suspect that she was not fully in sync with us. And still, we managed to put a good deal of our trust and faith back in her each time our comfort was reinstated.

Our mother was the cause of countless train wrecks before we were able to communicate with her in words. Such was life during the expansion of our inner frontier before our railroad operating system was fully in place. Such was the Wild West of early infancy.

The inner topography is unique to each one of us. Some of us live our conscious life in a wilderness within, others in a forest. Some look down on the world as though they sit at the top of a mountain. Others live in a valley or on an island surrounded by an ocean of emotions. But every modern man grows up in a way that can be described using the metaphor ‘thoughts as trains.’

The ground of belief beneath the railroad system of thinking and feeling of an American is an inner geography we all have in common. The way in which we achieve feelings of trust and faith is one we share with others in our country. We use the same words in the same ways. Therefore, we believe there’s something about us that’s different from other nations, and that difference unites us.

All men may have been created with equal access to trust and faith in themselves, but their inner landscape mirrors their cultural landscape. Their language is a system that transports every man reliably to his destinations, but the topography of his inner world looks a lot like his country, and his mentality mirrors his country and culture. Although the train wrecks each man has to go through are the result of circumstances he understands are personal, his inner world is revealed to him by the landscape of his inner world.

The ground of a child’s being is mirrored in his outer world, and the shape of that world is enhanced when he goes to school. His mind is addressed with the construction of railroad

tracks and trains of thought that are enhanced with bridges, tunnels and other inner infrastructures.

An American mind looks like the part of America we come from. We care so much about our region of the country because what happens around us locally impacts us all within. We don't have to share our feelings with one another to share a deep resonance with the ground of our being we hold in common with those in our city and state.

The feelings of loneliness and separation in life are most intense at birth, but those feelings were inadvertently reinforced through miscommunication. And although naïveté diminishes with age; it never fully goes away. When people don't learn how special they are, they can't appreciate the world we share, let alone the amazing topography of their private world within.

The Transcontinental Railway Of Everyman

The greatest number of tracks in life is hammered into the ground of our psyche as infants. Every experience then, whether pleasant or unpleasant, reinforces a track we'll hopefully one day learn to say we're proud we laid. But infancy is a time of great suffering since this process is done without the ability to understand and reflect on our inner landscape in words. It's also a time when we lay down tracks without knowing whether where they're going is really in our long-term best interest.

Before an infant is ever able to utter the word "mama" his head and heart have already assembled the meaning of trust in his mind. Soon after that production of his first word, he develops trains that arrive and depart many stations, and he instinctively comes aboard and rides them without questioning how he metaphorically operates, or where he's going. The world he'll discover around him will mysteriously mirror his world within, but it'll take him decades before he'll be able to talk about himself using metaphors.

Birth is the first unspoken word in an infant's vocabulary. It's a word he can't utter because it was learned only with body language. But as he builds his railroad of communication, the track on which the word "birth" will travel will be the infant's ultimate example of evil. Nothing could be more discomforting and unfortunate than birth to the infant. And the conclusion he came to about his birth will forever be revealed in his own body language.

Food is the next word in the infant's vocabulary. And the feeling of being well fed runs on a track he constructs that will take him toward the good. From the infant's point of view, birth went in the direction toward evil, but food goes the opposite direction, toward good.

The American people are inventive and creative in a way the world has never witnessed before. Our American mentality makes it possible for us to know ourselves with a New World application of ideas and self-expression that differentiates us even from all other English-speaking peoples. American English isn't just the language we use to communicate with one another; it's the way we uniquely accentuate our exploration of our inner landscape. We approach problems in ways that made us, and will continue to make us, the greatest nation on Earth. No matter how grown up the rest of the world thinks it is, the rest of humanity will always want to copy our childlike exuberance for life and our lasting appreciation of our Trees of knowledge of good and evil.

The Creation Story was never intended to be a scientific explanation for the creation of the physical world. It's a psychological description of the creation of communication in everyman. The Creation Story is the first stage of many stages that describes a

psychological evolution man has been going through since GOD gave us Torah through HIS inspiration of the author we know of as Moses.

The Hebrew WORD “BEN ADAM” figuratively means “GENTLEMAN,” but it literally translates as “SON OF ADAM” or “SON OF MAN.” {Jesus is called “The Son of man” in English translation of The Gospels, but He was really being touted as being a gentleman in His day.}

The making of gentlemen is the essence of The Creation Story. But a gentle man is made with eloquent words, well timed and carefully expressed in private discourse with himself before he releases his messages to others.

It’s preposterous to believe that the world was literally created in seven days or that a woman literally was born out of a man. It’s ludicrous to take The Creation Story in Torah as scientific truth when it’s intended to describe psychological and spiritual truth. Torah is describing the formation of man as seen from within. You are a new WORD that GOD uttered into being. In the beginning GOD created the world, but the first WORD HE had in mind was “you.”

Man And Sex

Because of intellectual interpretations of Torah in the past, men have blamed women for bringing on sexual feelings that they (men) couldn’t understand or control. And men were told by their religious leaders to use willpower to control those feelings. But that didn’t work well then, and it certainly doesn’t work any better today. Passions are very powerful, inner forces, and therefore they must be managed with greater finesse than comes merely from engaging your willpower. Willpower won’t even keep you away from cookies and potato chips. What good is it on the kind of snacks your loins crave?

Thoughts run on feelings in the same way that trains run on tracks. But thoughts are ill-equipped to deal with feelings because thoughts are logical, and feelings are rational. Willpower therefore doesn’t work. You can’t tell yourself what to feel or what not to feel. You have to love yourself enough to transcend the way you think and feel. You have to desire to believe in yourself because you can obey yourself.

Transcending thoughts and feelings has to happen using something else to oversee them. You need an inner master, traffic, control system that oversees the entire railroad system. And you have one. It’s called: your conscience. Only your conscience can deal with your desires to switch your thoughts and feelings in the direction of good or evil.

The more you can transcend your thoughts and feelings with ethical regard for your entire self, the more power from GOD you’re given. The serpent was right in saying that the forbidden fruit of The Tree of knowledge of good and evil would bring Eve power. But the conscience is the ethical interface between our thoughts and feelings that gives us that power. Crafty thinking and manipulative emotions only bring on pain and suffering. To become powerful, you need only learn more about the separate relationships your conscience holds with your thoughts and feelings. You must consciously separate your head from your heart before you unite them.

Literal Or Figurative Interpretations Of Torah

The difference between what GOD is quoted as having said and how HE feels about man has been at the root of all “religious” wars since the beginning of time. Dogmatic

interpretations of what GOD wants for us come out of our mind, and that often conflicts with charitably feelings we ought to have for others.

The problem isn't with the direction our tracks of feelings are going in; the trains that travel them; or the station we're at in our life. The problem lies with what fuels man. The fuel we use to feed our trains of thought is guilt. Guilt motivates man to "DO UNTO OTHERS, AS HE WOULD HAVE OTHERS DO UNTO HIM." [The Golden Rule comes from Leviticus 19]

In the past, guilt explained how people needed to behave sociologically, how they should treat others. But that was never enough because they treated themselves differently from how they treated everyone else. In terms of psychology, what we need to learn is how to treat *ourselves* lovingly. Only then will we be in a position to use that higher emotional standard on others.

Guilt serves much more than the spiritual purpose of making us feel miserable about ourselves. The benefits of guilt are virtually limitless when we look within at how miserably we sometimes think and feel about ourselves. You can't treat yourself like shit and claim that you're treating others any better.

If you don't see how you're treating yourself, you surely won't see how you're treating others. And the more you can see about your relationship with yourself, the more you'll be able to interface more effectively with the whole world.

When you can guilt yourself into treating yourself better than you have in the past, you compete against yourself, not against others. Your trains race against one another to improve their efficiency. They no longer have to maintain the unrealistic schedule of departure and arrival times set by others.

Guilt ignites as easily as gasoline, and it burns very hot. It's the oldest and most reliable, spiritual, energy source the world has ever known. It couldn't be cheaper or more abundant. And yet we often use it only to pollute ourselves with negative thoughts that drive us toward even lower self-esteem. Although spiritual men have been desperately searching for centuries for alternative, spiritual, energy sources that are cleaner and greener, using guilt more judiciously on yourself is the first step in solving your moral dilemma in doing right by you.

Self-love is obviously a cleaner burning, spiritual resource than guilt. Self-love is sustainable and renewable, and therefore preferable to guilt as an energy source. But self-love is costly by comparison. Until you learn how to produce self-love cheaply and efficiently from within, and stop waiting for others to validate you for every little thing you do right, you're going to have to guilt yourself into treating yourself better. You're going to have to guilt yourself into complimenting yourself.

This is why I'm a great proponent of boasting. You might even say that I'm a world class expert on boasting (not just insanity). I'm very fond of telling people all the things I do for others. But because many are so opposed to boasting, I recommend that if you'd like to do as I do, you find a way to do so subtly and sensitively or cleverly and amusingly if you want to achieve a positive outcome.

A Free Lunch Is Never Free

If you guilt yourself into admitting that you didn't know that guilt is a gift at all, you're off to a good start. A gift should be just what you always wanted. It shouldn't make you feel bad about yourself. A gift should only make you feel good about having received it.

But every newborn feels miserable while being born. Infants cry at every little thing that disturbs them, and children wheel-and-deal or whine if they don't get what they want. The gift of life isn't apparent to any of them unless they get what they want immediately. And they don't give a damn about guilt.

It isn't usually until adolescence that youngsters come to discover the pleasures of sex, not just physical exploration of their body. It's not until this time of life that they see something new in life they didn't see or want before. But by then, society, culture and religion have had an enormous effect on the individual to tell them how, when, where and with whom to have sex. Religion doesn't even permit the adolescent to have sex with himself without causing him to feel ashamed of himself if someone catches him doing it or finds out about it after the fact.

Guilt about sex is inevitable in every culture and sub-culture the world over. Let's not even try to fight it until we know a little more about how our trains of thought are presently fueled by guilt. While we're strategically building windmills and solar panels on our outer landscape, let's also look for ways to use guilt more efficiently from within.

If a new interpretation of Torah is going to offer anything of value to today's world, it has to impassion us with optimism, hope and meaning. It has to paint a picture of a world in which sex gets better for everyone, not worse. Torah will have to give us reason to embrace guilt as one of the greatest gift of life because getting through guilt to self-love should make sex even more intimate and thrilling. But how?

In the past guilt was dispensed through "religious gas stations" that profited from complete control over this spiritual resource. Religion monopolized the spiritual, fuel market. Temples, churches and mosques kept a tight control over their congregants' behavior by stoking their trains of thought with limitless supplies of guilt – provided their believers conducted their trains of thought only on certain tracks going to certain destinations. And just look at how religion has polluted this world!

But in this day and age, people believe it paramount that the power for passion be dispensed from within. They want to be provided with a clean, spiritual energy source; one that won't pollute their inner environment with hatefulness of others or self-loathing. They want to be assured that they'll be able to tap into an intellectual, emotional, sensual and spiritual, energy source that will be reliable and affordable. They want to be assured that they'll be able to use it safely, and that it'll be sustainable. That day has not yet come.

Guilt is a feeling; but so is love. They're emotional, energy resources given by GOD. Color your everyday feelings red {anger}, yellow {fear} and blue {sorrow}. Out of these three primary feelings you can derive a whole rainbow of emotions to paint your inner world in.

But guilt {black} and self-love {white} are GOD's shades that often leave us feeling gray {confused}. Guilt will repel you away from evil, and self-love will attract you toward GOD's love. But it's up to you to learn how to turn your black and white inner world into color.

The vehicle for the journey of life will always be the human body you were given. But the inner vehicle that runs you are 'trains of thoughts' that are fueled by guilt. Because we live in a new age where anything's possible, we can now talk about our dream of self-love motivating future generations with unlimited colorful outcomes that will please us all.

It's nonsense to think that Western mentality runs on guilt and the East, on shame. The mind/body/heart/soul of man is universal. I'm going to demonstrate later how shame is just

one aspect of guilt. I'll show you how deeper understanding of how guilt works; how it'll lead you to greater self-love; and how generosity of spirit can propel you through this world rather than leave you with an aura of insufficiency. To become spiritually green {jealous of what you've got, rather than what others have over you}, you need only read on.

Banishment As Change

From a psychological point of view, we're all banished from infancy early in our lifetime. And it isn't GOD's anger that causes it. Banishment from Eden is merely Torah's figurative way of describing "growing up."

The Creation Story isn't trying to make us feel guilty about loving sex, as outdated "religious" interpretations of Torah still assert. The characters in The Hebrew Testament are really personifications of stages of your emotional growth and spiritual development. At the deepest level, Torah is really describing how knowledge leads us out of infancy and onto the path of life. And that path will include getting you toward a healthy and happy sex life {regardless of the gender of your partner}.

"Expulsion from Eden" stands for 'banishment as a form of change from a previous time of life.' You can't stop your spiritual expulsion from one story in Genesis to the next. Adam and Eve's banishment from Eden along with its effect on GOD's good graces have to be psychologically unpacked to make them personally meaningful. Only then can you move on to the story of Cain and Abel with a sense of progress.

Banishment is the psychological result of feelings that lead you to the conclusion that you've been:

- A. Abandoned
- B. Betrayed
- C. Conspired against {rejected}

Banishment from Eden is Torah's way of describing the negative A.B.C.'s of life, the beginning of an alphabet of bad experiences that lead us to believe life is a burden to be borne, not a gift to be unwrapped.

Man has used his feelings of banishment from GOD's good graces to maim hope and murder optimism. But the feelings of abandonment, betrayal and conspiracy are something you can learn to use to help yourself understand the process HE's using to teach you to appreciate life.

The feeling of not getting what you want is akin to rejection. If GOD loved you, HE'd give you what you want. Therefore HE must have banished you from the Eden you're dreaming of recreating here on Earth.

With that image in mind, it's not hard to imagine how Adam and Eve must have felt when GOD banished them from Eden. They felt abandoned, betrayed and conspired against. They felt the effects of rejection.

But they didn't have a way of associating their feelings with the events that had caused GOD to react as HE did. They couldn't yet connect the dots between Eve's "conversation" with the serpent {sex} with knowledge of what was inside those mysterious two forbidden fruits {testicles}.

You return to the feelings of expulsion from Eden every time you feel that changes in your life aren't working in your favor. But you won't have to feel that unconsciously from

now on. You won't have to feel bad about yourself without a story to apply those feelings to.

I'm going to show you how to move forward in your life with hope, and back in time to your past, with greater self-interest. I'm going to show you how to move through the stories of The Hebrew Testament in any direction you wish to go. You don't have to try to recapture the misery of your past, especially the dismissive, disorienting experiences in your past. You can move toward your past or future simply by humbly yearning to learn more about the mystery of being you.

When you become the engineer of your trains of thought, you can go on tracks back to infancy with conscious regard for the magnificent landscape you'll be traveling back through. You can learn from yourself about yourself, and there will be no one you'll be more grateful to for that than yourself. From this kind of travel, you clean up mistakes in your past. You grow wise. And you open yourself up to the joy of self-love.

Banishment was actually the first conclusion we came to when we realized there weren't going to be any more free lunches in the womb; that we were going to have to earn everything we learned about life. During the birthing process bodily pain and emotional suffering became the first spiritual tools in our toolbox. Pain and suffering were the consequence of the first bite we took into the fruits of good and evil that brought us into this world, leaving us so disoriented and alone at first, that we can now identify as an Adam in Eden.

When Adam woke up from the deep sleep GOD put him in, he found himself with a partner: Eve. The mind of man begins operating after birth by projecting his heart onto his mother to overcome the terror of loneliness outside the womb and the disorientation of all new stimulation.

Every man's love of women is self-love projected out into the world. But his head and heart can work with his conscience to reclaim this projection. The more awareness you develop of these inner forces at play, the more you'll be able to integrate yourself more holistically with all your experiences. The more intimacy you develop from within, the more intimacy you'll be able to enjoy with others. Only then will you be able to believe me when I say that overcoming loneliness is an inside job.

The value of guilt lies in accepting the pain and suffering of being you with increasing dignity day-by-day. You know much more about yourself today than you did yesterday. You feel much more for yourself than you professed to love about yourself 24 hours ago. You're going to become far more moral than you presumed you could be before you began reading this paragraph.

Tomorrow you'll have more reasons to admit your guilt today than you'll ever be able to imagine until that day comes. That's what it means to be in a process of becoming.

Stages Of Self-Awareness

The discovery of the sensuality of life is instinctual and exciting for infants because they have no taboos yet. Sensuality comes through their bodily experiences of eating, being cleaned and entertainment with mother. This is the beginning of trust and faith that will motivate the baby to explore the world. In childhood this exploration will bring on rules and regulations. In adolescence sensuality will move into the realm of sexual relationships with others that will instigate acknowledgement of universal taboos.

Thousands of years ago this process was alluded to through allegory. Today we can afford ourselves the luxury of leaning on the science of psychology to enhance our understanding of all Scriptures. Thanks to psychology we know that every infant codifies his sensations in his body either as pleasurable or disagreeable. A baby has no need for any higher a moral principle than that. Instinct describes the way the baby learns at the first level of self-awareness. Instinct is information stored in the body, which is then released through body language.

Instinctive knowledge advances the baby to higher levels of self-awareness, as he becomes a toddler, then a child, an adolescent and eventually a young man on the precipice of maturity. These stages are addressed in the three stories after The Creation Story that lead up to the story of Abraham, who was the first man who could have an adult-like relationship with GOD.

Genesis Of The Self In Terms of Psychological Stages

The story immediately following The Creation Story tells the tale of the two sons of Adam and Eve: Cain and Abel. Cain kills Abel out of jealousy when GOD chooses Abel's sacrifice over Cain's.

This is the *childish* psychological stage in the development of a sense of self. Cain learns there are unstated rules in life by acting impulsively. Impulsive behavior corresponds to the next conflict between the head and heart, a thought that goes in one direction and a feeling that goes in another.

Adam and Eve agreed with one another until they were confronted by GOD. Only then did it become apparent that there had been a difference of opinion in what had initially motivated each of them. Adam blamed Eve. Eve blamed the serpent.

The story of Cain and Abel is the next metaphoric train wreck. The head {Cain} rejects {kills} the heart {Abel}. And the child's conscience {GOD} has to intercede on behalf of both.

The male infant at the *infantile* psychological stage of awareness {Adam and Eve} experienced rejection as banishment, and concluded GOD doesn't love him. He feels punished without just cause because GOD gave him Eve, and she tempted him. Adam identifies more as the forbidden fruit that ends up getting picked through no fault of its own. Adam learns about disappointment from that experience when he discovers GOD's rule supersedes his opinion in the way things should turn out. Whether or not Adam likes GOD's decision, he has to abide by it. He learns that *fate* is real. {But he, as yet, knows nothing about *destiny*.}

In the story of Cain and Abel a boy at the *childish* stage acts impulsively. The child wants what his brother has, GOD's favor. So his thoughts {Cain} override {kill} his feelings {Abel}. And the mind of the child is left with knowledge of a new, inner force called: jealousy.

Cain, like Adam, concludes there's something missing inside him, but for Cain it isn't a bone, it's GOD's favor. It's something outside of him. Having acted on jealousy by killing Abel, Cain finds himself feeling unperturbed. He simply went about his business until he was confronted by GOD.

Only when GOD asks him where his brother is does Cain realize he's harboring a secret. Only then does he discover that he hasn't achieved GOD's favor.

The child's mind is filled with thoughts of favoritism by the supreme, authority figure in his life who serendipitously chooses to prefer someone else's gift over his. When this happens, the mind of the child generalizes from the negativity of the experience that he's unworthy.

Noah and the Ark, the next biblical tale in Genesis, is the *juvenile* stage of psychological development. The adolescent imagines himself to be the captain of his destiny, and his life as a ship he's built out of his Tree of self-knowledge; a vehicle that will transport him through the seven seas of luscious sensations and sublime sentiments. He doesn't realize that it's been constructed from planks from The Trees of knowledge his caregivers gave him.

But when he finds himself alone on board drifting without a rudder in stormy seas, he sees that there's much more to life than his family was able to teach him.

The weather in this story is the authority of GOD who comes down to his world as a massive force of nature to cleanse HIS world of sin. The storm corresponds to the moral dilemma to the meaning of life that the adolescent sees as his soul figuratively flooded by a GOD full of wrathful vengeance.

Noah, the personification of every adolescent, miraculously manages to reach land after the flood, a sense of inner grounding on the other side of his teens, but by then he's so traumatized by the experience he'd been through that he has to escape his pent up feelings with alcohol. He reacts impetuously to the meaninglessness of it all, wishing only to escape his memories by getting drunk.

When we look at teenagers today, we make the scientific claim that it's hormones that create these inner storms. Youngsters feel socially wooden and morally stiff as they coast through puberty. And their conscience is as capricious as the world's weather, a force so powerful that they project it around them because they haven't yet got control of it from within.

But when you've gone from learning *instinctively* {Adam and Eve} to *impulsively* {Cain and Abel} and then you find yourself to be *impetuous* {Noah} – and nobody explains why you're doing what you're doing – you're going to conclude that nobody gets you, that you're really all alone, and always will be.

The next story of Genesis, The Tower of Babel, is the *reckless* psychological level in the acquisition of knowledge. In this story, the young man concludes he's constructing his life one story upon the next, in the direction of GOD who resides in the heavens above. But all his efforts come crashing down when his conscience forces him to face the fact that his motives only look sincere, that he's really headed in the wrong direction. He isn't acting in authentic harmony with his true self. He wants to go up the ladder of success like everyone else and with everyone else. But he's really conspiring against GOD to do so. Conspiracy and contrariness is a far cry from cooperation.

The reckless young man is really engaged in a cruel and competitive game that doesn't elevate him in his own eyes. He discovers the GOD he thought he was striving to reach was merely the idol worship that others were dancing around: fame and fortune. As he sees the ruins of his efforts all around him, he realizes that the bricks of his life that he'd arranged so carefully didn't get him where he'd wanted to go. He again wonders why others claim so ardently that life is a gift, while, once again, he feels so desperate, disappointed, abandoned, betrayed and alone.

The first four stories of Torah plot the course of the creation of a conscience-centered, moral man through the first 25 years of his life. These stories peer through his first, negative assumptions about his reason for having been created.

These stages exemplify psychological power struggles between his head, heart and conscience in his quest for psychic balance. Once understood as such, the self-motivated, morally-driven man is ready to learn about the God within who is The Lord of the universe within him and the GOD/GOD/G O D around, his One and only Ultimate Authority.

A Season For All Things

In terms of biblical timing, these first four stories figuratively occur over the course of one spiritual year. A man is born in the late autumn {Adam and Eve}. This is the season of harvest when The Trees are laden with fruit. The fall from grace occurs when a baby is banished from his mother's womb where he was connected to food, warmth, safety and security.

The story of Cain and Abel occurs in the winter of childhood when death is internalized as a struggle between thoughts and feelings. The winter brings up a sense of mortality, victimhood and sorrow about his place in the world.

The story of Noah and the Ark happens in the spring of adolescence when the raging storms of puberty wash the angry adolescent clean of childhood in preparation for the sanctity of manhood. And The Tower of Babel comes crashing down on the young man in his twenties. This coincides with the summer of a man's days when the first warmth of romantic love and illumination of worldly knowledge forces the immature, young man to admit that life will be much harder in adulthood than it looked when he was a child.

A man has a lifetime of work to do within himself, but he doesn't realize that THE WORD for work {AVODA} also means worship. It's not just the God within who doeth the work. You're expected to do it with Him.

When the infantile, childish, juvenile, young and immature look ahead to death, they find it difficult to grasp that whenever banishment or death appear in Torah, it's a sign of completion of one level of awakening and a preview to the next level. In this way, man progresses as though through classes in his curriculum. He advances towards graduation from the school of life.

Practice brings you closer to perfection when you do THE WORK you've been given. Once you agree to work for a *living* rather than just for the sake of *survival*, you then leave childhood on the road to adulthood. Your work is internal *and* external; occurring in your head and heart; manifested in yourself and with others.

The first four stories of Torah lead some men to conclude, "First you suffer; then you die." Life for the psychologically immature and unprepared is little more than a burden interspersed with raucous fun and games. Sex, drugs and rock n' roll are their best guess at how to make meaning out of their existence. Their life is an exercise in survival that they share with others, never with themselves. It's a group effort. Individuality is not yet their strong suit.

The next stories of Genesis, the stories of the Patriarchs {Abraham, Isaac and Jacob}, represent the stages of life that teach the maturing man how to move through his life from the inside in. These stories represent men who knew they were walking with GOD, even though we can clearly see that they faltered along the way.

Genesis concludes with the stories of Joseph and Judah. A Joseph isn't just a man who becomes rich and powerful out in the world despite his crazy family and the sick culture that didn't give him the tools he'd need for success. A Joseph personifies a psychological stage of life for someone who's mastering the concept of brotherhood from within.

Lastly, there's Joseph's half-brother, Judah, the man who learns the power that guilt holds over him and how to use it to a greater advantage. A Judah is a man who shames himself before himself, but who realizes that he's humiliated himself before GOD as well. Judah personifies the man who vows to work towards achieving his destiny after miraculously surviving his fate.

In the second book of Torah {Exodus}, Moses and his brother Aaron represent rare spiritual types who struggle to refine guilt together to move a multitude of people in the direction of self-love. These brothers represent the superior, spiritual seeker in two people who fit into no particular time frame in history. Theirs is a 40-year journey that corresponds to awareness of the spiritual, maturation process we all go through on some level, but find difficult to convey in words to others.

The second through fifth books of Torah {Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy} represent the stations we pass through on the journey of life that most men go through unconsciously. The Moses and Aaron within you are your inner voices of brotherhood that discover how to return to your Father spiritually healed.

GOD-Power And Man

The first four stories of Torah {Adam and Eve; Cain and Abel; Noah and the Ark; and The Tower of Babel} describe the creation and encouragement of egotism in males. This process is instinctual, impulsive, impetuous and reckless, but imperative for the formation of a healthy psyche. The egotistical male survives birth thinking himself a mighty god in his own unique way. He identifies with the omniscience of his bodily sensations rather than the limits set by the collective conscience of mortal men. He comes to think of himself as very clever, especially when he gets away with doing things that are crafty and conniving. Some young men think their reach is beyond the arm of the law. This impedes them in learning to admit they really suffer from terribly low self-esteem. Their egotism slows them down when it comes to humbling themselves to learn about themselves. Self-ignorance is their source of bliss. Spiritual stupor is their idea of a virtue.

On the other hand, those who are overly self-critical, extremely sentimental or menacingly self-cynical only end up hurting themselves. An easy, inner sense of faith in The Lord comes to those whose head and heart rely on their conscience as their guide.

GOD is law. And GOD's law is brought down to Earth through guilt and love. Those who love HIS love will learn by heart that HIS love is eternal. And those who have to be motivated with guilt, or arrested with harsher forms of external force, will receive their lessons of life the hard way.

The exodus from childhood leads every young man on a journey with GOD at his side, a GOD who, it turns out, is the same GOD/GOD/G O D for all of us regardless how you write or pronounce HIS/HIS/H I S names. This journey becomes especially apparent in adolescence as we leave the Egypt of our father's house and cross over to make our way across the great wilderness of the world toward a promise we made to ourselves.

The Spiritual Journey

Providence isn't only determined by fate, a force outside ourselves; we also have a destiny that emanates out from within. And although our fate is out of our control, our destiny lies in our own hands at every moment of every day. More important than the choice you've been given to learn to love GOD, you have to choose whether you're going to learn to love or loathe yourself.

The greatest tragedy of life is not that we must die. Nor is it that we don't love others enough, or that they don't love us. The tragedy is that we don't choose to learn to like and love *ourselves*. But that's a choice each of us has to make by ourselves. GOD only leads us in the direction of self-love with tough and tender love. It's up to us whether we choose to see our circumstances as meaningful steps on the journey to an inner Israel of self-love, or not.

HIStory is GOD's story. HIStory is the record of the consequences of selfishness and selflessness of man under a variety of circumstances. But through charity, goodwill and self-love, you discover for yourself that you're a mystery in the making. Knowledge of yourself makes you a vibrant participant in HIStory. The feeling of hope that you have the potential to learn to like yourself is the greatest miracle GOD has given any of us.

We're each of us a Tree of knowledge, but there's no fruit on The Tree more delectable than the one I can call: mine. There's no mystery greater than me. Although it's vital that I treat others with empathy and respect, it's even more important that I treat myself as well as I treat them.

If you haven't yet found the generosity to love yourself despite the lessons instilled in you by millennia of previous interpretations of The Old Testament, then the reason for not doing so must lie within you, not in the text. Then it's not the stranger around you that you're afraid of. It's the stranger within who makes you feel guilty for loving others more than yourself.

To know you doesn't necessarily mean you love yourself. To know you and choose to learn to love yourself will teach you to use your guilt in the most productive and righteous of ways.

Adam and Eve

Two Creation Stories

The Book of Genesis begins with a description of GOD's creation of humanity. "IN HIS OWN IMAGE, MALE AND FEMALE, HE CREATED THEM." [Genesis 1:27] We, too, have an image of ourselves, which is based on a man and a woman: our parents. And that image of ourselves lies in our imagination. Our self-image is created by our thoughts {male/Adam} and feelings {female/Eve}, which are like clay in our own hands.

If you're offended by the idea of your thoughts being male and your feelings being female you're resisting the idea of "Adam" representing the force of intellect and "Eve" representing the force of emotion. $x + y = 1$ The emotional and intellectual aspects of yourself make you whole. If you appose that idea, you may be acting spitefully. You may insist on being contrary rather than will to entertain a new idea.

(Bite into new ideas. Take a nibble out of them. Taste them. Chew on them. And swallow. See how it goes down. You don't have to eat the whole concept if you don't care for it.)

If you're experiencing a psychological stumbling block around this idea, that may be a defense mechanism you've built like a wall to protect you from anything new getting in. It may be because you resist the idea of being half female or only *half* male.

If you're tolerant enough to entertain the idea of misogyny beginning within, you'll continue reading about my theory while recognizing that there's a part of you resisting what I'm saying, possibly because I got too close to one of your prejudices. You don't have to "do" anything about it. Just read and see how it makes you feel.

You can accept yourself as you are, even if it makes you uncomfortable to think of yourself as more feminine than you may have previously thought. You ought to be able to accept yourself as you are, even if you're only half the man you thought you were. You should still be able to put your faith in yourself, knowing that you can move forward with self-discovery, even if you don't agree with every observation about you that comes your way.

Torah presents a second description of the creation of man that comes immediately after the first. The second is more specific, as though the camera first pans the scene with a wide lens, and then comes back from another direction to focus in on the details of The Creation Story from another angle.

In the second scene GOD breathes life into man and places him in the Garden of Eden. And HE provides him with a partner so he won't be alone.

GOD {the conscience} creates the mind of the infant {Adam} and breathes life {awareness} into it. The conscience provides a place for the mind to play, an inner garden {the imagination}. And then the conscience provides feelings {Eve} based on the needs of his thoughts {Adam}, so his mind won't be alone. {The infant becomes aware of a second inner force different from the first}. Once he realizes that his thoughts and feelings are alive and in relationship to one another in his inner garden, he {the baby's conscience} watches over them to see what they'll choose to do next.

When looked at in this way, The Creation Story explores the fine line that separates outer place from inner space. The Creation Story twists outer reality to conform to the truth about the world within, thus insuring that we don't make the mistake of taking this story literally.

The Feeling Of Loneliness

In this second Creation Story, GOD creates animals to help the first man avoid loneliness, and brings them to him to name. But none of the animals relieves his loneliness. These animals coincide with human characteristics every infant is taught to identify with each animal. {dog = loyalty; cat = independence; pig = greed, etc.}

But this process doesn't provide the inexperienced mind with a feeling of sufficient unity with these characteristics because the infant lacks experience. The baby's mind is dismayed because the characteristics are distinct, but not sufficiently personal. Its mind is left with the conclusion that it can't sufficiently unite with the characteristics of these animals.

It's at this point that the narrator of Torah mentions the man by name: Adam. What's odd about that is that we learn Adam's name, but he doesn't yet know it. It's odd that he'd be told to name the animals when he doesn't yet know his own name.

This is a description of the newborn. It has a name it doesn't know. Its busy trying to make sense of everything within and around it, but it's too soon in life for it to identify with itself through a sound that carries meaning: word.

To relieve Adam of his loneliness, GOD puts him to sleep and creates a woman out of one of his ribs to be his mate. And when Adam sees her he concludes that she's "THE FLESH OF HIS FLESH AND BONE OF HIS BONE." [Genesis 2:23] And he calls her by the generic term "WOMAN," {ISHA} while referring to himself generically as "MAN" {ADAM}.

The woman {Eve} is every male infant's mother. She's not only the personification of that one, recognizable sensation, the heartbeat that he recognizes from the womb. She's the one human being who later reminds the toddler that all the characteristics of man seen symbolically in the animal kingdom don't give him the sense of 'FLESH OF MY FLESH AND BONE OF MY BONE' that he holds with his mother.

The Heart And Mind Of An Infant

Torah states that when Adam was asleep, GOD took out one of his ribs, closed up the flesh, made a woman out of the rib, and brought her unto the man. Mother is the personification of the heartbeat every baby knew before birth. And because his mother's heartbeat is similar to the heartbeat beneath his ribs, he assumes her heartbeat was once inside him, too – that *her* heartbeat came out of *his* chest.

Every Adam associates Eve with a bone beneath his chest that was removed. Eve resonates with a rhythm he remembers from that time in his distant past before the trauma of birth. She reminds him of that place he came from before he "WOKE UP" after birth. The infant associates its mother with life before life.

Adam says, "SHE SHALL BE CALLED 'WOMAN' FOR SHE WAS TAKEN OUT OF MAN." [Genesis 2:23] From the self-centered perspective of an infant, it makes perfect sense that she came out of him. But it's infantile thinking for a grown man to parade around with the attitude that women should thank men for donating a rib to their creation.

This therefore also becomes Torah's description and anticipation of the source of male chauvinism, an attitude of ingratitude in men that's been around since the dawn of time.

Note that when Adam says, "SHE SHALL BE CALLED 'WOMAN' FOR SHE WAS TAKEN OUT OF MAN." there's no "I" in Adam's statement. He can't speak about himself in the first person. He can't even speak to her directly in the second person. He can only speak about her in the third person, as though to some nebulous "other" who's not fully present.

Although Adam can now separate his thoughts about this woman from all the other sensations his body is relaying to him, that doesn't tell him anything about who he is, or who he's speaking to.

In associating his mother with a heartbeat that came out of him, the infant concludes she is his. And a man will always think back to that time of life when he felt so drawn to his mother that he thought of her as something he felt was a part of him, even if she wasn't something he could as yet literally hold. Such is the meaning of the word "mother" in the body language of every baby boy before he has words to describe his inner world.

Torah begins its Creation Story by describing the state of awareness of every newborn male towards his mother. We know the baby's name, but the baby isn't developed enough to know it himself. He thinks of himself in the third person, as a "he," not an "I." He's capable of identifying and categorizing the different sensations in his body, but every time she appears, his hunger is abated and his physical discomfort and loneliness disappears. Since her interests appear to coincide with his, he concludes that she must have emerged out of him to serve his needs, like an appendage.

There are plenty of baby boys who get physically older without ever growing up in their awareness of the meaning of the word: mother. They think about all women in this undifferentiated way. Torah begins Genesis with a story we all know personally.

The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter

While wandering in the Garden of Eden, the woman comes upon a serpent coiled on The Tree of knowledge of good and evil. And the serpent can speak, and it asks her if GOD told them they could eat from all the trees in the garden. But what the woman says isn't factually true. She tells the serpent that THEY were told that THEY couldn't eat from The Tree of knowledge, or even TOUCH it, or they would die.

The facts, according to careful reading of the story, is that after breathing life into Adam, making him into a living being, GOD told Adam HE mustn't eat from The Tree of knowledge. But GOD never said Adam was forbidden from TOUCHING it.

GOD hadn't even created Eve at that point in the story. And GOD never said anything to Eve until HE confronts the two of them near the end of the story. Eve's understanding of the facts as she relates them to the serpent simply doesn't hold up under scrutiny.

It's only when you internalize the story that it makes more sense. The conscience {GOD} tells the mind {Adam} that it's free to wander everywhere in his imagination with one exception. The mind concludes that everything it does is permissible, save one, to eat the fruits of that one and only Tree. Not only can't the infant's mind resist the temptation to touch those two fruits {testicles} that feel so much more sensitive than any other part of him. He can't resist the temptation to discover why.

His mind then figuratively invests his feelings in his mother. He gives her a name and thinks of her as his {even if she doesn't always obey his demands}. He becomes other-oriented to get his needs met even though he has no idea what his own name is. He reorients himself to entirely focus on the world around him for his survival. And he has no problem in her touching his fruits and conversing with his serpent.

This is no mistake; it's a natural part of the psychological process all infants go through. The mind of the baby has had to:

1. Identify his mother as separate from the other “things” GOD gave him to play with in his garden
2. Recognize her heartbeat as separate but familiar to his own
3. Name her and possess her
4. Conclude that the two of them are made of the same flesh and bone
5. Recognize the sensations she causes when she cleans his genitals and anus.
6. Come to the conclusion that he’s doing this for himself.
7. Experience GOD as his conscience, eventually telling him that this is, for the present, not a taboo.

The infant’s mother {Eve} is free to wander anywhere in their garden {Eden} that she wishes. She can come and go freely, so long as he thinks he’s all alone with regard to his bodily sensations. While the two of them are one, touching him below the waist is no taboo.

The infant identifies his mother with all the pleasant sensations he feels. And just as Eve spoke to the serpent about her and Adam in the first person plural in The Creation Story {we}, his own mother refers to the two of them as “we,” giving him the feeling that his needs are as important to her as her own.

Breaking Through The Projection Of Mother

But a problem arises. Baby Adam begins to realize that all sorts of sensations occur without his mother being present. His knowledge of what’s pleasant and unpleasant, good and evil, can now be associated with events separate from her physical presence. As he identifies others as distinct from him, questions arise about the nature of the garden {this world} he finds himself in. This new challenge around him requires him to rework his theory about what’s going on. He’s faced with the dilemma that either everything around him is a part of him, or nothing is.

The rational is more valued by most men than the irrational because most males assume it takes more than crafty thinking to survive. Most males don’t lose track of the correspondences between their two worlds. They understand that it takes feelings that change in the moment when someone appears at his crib as well as thinking to thrive.

The more every modern man learns to acknowledge the feelings he first experienced with his mother and others during infancy, the more peace of mind and peace on Earth the world will attain.

Those who can’t fully separate their thoughts from their feelings become crafty, duplicitous, untrustworthy and irresponsible. They’re always testing the external world to see what they can get away with. They’re always stealing something in an effort to make sense of the forces within them verses the forces around them.

Thinking is the *freedom* that comes after birth when the first bond with the self is made. Feeling is the *liberty* that comes after a man discovers he wants to bond lovingly with everyone, just as he does at his mother’s breast. And believing is the *emancipation* that occurs after these bonds of idealism have been broken and mended in personal ways that give each human being a personal purpose in life.

Some men look at women as the personification of their own feelings and spend a lifetime putting women down for disappointing them. The truth is that the head of every man is logical and his heart is rational. The truth is that it was his heart that bonded with

his mother in infancy, and it was his heart that motivated him to learn about life despite the erroneous conclusion that he's motivated by reason, but women are not.

The predisposition to balance thinking and feeling on the fulcrum of the conscience isn't culturally created; it's GOD-given. Those societies that encourage a broad range of rational feelings in men produce societies where everyone feels safe to explore feelings deeply, personally and spiritually. Those societies that insist on idealistic goals that mirror the yearnings of infants produce totalitarian regimes where on the feelings of one man at the top get to be fulfilled.

The culture you were first introduced to through your family's home life conditioned you to perceive yourself in accordance with specific ideals set in place by the thoughts and feelings your parents held. They promoted these attributes by making you feel guilty or proud about certain rational or irrational ways of behaving that they thought would lead you to greater happiness out in the world later in life.

The cultural constraints your parents had to live with in their day that were instilled in you no longer fully apply in the 21st Century. What it means to be a man today is far more tender and compassionate than the male constraints of yore. The more men learn to embrace all their feelings, paradoxically, the safer everyone in society will be. And this even includes embracing infantile feelings of anger, frustration and rejection at not getting your way.

Typically, societies that are safe for the meekest members of the clan are safe for everyone. The meekest members of the world's societies are gays and Jews. Those societies that have large numbers of gays or Jews who are treated respectfully are the safest, most modern and most financially successful societies, bar none. The two safest societies in the world, therefore, are the United States and Israel where gays and Jews are legally, socially and morally treated as equals to straights and non-Jews. And the two safest cities in the world for gays and Jews are San Francisco and Tel Aviv.

Muslims living in the Middle East have the most repressive societies vis-à-vis gays and Jews. European societies have even become dangerous to Jewish life lately, and I predict they'll soon become intolerable for gays if Christian Europeans don't do more to teach the Muslims living in their societies to embrace 21st Century Judeo-Christian values, even though our modern ethics conflict with their 10th Century Islamic teachings.

As far as I can tell, the happiest Muslims in the world are those living in San Francisco, where Jewish wisdom, Christian love and Islamic hospitality before G O D are melding well together with 21st Century morals concerning gay people.

Morality is fashion conscious, and each generation tends to modestly take off and show a little more skin than the generation before it. Man is slowly becoming morally naked and natural; and liking it. Only the "religious" extremists in all three of the Abrahamic faiths are cringing at the sight of skin.

The prohibition in Leviticus for a man to sleep with a man has more to do with the way man thinks about himself than about whomever else he "sleeps" with. This prohibition has nothing to do with gender or sexual preference. In today's modern world, it has more to do with your relationship within yourself with regard to the relationships between the male {Adam}, female {Eve} and penis {serpent} you're going to be sleeping with for the rest of your life.

What I'm implying in that is that "sleeping" is a metaphor for "acceptance." So when GOD is quoted in Leviticus 18 as having said, "IT'S AN ABOMINATION FOR A MAN TO SLEEP

WITH A MAN AS HE DOES WITH A WOMAN,” the metaphor HE’s using is ‘acceptance as sleeping.’

That’s an extraordinary conclusion that infers that men should never accept one another using the same mindless, sexual urge they show for women who they see as only useful for procreation. And by extension, the relationships between all men and women must be fathomed for deeper engagement than just for sexual release of tension.

Enter Inner Voice Number Three

On one level, the conversation Eve has with the serpent symbolizes every infant’s discovery of his ambivalent feelings for the sensations that emanate from his penis, which are so different from all other sensations produced by his body. Eve’s “conversation” with the serpent in Torah signifies the interaction the infant has in discovering that this part of his body creates sensations and feelings like no other.

Awareness of this one, particular combination of feelings with sensations is fully consciously experienced in infancy, but it becomes sub-conscious over time. Some children become habituated to this truth. It becomes “second nature” to them. Others play doctor to recreate Eve’s conversation with the serpent to discover what it was exactly that they “said.”

The infant who’s feeling these magical sensations for the first time senses differences when he urinates; when his diaper rubs against his genitals; and when his mother cleans him. These combined experiences of wellbeing and excitement confirm that the chatter between his feelings {Eve} and sensations {serpent} are unique to this locale.

When man’s heart {Eve} confronts his desire for the power {serpent} with the purpose of his fruits {testicles}, his heart willingly tells all. Although Eve recounts to the serpent that she and Adam were forbidden from eating {knowing} or even touching {becoming familiar with} The Tree of knowledge of good and evil, we know that GOD only told Adam he couldn’t eat from it. And this half-truth gives the serpent a clever way of getting control over her. “It” believes “it” has found a loophole in GOD’s law.

When you imagine your body as the first of many levels of spiritual symbolism, you become The Tree of knowledge, and touching yourself physically, emotionally and spiritually opens you up to the greatest mystery in the universe: yourself. And you also discover that the power of creating life not only literally resides in your testicles; it figuratively resides there, too. This is the symbol seat of the fruits of good and evil in every Tree.

From the limited physical abilities of the infant, his body is that one Tree in his garden that he doesn’t have the ability to literally touch much because a baby hasn’t yet developed enough control over his hands to do so. And from this point of view, he may erroneously conclude later on that he doesn’t have the emotional capacity to touch himself much, either. He erroneously concludes he needs someone else to do that for him. He assumes he can’t explore his genitals spiritually without either hiding or exposing himself.

Once the toddler develops the dexterity to touch his own penis, he discovers he can elicit this sensation for himself. And in doing so, he then concludes that, if he has the ability {right} to touch his serpent {penis}, why not reach down to touch and explore his fruits {testicles}, too.

In truth we’re neither forbidden from touching ourselves physically to elicit sensual stimulation from our genitals; nor are we forbidden from touching ourselves emotionally,

in the sense of loving the human body we were given. From there, we're a hop-step-and-a-jump away from touching ourselves spiritually by concluding that our body was made in GOD's image. Touching ourselves spiritually means that we see ourselves in a physical/emotional vehicle that has spiritual purpose and direction guided by GOD/GOD/G O D. And since GOD/GOD/G O D is everywhere around and within us, we're on an adventure with the God within.

We give ourselves permission to know GOD/GOD/G O D and HIS/HIS/H I S intentions for us when we feel good about ourselves. We give ourselves permission to explore HIS/HIS/H I S mysterious interface with us when we give ourselves permission to explore ourselves.

We now know enough to use our time on Earth to come to know and love ourselves in the deepest sense of THE WORD/WORD/W O R D. In other words, we can experience GOD/GOD/G O D from our head, heart and soul if our conscience is authentic about our intentions, in the sense of clean.

But the undeveloped mind and heart of the infant has no choice but to draw the conclusion that his body is something untouchable, something forbidden and other. Only his mother can touch it. Only once he becomes a toddler is he old enough to control his motor skills to explore himself with the scientific accuracy that any adult would explore the natural world.

The author of Torah understood the difference between scientific fact and figurative speech, and was able to liken the body to a Tree with a snake in it that Eve could communicate with. In presenting us with this metaphor, we can extend the metaphor to understand what it means to be "banished from Eden" {outgrowing infancy}. And we can then anticipate that when every man moves away from his Eden {crib}, he moves in the direction of an Israel of blessed opportunities in discovering his reason for being.

The serpent {man's appendage that represents the delivery device to create life} is well aware of the difference between a thought {Adam} and a feeling {Eve}. Our serpent appeals to the rational {heart} side of us rather than the logical {head} side because "it" instinctively knows that our future desires will more easily be able to conspire with our heart {Eve} than with our head {Adam}.

And although our infantile head will have reservations at first, it'll eventually agree to collude in the conspiracy against our conscience {GOD}. It'll give in to the desire for more of these special sensations and feelings GOD gave us. Once our head submits to the temptation to learn about our Tree of knowledge, GOD will allow some of our desired outcomes, and deny the rest. But that's a unique road I can't describe any further for you as an individual.

The Extended Metaphors Of Eating And Touching

An even deeper understanding of these layers of self can be unlocked through THE WORDS "EATING" and "TOUCHING." In the most graphic sense, a man's conscience {GOD} forbids him from entertaining the thought of literally consuming his testicles. His testicles are enveloped in a peel that he may imagine peeling back to reveal the meat of the fruit, but logic (and sanity) prevent him from doing so even if a child is very curious to see what's inside his scrotum.

By extension of the metaphor, man is also forbidden from engaging in dismemberment and cannibalism of others to achieve the power he yearns for. Eating other human beings

doesn't literally give men "manpower." And removing their fruits from their casings doesn't reveal the meaning of life to them.

And still, modern man has found a way around this prohibition with such dietary delights as hot dogs in buns and meatballs in spaghetti sauce. We may have taken the prohibition literally at one time, but then we bent the rule to suit our desires figuratively. {Torah has always been an exercise in cleverly bending the rules without compromising the loving underlying spirit of the law.}

Metaphorically speaking "eating" in the context of The Creation Story refers to achieving knowledge. Man has been literally forbidden from eating his testicles or other men's, but he thinks himself very clever and crafty for employing the spirit of the law by getting to know himself instead. Yet this figurative "consumption" of the self is precisely what GOD/GOD/G O D wanted us to do all along...

If a man wants to avoid getting to know himself, and takes Torah literally instead, he often develops an appetite for food to replace his appetite for self-knowledge. The fatter a man is, the greater his desire to misdirect his urge for self-knowledge through figurative speech toward food and literalism. There are many ways, healthy and sick, to divert curiosity about the self out into the world rather than focus it on the world within. The goal of the spiritual seeker is to learn to do it all sanely, safely and simultaneously in healthy ways.

I'd now like to take a moment to talk about an unconscious way in which atheists extend the main metaphor of Moses without even realizing it. In order to avoid the guilt of picking forbidden fruit, they figuratively ask GOD/GOD/G O D to do it for them. They ask HIM/HIM/H I M to pick their fruit; suffer their loss; feel their guilt; and then banish HIMSELF/HIMSELF/H I M S E L F from their life. They stay in the garden, and force HIM/HIM/H I M out. It's a clever scheme, and it works to a point. Atheism has never been more popular than it's become nowadays.

Science was the only way of projecting religion out onto the world to find answers that would satisfy man's mind until psychology came on the scene. But, thankfully, GOD lauds man for using HIS powers of creativity so creatively. The more he learns about the world around him, the more worldly knowledge turns into clues to the mystery within. Science and psychology are actually leading man slowly back toward religion in the form of spirituality as his physical comforts prove to be inadequate in satisfying his desire to know and love himself.

"Religious" fanatics only make fools of themselves by trying to force science to conform to literal interpretations of The Hebrew Testament. They only demonstrate how little faith they really have in the ways of The Lord and how little respect they have for The Hebrew Testament.

Instead of eating up *life* with gusto, modern man often finds himself wondering what's eating *him*. He wonders why such a clever guy as he should be consumed by such unhappiness and misfortune. He can't imagine that the junk food he ingests around him is a part of a vast quantity of information he consumes that's also devoid of spiritual nourishment. What he knows about himself is empty of spiritual calories. Inside, he's thin and gaunt, spiritually starving to death, while outside he has a big smile on his face that anyone can see is forced, sometimes even fake.

I don't wish to give away the end of The Creation Story if you aren't familiar with it, but I will tell you that it never occurs to Adam and Eve to thank GOD for the fruit they took

without permission. They never tell GOD the magnitude of their hunger or their delight in learning. If they'd only have humbly asked for more forbidden fruit, I'm sure our loving Father and GOD would have gleefully commended them for their appetite. Then this story would have ended quite differently...

Once a man admits *he's* a Tree of knowledge, he comes to see that Torah is much easier to read than it first appeared. Man is a Tree in an orchard of Trees called: humanity. He was planted here, as was every other Tree. His mind branches out in many directions, and every year his mind grows bigger and stronger through seasons of experience that teach him more about the meaning of life in his own special way. Whether he's lucky or sad, rich or unrewarded, his roots dig in a little deeper, as they do their utmost to cling to the same Rock that we're all holding onto for dear life.

When a man realizes what a debt of gratitude he owes to GOD for waiting so patiently for him to ask for permission to relieve his ignorance of himself, he sees why Torah humbles everyone. He sees why it's the book that inspired Jesus and even the P R O P H E T Mohammed who couldn't read or write, but who listened carefully when the stories were told to him in a new way by the Archangel Gabriel.

Although every man worries about being transplanted out of this garden that we share here together, he rarely asks himself why he was planted here in the first place. He only asks in anger and frustration as one would imagine the forbidden fruit might have asked, "Why me?" It never occurs to him to offer thanks to GOD for trying so hard to teach him to ask that very question of himself, but with curiosity and joy rather than resentment and disappointment at GOD.

Learning to hold an attitude of humility makes learning much easier and rewarding. It teaches a man not to believe the gossip he hears about life being a gift. It teaches him to discover whether that's true for himself. He's willing to ask whether life isn't instead a pay-as-you-play game that doesn't compare to a gift.

When facing death, suddenly it isn't a game anymore. Then human nature mirrors Mother Nature. A dying man sees himself poetically as a Tree of knowledge planted in an orchard, and that Tree is about to be felled. On his deathbed when he most needs to glean the meaning of the fruits of his labors in terms of the biggest picture possible, he suddenly decides he wants to take everything he's got with him. But there are no pockets in death shrouds.

The dying man often realizes that he's totally unprepared for death. It's as if he were a student in a classroom who never believed he was going to graduate. He never thought he'd ever have to take the final exam. He thought he could wax poetic about the lessons of life forever. He never thought he was building a transcript that would really mean anything or be worth something. The timing of the immature male who's facing his mortality couldn't be worse. And yet the questions of life on which he's being tested couldn't be simpler.

When figuratively examined, you're the mysterious Tree in your garden, whose fruits you should ask your conscience {GOD} permission to pick. Love of yourself obviously begins with that aspect of you that's most concrete: your body. And the extensions of your love for you should deepen to your personality moving from there down into your persona. Everything you know and love about life is the result of information stored in your body that's made you who you are. You are a spiritual receptacle of knowledge based on inner

forces you've been subconsciously using, whether or not you're able to talk about them using biblical terminology such as metaphor, symbolism and signs.

Even if you can quote The Bible by chapter and verse, you may not have been able to take The Old Testament personally because you didn't have the key to unlocking its metaphoric secret. The key to Hebrew Scripture lies in the main metaphor of Moses, revealed in The Creation Story at the very beginning of Torah 'man as a Tree of knowledge.' Once you've got the master key in your hand, every door from there will open magically.

The First Level Of Self-Love

Vanity, excessive love of your body, isn't something to abhor. It's a hunger for you that can only be sated with self-adoration. Vanity turns you into your own idol. Adoring yourself is an aspect of love, but it's an aspect that you must move through in order to love yourself for more than your skin-deep attributes. *Adore* yourself when you're young. *Honor* yourself when you're middle aged. And *love* yourself when you're old. Or be precocious, and do as much of it as you can as soon as possible.

Even though you probably idolize and adore yourself unconsciously, you probably compensate for that with worry over thoughts of becoming narcissistic and arrogant. You fear vanity will lead to acts of gross selfishness and greed. You realize that excessive love of your body may make you feel pretty or handsome for a time, but it may also make you look unattractive over time. Vanity won't relieve you of your ignorance of yourself; but it will heighten your awareness of your inexperience.

My definition of *vanity* is excessive adoration of your container. My definition of *conceit* is excessive love of your contents. *Modesty* teaches us to keep our high opinion of our container under control, the part of us that people literally can see with their eyes. And *humility* teaches us to keep our high opinion of our contents under control, the part of us they perceive with their ears.

The vain and conceited can see The Tree in the forest, but they're so consumed with looking good externally {vain} or internally {conceited} that they don't use their eyes and ears to look and listen enough to themselves or what's around them. If you want to move through vanity and conceit, simply learn to look at yourself and listen to yourself from your conscience rather than your head or heart. That'll strengthen your ability to judge yourself fairly. It isn't easy. But doing so will be very rewarding.

Generally speaking, modern man doesn't see how great and majestic a Tree he really is. He's constantly literally dieting to keep his container looking good, as well as figuratively dieting to keep his self-knowledge from overflowing with arrogant uber-regard for himself. In going from one extreme to the other, he actually restricts his consumption of forbidden fruit without a clue to how famished for wisdom and self-love he really is.

He overeats when it comes to the food on his plate, but starves himself spiritually. For a healthy body and soul he should be doing just the opposite: eating less physically and more spiritually.

GOD never forbade us from knowing ourselves. If anything, this world is a school for spiritual gardeners who are Tree lovers at heart. GOD is our Farmer; Torah is HIS Almanac; and all the other students in class would do well to stay abreast of the Jewish updates to Torah from today's rabbis in how to prune themselves attractively to better reap the rewards of growing more beautifully, naturally and authentically year by year.

But most people don't want to get their hands dirty gardening spiritually. They're afraid that the guilt that'll get under their nails will look unattractive. Modern man isn't adverse to literally getting manicures and pedicures that give him nails that shine like a woman's. He's adverse to imagining how dirty his hands and feet really look when viewed from within. He's guilt-ridden.

What can a simple spiritual farmer know about life? Moses was a prince. Jesus was a carpenter. And the P R O P H E T Mohammed was a camel driver. If the three of them could learn as much as they did about spiritual farming practices, you don't need to have been born with a green thumb.

Until about the year 200 B.C.E., Torah was traditionally read aloud in the marketplace on Mondays. The Jews had already mandated compulsory education in reading and writing for all boys and girls so that religious training could occur for everyone. {England passed a law requiring compulsory education for all children about 150 years ago.} G O D only knows what little Muslims know about the history of the Abrahamic faiths with literacy rates among adults in Arab states among people 15 years of age and older at around 75%, 11 percentage points below the world average of 86%. [Wikipedia 2019]

Religious Jews today read 1/52 of Torah each week at synagogue. They complete the entire book in the month of September {depending on the Hebrew calendar which is based on lunar cycles not solar cycles} and start the process all over again the following September. This rescrolling of Torah to begin the cycle of learn over again with Genesis is part of the celebration of the Jewish New Year. We call our New Year "Adam's birthday" because it coincides with the retelling of The Creation Story. But our New Year is really the celebration of the creation of humanity.

In this way, Torah has slowly been reinterpreted by each generation of Jews over millennia. Its meaning has deepened as each class of spiritual farmers graduate from this orchard of delights, and the next class of farmers till Scripture to learn more about feeding themselves in this way.

Secular Jews know nothing about what I've written here; and Christian fanatics hold tenaciously to the letter of the laws of Moses; while many "religious" Muslims scorn the very foundation {Torah} upon which their faith is founded. Spiritual Jews, enlightened by our exploration of faith, do their best to make their way peacefully in a world where ignorance of our ways produces incredible pain and suffering in the Abrahamic faiths. In a world where people force love down your throat or try to shame you for not being more charitable to them, it would be helpful if people were more interested in first pursuing the wisdom of Torah. And it wouldn't kill them to lend an ear to a gay rendition of it.

Through the spiritual process of tilling ignorance, planting the seeds of knowledge and growing wisdom, Judaism's influence on the Abrahamic faiths has created spiritual nourishment for the world, but especially for the other two great Western religions: Christianity and Islam. When everyone can contribute to GOD's gifts to humanity through his own gleaning of wisdom, everyone profits. We, Jews, don't need much in the way of appreciation, but the continuing denial of our spiritual contribution to GOD's design is having an adverse effect on everyone's outcome.

Eating Is Mandatory

GOD never said Adam couldn't touch The Tree of knowledge of good and evil. And there's no evidence GOD spoke to Eve directly or that she learned about GOD's prohibition

from Adam. Her conclusions about that one Tree seem based on an emotional interpretation of The Tree of knowledge rather than hard, cold facts.

Although eating corresponds to achieving knowledge of good and evil – which Adam was forbidden from doing – there's more to eating when explored for its metaphoric meaning. There's a distinction between being all *consumed* with the acquisition of knowledge, and merely cursorily *nibbling* at it. Those who pick knowledge only for earthly gain are consumed by it. But those who are familiar with earthly knowledge without forgetting that it's part of a greater, spiritual path are in a much better position to nibble at the knowledge of good and evil with moral regard and spiritual intention for their own wellbeing throughout their life.

Familiarity with yourself begins in the physical realm with literally touching yourself, but it develops beyond that to include allowing yourself to touch and be touched in other ways. The more you become familiar with yourself emotionally, the more emotional intimacy you can share with others. And then you're better prepared to learn about spiritual intimacy, touching and being touched by GOD/GOD/G O D.

The concept of evil from the infant's perspective, as previously stated, begins with the act of being born. This is the primal, shared experience of all human beings that caused us extreme pain and suffering as newborns. Knowledge of pain, {unpleasant physical sensations} and suffering {unpleasant feelings} began with everyone at the same moment in life: birth. And this is why birth is considered the beginning of life.

The infant can't understand pain and suffering in a spiritual context. He's been forced into reality, and there's no way to communicate with him except through body language. A baby has a lot to do internally and externally before he'll be ready to learn to appreciate the world as a spiritual resource given to him as a gift by GOD/GOD/G O D.

There are those who are like infants: the physically homeless at one end of the spectrum and the spiritually homeless at the other. These people, and all those emotionally displaced in between, struggle with abandonment, betrayal and conspiracy issues {A.B.C.'s of life}. And this causes them to act out in ways that cause themselves, or others, pain and suffering.

The man who's terrified of growing up will cling to GOD/GOD/G O D or some opinion about life rather than accept his banishment from Eden {crib} after infancy. He'll spend a lifetime emotionally arrested at some point in The Creation Story trying to make sense of a metaphor he doesn't understand. He'll struggle with the forces within him in an effort to live with a talking snake he doesn't appreciate or can fully understand. But that snake will never shut up until the moment he dies, even though "it" may accomplish more with silence over time.

GOD never forbade Adam from becoming familiar with his feelings {Eve} or his desire for power {serpent}. HE just didn't want him to get overly wrapped up in worldly knowledge. It's great to be practical and experienced. It's terrific if you can use your head, heart and penis responsibly. But it's even better if you really understand the difference between good for you and bad for you; right for you and wrong for you; better for you and worse for you.

What your conscience {GOD} implies is that it's dangerous to assume that what you think, feel and yearn for is the sum total of the meaning of everyone's life. There's more to you than your ability to overcome pain and suffering with pleasurable sensations. There's even more to life than knowing right from wrong.

Without loving yourself, the gift of life is less than fully meaningful. It's sculptural and frozen, and that may be beautiful and inspiring, but you haven't yet come alive. You don't move. You aren't in a dance with yourself. Without love you're a relief, a sculptural figure that's been raised above a flat background, but not fully three-dimensional. You'll never enjoy relief.

The first fruits at the infantile level of life are good and evil. Increasing the *good* over many seasons doesn't just give you more good. When you compare one good experience to another over time you develop an understanding about the concept of *better*. The good gets better as you learn to more accurately give yourself that which pleases you. The good improves through better until it arrives at the concept of the *best*.

Love grows from unripe green to ruby red little by little, season by season. Love ripens like fruit, and it's up to you to learn to recognize when your love for you is fully ripe from one season to the next, pick and consume it.

That which is good in life doesn't lead to pleasure and contentment; and that which is evil doesn't lead to pain and suffering. Would that morality were that simple. Only infants who act instinctively base their judgments on the pain and pleasure principle. Children intuitively know there's more to right and wrong than that. Even adolescents, who are known to be impetuous, have higher levels of moral scrutiny than that. And the young man who doesn't move past the pleasure principle is surely going to model reckless behavior. For the mature man good is the consequence of doing what's *loving*, and avoiding evil is the consequence of doing what's *wise*.

The Physical And Moral Symbolism Of The Tree Of Knowledge

The Seeds

If every man is like The Tree of knowledge in The Creation Story, then he hopes to seed the Earth with his love {good} and wisdom {evil he's atoned for}. But the seeds of his deeds depend on the ripeness of the meat of his fruit. A man must root himself in a land where the moral climate best suits his needs. And he must hope to feel his roots entwine with those who share his intentions.

Not every man takes full responsibility for the fruits of his actions. He may want to disassociate himself from his deeds if he doesn't like himself for what he's done. And if he makes promises he doesn't keep – whether or not he gets caught or whether or not he blames himself or others – he'll have to face the humiliation of his unconscious self-loathing.

There are many varieties of inedible plastic fruits. Plastic fruit is the consequence of not facing the humiliation that people perpetrate against themselves. Much of the world is made up of plastic Trees from which hang plastic fruit. Only those who consciously face the three levels of guilt {embarrassment, shame and humiliation} are making a real effort to grow.

Plastic fruit is the product of ridicule. Putting down groups of people only produces self-loathing over time. In making others the butt of your jokes you may be implying that they're plastic, and unreal and undeserving of self-love. Mocking is hurtful, even if your intention is to teach them a lesson. It forces you to ingest a little plastic.

The diversity of man's nature is mirrored in Mother Nature. Every man is a Tree in the biblical, optimistic sense of the word. Every man grows from a seed through darkness under the ground of his being into the light. And although every Tree is different, the nature of all Trees is the same. Therefore, the first thing a man must decide, upon reaching adulthood, is where to replant himself. He must ask himself what physical, emotional and moral climate suits him. If he insists on ridiculing others, he's scorning GOD/GOD/G O D. And he's going to find himself in an inner tundra where's he's going to suffer long emotional winters that are bitterly cold.

The Fruits Themselves

The testicles have become associated with the seat of power and autonomy. A man demonstrates he has “balls” when he shows courage. He feels emasculated when he has to confront a “ball breaker” who tells him what to do or who forces him to do something he doesn't want to do. A man feels castrated when cut off from the source of his innate power.

It's no coincidence that our testicles are so tender and vulnerable to the touch. It's important for us to be sensitive to the power we have over ourselves, just as it's important to protect our testicles from physical harm. Freedom is important to us because it means we can “hang loose” without worry or concern for their safety. When we feel abandoned, betrayed or conspired against, it's as though we've been “kicked in the balls.”

Infants are aware that they're learning about themselves, although they can't say so. The process of holding that awareness in consciousness is passed on to the child in a form of learning called: play. The adolescent acquires more intimate self-knowledge through foreplay, and the young man achieves it through interpersonal relationships of all kinds of creative ways, especially in the workplace.

But the mature adult is ready to learn how to learn. Those who claim to be mature (but aren't) play only to win; they play games without knowing it; they play many parts and wear many hats. And they expect to earn trophies for them all.

But immature adults don't know why they should endeavor to learn to love their life. They should learn to love life because life can teach them how to love themselves best. They should learn to love their life because guilt will drive them forward with questions about the meaning of "me." The more a man learns about self-love {good} and guilt {evil} the more deeply he'll be able to figuratively penetrate his testicles to discover the secret of creating life out of someone who may have begun as plastic fruit like his mother and/or father.

GOD will humiliate you when you forget why you're doing what you're doing. You have to remind yourself of that at all times if you're so enchanted by the world around you that you've forgotten about your world within. Those who are taught to sacrifice self-knowledge to appease the needs of others suffer great pain and suffering in order to learn to love themselves intimately and deeply. Those who are intimidated into professing their love for GOD/GOD/G O D before they know how to love themselves won't be allowed to use ignorance of self-love and lack of wisdom as excuses when it's all over.

You can't succeed in fully loving GOD/GOD/G O D as well as all HIS intermediaries until you've been taught how to love yourself. Thank GOD, we live in the 21st Century, a century when self-love and wisdom are no longer seen as crimes against the state. Thank GOD, we live in a world where most people believe a Jew isn't the personification of the "devil" and a gay man isn't the poster child for selfishness and perversion. We've been given a great opportunity and spiritual privilege in our time, an honor nobody can afford to pass up.

Morality And Freedom

Intimacy emanates out from within. Your relationship with yourself is the source of your intimacy with others. Every time you reach out for the forbidden fruit of others, you'll end up getting burned if you don't do so with conscious regard for the spiritual process of learning more about yourself.

You can express your jealousy by wanting what other people have. You can even shame yourself by stealing the fruits of their labors. But until you choose to see yourself as your own Tree of knowledge and identify as forbidden fruit unto yourself, you'll be cursed to go back to other people's Trees again and again to experience the pain of learning who you're not. Only once you've past the test in knowing who you're not, will you be allowed to discover who you are.

You can't rewrite The Hebrew Testament any way that suits you. It's a living document. You have to live it to discover by heart how its truth unfolds for you. You have to get onboard a train of thought on a track of love that will bring you to a new lookout of yourself. Your panorama has to change from within before you'll see a new place for yourself out in the world. You have to discover for yourself that there are no coincidences in where you are within; who comes into your life; and what's happens around you.

The spiritually infantile and childish don't yet care about the inner gifts of living a principled life. They're only in pursuit of material rewards that give them the impression that they're as sweet as fresh fruit.

The world may be a school, but they live in a one-room schoolhouse without awareness of all the grades and students mixed together in the same classroom. They steal from one another and secretly scorn each other without moral understanding of their deeper motives. They're not thankful {to others}, appreciative {of themselves} or grateful {to GOD/GOD/G O D} for all the little things they're learning each day.

They take; they don't receive. And they wonder why they feel bossed around, and not spiritually led and instructed. They refuse to see that they're still enrolled in an elementary spiritual education. Either they claim they're bored with life; that they know all there is to know, or they're terrified of what's going to happen next. The thought of moving on to spiritual secondary school hasn't been explained to them in terms they can grasp.

This book was written for anyone with an eighth grade education for several reasons. First of all, this book would be inappropriate for anyone who hasn't yet achieved orgasm. You can't describe something to someone who hasn't experienced it. This book is therefore for those on the other side of puberty, probably over the age of 18. But many people who are physical capable of making babies are emotionally and spiritual still under age themselves. Therefore this book is written for people who are in *emotional*, middle school. You don't have to have a college education to follow my trains of thought. In fact, many people who are overly educated, but unschooled in street smarts, may actually find this book more difficult to understand than some teenagers.

For the spiritually infantile or childish who haven't graduated to emotional, middle school, death is just one more miserable lesson in learning to take "no" for an answer. And the promise of a "religious" reward in the "afterlife" is their only consolation for the gift of life they never learned to unwrap and use, let alone celebrate and give thanks for.

Authority From Within

The character of GOD in The Creation Story should be viewed as a nursery school aide. In the story of Cain and Abel, HE acts like a kindergarten teacher. In Noah and the Ark, HE's a like life coach. And in The Tower of Babel, HE's like a junior college educator. HE's like a lecturer for the rest of Genesis and becomes like a professor with tenure for the rest of Torah.

But GOD/GOD/G O D is always GOD, regardless how you spell the name or say it. HE's/HE's/H E's not advancing in the school of life; you are. Your perception of HIM/HIM/H I M will change as you graduate to higher levels of self-awareness.

Adam, the infantile level of man, is too young and inexperienced to learn about himself through words. He has to be shown. He can't describe his spiritual predicament because he hasn't built a spiritual vocabulary based on experience. His story had to be depicted in the deepest metaphor Moses could muster.

You can't convey the simplicity of GOD's message to the spiritually infantile any more than you can ask a baby to wait a moment while his bottle is being warmed. But a spiritual child is a little more capable of understanding the world. A child can be reasonable even if he's not yet able to control his impatience for very long. The child is conflicted about doing what he thinks best verses what feels good. But even that conflict slows him down so he can digest a bit more of his experiences.

The spiritually infantile interprets GOD as a fearsome, old man who's so emotionally wacked out with anger that HE can't be trusted to do what's best for us. He's afraid of GOD. He thinks HE's a loose cannon. He doesn't yet realize that GOD is both within and around

him. He thinks GOD has found a way to get into his head, but he doesn't think HE knows what's in his heart. He doesn't believe HE really sees him. He doesn't really believe that HE's even T{here}.

Man is born into a vehicle of flesh and blood that thinks, feels, desires and judges. This spiritual vehicle creates thrilling sensations that are very pleasing. But the mind of man has to learn how to engage the heart; the heart has to learn how to manage desire; and the desire to protect his feelings from getting hurt has to be achieved with revealing consequences for every action taken. If a man doesn't do so, he comes away feeling like the fruit in The Creation Story, voiceless, powerless and victimized. He feels kicked in the balls. He can only cry out with anguish, "Why me?"

The innocent get hurt, and the guilty go free. You may have been told that life is a gift. But I'm here to tell you that there were no free lunches from the moment you left the womb. Spiritual food is expensive, and the cost for having picked those two little fruits of knowledge figuratively hanging down from the trunk of your Tree is going to be especially dear. Fruit is stolen. Losses occur. Trees are felled. Orchards are burned down.

Life is fair; it just isn't easy. If you want to contribute, you're going to have to do your part to make fair play a more important part of the game. The more you live by the rules without letting your heart and penis get in the way of your conscience, the more you're going to see your contribution realized.

You earned every bit of good that life brought you from the moment you took your first breath. You didn't buy happiness. You didn't buy power. You didn't buy prestige. You were always learning how to earn them. And your experience now is like money in the bank. It will pay dividends over time if you invest in yourself and take greater interest in yourself.

But if you only invest in yourself; if you use people to become richer; if you don't pay it forward day-by-day – you'll have nothing to show for your efforts at the end. And you'll be very, very sorry when the last words you mutter are, "Why not me?"

Learning Manners

Life teaches you not to figuratively gulp down knowledge like pilfered fruit from somebody else's Trees. Guilty pleasures are particularly sweet, but every little thing that happens to you is an opportunity to learn more about yourself. If you take the time to notice what's going on inside, as well as around you, you'll feel well fed.

As with food, we have the tendency to scarf down knowledge too quickly when we're spiritually young. We aren't mindful and grateful for what we're learning. Gobbling up life too fast leads to spiritual indigestion. Cynicism and sarcasm are the common ways people regurgitate knowledge that doesn't sit well with them. It's a sign that they can't stomach what they're doing to themselves, even though their sour stomach may also say something truthful about how others make them feel.

When you can appreciate yourself, it makes it so much easier to be thankful to all those who contribute to your life, even if their effect on you was negative. It's a whole lot easier to be grateful to GOD when you see that you're making progress, whether you're being hatefully pushed or lovingly pulled in the right direction.

Thankfulness, appreciation and gratitude create the spiritual table manners your mothers tried to drum into you while you were eating at her table. She didn't want you to eat like a pig at the dinner table because she instinctively knew it would lead to an unseemly

way of you consuming knowledge. She just wasn't able to describe her goals in training you with spiritual terminology you could understand at the time. She didn't start by telling you you're a spiritual being having physical experiences in search of moral answers to how you can contribute to this world. And even if she had, you were too young and inexperienced at the time to understand what she would have been talking about.

You were probably the apple of your mother's eye, even if she never said so. She ate you up with her love in the hopes that you, too, would develop a spiritual appetite for yourself that would be as great as hers. You were the meal she was serving herself in projection. You weren't the person it was intended for. It all got very complicated when she made such a damn fuss about table manners, courtesy and regard for others without ever telling you why she felt so strongly about such things.

Can We Talk?

When a man watches his penis go into erection, it appears that it has a mind of its own. And, as every adolescent knows, it's very embarrassing when his penis decides to "speak out of turn."

The serpent in Torah is described as "THE SUBTLEST OF ALL THE ANIMALS GOD CREATED." [Genesis 3:1] But in its conversation with Eve we see, by the exuberance with which Eve responds to the serpent's questioning, that she's young and naïve, and doesn't fully comprehend the depth and direction of the questions the serpent is prodding her with.

And yet, despite her obvious lack of sophistication when facing this curious creature, Eve candidly and confidently refers to Adam and herself in the first person plural (we). She demonstrates a sense of connection and loyalty to Adam that he isn't able to express for her. Adam can only speak about her in the third person (she). He isn't even able to speak about himself in the first person singular (I).

Even if Eve doesn't show a deep understanding of the questions the serpent poses, she demonstrates she can, in her own bold way, speak up. She also demonstrates to us that she has a natural predisposition to cooperate and collaborate with Adam.

The character of Eve has the psychological predisposition of a mother whose feelings for her child are so intimate as to be virtually indistinguishable from her own. Eve's sense of "we" with regard to Adam is clearly evident today in a mother's regard for her offspring. The essence of "we" is usually instinctive for mothers. A baby boy usually learns the spiritual meaning of "we" first from a woman. But it's not the gender of his primary care giver that's important, but the role he or she plays in presenting the emotional message in that essential pronoun.

In infancy the mind of the baby boy hasn't yet mastered the concept of the first and second person pronouns. It doesn't yet have an inner sense of "I" "you" or "we." A mother's loyalty to her infant isn't reciprocated by the child because the newborn only has the emotional awareness of himself as "me." Because the infant doesn't instinctively realize how separate he is from everyone else, he clings to his mother with an instinctual sense of self-survival, not love as we know it.

He thinks of his mother as the object of his affections. He sees her more as a thing that comes to him to relieve him of his hunger and loneliness. To him she's just a branch of his own Tree that conveniently bends down to give him the juice from her two fruits: her breasts. He thinks of her as a restaurant that delivers. A mother will never be a person like

all others. To the infant in us all, she'll always represent something special inside us that caters to our unspoken needs.

The concept of love begins as a sense of place we're in that's comfortable and warm: our mother's womb. With birth, that place then suddenly appears before us personified. As a child we project our mother out onto the Earth and give our love of her to nature and the animal kingdom. The gifted child sees his mother's world as his garden, a place filled with animal characteristics and the metaphoric attributes of fruit Trees.

The infant doesn't realize his mother is a person, not a place. And the spiritually infantile never grow up and learn the difference between a person and a place. They move from place to place in the world without ever changing their outlook on themselves from within. They read people like a menu to discover how and what they're going to be served. They never discover that everyone has feelings. They use people and animals like things.

If you change your place, you still may not change your luck. What's important is that you change your attitude, not just your location out in the world. The wandering of the Jews in the Diaspora lasted 2,000 years. It was a long lesson in personalizing place. Loyalty to location results in patriotism. But the history of the Jews represents an ideal deeper than patriotism to the nations where they resided in the past or even our feelings for Israel: our spiritual homeland. Our history has taught us the spiritual difference between people, places and things. Loyalty to people should be greater than loyalty to a place; and loyalty to a place should be greater than loyalty to things.

Torah will go into a deeper discussion of the difference between inner space and outer place in the story of The Tower of Babel. The building of a tower to the heavens above will depict what happens when motivation to change location doesn't include spiritual awareness. You can look for GOD in people, places or things, but HE's both there and not there. HE's so much more. To find GOD you have to delve into yourself.

A Mother's Touch

The extension of the metaphor 'learning about yourself as though you were a Tree' creates a psychological process that's further activated when a mother touches her baby boy's genitals. Her physical familiarity with it doesn't have any detrimental, emotional effect on either of them. His genitals aren't off limits to her physically, only to him, because he can't yet reach them. She has no reason to feel guilty about touching his genitals because her intention is only to clean them. He feels the physical sensations of being touched by her without guilt because he hasn't yet been introduced to the concept of a taboo between mother and son.

While touching her son's genitals to clean them, the infant experiences the sensation as pleasurable. His mother's familiarity with his serpent {penis} and the fruits {testicles} of his Tree of knowledge beneath it is fine with him whether or not it inadvertently excites his penis to arousal. From the baby's perspective, in biblical language, she's figuratively conversing with his serpent, a chat a baby is pleased to have with his mother.

A boy's ability to touch himself develops physically, emotionally and spiritually at different times in his life. The Creation Story isn't about having defied GOD and having to suffer here on Earth for it, but about learning to understand the psychological makeup of the male human being in a world created for him to become aware of the spiritual consequences of all that he thinks, feels, desires, believes and then does. Whether or not a man can make the metaphoric connection in his feelings {Eve} interfacing with his desire

{serpent} to deliver his power {semen} to others, his mind {Adam} will have to account for the consequences of his actions both to his conscience and before his GOD/GOD/G O D.

The Mother And Son Relationship

The narrator of Torah states that Eve picked forbidden fruit and tempted Adam with it. But the meaning of that must echo down into our mother tongue: body language. A mother not only nurtures her baby boy physically with milk from her breasts and relieves him of his loneliness with her time and attention. She also inadvertently tempts him to discover himself. She converses with his serpent {touches his penis to clean it} and picks forbidden fruit {touches his testicles to clean them}, inadvertently tempting him with awareness of sensuous bodily sensations that will lead him to a desire to know himself all the more.

A mother and her infant child know no guilt; neither of them is ashamed, or should be in how they unconsciously and metaphorically connect with one another. This is the Eden of a boy's infancy, the time in his life when he and his mother are figuratively, and sometimes even literally, naked before one another without having to think about the consequences.

In terms of body language, we literally get up and walk out of infancy as a toddler when we our body becomes strong enough to carry our own weight. It's at that time that we leave the deepest, innermost garden of imaginative delights to explore the outside world where we derive new experiences that teach us how the world operates.

But the most fertile soil will always lie in a man's imagination where, in the Eden of his infancy, self-knowledge germinates, grows into the light, and branches out in its first magical exploration of life.

When GOD later asks Adam, "DID YOU EAT FROM THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE THAT YOU WERE FORBIDDEN FROM EATING FROM?" we'll be in a better position to understand why Adam reacts with fury to the question. We, too, feel cornered when we're asked questions too deep to answer. Our own history and imagination will remind us of the awesome spiritual work before us in coming to know and love ourselves.

The Forest For The Tree

After a baby can acknowledge his mother as physically separate and distinct from him, he concludes she's figuratively one of many fruit Trees in an orchard. But he still thinks of her breasts as *his* fruit, and the juice from her fruit as his own. He becomes even more possessive of her the more aware he becomes of what she means to him. He'll see other people as Trees he can harvest for nourishment or entertainment, but he won't hold them in his heart in the same way as her.

After the first few months of life, the infant concludes that the world is really an orchard, not a garden. It's filled with a variety of Trees {people}. He realizes he's not all alone. He sees his life as an autumn when every Tree is laden and ready for picking. He becomes curious to explore the world around him. He becomes hungry to harvest. He babbles. He smiles. He wiggles his fingers and toes, and before you know it, he turns over by himself.

Some of The Trees will bring him physical nourishment, while others will just be there to climb for fun. He'll develop intellectually, living life more like a monkey in a jungle than a baby in a crib. His intellectual evolution will be in the African infancy of its

inception. When he stands in his mother's lap he'll cling to her hair more like an ape hanging from a branch of a Tree. He'll thereby demonstrate how primitive he still is, but he won't know it. He'll have to evolve emotionally before he'll be able to discover how he's evolving physically. He'll have to leave his inner Africa {Egypt} for an inner Middle East {Israel}. He'll have to grow up in his own way, while still following the spiritual pattern eluded to in Torah.

The word "paradise" comes from THE WORD "PARDES," which means "ORCHARD." {Non-biblical scholars see the word "paradise" as coming from the Latin, Greek and Persian word for "park."} The concept of "paradise" in Torah is really a sociological condition that perceives us all as Trees of knowledge in an orchard of experiences. The poorly educated toddler lives in a "park" of his parents' making. He thinks and feels he's a fully vested member of the family of man, but there's as yet no way for him to grow hopeful. Every event leaves his feelings delighted or dashed.

The child of religiously or spiritually, educated parents sees everyone as a Tree in an orchard that will bloom with fruit to eat, not as a park where there's nothing at all to browse and consume. His family is his garden, and his community is his orchard. He has no reason to leave home by crossing an inner Red Sea to go on a desert journey for a lifetime because he feels well-fed right where he is.

The Juice Of The Fruit

Milk is the infant's liquid love. It's the nectar he feasts on when he's a god in his own eyes. It makes him feel like he's king of the universe. It's only after he's weaned off the breast that new ways of perceiving love come into his purview.

When your mother chose not to share the juice {milk} of her fruits {breasts} with you, you finally realized they were really hers, not yours. The juice of the fruits from her Tree figuratively dried up. She weaned you. You entered your first winter of discontent at having to gum your food, and you may even have been mad at your mother with what you thought then was, good reason.

When a mother withdraws her breast from the lips of her child once and for all, the infant may first conclude that something of his has been taken away from him, and he may get angry at her for abandoning, betraying and even conspiring against him. Only in realizing that she's the keeper of other sources of nourishment does he conclude that her well hasn't figuratively dried up. The toddler concludes that just because his mouth won't literally be able to draw out liquid love from his mother's body, he'll still be able to continue suckling from her breasts figuratively and even emotionally.

From this change in his mother's body language with regard to his eating patterns, the baby discovers the linguistic difference between *his* and *hers*. He learns that *physical* and *emotional* nourishment are separate kinds of food. And he learns that disappointments can lead to happy outcomes.

Or, at least, that's the theory... In truth many toddlers never learn the difference between what's theirs and what's not. They never learn how to find emotional nourishment that's truly satisfying. And so they take disappointment too seriously. (Just misplace your wallet or keys and see how you respond...)

Consequently, people may use people unconsciously, or pay to use them to get from them what their infantile conscience deems only fair. There aren't just plenty of babies out in the world. There's a baby in all of us, as well. When you discover in what ways the

infant in you is still controlling you, you're going to need to love it anyway. Infanticide of your inner child is hardly the way to learn to love yourself. Physical punishment will never make you change your mind. Only withholding your love from yourself will teach you a lesson.

Loving yourself despite you behaving like a baby is the only cure for immaturity. A mother doesn't withhold everything from her son, and neither should you. If you need to withhold some self-indulgences, you should be able to realize that you're doing so for your own good.

For the heterosexual male absence from the breast makes his heart only grow fonder for female breasts. His desire to return to women's breasts in puberty is rechanneled as a sexual hunger that will replace his long, lost desires from infancy. Puberty is the promise of new pleasures that the adolescent has waited many years to satisfy.

It's quite understandable that heterosexual, teenage boys are impatient to lose their virginity when you realize that they are, by that age, famished for a woman's breasts, a feast they've been dreaming about since puberty set in.

Teenage boys don't distinguish easily between their physical and emotional appetites. They just know when they're hungry. They don't discern psychologically between the lust for food and sex. They can't help overeating in bed *and* at the dining room table. All adolescent males are physically and sexually starving to death...

Sex Talk

Further extension of the overarching metaphor 'knowledge as fruit' is needed for spiritual clarity to intellectually unpack and understand Eve's conversation with the serpent. It makes no sense whatsoever to imagine that a woman literally had a conversation with a snake as described in this story. Snakes can't talk, and I've never met a woman who would gladly pursue such a conversation even if she could. Taken literally, this story is absurd.

Eve's conversation with the serpent is the extraordinarily tactful way Torah describes man's introduction to the importance of his own penis. On the one hand it's a biological conversation between man's heart {Eve} and desires {penis}. It's the consequence of his feelings and desires agreeing on what they want to deliver {semen}, the milk heterosexual men want to give back for the liquid love they received as an infant.

But there's a psychological dynamic also occurring between an infant boy and his mother. By literally holding her son's penis when she cleans it, a mother is figuratively holding a conversation with it. By literally grasping it, she figuratively grasps the meaning of having a penis as best she can. And thanks to her curiosity about it, the infant boy who can't yet reach it himself learns something about it indirectly from her, and therefore indirectly employs hearsay to learn about himself.

Male babies develop a positive or negative impression of their penis from their mother. The attitude with which she holds her son's penis will affect his attitude when he's finally capable of holding it himself. Therefore in those "religious" societies where blame for Eve having tempted Adam is still prevalent in the attitude of men towards women, it would stand to reason that mothers would hold a negative predisposition to their son's penis.

If a heterosexual woman's hymen is broken through sexual penetration with a man, his penis is like a snake that bites her, leaving her bloody and in pain the first time. A virgin girl becomes an experienced woman from this bite. The loss of her virginity and the pain

it causes in polite biblical terminology is figuratively seen as an argument – not the pleasant chat Eve had with the serpent. After such an argument, the sexually experienced woman might resolve to speak with men differently in the future in the hopes that sexual penetration thereafter will be more pleasurable than it was the first time.

But a mother should have no reason to fear her baby boy's penis, unless she fears all penises. Her curiosity about her son's penis can be safely satisfied touching it when she cleans it. She also realizes that the penis that came out of her body {her son's} is very different from the one that went in {his father's}. Her son's penis can't hurt her when it's small, and won't hurt her when he grows up either because of the taboo that lies so deep in every human being.

Eve's discussion with the serpent in The Creation Story is therefore a beguiling conversation every mother once had with the serpent that brought her little Adam into this world nine months later. And, the conversation a mother has with her infant son's serpent from cleaning his genitals comes from her motherly duty, not sexual pleasure or "religious" duty. This is an intimate conversation, but with a different intention.

A mother's little man {her son} looks at her as she's cleaning his genitals with the attitude of a husband with his wife. This is her duty. The two of them are bonded together in the first and primal marriage of life. He sees her serving his needs and draws the conclusion that her one and only job in life is to serve him.

The infant boy doesn't at first acknowledge his father as his mother's husband. He's in competition with his father for her attentions right from the start. In those ways that she serves his father's needs or, in fact, anyone else's, the son may conclude that that takes time and energy away from her serving his.

The baby doesn't realize that his father sexually feeds from the same breasts that he physically feeds from. At a level of poor self-esteem, a boy may see his father as the snake that bit his mother with his teeth while the two of them were conversing. And from that bite he infected her with the poison {semen} that brought him into this world.

The infant boy may not just be in an adversarial relationship with his father for the attentions of his mother from the standpoint of time and attention. He may well be in an adversarial relation with his father to discover the knowledge of the secret of life, something the boy cleverly and correctly concludes his father knows more about than he does.

Competition between males may be spiritually based on every son's desire to know more about the secret of life than his father. The son may interpret that secret through winning, earning, serving, knowing, loving or giving. But it's not the object of the competition that's as important as the reason for the motivation to compete.

Subsequent to the conversation Eve has with the serpent, Torah describes Eve's interaction with Adam thus, "WHEN THE WOMAN SAW THAT THE TREE WAS GOOD FOR FOOD, AND THAT IT WAS A DELIGHT TO THE EYES, AND THAT THE TREE WAS DESIRABLE TO MAKE ONE WISE, SHE TOOK FROM ITS FRUIT AND ATE; AND SHE GAVE ALSO TO HER HUSBAND WITH HER, AND ATE." [Genesis 3:6]

There has been no discourse between Eve and Adam up to this point in the story. {In fact, they don't say a word to one another in the entire story.} All their interactions are described by the narrator, thereby leaving much room for us to fill in the details with our own imagination.

Curiously, Adam doesn't debate the moral issue with Eve in accepting her gift. Clearly, he doesn't have the wisdom to know any better. As her husband he simply takes what she gives him, and doesn't ask any questions. But that doesn't pass the smell test.

It's also interesting that Adam is described as "HER HUSBAND (who is) *WITH* HER." That would lead us to believe that he was with her at the time she picked and ate the fruit. This begs the question why he wouldn't have just picked the fruit himself. Even if he'd chosen to wait until after she did, he could have done so. Surely, he could also see that "(The Tree) WAS A DELIGHT TO THE EYES, AND THAT THE TREE WAS DESIRABLE TO MAKE ONE WISE."

It would lead me to believe that if Eve ate and then gave some to Adam, surely what she did had to have been wise since the fruit of The Tree of knowledge produced knowledge of good and evil that would make one wise.

The only reason I can find why Adam wouldn't have picked the fruit himself and then eaten it was because he couldn't. This lends support to the idea that Eve represents every baby boy's mother, and Adam represents the initial state of life when a baby can't do such things himself.

And yet, when looking at this issue from the forbidden fruit's perspective, it's easy to see that Adam didn't bother to reach up and pick it. He let Eve do it, assuming she'd then get in trouble, and not him. This would attribute malevolent motives to Adam, making him the first "son of a bitch."

When personalized and internalized, Torah implies that the mind is incapable of wisdom. The mind is capable of knowing the difference between good and evil, but it must be fed wisdom from the heart. Knowledge requires loving intentions in order to create wisdom. Wisdom, therefore, becomes a byproduct of knowledge mixed with feelings.

Masturbation And Intercourse

Most boys learn to *converse* with their serpent by themselves long before puberty, often without the need for a formal introduction through playmates. Although we used to call sexual exploration between small children "playing doctor," children are really recreating the conversation Eve had with the serpent in their imagination all the time.

When children play doctor, they attempt to work out the silences found between the lines in Torah. They attempt to read between the lines to make sense of a story they intuitively know they're going to have to live with for the rest of their life.

Adolescent boys are particularly free and easy about the pleasure of *chatting* themselves up. It doesn't require much in the way of *conversational skills* or social formalities for boys to instigate these one-on-ones. Sex that isn't solely for procreation becomes associated with pure pleasure, which is a slippery, moral slope for those who interpret The Creation Story as a prohibition against sex outside of marriage.

When sexual relations become associated with play, not a biblical duty to be performed only for the sake of procreation, sex then leads to relaxed *morés* when it comes to playing with yourself. And when masturbation is no longer forbidden, dirty or immoral, these *tête-à-têtes* lead every Adam to question his relationship with his Eve as well as his serpent. And he may begin to wonder whether spanking the monkey without shame says more about his spiritual achievement in life than he was previously prepared to admit.

A curious boy who isn't terrified of new experiences may then begin to realize he has feelings for himself, not just desires for sexual prowess, power and control over others. He wants his head to share in the fun his heart and penis are having.

He starts to question the causes and consequences of his feelings of guilt in all his activities, public and private. He begins to see himself in the third person, as someone he'd like to get to know.

But this interpretation of The Creation Story can be very disruptive to the social order in a rigid, tribal society where talk of love is cheap and talk of guilt is taken much too seriously. When boys will be boys, men begin to realize that they're just boys themselves in some ways. And they begin to yearn for the time before puberty when things looked a whole lot easier.

Between 500 and 1,000 years ago, when European society opened its doors to romance, that began to allow men to act on their feelings for women, not just their duty to (1) sire a male heir, (2) GOD and (3) country. And as the result of that, we now live in a world where men claim the right to live their life in harmony with their feelings for themselves. Some men today even insist on having openly romantic feelings for other men... {shocking!}

Men who feel guilty about masturbation suffer from biblical anxiety, more than prurient, sexual morés. They don't realize that giving themselves permission to touch themselves with sexual intentions leads to more than guilt-free sexual intercourse with members of either gender. It leads to emotional freedom from within.

Once a man is free to love anyone he chooses, he thinks about the most forbidden love of all, loving himself. And that's what leads him down the path of spirituality to GOD, not "religious" indoctrination and dogma. Once a man isn't afraid to love himself, his GOD/GOD/G O D enters his conscience and turns it into a soul. That explains why there are so many soulful people in the world and why the hyper "religious" are so intolerant.

Although violence between men is childish and useless, wrestling with ideas passionately is a good way to get to know and conquer yourself. Conversing with serpents is the spiritual motivation behind sports, politics, friendship and intellectual banter at one end of the spectrum and poetic discourse on love at the other. Conversing with serpents is the preview to picking forbidden fruit, and seeing your life from a whole new perspective.

Eve's willingness to believe what the serpent told her indicates that she heard what it said and she liked what she heard. She didn't anticipate the confrontation GOD would later have with Adam. Nor did she foresee her own altercation with HIM.

The penis is deaf, and the heart is blind. A man's head has to look back with hindsight and insight to develop the foresight to anticipate where every conversation between his heart and penis might end up.

It's a man's conscience that has to answer to GOD; but if his mind can't see and hear where his heart and penis are taking him, he'll find himself suffering guilt and whatever the consequences of his actions GOD chooses to inflict upon him.

You can't control the world around you. You can only control the world within you. You can come close to the fence of flesh between your two worlds. You can look through the holes you were given in that fence. You can perceive how permeable and vulnerable you are. Or you can stand back from your flesh and blood and give yourself the impression that nobody will ever be able to get inside to know you.

Either way, you can't control what GOD/GOD/G O D has planned for you. And it's much too late to complain about the way HE/HE/H E made you. HE made you in HIS image according to Torah. And now you're stuck with the way you are, unless you choose to recognize the way you've changed and resolve to keep *changing* your present, *transforming* your future and *transcending* your past.

Later in the story, when GOD confronts Eve by asking her what she's done, she simply regrets her decision, telling HIM that the serpent messed with her head. "THE SERPENT DECEIVED ME, AND I ATE." [Genesis 3:13] This is Torah's extraordinarily polite way of saying that a man's heart simply becomes sorrowful when a misunderstanding occurs between his feelings and desires. Therefore the mind of every man should think ahead to avoid the calamity the forces within him may unleash out into a world he has to share with everyone.

To know you leads to loving you. To know you is to find the courage to know the good and bad in you. This is the underlying premise of the purpose of reality. GOD offers you forbidden fruit in the form of all kinds of apples, and you have to decide which ones you're going to pick, and when.

You project your own curiosity about yourself out onto people, places and things. And then you fall in love with some of them. But when you see that each of the characters in The Creation Story is an aspect of yourself, you also identify as the fruit in The Creation Story. And you even begin to identify with every other fruit on The Tree of man.

Self-love is the sweetest and most nutritious fruit on your Tree. It's the best because it grows on the highest branch, and therefore gets the most light. It's also the most difficult to reach. {Perhaps that's why Eve {your mother} could reach it, and you {as an infant} could not.

Self-love is the most delectable of all the temptations in life because it grows in the light of GOD's illumination {wisdom} and warmth {love}. Self-love will teach you more about HIM than all other forms of love. But self-love, too, has consequences; good and bad...

Forgiveness

All baby boys have to grow up to excuse their mother for having touched their penis before *they* could. But that's more involved psychologically than it may at first seem. Every boy must admit he wasn't alone in his curiosity about the hidden meaning in having been given a penis; that his mother was mildly curious about his penis too. Her son's penis mirrors his father's penis. The penis that went into her produced a penis that came out of her. And that's a curious truth about a woman giving birth to a baby boy.

A man's curiosity is intellectually motivated by the desire to know himself. Power over himself is what makes a man powerful, not power over others. But all men once shared their inquisitiveness about the source of their power with their mother. A boy intuitively knows that his penis and testicles unite him in some mysterious way with his father. And his mother knows that, too.

Every man should be able to admit that he's touched his penis with much more intimacy and curiosity than his mother ever did, or would ever have cared to. His interest in his own penis emanates out of a special regard for himself. There's something mysterious or unbelievable in having a penis and watching how it works. There's nothing in the way it operates to be ashamed of. The desire to motivate a man to know and love the serpent hanging down from the trunk of his Tree isn't evil. It's natural. It's human. It's manly.

What makes knowing and loving your penis so morally complex and subtle is that your mother knew your father's penis, but your father loved his penis because "it" brought you into the world. He's proud of what he accomplished physically. (Whether he has reason to

be proud of what he contributed intellectually, emotionally and spiritually to your life is another story.)

The one thing every son on Earth shares with his father is the fact that they both have a penis. This is irrefutable. So this is the point at which a man must begin his journey in becoming a man. Don't let anyone without a penis tell you differently. Don't let ridicule from anyone sway your curiosity about what it could be like to become more of a man in your own eyes.

No man of sound mind has any interest in sleeping with his mother, even if his father did, or still does. The more men can touch these ideas lightly for spiritual enlightenment, the less likely men are likely to rub each other the wrong way.

Men don't have to strive to be like their father. Every man is different in that he has tastes and preferences of his own. It's what he likes that makes him unique and special. Becoming a man has nothing to do with whom you want to sleep with. Becoming a man is a moral progression that has spiritual consequences now, and forever.

A man's emotional independence from his father and mother is part of that spiritual progress. He has good reason for embracing the two of them as a choice GOD made for him. His parents gifted him with life and physical attributes. These were the gifts of *nature*. His parents also had a huge effect on his emotional disposition and intellectual leanings. These were their gifts of *nurture*.

Our nature and nurture were given to us. In some ways they may seem like rewards; in others, like punishments. It's not the gifts you got, but how you unwrap them, and what you choose to do with them that counts. In addition to Mother's Day and Father's Day, to celebrate the gifts from GOD, there should also be Child's Day, the day we appreciate the child within that we can raise in accordance with our own principles and integrity.

The Power Of The Penis

The serpent in The Creation Story is only aware of the power of GOD. It doesn't understand that GOD's greater intention is to give us power to seek freedom {the right to develop our mind}; liberty {the right to develop our heart}; and emancipation {the right to develop our belief system}.

We should use our desire to deliver our power to ourselves in three ways {freedom, liberty and emancipation}. The purpose of the entire delivery system of spirituality is to develop these life-giving forces in ourselves; with ourselves; for ourselves; and by ourselves.

Lust {penis power} without love {heartfelt intentions} begins as excitement, but it sometimes ends with destruction and dismay. It begins with autonomy, but it sometimes leads to authoritarianism and totalitarianism. Lust can curtail the pursuit of freedom, liberty and emancipation. Lust can force man's mind to pick and eat fruit green, when it's unripened. It forces some men to make choices based on seemingly desirable options that may become very undesirable over time. Sexual power where there is no love can lead to scarcity and poverty of many kinds.

But love without lust can also be destructive. Freedom without discipline leads to fruit that rots on the vine. Too much freedom leads to laziness and a sense of entitlement. Rotten fruit is as inedible as fruit that's still green.

Love and lust must cum together and stay together to be constructive. And this puts pressure on romantic relationships and artistic endeavors, especially in young people who

may not know or love themselves nearly enough to handle the many challenges of a lifelong relationship.

Here is the conversation verbatim between Eve and the serpent:

Serpent: “INDEED, HAS GOD SAID, ‘YOU SHALL NOT EAT FROM ANY TREE OF THE GARDEN?’”

Eve: “FROM THE FRUIT OF THE TREES OF THE GARDEN WE MAY EAT, BUT FROM THE FRUIT OF THE TREE WHICH IS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GARDEN, GOD HAS SAID, ‘YOU SHALL NOT EAT FROM IT OR TOUCH IT, OR YOU WILL DIE.’”

Serpent: “YOU SURELY WILL NOT DIE! FOR GOD KNOWS THAT ON THE DAY YOU EAT FROM IT YOUR EYES WILL BE OPENED AND YOU WILL BE LIKE GOD, KNOWING GOOD AND EVIL.”
[Genesis 3:4]

The serpent insinuates that what makes The Tree of knowledge different from all other trees is that this Tree is a metaphor for the name of the operating system for all of humanity. The serpent implies that this isn’t a real tree, any more than the serpent is real. Snakes can’t literally talk, and trees can’t literally make you good or evil.

The serpent couldn’t literally quote GOD. GOD’s WORD is so great that there’s no way to quote HIM and hold the whole truth in words. We have to paraphrase HIM, and in so doing we inadvertently misquote HIM. When GOD speaks HE speaks on many levels simultaneously. Each of HIS words carries the messages of:

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| 1. Wisdom | Judaism |
| 2. Love | Christianity |
| 3. Generosity | Islam |
| 4. Diversity | Hinduism |
| 5. Paradox | Buddhism |
| 6. Mystery | Taoism |
| 7. and nature | Indigenous beliefs |

You can only address those aspects of HIS/HIS/H I S WORD/WORD/W O R D that you’re ready and able to hear. Your religious background is only going to be able to give you a limited knowledge of what HE/HE/H E wants you to learn in life. The game is rigged. No faith or philosophy can claim to have it all. You’ve been out foxed. That’s one of the many truths that come from the forbidden fruit’s perspective. The more you know, the more you know how little you know.

Although Eve quotes GOD in saying that if they touch The Tree they’ll literally die, what she’s really trying to communicate is that she feels overwhelmed by the metaphor and is now confused that death, too, may not be real.

This indicates that Eve can’t discern between the literal and the metaphoric. It indicates that she’s so caught up in the emotional meaning of words that her interpretation of GOD’s edict says much more about her feelings of having been threatened by HIM and the fear that’s brought up in her than it addresses the truth of HIS intentions. Her perception of the line between the literal and the figurative is blurred.

From the head, you know you're going to die. Intellectually, you perceive life as having a beginning, middle and end. Time literally stops when you die in the objective sense of what time means to those who are alive.

But from the heart we may feel otherwise. The heart that loves life wants to believe that time and space aren't all there is to life. The heart knows in ways that the head can never successfully argue with. When the heart loves, it loves eternally. Wisdom of the heart is unlike wisdom of the head.

And this is why you need to develop a conscience. There's no other way to reconcile your head and heart without a conscience to guide you, unless you rely solely on religious dogma, something that even the religious institutions are finding ever more difficult to do in this new advanced age we live in.

When the serpent contradicts GOD by saying Eve won't die, it's speaking not only metaphorically; it's speaking from the standpoint of desire. Of course our feelings will agree with our desires rather than anyone else! But that only begs the question whether the two of them are right.

Everyone literally dies. But in terms of metaphorical understanding of Torah's message, the serpent is telling Eve that getting through her fear of GOD won't kill her. It implies that if she breaks through her fears, she'll come out of the watery world of emotion into the spiritual world of air where she'll be able to breathe free. This will make it possible to intellectually ground her. Doing so will make her more knowledgeable and powerful than she was before.

The serpent is telling Eve that overcoming fear will make her like GOD: fearless. In that sense, the knowledge of good and evil will ultimately remove her fear of GOD entirely. And the serpent is absolutely right. Moral knowledge exercises our conscience, making it stronger and more certain of GOD's loving intentions for us. And the more righteous we become in our effort to enjoy those rewards, the closer that brings us to HIM.

Proximity to your idea of GOD/GOD/G O D through righteousness is the only way to remove your fears. What the serpent omits to say is that she therefore ought to ask GOD permission to learn about the consequences of good and evil. That would have been the morally sound thing to do. But when our feelings conspire with our desires, all moral options go out the window. Our mind just stands still as Adam did with Eve before The Tree of knowledge in which the snake was probably still there hanging around. Our mind lets our heart make decisions for us.

Although old-fashioned interpretations of The Creation Story implied that the serpent was saying that GOD would be jealous of Adam and Eve if they achieved HIS power, this is utterly absurd. GOD is all wisdom, love and generosity of spirit. HE doesn't bestow HIS gifts on us to make HIMSELF jealous, but to help us improve ourselves. HIS gifts are pure and always given in a timely manner. It's what we do with HIS gifts that we must examine.

Shutting Up The Serpent

The serpent is always depicted in religious paintings as coiled around a branch or the trunk of The Tree of knowledge, and always very close to the forbidden fruit. A man's serpent {penis} lies coiled near his lower branches {legs} right next to his fruit {testicles}. It hangs flaccid with clumsy disregard for decorum and grace when a man walks around naked. His penis flops about with no support other than it's flimsy lifeline to the trunk of his body. Perhaps it thinks it can do anything it pleases in part because its grasp is so tight.

Dismemberment of the penis is an act of great anger and frustration that men at war sometimes perpetrate on their enemy. Before they went into battle ancient Greek soldiers were known to go through their towns dismembering and castrating marble statues.

Cutting off a man's penis is a physical act that expresses an emotional state of frustration at male power that then reflects man's uncertain, personal relationship with GOD. Fear of the power of HIS authority and HIS desire for us when death is imminent brings into question the edges of imagination where reality and metaphor meet. Imminent death {and eternal damnation} can make men afraid of other men's penis and testicles.

The *thought* of metaphorically removing the serpent from a man's Tree of knowledge to keep it from conversing altogether doesn't kill a man. It only dismembers him figuratively, shutting him up. Censorship, for example, is a form of dismemberment.

Dismemberment is a violent way to interrupt your enemy's desires at its source. It's a way of using body language to say something the biblically undereducated man can't put into words. It indicates that he hates the delivery system of his enemy's intentions and would like to cut short his conversation with him before it gets into the heart of his compatriots.

The atrocity of dismemberment has been committed physically on men throughout the ages, but even the thought of cutting off another man's penis and castrating him comes from a mind intent on making others feel powerless, emotionally useless and spiritually insignificant. It stems from a head {Adam} that's furious about the conversation his heart {Eve} has had with his own serpent {instrument of desire}. It's a clever, but criminal, way to try to circumvent the outcome in The Creation Story by separating Eve and the serpent to keep Adam from being tempted by forbidden fruit. The theory behind dismemberment implies that if a man's love {heart} and lust {penis} are disconnected once and for all, he'll never again have to worry about unlocking the secret of life.

Raping a man physically is equally, spiritually destructive. Forced sodomy attempts to violate the values of the serpent in The Creation Story by having one serpent shout out its importance over another. It emasculates a man to have another man's desires forced into his sphere of influence without his consent. In terms of desires and feelings, the rapist does get to finally *spit* it out, so to speak, but his anger and wishes reproduce the humiliation and degradation he was once subjected to himself. The humiliation and degradation of male-on-male rape defile the victim and the perpetrator alike. In the end, both will cry out "Why me?" albeit for very different reasons.

Emotional dismemberment upon the perpetrator (probably in youth) is usually the cause of his later rape of his victims. Emotional dismemberment ends the possibility of a civil conversation altogether. When a man is so emotionally cold to himself that he refuses to "talk" to himself except under the most violent of circumstances, i.e. rape, he's lost all sense of humanity. He's the one who's fucked for life. The victim is only penetrated in the moment.

What makes it so hard for men to talk to one another is the violation they suffered in their past and the fear of being misinterpreted in the future. They're embarrassed about relating to anyone that honestly, for fear of being misunderstood. Men worry that discussing sex means they want to have sex with the person they're talking to.

Men with lower self-esteem don't want other men to think they're sexually stimulated by them, when what they really want is an honest conversation about the forces at play within themselves. They want other men to understand that their excitement about the topic

is purely intellectual, emotional and spiritual. They're not interested in their penis being included in the conversation.

Castration, the removal of the testicles, is the third way, after dismemberment and rape, to twist men's words. The testicles are the physical representation of the forbidden fruit in the biblical metaphor. They symbolize the seat of pure power in man, the source of raw curiosity about how life is created before it's delivered to its destination.

The testicles are extremely sensitive and exposed; a reminder to every man that although we're tempted by pure power, we must reach for it gingerly. It's up to every man to protect his testicles from harm in the literal sense. And it's up to all men to protect one another with moral regard for society as a whole in the sociological sense. The underlying rule of law (and intent behind good sportsmanship) requires that if any guy is kicked in the balls every guy vicariously feels it.

Education is the only way we can defend ourselves individually and *en masse*. The man who doesn't understand the subtle nuances of words will probably become a victim of them. Everyone needs to be taught to protect himself from those who'd cut him off from the source of his own power.

There are physical sadists, emotional sadists and spiritual sadists. The physical sadists would enjoy crushing your testicles slowly to watch you squirm. The emotional sadists would like to dismember or castrate you to see you suffer without your delivery device {penis} or power {testicles} to love yourself. And the spiritual sadists would like to cut you off from your relationship with your GOD/GOD/G O D to try to convince you that you should give up all hope of believing in HIM/HIM/H I M.

Muslim terrorists are a good example of spiritual sadists. They wish to prove to the Jews and Christians that our beliefs in GOD/GOD are false; that only their belief in G O D is real. Paradoxically they're only proving the opposite. Good Muslim men are coming together to protect their genitals from the spiritual sadists in their faith who are determined to spiritually dismember and castrate anyone who defies them.

People need a philosophy of life to protect themselves from autonomy. Autonomy is in conflict with the Jewish tenet of freedom. Defunding public education and public television, homophobic rhetoric, anti-abortion legislation and harassing blacks are political approaches to emotional castration in an effort to maintain autonomy.

Turning the pursuit of knowledge into a luxury that only the wealthy can afford will force the little guy to "sing soprano." The less access men have to financial security, psychological comfort and spiritual education, the more the sadists believe they'll be able to control the masses. Nip the problem in the bud... Neuter the little guy, and he'll become docile... Well, that never works for very long.

When members of society conclude that homosexuality is a morally degenerate lifestyle, their fear of self-love is heightened because their fear of their own penis and testicles is heightened. Those "religious" fanatics who detest gay men can't account for the fact that they don't feel as bad about lesbianism. They simply don't realize how terrified they are that self-love will tempt them personally into having sex with another man. They're morally bound to hate their genitals. Therefore they're morally bound to hate themselves because there's no way to stop self-hatred above your belt once it exists below it.

The emotional and spiritual purpose of testicles isn't only to enhance the process of using them to create new life. The emotional purpose of your testicles is for you to

remember the awesome responsibility you've been given to advance the power of goodness. And the spiritual importance of testicles is to entwine your power with the other inner forces in yourself for the pure joy of creating and disseminating your love of being alive.

GOD created man in HIS image, and man recreates HIS image in his own image. It's no mistake a man looks as he does nude. And it's no coincidence mankind looks as it does naked – for we are living metaphors. When you look at how you feel about your body, you can see why you believe what you do.

Spiritual castration emasculates a man's curiosity about life, cutting him off from his ability to even yearn to discern good from bad. This leaves him a follower, a sheep, never a leader, never a shepherd. Spiritual castration teaches him to give up and do what he's told. A eunuch was an historical anomaly that today metaphorically describes the man who isn't able to even imagine what a joy it is to learn about the gift from GOD/GOD/G O D he has in having been given testicles.

Every man secretly sees himself as a eunuch from time to time. He figuratively hides his balls in his body cavity as needed, in the hopes that no one will know he has any. He has a perfectly adequate delivery system of power, but he has no will to use it when the circumstances are morally ambiguous to him. He'll talk a good talk {get an erection}, but he won't have anything to show for it {semen}. It doesn't take very much of the milk in a man to make babies, but it does require great knowledge of the secret to live to produce changes in the way he lives his life. The man who consistently figuratively pulls his balls behind his legs to make it look like he doesn't have any will find himself with much less juice from his fruits to make the changes in his life he dreams of.

From a metaphoric perspective you don't have to literally make babies to give your gift of life to the world. You can infuse the traits that life holds for you into whatever you choose to do. The question is not whether or not you can deliver {the length or girth of your penis}, but what you have inside to give {the quality and quantity of the life force you produce}.

The Creation Story teaches us how to give. If you're a giver, not a taker, you have to have power {serpent}, love {Eve}, intellectual direction {Adam} and something of value {fruit juice} that you must give yourself before you can impart that to others. If you have all the above, then let your conscience be your guide, for you can rest assured that GOD will then reveal your mission to you.

Women like to figuratively castrate a man when they think he's not listening to them. They know just how to hold men where it hurts; and men do, too, with one another. Everyone is willing to emotionally dismember, rape or castrate those who don't want to listen and do as they're told. Following, not just leading, is an art.

But we only accomplish conformity by spitefully making men fight for their masculinity. We make men afraid of being violated, rather than encourage them to give of their own free will. What's the good of having the goods if you're always being prodded to prove you've got them?

A man can claim he has no desire to become a better man, but the journey from boyhood to manhood is figuratively fraught with blows to every man's testicles that teach him to better himself or suffer the consequences. "Blue balls" are really sad balls (and every man know why).

In politics, as in life, power to penetrate the lives of others should not be based on the implied length or width of a politician's penis or the quantity of semen he produces. It should be based on the conscious integration he's achieved between the forces within him. The juiciness of his ethical regard for others and the sweetness of his ideas should be what tempt people to vote for him.

GOD didn't dismember, rape or castrate Adam for not listening to HIM. GOD isn't spiteful. HE merely questioned Adam to teach him to help him think about why he'd refused to listen to HIM in the first place. People who act like they're god use their power to punish rather than to teach, while thinking themselves great professors of moral conduct. The problem with unexamined power is that it gives authority a bad name.

Growing Up With A Pet Snake

Straight adolescent males like to *banter* with one another about their skills in *dialoging* with women. They like to boldly assert theories on how to have on a good *chat* with members of the opposite sex. Testosterone, the physical sap in the trunk of The Tree that helps make the juice in the fruit, motivates the adolescent penis to *shout* at those his serpent thinks can't hear {attract} it.

Adolescents get drunk on just thinking about discussing the powerful *words* they want to use to penetrate others. They're intoxicated with themselves. They like to figuratively get a hard on with one another through *girl talk* to suggestively measure who's got the bigger, better delivery system.

But they do so subconsciously. They don't want to bring their conversations to full consciousness because of the embarrassment it would cause them in discussing something so personal with other males. If straight youth could hear what part of them is really doing the talking, and what "it" was really saying, they might shut up or at least lower their voice a little.

The fear old men have of self-love at one end of our gender is countered at the other by the boldness of youngsters. Gay men try to politely point out the raw sexuality young, straight men elicit that's so unripe, as well as with the overly ripe sexuality that makes older, straight men so unattractive. But it isn't easy to make the point when straight males are so afraid of being *touched* in this way.

The fruit of self-love that hangs high on every man's Tree isn't usually ripe or within his grasp early in life. Every male generally has to pick the low hanging fruits of lust and competition amongst his peers to determine his worth and raise his esteem in his own eyes. The power the young man holds in his hands is merely self-adoration, a juvenile stage of self-ripening every mature man remembers well. Although adolescent boys complain a lot about blue balls, their balls are really green {unripe}.

When a boy's serpent *spits* out its first *words* {has an orgasm for the first time}, he may be overwhelmed by the sensation that accompanied the liquid love he produced. He may conclude he's sweet, ripe and ready for consumption, inside and out. He may give little thought to the power he possesses to produce life, or the STDs he might transmit that could cause death. He has no clue as yet to the emotional consequences the fruits of good and evil embody. All he knows is that he's just felt something he never felt before. And he becomes in awe of his own body. He doesn't associate anything happening below his waist with how GOD created him in HIS image.

When he tastes his sticky, sweet syrup of manly milk for the first time, he forgets the milk of human kindness. He forgets what his mother tried to teach him at the dinner table. The ability to ejaculate, see, taste and eat the source of the life within him may produce a great psychological change in a male that overwhelms his judgment. Unless a man is alerted to the spiritual association with the physical experience he took so casually when he was a juvenile, he may assume that the secret of life can't be address through figurative speech. He may become wedded to literalism in order to fend off guilt.

He may literally stop speaking to himself. And if a man doesn't speak to himself in the privacy of his mind, he can't be honest with himself. Honesty comes with candor. Candor comes with sincerity. And sincerity comes with authenticity. The man who refuses to develop a verbal relationship within himself is much more likely to feel a gnawing sense of dishonesty, insincerity and inauthenticity regardless of what he feels about his success or failure in the outer world. He may project that discomfort out onto the world around him, or he may sense it beneath layers of defenses against guilt from within.

Orgasm is the first physical evidence that a boy's body is no longer that of a child's. Now he has milk of his own to give to the world; proof positive that he's no longer an infant suckling milk from his mother's breasts. His own liquid love is the first gift he physically can give back to humanity, something he produces solely by himself. And most young men want the whole world to be open to their gift, literally and figuratively.

As a rule immature young men want women to open their vaginas to them, and they want men to bend over backwards for them. In other words, they want women to find them sexually attractive and men to acquiesce to their will in worldly matters.

But this sticky ooze isn't the first bodily product that he's tasted. He's certainly tasted his own tears, earwax, nasal mucus, blood, nails, callouses and cuticles, and maybe even his urine and feces. He's probably shared his blood with a friend to create a blood brother pact in which he literally gave the best of himself from within to prove his virtue.

The line between the literal {his container} and the figurative {his contents} is sublime. And his conscience has to learn where to draw that line in its own unique way based upon family, tradition, culture, language and generational morés.

The biological transformation in the body of the adolescent corresponds to the psychological transformation into manhood that leads him to think his father's power has finally been bequeathed to him. And the adolescent may react intensely against anyone who tries to tell him otherwise {especially his father}. He may experience the power of authority figures who are critical of him as more than a slap in the face; he may feel their criticism like a kick in the crotch. If so, he'll become hypersensitive to criticism because he correctly intuitis that it's always going to hit below the belt.

Ejaculation is the physical evidence that leads the adolescent male to wonder whether his whole body is a magical vehicle that will lead him to something more. With this new, physical sensation of orgasm that he'd previously only heard about, but couldn't possibly imagine until he'd experienced it for himself, the sensitive boy may question whether his body might actually be an instrument given to him by GOD to learn about life in new ways he could never have anticipated in childhood.

If he concludes that he's a spirit in a human form, he'll become spiritual in nature. If he's unsure about the connection between his body and his spirit, he'll become agnostic and look for more evidence before he decides. And if he doesn't believe his physical experiences are in any way more than just pleasant and unpleasant sensations, he'll become

an atheist – unless or until he's confronted with an encounter that elicits the voice within of a greater Authority than his own.

Organism is a boy's first clue that GOD doesn't live only in heaven; it's the juvenile mind's way of acknowledging that the spirit of GOD comes down on occasion to Earth. Orgasm is his first clue that rapture is real.

Achieving orgasms is so uniquely separate from all other sensations of the body that the discovery of the body's ability to produce them can easily beguile a boy into thinking he can talk more about the meaning of life on Earth than he really knows from personal experience. Sexual knowledge can turn a boy into a talking head. Without the humility learned at someone's knee in childhood, the adolescent may become the sort of true believer whose orgasms unconsciously impress him more than the natural achievements of GOD Almighty in the world around him. He becomes a dickhead in the opinion of his peers.

A boy needs to be taught how to develop a balanced relationship between his Eve and serpent. If he's too emotional about sex, he'll become overbearing and needy. If he's too unemotional about sex, he'll develop obsessions and compulsions over power to compensate for all that making love leaves missing in his life.

Orgasms represent the physical joy of giving, but they also represent a need to take responsibility for one's actions. They're more spiritually significant than a boy may first imagine in the way they manifest themselves physically. But before he can discover the spiritual importance of orgasms in discovering how to love GOD through sex, he's going to have to wade through their emotional significance in learning to love people despite his autonomous desire to have sex with them.

A boy can become a very angry Adam if he discovers he's been abandoned, betrayed and conspired against. He may not know where these A.B.C. problems of life come from, or who to blame for feeling so alone. He may eventually decide to blame himself for who he is, when what he's been through is completely normal – even if no one could explain it to him.

Over time, he may decide that life simply isn't as much fun as it was when everything was new and exciting. Even reaching orgasm can become habitual and uninteresting if you don't have enough of a reason to get excited. Drugs are temporarily helpful in producing excitement on the physical plane. But the body soon habituates to them, too. And the spiritual problem of the meaning of life {and orgasms} returns with a vengeance.

Unless you see sex as a metaphor for self-discovery, you're going to get bored with sex. And the only cure for self-boredom is self-love. Nobody can interest you physically, intellectually, emotionally, sensuously or spiritually enough to keep your interest forever. If you aren't interested in pursuing yourself, you aren't going anywhere with your relationships with others.

Your life comes to a screeching halt, and you don't even know why. It's as if someone slammed on the brakes, and although you looked around at who was sitting in the passenger seat of the vehicle you're driving, you can't even figure out how you came to such a sudden stop. Life may be a journey, but there are many stalled vehicles on the road waiting for roadside assistance.

Misunderstandings

The conversation the serpent holds with Eve led some males in the past to presume that women should be seen and not heard. They believed that women shouldn't talk back to men; that their point of view didn't count.

The character of Eve personifies every woman who's emotionally compliant before men. She doesn't question men who have knowledge about power. She naïvely listens and agrees to what she's been told by every talking serpent that hangs around her. Women today who still wish to emulate Eve will prefer that a man speak for them. But this is an old worldview that's quickly disappearing in the modern age. Even Republican women are tired of being left in the kitchen. They want to make their way back to the bedroom, while wondering if their worm has anything in common anymore with the old adder they chatted up many years before.

Today, a woman with opinions of her own will intimidate some men if she refuses to adhere to this ancient, outdated, Jewish, female, role model. A modern woman who's willing to use her knowledge of the heart wisely won't be unkind while expressing her opinions, but she'll give her opinions regardless of how she expects they'll be received. She'll understand how men sexualize criticism, and she'll shrug her shoulders, knowing that that's their problem.

Unbridled desire {penis problems}; lack of feeling {cold heart}; and faulty thinking {an infantile stage of psychological awareness} are weaknesses that should concern everyone. We need men, especially men in power, who can point out maturely how and where others are using their spiritual operating system for and against the system. Locking up serpents in ghettos, whether that's a Jewish serpent, black serpent or gay serpent isn't the answer.

Cynicism and scorn aren't tools used only by the spiritually ignorant and insensitive. The well intentioned endeavor to be kind-natured in their attitude and seek to help using rational arguments, not emotional ploys that evoke fear or intimidation. But they, too, may use cynicism and scorn on others without having the skill and insight to use it effectively on themselves.

If you realistically doubt your ability to change your mind, transform your heart and transcend your "self," you have every reason to be cynical of yourself. When you repeatedly see yourself giving in to temptations and bad habits, you have every reason to scorn yourself. But if you don't do so in words, you're not going to have any power over yourself. You're not going to be able to move forward despite your compromised state.

A man who isn't afraid to express his love or the power behind his desire to make his dreams come true is a good catch if he has the common sense to talk about himself with a willingness to listen to supportive feedback. A man who's willing to teach others using supportive compliments and philosophic insight is sexy and hot. He can express his sensuality in myriad ways that might be of some help to others. Men will admire a man like that, and women will adore him.

But you can't just copy such a guy without questioning your intentions. You have to acknowledge that your conscience isn't guiding you if you continually make decisions that aren't in your own best interest. You have to admit your head has been screwed up by your own dick if your desires are out of control. But you should also be able to laugh at discovering that your penis has so much longer a reach than you ever imagined.

Your behavior toward others obviously indicates that there are areas in your life where you express self-hate indirectly. Your heart just isn't all that in to you. You use you. You don't appreciate you.

Totalitarianism is the sociological endpoint of people with penis problems. They pretend to speak candidly, but they're really insincere. They overreach. They excite; they don't thrill. They're still afraid of Mommy and what she represents to the infant within them. At the root of tyranny lies a serpent spitting bullets. He's an outraged Hitler, a baby insisting that a woman touched his pride {penis} and joy {testicles} before he did. Such men are dangerous and in need of a spiritual "time-out" whether they want it or not.

Shockingly, you may be one of those men. You may have a totalitarian hold on yourself in some ways that you've obfuscated from your conscious mind. Your march to freedom {Exodus} in the biblical sense may be a long way off. In that case, The Creation Story is just the Genesis of your conscious understanding of how you operate.

Sex begins between our ears, not our legs. And when "it" goes in one ear and comes out the other, we're really describing the penetration of a man's mind with a penis. A "mind fuck" is precisely what the serpent in The Creation Story accomplished with Eve. And it did so without arms or legs, without ever laying a hand on her. This is yet one more reason why the serpent is described as beguiling.

Once you identify as Eve, one perpetrator of the crime, you can then identify with the serpent, the other. And, then, your conscience can admit that your mind is the third perpetrator of this crime against your own humanity. You "mind fuck" yourself all the time. The Creation Story is absolutely real, even though it literally never happened.

The difficulty in using metaphor wisely is that it requires a clever mind, a good heart and a judicious conscience. You've got to know right from wrong before you make claims about better and worse. And that all hinges on what you know about good and evil.

You've got to have a wise, loving and generous spiritual relationship with yourself before you can start to profess to others what your GOD/GOD/G O D wants for us all.

As Torah states, "THE SERPENT IS THE SUBTLEST OF ALL GOD'S CREATURES." And the myriad ways the power of the penis can become manifested in man's mind in healthy and unhealthy ways supports this conclusion. Some men listen to the voice of their serpent and hear a call to dominate their fellow man. Others hear the sirens of sensuality and wish to use its powers in the bedroom. A few will listen to the song of inspiration they're singing within to themselves, and acknowledge both the melodiousness of their tune and the wisdom of their own words. But it's a rare fellow, indeed, who's willing to admit that The Creation Story is warning him that he's his own worst enemy.

The physical attributes of a man's penis will shape his drive for worldly power if he's afraid to listen to his head, heart and soul. He'll think of himself as either too big or too small for this world. It behooves all of us, gay and straight men alike, to come to know ourselves in the biblical sense of THE WORD. There's no coincidence in the way GOD created any of us physically. Discover what your body means to you. By doing so you'll more authentically relate with yourself, and through yourself, with others.

Torah will return to the topic of penises later in Genesis in the story of Abraham when GOD makes HIS Covenant with Abraham that's contingent on circumcision. The rite of passage from this world to the next will become spiritually contingent on circumcision for Muslims and Jews. And in America circumcision has become culturally acceptable for many European-American Christians too.

Mind Over Emotion

Adam and Eve have vastly different agendas. Adam wants to be obedient to GOD; Eve wants to explore the garden fully. And thoughts and feelings are equally disparate. A man's thoughts can go one direction, and his feelings, quite another. What makes it even more complicated is that man's feelings and desires are always conspiring behind his back {unconsciously} with a plan of their own. Until his conscience questions his fantasies {the unrealistic or unstated collusion of his feelings and desires} it's not likely a man's willpower will be strong enough to intervene with superior moral regard for his own wellbeing. His better interests will be threatened.

There's a crude expression in Hebrew that loosely translates as, "When a man's penis is erect, his brains end up in his behind." In other words, lust gets men into trouble. So you'd better listen in to what your feelings and desires are whispering to one another because they may not always be considering what's in your best interest.

To figure yourself out, you need one eye focused out on the world, and one, in on yourself. You need one ear hearing what you're saying out loud; the other listening in to what you're feeling inside. And you need one nostril sniffing out others' intentions, and the other sniffing out your own.

We were all raised in a guilt-ridden environment. We were all taught to forgive and forget. But we have difficulty doing either. We'd all like to perform better in bed tonight, as well as make love not war tomorrow. But that requires that we get emotionally naked with one another, not just take our clothes off and roll around nude.

It's not about the size of your serpent, guys. It's not about how much it has to say for itself in its attempt to represent you. It's not how agilely it can climb other Trees, or whether it ungulates rhythmically and seductively as it utters its words. It doesn't matter whether it yearns to make its home in someone else's head, heart, soul or between his legs.

What's important is how far and wide your imagination can take you to help you embrace the union of your feelings and desires to bring your greatest good into other people's lives. Meaningful dialogues with others don't depend on your I.Q. Meaningful dialogues are in direct proportion to your emotional quotient {E.Q.}, the relationship between your feelings and desires. If you're not satisfied with what's going on in your bedroom; your cubicle at work; at school; or out on the playing field – the way to solve the problem begins within you, not around you. And you can fix most of your problems by yourself if you feel free enough to speak respectfully about yourself to yourself.

Misuse Of Power

One of the reasons why child molestation is so odious is that it confiscates the opportunity for a child to *converse* in the privacy of his own imagination without interruption. It destroys the implicit joy in a child asking and granting himself permission to enjoy this delightful form of *chitchat* without coercion from adults. It allows the child wonderment: the opportunity of discovering for himself the meaning of being a spirit in human form.

Every youngster deserves time and space to *converse* with himself without having others butt in. Relationships are the hardest thing to hold onto in life, and everybody deserves to be protected and encouraged in the development of the most meaningful and personal relationship of a lifetime – his relationship with himself when alone.

The crime of Catholic priests molesting boys lies in The Father role they tried to play. They overly identified with their role as our Father's emissary here on Earth. Male rapists give all men a bad name, but "religious" leaders who rape children give their GOD/GOD/G O D a bad name. It's a sully of HIS/HIS/H I S reputation by someone who claims to believes in HIM/HIM/H I M. It's equivalent to raping the Christ child. It's legally odious and spiritually unforgivable. Every child deserves to be protected from people who abuse their own power to get back at the GOD/GOD/G O D of their ancestors.

Religious leaders who blame gays for our queer ways don't understand their misuse of personal power. They don't understand the pain and sorrow they're going through within to be liked and loved by themselves. And they certainly don't understand the depth of the main metaphor of Moses.

Pronouns And Intimacy

Our Scripture is sacred because its meaning continues to unfold one generation after the next. When viewed with today's perspective on the importance of the individual's growth and development, Torah reveals a modern message on the self. Its characters even elucidate the production and development of inner intimacy through the Hebrew meaning of their names. {The meaning of the proper nouns in The Hebrew Testament is hardly ever discussed in Bible studies, let alone for personal insight and enlightenment.}

The relationship with the self is especially evident when plotting and charting the use of pronouns in Torah. Before making claims about adjectives such as "abominable" {an idea I'll go into at length in my discussion of The Book of Leviticus} it would behoove proponents of "that ol'-time religion" to first look at The Hebrew Testament's use of pronouns.

In The Creation Story, Torah implies that every boy is born an Adam without a sense of the first person singular pronoun "I." He can, as yet, only relate to himself in the third person as a "he." And, although Eve has the capacity to express a sense of "we" when referring to GOD's prohibition of eating from The Tree of knowledge, Adam appears to be much slower to develop this sense of team spirit.

The production of pronouns unfolds very slowly for the male characters in Torah. Adam's rudimentary use of the third person singular is a sign of man's psychological wiring and how his mental capacity develops only with age and experience. In other words, man's ability to express himself verbally is the result of emotional components that must come together before he can demonstrate higher-level cognitive skills. And the beliefs that are the result of these emotional abilities must be nurtured and given time to develop.

The second person pronouns {you} in Hebrew are gender specific. That means that in order for a speaker of Hebrew to speak directly to the person in front of him, he has to be able to demonstrate an understanding of gender and number. That requires an understanding of the four possible ways to express the word "you." Here is a diagram that elucidates this idea:

English	Hebrew	
Second person feminine singular	YOU	AT
Where are you {AT} going?		
Spoken to a female		

Second person masculine singular Where are you {ATA} going? Spoken to a male	YOU	ATA
Second person masculine plural Where are you {ATEM} going? Spoken to a group of men or a combination of genders	YOU	ATEM
Second person feminine plural Where are you {ATEN} going? Spoken to a group of females	YOU	ATEN

An infant in Israel has to learn the cognitive differences between these four words for “you” before he can begin to speak Hebrew. This process is no different today than it was 3,400 years ago when Hebrew was the spoken language of the ancient Israelites then. But every infant worldwide does the same regardless of the grammatical rules of its mother language. He just may not need to express that knowledge linguistically, depending on the grammar of his mother tongue.

The newborn views the world as though it were a dream or a movie. It’s totally consumed by what it sees. The first “character” it begins to identify as, separate from the others, is its mother. She takes the place in the linguistic center of its brain where THE WORD “AT” {“YOU” FEMININE SINGULAR} will emerge.

When, exactly, all four words for “you” are introduced in Torah isn’t coincidental. It occurs in the order given above, signifying that a male’s emotional awareness of those outside himself not only develops over time, but that it develops through a particular, gender and number progression.

Adam and Eve never say a single word to one another in the entire Creation Story. And, although in the next story it is reported that Cain has spoken to his brother Abel, there’s no direct speech between them.

The first time a male character addresses another human being directly occurs in Genesis 12, ten chapters later, when Abram addresses his wife in the second person. He says to Sarai, “I KNOW WHAT A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN YOU ARE.” This is the first use of the word “you” in Torah, the first example of direct speech between human beings. It’s THE WORD “AT” that’s employed to directly express the love of a man for his wife.

In the next chapter of Torah, Abram addresses his nephew Lot directly, demonstrating the capacity of a man to recognize the gender of another male. Abram employees the second person, masculine, singular “ATA,” saying, “LET THERE BE NO STRIFE, I PRAY YOU, BETWEEN ME AND YOU, AND BETWEEN MY HERDSMEN AND YOUR HERDSMEN.” [Genesis 13:8] Nowhere before this point in Torah had a male character addressed a masculine character directly. All communication using masculine pronouns had only been between man and GOD. This is the first time in Torah that a male uses the words “I” and “you” in a conversation with another male.

It isn’t until Genesis 18:5 that THE WORD “ATEM” {SECOND PERSON, MASCULINE, PLURAL} is used. Abraham addresses three strangers directly by inviting them into his home, demonstrating in the psychological context that man is now at the stage where he’s

developed the linguistic ability to acknowledge more than one male at a time. “I WILL FETCH A MORSEL OF BREAD AND COMFORT YOUR HEARTS.”

This encounter with several men occurs after Abram has demonstrated he can use THE WORDS “AT” and “ATA,” which acknowledges his ability to feel deeply enough about a female and a male that he can put those feelings into words. It also occurs just after he’s been circumcised, and circumcision is a rite that addresses inclusion in the tribe.

The cognitive ability to produce three of the pronouns for “you” in grammatically correct Hebrew is in indirect appreciation of Abram’s emotional development. Using these words correctly without having to think first about which form of “you” to use occurs at the deepest level of linguistic production.

In fact, Abraham’s ability to use the second person, masculine, plural word for “you” {ATEM} only happened:

1. After GOD changed Abram’s name to Abraham
2. GOD presented him with HIS Covenant, an eternal promise to his descendants through Sarah, the woman he loved
3. Sarah circumcised him

In order for Abraham to open himself enough emotionally to acknowledge society {more than just one man in his immediate surrounding}, he had to go through a physical change, emotional transformation and spiritual encounter with GOD. He had to have a change of heart that gave him the ability to speak wisely and grammatically correctly.

But the greatest mystery in linguistic production actually lies in THE WORD “ATEN” {“YOU” SECOND PERSON, PLURAL, FEMININE}. Logically speaking, you’d assume that because women generally care for baby boys, boys would learn THE WORD “ATEN” even before THE WORD “ATA.” Torah refutes this notion.

The only interaction between a man and more than one woman in Torah occurs near the end in Chapter 27 in The Book of Numbers when the five daughters of Zelophehad address Moses with regard to their inheritance rights. After their father died, these women were left without a male heir and petitioned Moses to ask GOD to consider their claim for Land in Israel. Although GOD acknowledges their claim, there’s no direct communication between Moses and these women. THE WORD “ATEN” is never literally expressed, only implied.

This suggests (1) that man’s awareness of the needs of women {one half of society} is so high a level of moral conduct and transformation of the heart that Moses must petition GOD to achieve it. And (2) that man’s ability to understand and identify with the thoughts and feelings of more than one woman at a time is so emotionally complex that men only come to this awareness late in life. The infantile, childish, juvenile and immature stages of psychological development of man don’t even recognize the importance of this achievement in themselves.

When we look at one moral aspect of history {how men have treated women}, particularly in the realm of men making and keeping vows of fidelity, we clearly see a very slow development in man’s moral behavior. Men have made promises to more than one woman at a time without acknowledging those women as a whole.

Many men treat women as a series of “AT’s,” not as “ATEN.” They don’t recognize how women on the whole feel because their own heart is fractured, not whole. The philanderer

abuses one woman at a time because he doesn't recognize the spiritual importance of holding all women in his heart with moral regard, not just each woman individually.

The spiritual importance of THE WORD "YOU" {ATEN} is derived from loyalty, but that loyalty has to begin with an overriding love for all your feelings, including your feelings of spite and revenge. And that brings up moral issues of vindictiveness that must be addressed to be understood.

The loyalty women are conditioned to show for men is often stronger and more enduring than the loyalty men generally show for women, perhaps because women have been conditioned to admit their feelings of spite, revenge and vindictiveness, while men have been conditioned to deny them.

Heroism begins within. It's a relationship with all your feelings for yourself. For a man to demonstrate heroism out in the world, he has to act with emotional integrity. Heroism is the result of a relationship of "I" to each and every "you" in the biblical sense of these WORDS. Heroism begins as a relationship within the self where "I" can relate to "you" {ATEN}. And this is a level of self-intimacy that some men never achieve. They'd rather bite off their nose to spite their face than pick that much forbidden fruit.

This is most clearly evident in society in our {male} assumption that the issues of birth control and abortion require our moral input. Our segment of society {the male Trees of knowledge} wants to solve this problem even though we don't have the female human body or emotional hardwiring women {Trees of life} have to make these decisions.

Torah's description of GOD having created woman from one of man's ribs doesn't give men reason enough to make decisions concerning the female body. If man had been made from the rib of a woman, I wonder how we'd feel if women debated what we can or cannot do with our body.

Woman is The Tree that bears real fruit {babies}. She is a Tree of life, while man is The Tree that bears fruit figuratively. He is a Tree of knowledge. Man's seed contributes to the bearing of human fruit, but GOD gave woman, not man, dominion over bringing life into this world. It's "chutzpadik" {Yiddish: cheeky, audacious} for men to make decisions about birth control and abortion. These issues should only be female issues.

Men who insist on arguing against a woman's right to choose are indirectly saying that they are Trees of knowledge, and therefore they know what's best for Trees of life.

"Us" And "Them"

Although Eve was able to use the first person plural {we} right from the start, the production of this pronoun by a male character doesn't occur until Abram can produce THE WORD "ATA" {YOU: MASCULINE SINGULAR}. It's in the very same sentence that Abram is able to express a sense of unity with his nephew Lot using THE WORDS for "YOU" and "WE." "LET THERE BE NO STRIFE, I PRAY YOU, BETWEEN ME AND YOU; AND BETWEEN MY HERDSMEN AND YOUR HERDSMEN; FOR WE ARE BROTHERS." [Genesis 13:8]

This achievement isn't repeated in Torah until nearly the end of Genesis when Joseph, a great-grandson of Abraham, describes his dream to his half-brothers. "THERE WE WERE BINDING SHEAVES IN THE FIELD." [Genesis 37:7]

Abram's ability to use the first person plural pronoun to acknowledge his sense of "we" with the world took 13 chapters in Genesis, something Eve demonstrated she was capable of doing in Genesis 3. And for Joseph to use the first person pronoun on his immediate family took 37 chapters of Genesis.

And even more ironic is the fact that Lot never did anything to reciprocate his uncle, Abram's, generosity and assistance. And Joseph's brothers later betrayed Joseph despite his concern for them.

"We" is a biblical pronoun loaded with strife. Emotional investment in the verbal production of the word "we" often leads to disappointment or downright betrayal. Therefore, it's safe to say that trust is difficult for men to feel and express among themselves.

When viewing the production of pronouns in Torah as an example of the emotional development that leads to a cognitive ability expressed linguistically, Torah implies that the personal meaning of every word is a monumental achievement that must be made internally before you can sincerely use your words on others with heartfelt intention.

I can also make the case that life is a spiritual vocabulary-building experience. Until you know the meaning of words from your heart and soul you haven't learned to speak in a way that will make your prayers meaningful. You're just mouthing the words you utter to your GOD/GOD/G O D.

The concept of "we" is an achievement in males that reflects the transition from boyhood to becoming a man. It's hardly a surprise that the history of mankind has been so fraught with violence and brutality when you consider how long it takes for Torah to introduce a character who can speak to his brothers from his heart using the first person plural.

Before a man can create healthy relationships with others, he has to develop them within himself. If you feel connected to your family, but they don't feel that way about you, there's nothing you can do to accelerate that sense of "we" in them. Nothing would hold us back as a society from teaching one another to trust if we understand that emotional dynamics begin at the core of the individual. Until there's a "we" in you, you'll never be able to extend that trust to another living soul. It all begins as an inside job.

The spiritual seeker slowly develops from an inner "me" to an "I/you" relationship. But going from there to an inner sense of "we" is a day-by-day struggle that takes many years. As you turn the stranger within you into "I," you move closer to your inner "we." A spiritual description of the word "confidence" could be stated as the pronoun "I" in a process of becoming "we."

Guilt At The Core

Before eating from the forbidden fruit, Torah says "ADAM AND EVE {were} NAKED AND WITHOUT SHAME." [Genesis 3:7] But after eating it they realize they're naked, and so they cover their genitals with leaves.

The metaphor presented in this quote is 'emotions as physical nudity.' When a man's feelings are exposed without his consent, he feels naked and ashamed. He feels emotionally raped, penetrated by strange eyes, violated. When his feelings are laid bare before others he returns to awareness of his early childhood, reminding him of the time when his mother eyed him nude. He feels infantilized, and that's painful to bear. Nobody wants anyone to hold unfair advantage over him, especially not a woman who might use that knowledge to ridicule him. That would only make him more distrusting of women who are working to wrest power away from men.

The conspiracy theory straight men unconsciously hold up to women began with Eve tempting Adam to pick the fruits of knowledge of good and evil. It has turned into a

psychological suspicion in modern men that has to be put into words for all men to understand it. Eve couldn't have conspired against Adam if he was right there when she picked the forbidden fruit, and could have picked it himself if he'd wanted to.

The theory of "feminine wiles beguiling men" implies that with one hand women figuratively stroke the penis {serpent} of men to give men the pleasure of feeling agreed with. But their other hand is firmly grasping their testicles {fruit}, squeezing them as need be to manipulate male guilt to get them {women} what they want. Such a conclusion was once easy to sell on men who hadn't read The Creation Story carefully enough.

The feelings of infants are raw and brutally bare for all to see. A baby emerges from his mother's vagina and begins to suckle at her breast. He feels no shame at being physically nude and emotionally naked before her. Nor is he ashamed of presenting her with his waste products or spitting food onto her. His physical intimacy with everyone is devoid of any awareness of emotional consequences for the way he acts. He knows no shame. In this way he's more like an animal than a human being. And that's one of the reasons why babies are so cute and cuddly. Their nakedness makes us want to protect them.

Nudity is a physical state of being that leaves man feeling vulnerable. But *nakedness* is an emotional state of being that leaves him vulnerable in a whole other way. When we become aware of our nudity, we cover our body with clothes, armor, a mask etc. But where we become aware of our nakedness, we try to cover it up with denial or blame rather than allow our vulnerability to be exposed.

The uncomfortable feelings that arise when reminded of our physical intimacy with our mother in infancy are common to us all. In deference to memory of our relationship with her, we try to do what we can to treat others tactfully and respectfully. We try not to remind each other of the shame we felt as toddlers when we realized our mother was looking at us critically, as though she could see right through us. It was then that we first realized we were naked, not just nude, before her. It was then that we decided we weren't comfortable being fully nude and naked in front of her any longer. And so we covered our genitals and parts of our heart from her prying eyes.

Part of learning the spiritual depth of the meaning of the pronoun "we" is to be tactful and respectful to others when it comes to the kinds of memories we all share. We all have an inner "we" that's very fragile, distrusting, and in the process of being formed. Singling out individuals or groups has a way of depleting our own efforts to grow the word "we."

Everything bad that happened to you in early childhood made you feel as though time was against you. Every time you were reprimanded, it brought back memories of that horribly painful moment when you were born. That was the nightmare as a toddler you tried to forget, the struggle you have to work on now to remember.

You may have motivated yourself to forget the past when you were very young, but now you have to motivate yourself to go back to clean up your beliefs about this world that you created long ago. The evidence at that time led you to conclusions about life that no longer apply anymore. To overcome the infantile side of yourself, you have to change your mind, transform your heart and transcend your past. Everything you've done thus far has moved you forward toward manhood and away from that uncomfortable moment when you emerged from your mother's womb.

The feelings of superiority or inferiority you hold can be examined to discover the conclusions you drew about life in the past. The more you can find the "we" in "me" today,

the more you'll understand how every "I" is a composite of one "i" after another that made you grow to become who you are now.

Whether our Teacher began your lessons in infancy, childhood, adolescence or early adult years – go back with HIM to whatever lessons in life he wants you to review. You'll be amazed at how your past can become a resource for a better tomorrow. You'll be amazed how much more a part of humanity you can learn how to feel.

The concept of time is no different than the concept of space. Just as there's inner space that's subjective and outer place that's objective, with a border between the two that can appear to be like a wall, a membrane or an electric fence – there's a sense of time that flows within us, and another sense of time that we share with the world.

Objective time is easy for some people to conform to, while it's difficult for others. Some are always respectfully punctual. Others are consistently late. And there are even those who'll tell you that if they're only five minutes early they feel like they're late. Objective time is actually more subjective than some think.

Spiritual time begins when you're born and ends when you die. Spiritual time is personal and emotional. It's the sense of time that flows quickly or slowly because you perceive it that way. If time seems to crawl when you're alone, you may find it difficult to be alone with yourself. If, on the other hand, you can't wait to get away from people to be alone again, you may not be the person some others may have wanted you to be.

History has a lot to do with spiritual timing. History, the time we measure as a written account of the world around us, was as much dependent on coincidence and good luck as sound thinking and preparedness. There's always a question whether time is on your side or against you. Objective and subjective time are GOD's quiet, little contributions to the game of life that are always on HIS side. If you need more time, you're going to have to learn how to earn it.

GOD didn't create the objective world in six literal days. HE created your subjective world in six metaphoric days. The formation and development of your inner world was revealed to you after birth in weekly segments as a reminder of your moral accountability to GOD throughout your lifetime.

If you took the moral importance of the Jewish seven-day week for granted in the past, you can adjust that conclusion with spiritual insight here and now. In stating that the world was created in six days, Torah is describing the formation of the spiritual timing that brought a unique and personal rhythm to your life. This is why Torah was divided into 52 segments and why Jews study it a week at a time.

Your subjective sense of time has a powerful effect on how you resonate with others. When you feel that the rhythm of your life is out of sync with everyone else's or a segment of society, you behave differently at certain times and with certain people. Becoming aware of how subjective time works for you or against you is important in coming to love yourself despite the limitations you have.

Inner time is a form of self-knowledge that provides us with a greater, intuitive understanding of what our purpose in this world will be. Inner time is as subjective as inner space. The hours and minutes in a day affect us differently individually as well as differently as groups of people. You have to find the courage to love the time you have on Earth in your own way and through your own culture and rhythm. You have to learn to use your knowledge of time and space from within before you can learn to love yourself wisely and feel you're a constructive member of world history.

Time is measured literally on the clock when we need to be objective. But the effect of objective time on our inner rhythms will be measured emotionally as pleasant or unpleasant depending on the circumstance. This is an instinctive reaction that has to come to consciousness before you can use subjective time intuitively and wisely. This is the reaction that comes to consciousness in an infantile manner that we must all learn to handle expertly, as does a mother.

Impatience is the result of being out of conscious touch with the subjectivity of time. Impatience is a virtue when it comes to wishing to see the world advance, but you've got to internalize your impatience to discover the wisdom of impatience at its source. If not, you're going to blow up when you should chill, and chill when you should blow up. Therefore, impatience ought to be monitored by your conscience, not your head or heart.

Guilt Over Time

The world tells us to "screw guilt." But we can't. The more we ignore guilt, the greater it grows. Guilt shouldn't be disregarded because it can't be dispensed with. Guilt is the spiritual energy source behind all intellectual, emotional, and sensual motivations. Guilt leads us to ask questions about our past. Questions lead us to wonder about our future. And wonder leads us to a stronger sense of belief in the way our world is unfolding right now.

People say, half tongue-in-cheek, that Jews invented guilt and Catholics spread it around. We didn't. Guilt is universal. Guilt is GOD-given. Everyone feels guilty. The Jews were just first to recognize it in The Creation Story and talk about embarrassment of the body as something people have a natural tendency to conceal from GOD.

Guilt is the juice in the fruit of evil from The Tree of knowledge. {Jesus will later associate love with the fruit of goodness from The Tree of knowledge.} There's love in everything good you've experienced, as well as guilt in all the mistakes you've made. It's only when you realize you feel guilty about everything you do and loving about everything you don't do that you realize how important it is to make your conscience your guide.

Everyone agrees we should feel guilty about the things we do wrong, misunderstand or ignore. And once we do feel guilty, we agree (on paper) that we should apologize, try to correct our mistakes and make amends where and when needed. These are the proper ways to assuage our guilt. This is the way to turn guilt into wisdom.

The problem, however, is that the feeling of guilt gets more complicated when you feel guilty for thinking you're not doing enough good. Some think they need to make up for their mistakes with an extra dose of goodness to make sure they have a reserve for the next mistake they make. Some have a tendency not to want to be outwardly rewarded for the good they do, perhaps out of fear that any self-acknowledgement of their goodness will discount their efforts. In the end, it looks to me like many don't know what they have to atone for in themselves, so they do good willy-nilly.

I overeat to assuage my guilt at how badly I treat myself. And I celebrate food without enough good reason, mourning my losses with even more food as compensation. If there were one word I'd use to describe the taste of forbidden fruit, I'd say that it tastes guilty. And this is why it can't be washed down with copious amounts of self-love. It can only be understood for what it is.

People just don't know themselves deeply enough. They therefore suffer from low self-esteem and feelings of guilt for reasons that they can't easily access in the moment. It's only when they discover what's really wrong with them in retrospect that they can atone

for some of how they habitually behave. In this way, they take one step forward with guilt and then bring the other foot forward with love. But later they find they have to take a step back with redemption, thus making their way through life slower than they might have expected: two steps forward, one step back.

When Adam and Eve are caught having picked the forbidden fruit, they demonstrate their sensitivity to guilt in their own ways. And although the word guilt isn't used in the story, it's implied and very clearly depicted in the storyline. {I'll go into the separate ways Adam and Eve model guilt in detail a little later.}

Love will never conquer the world without the power of wisdom by its side. And even wisdom and love aren't enough to bring peace to this planet. It takes generosity of spirit to love wisely. And it actually takes a *very* charitable nature to embrace wisdom and love. Nobody likes a good example. That, too, makes them feel guilty...

Wisdom is like the skin of the forbidden fruit. Love is like the meat, and generosity is what you can expect to find at the core. But guilt is the juice of the fruit. Until you understand the combination of tastes that make up guilt, you won't understand the dynamics that affect your spiritual efforts in inner time and space.

A New Introduction To Guilt

Although my next statement is well supported in The Creation Story, I'm going to state my conclusion and then go back to show you how I reached it. This will make it easier for you to follow the evidence for my argument.

Guilt is experienced in three ways, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. The guilt we experience about matters of our body is called: embarrassment. The guilt we feel regarding our character development is called: shame. And the guilt surrounding the development of our conscience {soul} is called: humiliation.

These are the three fundamental aspects of guilt that are cleverly embedded in The Creation Story. After Adam and Eve eat the fruit from The Tree of knowledge of good and evil, they look at each other, realize they're naked in the physical sense of having no clothes on {nude}, and cover their genitals with leaves. They realize their genitals are exposed and are *embarrassed* by it.

Then they hear GOD approaching, and hide from HIM amongst the trees. They're now two Trees hiding among other trees. They've had a little more time to think about what they did that they shouldn't have done, and are *ashamed* of themselves. So they hide their whole body using the strategy, "out of GOD's sight, out of HIS mind."

And finally GOD calls to them and confronts each of them individually, at which point Adam accuses GOD and the woman HE gave him of having betrayed him. He *humiliates* himself before GOD with blame and accusations rather than take responsibility for his error of judgment. GOD simply asked Adam to account for his behavior, but Adam, in turn, blames HIM and Eve. And when GOD asks Eve what she's done, she then *humiliates* herself by blaming the serpent instead of taking responsibility for what she chose to do.

Embarrassment: The First Level Of Guilt

Every Adam is banished from the paradise of infancy at that point in subjective time when he comes to feel embarrassed by his body while nude in front of his mother. He'll then leave the Eden of infancy subjectively, and move out into a larger world with more complex problems to solve.

Embarrassment is the emotional sign that a child has realized he's physically unique and separate from his mother. And, although she's accustomed to seeing him nude, he's no longer comfortable having her see his genitals exposed. Embarrassment is the physical sensation of guilt that distinguishes the child from the infant.

Grown men and women aren't embarrassed in showing their genitals to one another. In fact, they delight in doing so. There's no reason to feel guilty about carnal knowledge. Knowledge of the pleasures of sex is divine. The genitals are first and foremost a reminder to us that the joy of making love was freely given to all human beings, a sensuous gift we don't have to earn; one we need only appreciate.

Our genitals aren't an embarrassing part of the human body because we disobeyed GOD. Our genitals are embarrassing only because of the confusion in infancy between that special woman's role in our life as mother *and* wife. But this infantile conclusion about our mother's roles need not interfere with a healthy sex life when we grow up. We need only recognize that we must separate the functions of women in our life. As we grow into childhood and have female teachers and other female role models, we learn to discern between the role of mother and wife. In so doing, we learn to understand the importance of embarrassment and its effect on every aspect of our spiritual development.

The word "art" in Hebrew is "OMANUT." And the word "faith" is "EMUNAH." They're not only semantically related; they're spiritually related. The art of learning to love requires faith in The Old Testament as an operating system that won't fail you. The art of every Moses in becoming a *righter* of his life will lead him to see himself as the *writer* of his life.

The sensations of infancy can lead to great emotional and spiritual rewards later in life if you have faith that it's all part of a spiritual process; that you aren't going to be dropped along the way. This is the essence of Judaism. This is the secret sauce that makes Torah timeless and unique.

It takes time to understand why life unfolds as it does. It takes time for guilt to lead a man to question his personal history and mystery: HIS story and my story. And it takes even more time to question ourselves to achieve answers on a daily basis we can build on.

Transforming Yourself Through Embarrassment

Transforming yourself through embarrassment is a process that leads to the spiritual achievement we refer to as modesty. The toddler begins to feel embarrassed when nude, so he moves through his discomfort by subsuming his will to the {typically female} authority figure at that time of life. She guides him in overcoming his embarrassment by training him to use the toilet and conceal his genitals with clothing. Her relief at his ability to achieve these skills provides him with emotional relief as well as physical proficiencies. The toddler learns to love his mother because she teaches him how to overcome embarrassment with life skills. But through this process she's indirectly teaching him the spiritual virtue called: modesty.

These life lessons for the toddler then go beyond the bathroom and bedroom to include the kitchen where the toddler learns to feed himself. In the dining room he learns to express himself with his family in socially appropriate ways. And in the living room he learns to conduct himself with strangers to their home. The toddler discovers that every room in his house has a purpose that's spiritually tied to the process of transforming embarrassment into modesty. And he instinctively divides inner space into his inner house, a place that

mirrors his outer world, a space that houses many rooms, each with a special, spiritual purpose he's curious to learn about.

Each room in the toddler's inner world is decorated with observations about his outer world that will create *ideas* about the meaning of life. Many of these ideas will unify each room to create conclusions that will be consistent and in harmony with his experiences. These inner rooms will be connected by hallways that will develop concepts that will unite the child's knowledge under one roof.

Concepts will eventually be wired with general hypotheses about life for the adolescent that will bring a sense of power and mastery to his inner abode. As a precocious, young man, he'll then cut *theories* through his inner walls about the way life should be organized outside himself to create windows. As he looks out on the world in adulthood, he'll achieve a greater view of the world than his parents could see.

These openings out onto the world will let light in that will illuminate him to his personal purpose in being here. And if he should be lucky enough to have created skylights, they will allow him to let in the light of GOD/GOD/G O D.

The toddler lives in an inner home that mirrors his parents' home. His inner domicile will become the spiritual architectural underpinnings for his future philosophy of life. As a child, he'll leave home to go to primary school where he'll discover strangers whose inner house is quite different from his own. Much later in life, he'll realize the similarities behind the organization of the inner abode of everyman, and will return to his own inner home as a spiritual contractor with the new ideas the world gave him with which to remodel his inner residence with the goal of creating domestic bliss.

Adolescents often assume they know so much about their mind/body connection that they think they can easily eliminate embarrassment altogether or circumvent it with machismo mannerisms. They try to imply they know their way around inside themselves. But posturing self-esteem doesn't overcome the feeling of embarrassment; it merely postpones the value of the lessons in learning modesty until later in life when, as an adult, he realizes he didn't know shit about himself when he was a teenager.

Macho young males often complain about feeling betrayed by love when their sexual relationships sour. Unripe fruit always looks a lot better than it tastes. The intensity of the desire for intimacy in teenagers can't compensate for their lack of emotional depth. Overcoming embarrassment with sex instead of modesty is a natural stage of life. You can't form deep mutual bonds of intimacy with your partners if you don't yet feel at home within yourself. Adolescents don't realize how important it is to transform embarrassment into modesty by getting naked with themselves, interspersed with getting nude with others. (And grown-ups who behave in a juvenile manner suffer from the same mistake.)

The juvenile male doesn't realize that those who are psychologically immature will seek out partners who'll babysit them. They won't be ready to consciously face their existential loneliness while alone with themselves. They'll be too embarrassed. They'll seek the company of others to replace a relationship with themselves they aren't yet emotionally strong enough to fully explore.

Sexiness and sensuality are the result of modesty, not immodesty, as many would claim. It's by overcoming embarrassment with modesty that we find the freedom to express our body's desire for authenticity. Modesty makes it possible to be yourself. Those who've learned to love their body have a physical freedom to use in expressive and sensuous ways that the uptight can only envy. If you can see yourself as a physical being, and like what

you're looking at beneath the exterior, it's because you're well on your way in transforming embarrassment into modesty.

The path to self-love can't even be acknowledged until you've addressed the first level of guilt: embarrassment. Love of your body grows as you face the physical embarrassment caused by aging. While making a lifelong commitment to strive for modesty in your relationship to that part of yourself others see, you experience many intimate moments with your body that you may not even be able to share with another human being.

The more you hold, not hide, your respect for your body, the more comfortable you'll become in your own skin. A man's body can be a great source of self-love if he knows how to use it. And that self-respect can then be shared with one, other, special, human being to create a fabulous sex life over a lifetime. This is the promise and goal of monogamy.

As every spiritual seedling grows into a Tree of self-knowledge, there are transformations that will take place along the way. Modesty is a leaf that figuratively unfurls in the springtime of life. Modesty is a little factory that turns embarrassment into a spiritual energy source that nurtures your Tree during the growing season. Modesty is spiritual photosynthesis. It turns the guilt called embarrassment into liquid love; sap that permeates the sprout {child} and sapling {adolescent} down to their roots. Modesty is the miracle in man's nature that makes him physically attractive. Modesty gives the spring season personal, universal and eternal meaning. (And the lack of modesty looks like the winter branches that leave The Tree exposed and bare.)

The leaves in The Creation Story that Adam and Eve used to conceal their genitals are symbolic of the modesty men and women use to overcome their embarrassment before one another. It's the physical hint Torah gives us to a spiritual process.

Adam and Eve look at each other nude, and they're embarrassed because they don't know *themselves*, not because they don't know each other. They can't know one another in the biblical sense of THE WORD because they *don't* know themselves. Once you do know yourself this intimately, you aren't going to make babies without planning the event carefully.

In The Creation Story Adam and Eve both choose to cover themselves with leaves to hide their embarrassment just as a branch of a Tree blushing conceals its naked branches with new growth in the early spring.

The embarrassment of not knowing yourself unfurls in pale-green shades of unawareness in the toddler. His parents walk him through this process through training procedures, even if the parents don't consciously realize or choose to verbally tell him what he's going through. The toddler will be expected not only to take good care of his body all his life, but also to do so modestly. The older he becomes, the more physically and emotionally pleasing society hopes he'll become.

The refining of embarrassment into modesty is enough to make anyone realize the importance of guilt. But body-knowledge, like body language, is something you have to attain by yourself and see for yourself. You can admit you have feet of clay intellectually, but until you experience that truth emotionally and metaphorically, it won't be as meaningful.

Self-knowledge comes from an intimacy with yourself that no one else can give you. It can only be pointed out by those who care about your wellbeing. GOD does a far better job of pointing these things out through nature, although HE leaves it up to us to make the connections and help one another achieve awareness of HIS plan.

Modesty And Motherhood

Embarrassment is a feeling that occurs in both mother and child that signals to them that they're ready to physically relate to one another more modestly. This transition may begin with *pain* when her son develops teeth and begins to bite her breasts. Or this transition may begin with *suffering* when others tell her that she's dallying at this stage in her son's development.

When the toddler decides of his own accord to use a cup rather than a bottle; a toilet instead of wearing diapers; and dressing himself – he's demonstrating his willingness to transcend his embarrassment with modesty. He acquires these social skills, not only in an effort to conceal his genitals from his mother, but also to transcend the embarrassment of depending on her to get other needs met. By doing things himself he reaps the rewards of privacy and independence. He begins to identify with those older than himself who behave similarly. He shows, rather than says, that he wants to grow up to be modest like his mother and others around him.

A toddler will continue to learn to transcend embarrassment through other aspects of personal hygiene that will include choices with regard to diet and exercise. And the lessons in modesty will continue, getting more complex with age until he's finally physically ready to overcome his embarrassment sexually.

As a mother guides her infant/child/adolescent through his lessons in embarrassment, she, herself, goes through additional life lessons of her own and the possibility of hypocrisy in not practicing what she's preaching. With every leaf of modesty that bursts forth on the branches of her son's Tree, a mother finds more reasons to be proud of him, and, in turn, hopefully, of herself.

Vanity, Thy Name Is...

If you're very sensitive to the emotional discomfort of having a body, you may choose to glorify your body instead of your struggle for modesty over embarrassment. This creates the spiritual challenge called: vanity. Vanity is a normal, spiritual, posturing technique that signals emotional discomfort at this first of three levels of guilt.

Vanity demonstrates that you see yourself as beautiful outside (if not yet within). Once you've gone through the second level of guilt {shame}, it's much easier to go back and clean up the embarrassment you may feel over having shown off your physical beauty in a world where many aren't as physically blessed as you. When you're able to use your body with expressive gesture, yet without guilt, you're truly modest. Then you don't have to posture false modesty. {This is what separates those who can simply *move* from those who can truly *dance*.}

Real beauty begins within as an attitude of acceptance and tolerance for your character. Once you feel secure with your inner beauty, vanity slips away naturally. When you ripen slowly from the inside out, the skin of the fruit shines with a glow from the juice in the meat beneath it.

"Vanity: thy name is woman" was an accusation in the past to keep women under male domination. In the past men were encouraged to project their vanity onto women and then to embarrass and ridicule them for being vain, instead of owning their own vanity.

Everyone who's vain is struggling with embarrassment at the ground of his being. But vanity isn't gender related. It's a sign that you can't yet consciously handle the guilt of being a spirit going through the physical experience of being human. Vanity is the

audacious evidence of not being able to freely admit you're in a new vehicle you don't yet fully know how to operate.

Birth Control And Abortion

In the last century, science made it possible for women to reap the rewards of reliable birth control, releasing them from the bondage of unwanted childbirths. And when financial constraints in modern times made it necessary for women to enter the male work force, society relaxed its attitude toward them appearing in public pregnant.

We transcended our embarrassment of the female body with greater modesty out of necessity. As it became necessary for women to go into a "man's world," men had to own some of the projection of the vanity they'd previously deflected onto women. Women's participation in the workforce has been a spiritual achievement in modesty that we've all earned and benefited from. We've all, thereby, reaped the rewards of breaking through this projection. Every expression of equality amongst the sexes is a sign of our growing modesty.

The issue of terminating a pregnancy didn't originate when women entered the workforce, and it didn't go away just because the Supreme Court decided in favor of abortion rights for women. The issue lingers today as an emotional question of collective guilt that our society still faces. But the real question isn't "when life begins," as people are fond of endlessly arguing. The issue centers on the guilt that prospective parents may feel about ending a pregnancy.

Some "religious" people are afraid of GOD's wrath on all of us by condoning abortion. They wish to protect the innocent, which they believe not only refers to the unborn babies, but the psychological babies who are creating those babies. And they wish to protect the innocent in society who aren't moved by guilt over this issue.

When women take responsibility for ending a pregnancy, they don't transcend embarrassment of having misused their bodies in not having used protection while having sex. They face their struggle for modesty before GOD.

It may be embarrassing for some potential mothers to conceive an unwanted child, but it may be embarrassing for others not to conceive their unwanted child. The issue becomes emotional and personal depending on the degree of guilt and where that guilt is projected in the outside world. As irresponsible women struggle within themselves for having created a life they don't want, their embarrassment should grow. And, hopefully, their modesty before The Lord will then, too. And they'll do what they feel is right for themselves and their fetus.

"Religious" opponents of abortion today don't demonstrate sufficient awareness of GOD's eternal desire to forgive and teach us to do better in the future. If HE can forgive us the mistakes we make in learning how to use our body modestly, we should learn to find better ways of moving through our embarrassment by ourselves. The conclusion that HE destroyed civilizations in the past simply because of man's immodesty is a gross simplification of the meaning of life. {This is a subject which will come up again in the story of Sodom}

Guilt must be questioned before it can be answered. But, however it's answered, it's got to become a personal issue between the woman and her Maker who let her get pregnant in the first place. GOD will deal with every individual (and couple) as HE sees fit. This can

never be anybody else's business since the decision is an emotional issue that has spiritual consequences, whether or not the man, or "religious" fanatics, wants to admit it.

Society shouldn't outlaw abortion because it's a spiritual issue that only affects the mother and her unborn infant. The real issue isn't when life begins, but what happens when life ends. What will happen to the woman who aborts her baby after she dies? And if this is a lesson in modesty, can she make up for it in other ways before she graduates?

Society shouldn't even outlaw suicide, since it, too, is an issue that affects the spiritual outcome of the individual, not the society as a whole. Abortion and suicide are complex issues because they go beyond embarrassment of what you've done to your body, and shame at how you didn't conduct yourself with others. It rises to the level of humiliation before The Lord. And that's GOD's/GOD's/G O D's department, not ours. We need to worry about the wellbeing of society as a whole, and let HIM do HIS job for all the rest.

The inability of some men to keep their nose out of other people's business is renown. If they're not sniffing around in women's vaginas, they're sniffing up the butt of gay men. And since you know that they aren't going to stop there. You can assume they think your life lies in their hands. They think they have the power to legislate whether you live or die and who you fuck with. They think they're gods.

Those blessed with an understanding of the spiritual gift of guilt must find solutions that don't force them to choose between loving GOD or loving unwanted babies. They aren't going to be able to love either if they don't learn to love themselves.

The purpose of birth control should not only be to avoid bringing unwanted children into the world. Birth control is the best way for the individual to avoid embarrassing indiscretions brought into the public eye. Shaming women into keeping their unwanted babies doesn't do the mother or the child any good. GOD isn't that cruel. So let's not be, either.

The right to birth control and the freedom to abort a pregnancy has its roots in free speech. If the serpents and Eves of today don't have to right to enjoy casual *chitchat*, it's only going to aggravate the arguments between the Adams of this world and their relationships with their GOD/GOD/G O D. Everyone who has a head and heart has a delivery system to justice that society doesn't have the right to legislate over just because the issue happens to include a penis.

It's only those men who can't differentiate between a penis {the lifegiving delivery device} and a gun {a death delivering device} who have a problem. Once a man understands the out-cum from both testicles, he can make better decisions about the moral challenges he faces in society.

Outlawing abortion is no different than outlawing sodomy and suicide. It brings the nose of society sniffing around in your bedroom and living room based on the presumption that religious institutions have the right to silence your desires and feelings if they want to. The "religious" right is wrong.

If you don't understand embarrassment, the first level of guilt presented in The Creation Story, you'll insist that Adam and Eve were literally wearing leaves to cover their genitals. You try putting a leaf over your genitals and see if you can keep it on! You're not living in a 17th Century European painting. You're a human being who moves through the day-to-day today. You can't *literally* keep a leaf in place over your crotch and pass laws requiring everyone else to do so *figuratively*. You'd turn life into a two dimensional being, not three. You'll turn into a person in a painting.

Shame: The Second Level Of Guilt

After covering their genitals with leaves, Adam and Eve hear GOD walking in the garden in the “COOL OF THE DAY.” In other words, the conscience doesn’t become activated until sometime after embarrassment sets in. The reason Adam and Eve hear GOD is, obviously, because HE wants to be heard. HE’s GOD! HE could have come upon them silently if HE’d wanted to. And the same can be said of our conscience. It makes itself known when it’s ready to.

On a subconscious level, we realize that although Adam and Eve’s embarrassment has been dealt with, another aspect of guilt is growing within the two of them as GOD gets closer and closer, boring down deeper into their psyche. Instead of using just a single, flat leaf to cover themselves from each other’s eyes, they decide to hide HIM by camouflaging themselves in the other trees.

The irony of man as a metaphoric Tree choosing to hide among the real trees in this garden isn’t lost on the poetically and evolutionarily inclined. Man isn’t stupid. Hiding two Trees among all the other trees in a garden makes great poetic sense. It’s actually amusing, although still sad. For Adam and Eve to conclude they can hide from GOD by blending in with Trees is the poetic reasoning behind all the misery in this world since its inception. People hide amongst others by assimilating with the morés of their day. They don’t want to stand out as looking different. They don’t want to appear guilty when everyone else looks innocent. Or they don’t want to appear innocent when everyone else looks guilty.

Adam and Eve’s reaction to GOD’s approach describes the second, more intense level of guilt called: shame. Adam and Eve conceal their entire body from GOD because they feel ashamed of what they’ve done. But rather than walk toward HIM with the intention of confessing their sin, or even wait for HIM to approach them, they run and hide instead.

Shame focuses on matters of character. Shame brings Adam and Eve’s character into question. Their reaction to what they’ve done has reached an even deeper layer of discomfort than embarrassment, one that’s triggered by their awareness of GOD’s increasing proximity to them.

Both mother and young child may feel, at times, ashamed of their character because they share so many of the same negative traits. But they don’t usually question how they act with one another in the course of the day until a third person comes onto the family scene {like the child’s father} at night.

At this infantile level of understanding of GOD, Adam and Eve think they’re embroiled in a conspiracy against HIM. They think it’s the two of them against ONE. In family dynamics it’s often the mother and son against the man of the house: her husband and his father. Such divisions in family dynamics are common, and definitely worth feeling ashamed about. But if shame isn’t discussed openly, everyone’s going to feel individually hidden behind a Tree instead of standing alone courageously before GOD.

“HIDING AMONGST THE TREES” is also Torah’s way of saying that people try to be average, not to stand out. They try to do no better or worse than anybody else. They don’t want their knowledge of guilt to be perceived as any different from anyone else’s.

The logic in this stance assumes that the more you know about guilt, the more reason you have to feel guilty. But, in actuality, the opposite is the case. The more your head knows about your own guilt, the less your heart and penis are going to be able to manipulate your conscience.

We know Adam and Eve are running away from GOD for the same crime: eating forbidden fruit. We know that takes them in the same emotional direction whether they end up behind the same Tree, or not.

Embarrassment and shame are expressed in communal ways. Embarrassment and shame take everyone in a family in relatively the same moral direction. It's not until humiliation takes hold that people begin to act in unexpected, separate ways.

In hiding from GOD, Adam and Eve have now lost their original place in HIS eyes. They've literally repositioned themselves in a new place behind trees in the garden as the result of their guilt. But this change of location represents a change of heart.

Now they find themselves hidden behind a trunk, leaves and branches that give them the impression GOD can't see them. But from where they are now, they've also obscured their view of HIM. They're probably crouched down, and if not a bit scratched and perhaps even bleeding, surely they're emotionally shaken with fear and apprehension, wondering whether or not they're going to get caught for their misdeed. If the leaves they've used to conceal their genitals don't make GOD suspicious in our eyes, then hiding behind trees certainly does. They couldn't look more like Trees of knowledge than they do at this moment; and they couldn't be less aware of it.

When we know we've done something wrong and feel bad about it, we've reached the level of guilt called shame, a heightened awareness of our culpability. Guilt has moved its figurative location from being physically set in our genitals to pervasive throughout our whole body. You can see it in where a man looks, by the look on his face and by his stance. Nothing makes a man look more guilty than running away from the scene of a crime.

Many people are stuck in their head where they *know* something about shame intellectually without allowing themselves to know what it *feels* like viscerally. They stay at this level of awareness in the hopes that they'll be able to use emotional ignorance of right and wrong to exonerate themselves of wrongdoing entirely. Although everyone knows he's legally responsible for his actions, many hope that if they don't feel bad about what they've done, they won't be accused of having done something shameful in the eyes of the law.

The thief who's not sorry about stealing suddenly feels very sorry about being caught. But he still adamantly refuses to feel sorry about what he's done. He refuses to admit he's behaved in any way shamefully. Only a very, very good man can say he's ashamed of himself.

Far greater than the sin is the guilt. Every sinner knows what he did was wrong. What he doesn't know is the feeling of guilt that should have come with his sins after he committed them. Only the good *know* shame and can allow themselves to *feel* it.

Knowing shame and having felt it may lead some men to express that through their personality. They're shy, introverted, withdrawn, bashful, inhibited, quiet timid or reserved. They intuitively know there's an apple hanging over their heart and soul: their Adam's apple. And they don't know consciously that they have the power to reach *down* from their head to pick it without humiliating themselves before The Lord.

Wagging your finger at people for being sinful simply doesn't work. It's neither loving nor wise. And it certainly doesn't get anyone out of his head and into his heart where his feelings of guilt are located. Once you can see another person's guilt through your own, it puts you on a different footing with them. You suddenly see that we're all in this together, while also alone. We're all embarrassed and ashamed from time to time, and we have to

learn to live with that individually and collectively. And that's where the art of living meets the science.

Transforming Shame

The second opportunity to transcend guilt comes through admitting your shame. That produces humility. Concealing your shame by hiding amongst other Trees is actually the biblical clue to seeking humility through conformity, assimilation and adaptation. Being like other people isn't shameful. It's humbling.

The other trees are as comforting a solution to Adam and Eve's shame as the leaves were for their embarrassment. The leaf and other Trees are metaphoric descriptions of a man's emotional experience in our communal Eden that GOD has provided us all with. Their presence in our garden is no coincidence. It's imperative we understand the importance of embarrassment and shame if we're going to improve ourselves over a lifetime.

Man's built-in ability to protect himself from harm as well as maintain standards of decorum that unite him with others is determined by his inner environment. GOD gives all of us a way to hide. HE knows how painful guilt is and that not everybody is ready to experience it by himself, thus giving us the opportunity of facing our embarrassments and shame together by talking about it.

The forbidden fruit hanging overhead makes its way into our spiritual operating system, permeating us with its unspoken voice, albeit slowly. We're wired to protect ourselves from embarrassment and shame by comparing and contrasting our actions to others. And it's our conscience that decides if our actions are in harmony with our deepest intentions. In this way, life is like a school and everything we go through is like a lesson.

The infantile think that if they only suck out the juice of the fruit no one will be able see the evidence of it any longer; that guilt will be hidden within their belly. This fallacy is exposed by their mother who playfully sticks a finger or her face in the belly of her baby to let him know that she knows where all her juice {milk} has gone.

Infants don't realize that everything will come out in the end... They simply make excuses for their hunger and theft until the truth is revealed in their diapers. And although the infantile might be blind to what they're doing and unwilling to listen to reason, even they end up being able to smell that something's wrong around them.

Infantile people think their shit don't exist, let alone stink. Every now and again everyone gets a whiff of himself, and his own nose judges him offensive even if his eyes and ears are tightly sealed to keep out the obvious.

Our own bad odor is the spiritual cause of depression. People don't see how they look. They don't hear how they sound. And they don't smell the awful stench they produce. But then they innocently ask themselves why they feel so shut down. The reason should be obvious. And if you think that a spoonful of sugar will help the medicine go down, you're living out a fantasy.

The Hebrew WORD for gossip is "LASHON HARA," which translates as "BAD TONGUE." The nasty odor of gossip isn't only caused by bad mouthing others. The foulest of odors comes out of your mouth when you gossip to yourself about yourself. Those who are depressed have spiritual bad breath, and so they turn off their feelings and sensations to protect themselves from further harm.

But no one can turn off his head. We all have to listen to our own thoughts, however low we go to turn down the volume of our conscience.

The lessons of the toddler in its mother's arms are replete with opportunities to feel shame and transcend it naturally and effortlessly with humility. His mother teaches him table manners more as a metaphor for comportment in a courteous world than because she's worried about him staining his clothes. The way we're taught to eat speaks volumes about the way our mother taught us the first lessons in moving humbly through shame. Table manners were her way of teaching us to respect ourselves, to take spiritual food in without making a mess of ourselves in the process. My mother didn't succeed. I ended up in mental institutions because I couldn't make the connection between real food with spiritual food.

Feelings Described In Terms Of Physical Location

While Adam is hiding amongst all the other trees, GOD calls out to him saying, " WHERE ARE YOU?" HE does so, not because HE doesn't know his physical location; HE's GOD! Of course HE knows where Adam is. (Taking Torah literally is just ridiculous!) HE does so because HE wants Adam to take stock of where he is inside himself. He wants him to look at the emotional elements of guilt that are coalescing within him.

The biblical question, "Where are you?" pinpoints the need for our conscience to question where we're at. But most people are so consumed with life that they project that spiritual question out onto the world by becoming adept at orienting themselves in the objective, physical world rather than in subjective, emotional space.

Modern man has created all sorts of G.P.S. devices that operate from outer space to tell him where he is in relationship to others, but he doesn't know where he is in relationship to GOD because he doesn't know where he is in relationship to himself. It would behoove you to ask yourself several times a day, "Where are you?"

Adam's feelings of guilt are so new to him that he doesn't realize he's embarrassed and ashamed of himself, let alone that GOD is watching him. He forgets GOD knew him before he put on the leaf and hid amongst The Trees. He forgets to use his imagination to try to look at himself from GOD's perspective. He forgets just how nude, naked and exposed he is to his Creator at all times.

Adam responds to GOD's question of his whereabouts by saying, "I HEARD YOU WALKING IN THE GARDEN AND I WAS AFRAID BECAUSE I WAS NAKED, SO I HID." [Genesis 3:10] Adam gives GOD an honest account of his actions because he still feels safe in HIS presence. (Honesty is always the best policy, especially for those who feel safely held by GOD.)

Perhaps Adam senses that the leaf and the trees were GOD-given, and therefore he has good reason to trust in GOD. Perhaps he's beginning to suspect there's no such thing as luck. Or, more likely, he's just oblivious to why he's in the world altogether. In any case, the spiritually infantile generally respond with honesty only when backed into a corner.

The embarrassment and shame Adam and Eve both felt is no different than what any of us has to go through. But like them, we rarely acknowledge that divine intervention is with us at all times. GOD gives us ways to hide from HIM out of courtesy because HE knows how bad we sometimes feel. HE allows us the liberty not to feel the way we should, and the privacy to question our "self" by ourselves.

Modesty gives every Adam an appropriate way to conceal his embarrassment. And humility gives him an appropriate place to hide his shame. From these safe, GOD-given, vantage points, every Adam can look at Adam and agree, that he, too, is in the process of

getting to know himself. We've been there. We know what he's going through. We can relate.

THE WORD "TORAH" means "TEACHINGS." Yet, paradoxically, Torah doesn't teach. It illuminates what you already know. Those who haven't learned from life about life won't learn anything from Torah. It won't teach them a thing.

But for those who are curious about life, Torah will show them how to recognize what they already know because Torah presents life in a chronological, developmental format that brings organization to man's being. Studying Torah won't make you wise, loving or generous. But it will teach you how to organize the wisdom, love and generosity of spirit you already have amassed from your experiences in life.

Torah is more like a coin machine that separates the coins into stacks of different denominations. Just as GOD separated the Jews from the other nations, Torah separates your inner, operating system forces into something resembling rolls of coins that you can trade in for anything you want, including love and money. In that sense, Jesus was a very rich Jew. It was the Jews around Him at that time who were paupers.

When embarrassment and shame aren't transformed into modesty and humility, the emotional consequences are fear and anger, respectively. Fear indicates that a man's embarrassment hasn't been resolved with modesty. He's afraid that his genitals have been exposed, and that he'll be ridiculed for appearing nude. Or he fears that his testicles will be harmed, whether literally or figuratively.

Anger indicates that a man's shame has been exposed. An angry Adam hides among many trees and thinks GOD can't tell the differences between any of them. Anger indicates that he's hiding and doesn't want to be found.

When GOD asks Adam if he ate from The Tree of knowledge, Adam accuses, "THE WOMAN WHOM YOU GAVE TO BE WITH ME, SHE GAVE ME FRUIT OF THE TREE, AND I ATE." [Genesis 3:12] Adam blames GOD for bringing Eve into his life. Adam isn't just afraid of what's going to happen to him. He isn't just afraid that he's going to get kicked in the balls for having stolen forbidden fruit. He's angry about what might happen. And he expresses that fear with anger to conceal his real feelings.

Sorrow is the eventual fallback feeling that rises in the heart of the ignorant when unresolved guilt has its way over time. This begins with anger and frustration at life being so hard. But it turns into fear and ends with disappointment in themselves. People conclude that there's nothing they can do about their problems; other people are evil and they're good. And that's just the way it's going to be until they die and are rewarded for their goodness {stupidity}.

There's so much to learn about ourselves and the lessons are so deep that we have go through our fear and anger to arrive at sorrow many times before we become smart enough to see the pattern. And even then, there's a tendency in us not to apologize to ourselves for our mistakes. We don't atone to anyone, least of all to ourselves. We simply resign to move make do, not explore our guilt for the rewards promised in self-love.

The feeling of happiness becomes even harder to achieve when, in its pursuit, you have to go through so many negative feelings that only seem to make the goal of happiness move further from your grasp.

This makes people sentimental for childhood, a period in their past when things were simpler or a period in history when things looked more meaningful than they do today. In

truth, the hyper “religious” are the most sentimental people on the planet – and the most dangerous!

Sorrow is the emotional song sung by every perpetrator whether or not he knows what he’s done wrong. For most, the perpetrator in us has made us feel guilty for the way we’ve treated ourselves. But for some, sorrow seems forbidden. They abhor the idea of feeling sorry for themselves. For others, playing the victim and expressing the sorrows of their life is all they talk about.

I’ll discuss the default feelings that signal unresolved guilt {anger, fear and sorrow} in greater detail later. Suffice it to say at the moment, Adam covers a part of himself and hides that knowledge with a leaf. Then he feels he has to hide in the Garden of Eden because GOD is coming. He isn’t aware that his guilt will be evident by his actions.

People don’t see the result in the universal importance of Adam. Nor do they appreciate the other characters in Torah. When you can’t see yourself in a story, you idolize the story or reject it. You dance around it as though it were a Golden Calf or you find another god to love instead.

Adam is the spiritual infant who doesn’t even know his own name. Although we can read his thoughts and feelings like a book, he hasn’t yet consciously enrolled in the first grade in the school of life to learn to read himself. He’s a stage you once went through and have probably forgotten. He’s the infant hero you never knew you were who lives deep down inside you. And, he’s a mirror of the hero you are. You’ve done so much without knowing what you’ve accomplished. But you’ve made many, many mistakes, and you haven’t apologized for enough of them to the one you love: yourself.

Good GOD, Bad GOD

Despite Adam blaming GOD for his own actions, it behooves us to explore the character of GOD in this story to learn about the loving motives inherent in man’s conscience. If we use our head to learn from embarrassment and our heart to learn from shame, we need to learn how we instinctively perceive GOD to become soulful:

1. Our conscience {GOD} allows our thoughts {Adam} and feelings {Eve} to work together to discover modesty and humility.
2. Our conscience lets our thoughts blame our feelings without interfering in our opinion.
3. Our conscience questions our thoughts and feelings separately so each can discover its nature. In this way you’re free to act differently in the future.

What good is authority that comes at you from the outside to muddle your mind and play with your feelings? If authority isn’t first perceived from within, you never learn the importance in being the way you are now. You never learn obedience to yourself. You spend time groveling before authority, defying it or struggling within yourself about what’s right and wrong.

The reason the Jews are called “The Chosen People” isn’t because GOD chose us. GOD chooses everyone, or you wouldn’t be here. The Jews are chosen because we were the first to choose GOD.

As HIS/HIS/H I S first we were spiritually assigned to getting to know HIM. This made us fear HIM. As HIS/HIS/H I S second chosen people, Christians were assigned to getting

to love Him. This emboldened them. And as his third chosen people, Muslims were assigned to getting to express their loyalty to H I M. This allowed them to seek redemption.

Anyone who chooses to fight for the rights of the physically, emotionally or spiritually impoverished is going in the direction of GOD. He's Jew-*ish*. He knows he's righteous. He knows he's choosing to walk GOD's path of justice with every step he takes.

But Adam is far too spiritually young to think in terms of taking the next step after expulsion from Eden. He only wants to run as far away as he can from the discomfort of embarrassment and shame at what he's done. Even though he has the modesty and humility to correlate having run away from GOD with feeling naked and wanting to hide {"I HEARD YOU WALKING IN THE GARDEN AND I WAS AFRAID BECAUSE I WAS NAKED, SO I HID."} he doesn't have the ability to understand why he did what he did. Because he can't yet reflect on his actions with conscious understanding of guilt, he has no choice but to *react* rather than *respond* to the circumstances at hand.

You surely know what comes next in this story. You know Adam is going to have to leave Eden. And you can see that that also happened to you. What you don't remember is why you did what you did when you were an infant. You don't know how you reacted. If you knew that now you'd be able to tell yourself why you have reason to believe you were a hero for standing up for yourself as you did then.

How We Learned We Were Naked

Before Adam has a chance to tell GOD that Eve gave him the fruit, GOD asks him who told him he was naked, which is a really brilliant question because the interesting answer is that every parent has to remind his toddler from time to time to put some clothes on. A toddler has to have verbal reinforcement to remember that he's physically nude.

But the toddler sees no importance in nudity until he discovers that he's emotionally naked. Only once he feels embarrassed and ashamed does he agree to cover his genitals with leaves {underwear} and hide his entire body with Trees {behave like others}.

The repetition of these physical experiences wouldn't have any lasting effect if there weren't the negative, emotional reinforcement of embarrassment and shame as well as the positive emotional reinforcement of modesty and humility to train the toddler.

The more intimate the relationship between the mother and child, the more powerful the effect rejection and acceptance will have on his early training. Those infants who have very close relationships with their mother are not only quickly trained. They go to nursery school eager for instruction, and come to elementary school well prepared to be educated in ways their mother didn't teach them.

Our parents didn't guide us through inner space. They only guided us through outer place. We forged through the darkness within ourselves alone. Only once we had thoughts supported with feelings of guilt was our conscience willing to allow our teachers to teach us with positive reinforcements that shaped us to become even more knowledgeable, modest and humble.

Only then did the moral consequences of what we learned turn into beliefs about the way the world is spiritually assembled. But because all this began before we had language, it's impossible to discuss this spiritual process except using metaphor. And this is what Moses accomplished with the main metaphor of Torah presented in The Creation Story.

Finding our own way to tolerate, accept and even admire the facts and feelings that we gleaned about life led us to fleeting moments of tranquility. This peace of mind {tranquility} within then prompted us to pursue happiness in the world around us.

Whether tranquility is morally achievable or not for each circumstance you find yourself in is impossible to determine without trial and error. Until you act on your beliefs, it's impossible to know what you think and feelings to be true about yourself. You may pursue tranquility in order to avoid yourself, or you may pursue tranquility to discover yourself.

When you can reproduce tranquility within you around you, you also feel happy. When you can avoid suffering by not wanting unnecessary complications in your outer life, you reinforce the tranquility that will lead you to perceive the forces within with greater clarity.

Eve is still hiding amongst the trees as Adam has his candid conversation with GOD, but the narrator doesn't say anything about her impressions of GOD's reprimand of Adam. Eve surely must be wondering how Their interaction will affect her. No doubt she assumes GOD will question her since she instigated the crime. We must remind ourselves that we won't be able to morally weigh Eve's response to GOD fairly without first acknowledging that she has had time to prepare her answer.

The mind of the inexperienced has no time to anticipate the questions its conscience will pose. The mind can only grasp the moment, and respond to it, or react. The inexperienced have no time to think on their feet. When they experience the accusation of wrongdoing, they often have to justify their actions without first formulating a plan.

Adam {the mind of man} is fast reaching overload by this point in the story. He may have handled embarrassment and shame with intellectual prowess by covering and then camouflaging himself. And Eve {the heart of man} may have achieved emotional poise by concealing herself in the same ways as best she could. But at this point in the story GOD has gotten so close to the two of them that the light of HIS righteousness bores through their nudity and nakedness to the core of their being. They both experience something even greater than shame. They experience something so overwhelming that each will react to it powerfully, although differently. Their guilt has risen to the third and final stage of moral insight after nudity and nakedness: transparency.

The Deepest Level Of Guilt

Before GOD questions Eve, HE asks Adam a third and last question, whether he ate from The Tree that was forbidden. At this point Adam explodes with rage, blaming GOD indirectly for that woman HE gave him.

Like every toddler going through the terrible twos, Adam has a meltdown. He doesn't consciously realize what's happening to him, but we can see that he can't deal with any more guilt. It bubbles up into something akin to hysteria, and he expresses it through words of blame directed at ONE and all.

Although GOD previously provided Adam with leaves {modesty} and trees {humility} to hide behind, he can no longer depend on providence. He has to protect himself using the only defense he has left: excuses and blame. Adam may have previously denied intellectual and emotional awareness of what he was going through, but now he's chosen to provoke GOD.

The toddler blames his mother and father for everything, never himself. He sees himself as a victim of circumstances, and he sees them as the cause of all his misfortune. He doesn't

yet have the ability to take responsibility for his actions. He has no moral authority, and therefore no choice but to blame his parents for the consequences of what he thinks and feels.

What the toddler doesn't realize is that the consequences of what he thinks and feels will not only shape his beliefs. They'll create knowledge of the guilt that will become so important to his spiritual advancement for the rest of his life.

It isn't easy to admit that there's a thread that connects everything that happens around us today with everything that previously happened within. We want to think we're free to make any choice we want in this moment in time. We don't realize how this moment has been personally created by us based on every previous moment we went through.

It's this thread of reality that leads us to believe in GOD. It's this thread of reality that leads us to believe in HIS story. Without this thread {stem} the whole Creation Story falls apart. There's nothing to connect forbidden fruit to The Gospels or Quran. Without GOD, there can be no GOD/G O D.

The outer world is the blackboard in the school of life on which you write your answers for the whole class to see. What you do is a reflection of what you believe to be true based on what you think, feel and desire. At the initial stage of awareness {infancy} you were who you were because of what "they" did for you. You were an Adam who woke up in a garden where you later realized your mother had conspired with your father to bring you here. Although you were praised for doing things right, you were also repeatedly accused of doing things wrong, things that you don't even remember having done anymore. You were made to feel beloved and guilty. And you were ultimately banished from infancy regardless of how you felt. You moved on.

You are who you are today because of choices you made you don't even remember having made. Those choices were unique to you, but they were identical to a range of possible options every other human being on Earth also had to choose from in the diagnostic sense. You are The Creation Story personified. Without your truth guiding you through this story, you can't believe in GOD.

Before experience taught you otherwise, each of these inner forces in you appeared to act independently of the others. You couldn't see them in story form leading to a universal end. There wasn't a pattern to how you operate that you could consolidate into a narrative. But now that you can see that the first story of The Hebrew Testament is your story too, there may now be some hope in you that the rest of Torah may reveal even more about you.

Jesus quoted The Hebrew Testament numerous times because He realized that Torah is the story of every man. Torah was also the P R O P H E T Mohammed's story, even though he couldn't read, and had to have Torah conveyed to him orally by the Archangel Gabriel.

Every infant hides in the woods as long as he can from his vulnerability before GOD. He hides behind habitual behaviors that he sees everyone else hiding behind. And he grows up in denial of the interconnectedness of his inner nature to his outer nurture. He doesn't see himself as a product of an outer place in objective time as well as an inner space in subjective time. He doesn't see himself as a moral agent here to transcend his past with a hopeful future. He doesn't identify as the forbidden fruit in The Creation Story that GOD is trying to get him to give back in his own special way.

He simply concludes he's always the victim of other people's feelings {Eve} and desires {serpent} that are beyond his control. He plays the blame game. He gives up on the

infant within him. He turns his back on his past to embrace his future. And that's a very unwise thing to do.

How far would an infant get if he chose to run away from home? How far would a child get if he tried to do the same? An adolescent might get away for good if he could sell his most valuable asset: his ass. But how far would a young adult get if he didn't want to sell himself to get ahead? How far did you get?

Nobody's heart and mind wants to have to identify with the unlucky fruit in this story: lonely, separated and victimized. Nobody wants to feel like he's been unfairly singled out. And yet we're all stuck with thoughts about having to die {victim}. And we sometimes even think we'd be better off dead {perpetrator}. We're all stuck between a Rock {GOD} and a hard place {our conscience}.

Nobody loves a perpetrator or a victim, and yet everyone automatically becomes one or the other when he doesn't realize he asks himself the age, old question "Why me!" An infantile Adam doesn't think to blame the snake on his Tree for the trouble he's in, only 'GOD and that woman HE put him here with.'

Man won't admit it's his own desire for power to get his curiosity satisfied that causes all the trouble he finds himself in. While women have been saying it since the beginning of time, men think with their dicks. But no man wants to admit that because that would mean his own penis has penetrated his head, heart and soul with unconscious desires that are running him.

It isn't surprising that Adam doesn't blame the serpent, only GOD and Eve. A man intuitively knows that if he blames the seat of his own desires, he won't have a leg to stand on. His heart will be fractured into thousands of feelings he'll have to struggle to integrate, and his mind will be consumed with avoiding blame by making one excuse for his existence after another. Couple that with a desire for power over others just to survive in this GOD forsaken world, and you can see why life becomes more complex the longer you live.

Why We Hate Guilt

It goes without saying that guilt leads us to believe we're wrong, bad, dirty, foul, disgusting, perverted and evil. And if your religion didn't once try to make you believe you should feel guilty just for being alive, let alone for making mistakes – the government, your job, family, friends or society at large, did.

If you've been able to avoid all these forms of guilt and feel you're guilt free, chances are you've found a scapegoat to blame instead. Very few men want to blame the one they're with when there are so many weaker individuals and groups out there to blame: Jews and gays to name only two... women to name another.

Guilt makes us question what we're really doing here. Guilt is the best motivator to feel sorry for yourself for not having spent more time getting to know yourself better by this late date. Guilt is the emotional indicator that lets you know that you have an opportunity to make self-improvements that will go deeper than your physical body or character development. Guilt teaches you that there really is a GOD/GOD/G O D behind it all. But the God within ain't gonna do all THE WORK/WORK/W O R K. You have to try a hell of a lot harder.

The low-level students of life need authority outside themselves to motivate them to be good. The average students of life need guilt to motivate them to do what's right. Only the

highest-level students are spiritually developed enough to know how to use self-love to get themselves where they want to go.

It's easy to hide from the embarrassment and shame others try to impose on you. Providence provided you with "leaves" and "trees" to conceal yourself from others and GOD. It's only when you realize you're really exposed and transparent to yourself that the full force of guilt motivates you to go back to Torah to ask yourself what you may have missed on previous readings.

Christianity has done an excellent job of obfuscating the real meanings in Torah. Islam has done an even better job by blaming the Jews for the GOD that we gave them. But the Jews are, by far, the most at fault for abandoning Torah to begin with. Our rabbis are the biggest fools on the planet since it's taken a gay-Jew to explain to them what they haven't been able to reveal to themselves about themselves. May GOD/GOD/G O D damn them all!

If you want to use guilt to motivate you to love yourself and redeem you, you're going to have to forge new understandings of Torah, The Gospels and The Quran. You're going to have to invite yourself to the religious table and ask the simple questions that they're avoiding. Religion isn't going to change unless spiritual people change it.

Most Jews avoid reading Torah like the plague. They have no idea how it could be used for personal insight. And most "religious" leaders in Christianity and Islam have an even worse opinion of Torah and the Jews. They only want to be able to claim they love GOD/G O D and are charitable to us because HE's/H E's so loving and generous to them. {But when the evidence for that disappears, the snake-like head of anti-Semitism whispers sweet nothings in their ears about whose fault all this really is.}

Guilt is not only caused by embarrassment and shame. Guilt not only causes you to look at your body and character differently. When you realize you don't want to hide from your conscience, you see that there's a third and final stage of guilt: humiliation. This is when guilt really gets personal.

Humiliation is the driving force behind life's lessons in holding a loving and charitable relationship with yourself. If you don't learn about the core of the forbidden fruit {humiliation}, your guilt will remain projected out only onto others. You won't understand why GOD allows your life to be the way it is.

Acts of GOD are meant to teach you not to be anti-Semitic, racist, homophobic and misogynistic. Acts of GOD are meant to teach you to embrace life like a school in which everyone's grades depend, in large part, on us working together.

Humiliation, this third and final psychological stage of guilt, is so deep and personal a discomfort that it's very difficult to talk about its effects except using metaphor, symbolism and similes. GOD humiliates us with bad luck {acts of GOD} because we aren't willing to humiliate ourselves. HE humiliates us with the persona we have that creates the personality we use to interface with others. HE humiliates us with the body we have that often reminds us that we're not going to be able to stay here in it forever. HE can make us face any circumstances HE wants without having to give us any reason for doing so. Using the school metaphor, HE enrolls us in any course or curriculum HE wants us in. Our class schedule isn't entirely in our control. We really only have control over our electives.

Adam humiliated himself by blaming GOD and Eve for his own choices. And what he got for it was the worst reputation of any character in The Hebrew Testament. In truth, he did the best he could under trying circumstances to make sense of a barrage of new experiences.

If you don't look at The Creation Story as the foundation for a three-story, ethical edifice {Creation Story, Cain and Abel, Noah and the Ark} you're not going to understand the four-paragraph story of The Tower of Babel in Genesis 11 when GOD knocks man's moral edifice down even though the whole world worked on creating it together. You're not going to understand the evil inclinations in man that GOD has a plan for ameliorating.

Every epidemic, pandemic, recession and depression is a world crisis that should be looked at as an act of GOD. But people only want to look at global problems as local problems. They don't want to take responsibility for the outcome for all of humanity. And the planet won't suffer for our mistakes because our planet has no feelings.

Adam personifies bad thoughts, and Eve, bad feelings, about the genitals we cover with leaves {clothing} and the character defects we conceal from ourselves with other Trees {conformity}. When you don't know this much about yourself, there's nothing left in GOD's arsenal of teaching techniques to use on you other than humiliation.

By this point in The Creation Story Adam has nothing left to retaliate with other than blame to hide his soul from GOD's prying eyes. He can't conceal himself from Eve. He can't hide himself from GOD. He has no choice but to humiliate himself. He certainly doesn't have self-love or generosity of spirit to motivate himself to do otherwise. He's got to blame everyone around him for his misery.

Humiliation: The Third And Final Level Of Guilt

Embarrassment is evident on the outside as blushing on the face or waves of heat over the body. Shame is a more subtle reaction that rises from a place more deeply situated within. Shame is usually evident in the body as stiffness, tension, shifty eyes or jerkiness of movement. But humiliation lies so deep that it's diffuse, and so it can't be pinpointed to any particular physical place in the body. Humiliation is almost an out-of-body experience because it's so painfully personal and intense. If embarrassment is skin-deep; and shame is a little more intense than that, like a bruise that penetrates down into a man's flesh; humiliation goes right to the bone.

A small boy is embarrassed before his mother when he realizes he's becoming aware of his genitals. Embarrassment makes him distance himself from her for privacy. He's ashamed before his father when he realizes that some aspects of his character that he shares with his mother are less than admirable. This distances him from her even more, but it doesn't mean he's necessarily going to be comfortable around his father and other men.

A youngster is humiliated in front of himself when, alone, he realizes that deep down inside he blames the GOD who created him in HIS image and that woman HE gave him for a mother. This is the ultimate curse. Humiliation includes the revelation in every infant Adam that he wishes he'd never been born.

Those who are afraid of GOD's wrath are so with good reason. They instinctively know they've blamed HIM and have, therefore, humiliated themselves. And they're afraid of what HE's going to do to them in return.

The spiritually infantile blame GOD; they aren't grateful to HIM. And deep down inside they even know it. They just don't know why they don't love HIM and the life HE gave them. The answer, obviously, is because they humiliate themselves before HIM, and they're afraid to go back to HIM under such guilt-ridden circumstances.

Embarrassment leaves us with knowledge of our nudity. Humility leaves us with knowledge of our nakedness. But humiliation leaves us with knowledge of our

transparency. Only when we can see right through ourselves can we admit it's likely that if we can, GOD can, too.

We're all spiritual students of life stuck for a period of time in a morality-making machine that we're learning to operate in a three-dimensional school called: reality. Everything we think, feel and judge has consequences. Everything we do is usually based on something we desire. And our Teacher sees it all. Our life is a record written in thin air of everything we are, and are becoming.

When you realize you've made a mistake, it cuts to the quick. Some have anesthetized themselves to pain and blinded themselves from suffering. But every little itch you scratch is the result of a moral mistake you made that GOD has made you deal with. You're far more sensitive than you realize and far more transparent than you think.

People who lose a child or a limb know the pain of this exposure to GOD's design, even if they don't know HIS plan. Some can see their own transparency. They can look inside themselves as though looking at an apple cut in half.

The reason why we can't even attempt to love ourselves until we understand guilt is because we want to avoid further humiliation at all cost. We don't want to see right through ourselves because we're not accustomed to the pain involved in that much self-reflection. We make the excuse that that much inner illumination would hurt our eyes, even blind us. We'd rather wear rose-colored glasses or squint.

To be as transparent as a window is fine for others who like the idea of being made of glass. Let them crack, shatter and become mere shards of who they were before. Most people don't want to see that happen. They try to build their inner house of straw, wood or brick – anything that the “Wolf” won't be able to see through. They're terrified of GOD coming knocking on their door. They're terrified of HIM getting in.

What most of us don't realize is that we're really made of stained glass. We're not fully transparent and don't have to be. Even though we're far more fragile than we might want to admit, we don't realize that we're in an artistic, spiritual process of telling ourselves our story in a way we'll remember through a beautiful and clever form of self-revelation.

We express this process physically with tattoos that hold great personal importance. We do this emotionally by changing partners and jobs to give our life a more interesting design. And we do this spiritually by creating and constructing an inner sanctuary for ourselves that we may not realize holds tremendous personal significance.

Every man is actually under construction of an inner abode that looks like a European cathedral. {Who would want his inner world to look like an American 7-11?} We shine the white light of self-illumination like a prism through our inner windows to create an emotional rainbow effect in meaningful patterns in our soul to appreciate our rendition of GOD's language in Hebrew of hope. This gives us a transparency and tranquility that we can occasionally perceive and own as our own. And through the discovery of our unique and colorful nature, we discover GOD's loving designs for us all.

We know that self-love isn't forbidden fruit that we can't have, and yet out of self-ignorance and fear of self-love we don't allow ourselves to pick it. We refuse obedience to ourselves because we're stubborn, lazy or sleepy. We don't have the self-esteem to want what we have; we're too apathetic to care; or we're still so stunned by the pain of birth to move out of the infancy of being and get out onto the road of life.

Most men won't admit that loving themselves is the most odious act they could possibly be tempted to perform. They're the last person on Earth they want to get to know.

{Familiarly with themselves only breeds contempt.} They'd rather stay asleep or remain lazy than have to learn to love themselves. The idea of loving *that* man is the cruelest joke GOD could ever play on them.

The Humiliated American

The Constitution of the United States of America guarantees us the right to pursue happiness. But happiness is an outside experience. Tranquility isn't something guaranteed by the Constitution or even by GOD. Tranquility is an inside experience that you have to guarantee yourself. Ours is the greatest nation on Earth, and yet, while so many are busy pursuing happiness, very few are even aware of the greater importance of the tranquility that leads to inner peace.

The stranger in our society today isn't black, white, brown, yellow, pink or lavender. He doesn't wear a turban or wash his feet before he prays. He doesn't put his hands together to say "hello" and "goodbye." He isn't married to another man.

He's you. He's the stranger inside who's set you up for humiliation, and who you refuse to get to know. He's the core of the fruit from The Tree of knowledge that you think you discarded. You didn't. You ate the whole thing. The Eve within you ate the skin and the meat and gave you the core. There's a woman in every man who conspires to keep a man from identifying as a woman, when everyone knows that $x + y = 1$. And it's the 'x' factor that we're all seeking to know.

Every Adam has taken, bitten, chewed and swallowed whatever piece of the forbidden fruit Eve gave him, and he can see that it got stuck in his throat {right where his Adam's apple is}. He believes he's in a spiritual Catch-22. He believes there's nowhere between his head and heart to run and hide. He suspects the love he has inside for himself is a woman's love for a woman, or a man's love for himself, either of which he's concluded feels dirty.

He prefers to be distracted with the bounty of the outer world rather than the riches within. He'd rather be hungry for something he hasn't yet tasted. He'd rather be thirsty for something he can't even see.

Man is tempted by things around him that he already holds metaphorically within. He's just emotionally incapable of retrieving what he has. These two parts of himself {call them 'x' and 'y'} aren't often on speaking terms with one another. Either he hates that part of himself that's feminine or he hates the part that's male.

You owe yourself apologies every day, but you were never taught by your parents to tell yourself, "I'm sorry." You should be sorry if you've neglected the greatest guy you could have ever come to know and love. You should be embarrassed, ashamed and humiliated by how little effort you make each and every day to know and love your whole self. You're surely the last person on Earth you ever told yourself to care more deeply about.

The way you've treated yourself in the privacy of your own heart and mind has probably been simply outrageous. You've almost certainly been far nicer to everyone else. You had to have GOD banish you from yourself before you discovered you were even missing in action. It's a little late now being yourself after all the other people you tried so hard to be like instead. It was always *your* absence that has made your heart grow fonder. I'd bet that you've got a lot of catching up to do if you're going to make up to yourself in a way you'll truly appreciate.

I hope you've had enough anger, fear and sorrow for one lifetime. I hope you've humiliated yourself in your own way long enough. I think you deserve to be better at being you, and you can do so by transcending your guilt. You'll love being a new you when you're ready to truly believe you're far superior to who you were previously willing to be.

To talk about yourself in gay terminology, I'd say, "Honey, you're fabulous!" And the reason you're fabulous is because you wouldn't allow you to fully know yourself until you were ready to appreciate yourself with all your heart and soul.

Self-Love And Self-Blame

Self-love isn't a frivolous pleasure. It's a moral imperative. If you don't learn to share your feelings with yourself, you'll never be able to fully share them with others. Your own approval should mean more to you than the approval of anyone else on Earth. But if you live a life with fractured feelings for yourself, the gift of life will never be fully realized.

You ought to at least be curious about yourself or you {ATA: masculine singular} will have no reason to get to know you {AT: feminine singular}. And then you {ATEM: masculine plural} will have great difficulty in learning about you {ATEN: feminine plural}. You {singular} has to teach yourself how to be yourself $\{x + y = 1\}$. You {plural} has to teach yourself how to be a part of society $\{x^2 + y^2 = 1\}$.

Of course, there's a little bit of truth in all blame. We're never entirely wrong for blaming others for their lack of modesty, humility, or even for the ways in which they humiliate themselves. There's even good reason for blaming our family for not having treated us more sensitively and compassionately when we were young. So there's certainly enough good enough reason for blaming the outer world for some of what we've had to go through.

But it's particularly popular these days to love loving women and to love loathing men. It's so easy to blame man for the evils of society and to see women as the embodiment of hope for a better future.

But it's really not all man's fault. It's everyone's fault. It's even the fault of women and children. It's the fault of the Jews. It's the fault of the gays. It's your fault. Even a miniscule amount of the fault in the way this world has turned out rests with me...

But self-blame should be doled out even more judiciously. When we point a finger at others three fingers, representing the three aspects of guilt {embarrassment, shame and humiliation} are pointing back at us. The biblical question that GOD asked Adam {"WHERE ARE YOU?"} always needs to be asked when blaming others and ourselves, "Where am I?" in all this.

Transforming Humiliation

Thankfully humiliation is no different from the other two aspects of guilt in that humiliation can be seen as either a curse or a blessing. In humiliation, there lies an invaluable emotional reward in Hebrew called: "CHESED," which is often translated as "RIGHTEOUSNESS" or "LOVING KINDNESS." But "CHESED" literally means the combined meanings of "LOYALTY" and "FAITH." Chesed can be poetically translated as loyalty to GOD because it refers to GOD's loyalty to the Jews and The Land of Israel HE gave us. In a personal way, chesed can be seen as loyalty to the process of learning to put your faith in yourself.

This inner sense of self-appreciation is a gift from GOD each of us has to earn. It's a personal process that will ground you, and it's a universal project we're all engaged in accomplishing. It's the inner Israel each of us has to attain for himself, and it's the State of Israel we all have to learn to defend. We're all in this alone together.

The Christian equivalent to chesed is a "STATE OF GRACE." The Muslims use T H E W O R D "H U B B" {L O V E} 69 times in The Quran to express the process of self-transformation through faith in their way. And I'm equally sure that all the world's other faiths and philosophies have a concept to describe the inner peace that comes from moving through humiliation to this most profound sense of intimacy within ourselves. Loyalty to ourselves is a universal process that we have to recognize and develop before we can demonstrate the loyalty we give to our GOD/GOD/G O D.

When we blame, regardless of whom, we usually miss the opportunity to learn to measure ourselves more astutely because we're so busy measuring them. But there's little point in developing a conscience if you shine it on others only to illuminate the error in their intentions. Even if you shine your light onto others just to illuminate you to their mistakes, you're still not doing enough to personalize the reason for them being in your life. Our Teacher has brought their spiteful ways into our lives to teach us how to behave righteously even if we find ourselves having to deal with snakes.

By righting our wrongs-with-ourselves we achieve chesed, a sense of inner loyalty. This increased intimacy from within is the very essence of self-love. It's so much easier to act righteously, cleverly and in a timely manner when you love yourself for having improved yourself. This is what may set you apart from your enemies. They're trying to consolidate power for themselves. You're trying to distribute it to everyone.

Putting your faith in yourself isn't possible unless you have a good conscience you can rely on. Faith in yourself can only come with massive amounts of guilt that trains you to love yourself through the process of transcending who you were before.

The idea that life is a gift is something that cannot be experienced until you pursue the meaning of self-love. All that you love about life was allowed by GOD so that you'd learn how to consciously pursue self-love in your own special way.

A mother's love for her children; a man's love for his country; your love for whatever ideals float your boat – they all come from the ocean of emotion that covers 70% of your inner world. If you're landlocked intellectually you'll never discover how fabulous your whole inner world really is. You've got to descend into the mystery that lies at the bottom of your heart.

The Taste Of Forbidden Fruit

The peel of the forbidden fruit may look modest; the meat of the fruit may look humble. But at the core of forbidden fruit lies chesed, loyalty to yourself.

Loyalty isn't something you can steal from others with retribution. Vindictiveness is a sign of disloyalty, not loyalty. Revenge is spiteful, and spite is the most obvious sign of self-hatred.

Loyalty has to be earned; you can't simply claim it with cheap words or shallow deeds. You have to do good for others; witness the goodness you've done; and then consciously commend yourself for it. If you can't acknowledge yourself for bringing the world a little closer to peace through acts of kindness, you won't be able to demonstrate long-term loyalty to anyone.

But these little steps you take with regard to others are just the beginning. Then you have to use the gift of self-scrutiny GOD gives you to explore your motives in all the ways you treat yourself. Your personality is a preview to coming to know your persona. And your persona is the product of infantile, childish, juvenile and immature conclusions you unconsciously assembled a long time ago. Taking yourself apart in the abstract to put yourself better together with righteous deeds is a lifelong job. In these ways, the little steps you take with regard to others will lead to giant steps you can achieve with regard to yourself.

Loyalty to GOD goes beyond anything or anyone. Loyalty to GOD has to be created, developed and practiced from within before you can shine it out to fill this dark world with your myriad bands of colorful emotions. You have to cry as GOD cried in the story of Noah when HE flooded the whole world with HIS tears. You have cleanse yourself and wait for the waters to recede before you can claim to own a rainbow of hope and faith in GOD's design.

The forbidden fruit from The Tree of self-knowledge can be turned into a symbol of the modesty with which you can look at your body and excuse it for being imperfect. It lies in the humility with which you can perceive your character with forgiveness for your faults. And at the core of the forbidden fruit in you, you can signal all the ways you prove that your loyalty to yourself will exonerate you for your sins of your own inhumanity.

Tolerating embarrassment, shame and humiliation isn't much of a strength. Murderers, adulterers and thieves can do that much. Anyone can lie about how he feels about himself. That's called: denial.

To move through the three aspects of guilt to modesty, humility and grace, you have to have a plan. But that plan will be so big and all-encompassing that you're going to need help in formulating your plan. Torah is that plan readymade for the common man. If it was good enough for Jesus to use in developing His plan of self-love, and if Torah and The Gospels were enough for the P R O P H E T Mohammed to develop his plan based on generosity of spirit, Torah ought to work as a good starting point for you.

The fruit in The Creation Story is the real victim in the story. It has no voice. It loses its life for no reason. If you identify with the fruit of goodness that lead to love and the fruit of evil that leads to mistakes made and corrected {evil}, self-knowledge will lead you in the direction of the wisdom, love and charity that will reveal the unique way in which GOD created you in HIS image.

A Good Look At Yourself

Nude is a state of mind. *Naked* is a state of heart. And *transparent* is the state of spiritual openness to your soul that's revealed in the actions taken by Adam and Eve by the end of The Creation Story.

You can cover up your bad thoughts with modesty. You can hide your hateful feelings with humility. And you can conceal the laziness that lies in your soul with loyalty. But life will only continue to slowly disrobe you over time. Your nudity, nakedness and transparency will be exposed whether you're the only one who can see it or the only one who can't.

The reason people are morally opaque in their dealings with one another is because they're not fully transparent with themselves. They're spiritually masking their

embarrassment, concealing their shame and obscuring their humiliation in an effort to defend themselves against doing THE WORK we're all here to do.

People let some of their own light in through the windows in their inner Temple. They just don't have enough windows to allow in enough light to see themselves clearly. They can see that their inner walls have stained glass windows. But the light they let in doesn't quite shimmer throughout the room. Maybe that's because it's just the dawn of their day.

When too much light shines onto a man's body, it leaves him vain and unable to express embarrassment. Too much heat in his character leaves him conceited and unable to express his shame. But when there's too much burn focusing in on a man's soul, he's left hiding his pain with overconfidence and self-righteousness. This is when he becomes his own worst enemy. This is why humiliation is the only way he can free himself of the sin of perfection.

A big *ego* in the sense of "too full of himself" is the result every man comes to when he gets just what he wants. Those who strive for perfection end up miserable when the least little things don't come out their way. Once a man has completed his journey to perfection, he's got to turn around and go back down the same road he came. But going back he's going to be made aware of his imperfections. He's going to see what was on his right on his left and what was on his left on his right.

This when the fun begins for his enemies. This is when they get to humiliate him for his stupidity in always comparing himself to Jesus, and never contrasting himself to Him. This is when they're going to get their just desserts. And believe me, everyone is just waiting for the opportunity to get his just desserts, especially from the gays and the Jews.

Man is egotistical, and The Hebrew Testament, Christian Bible and Quran are trying to get us to see ourselves as imperfect. It's only when you can acknowledge your imperfections that you can celebrate the dance of life. Only when you can acknowledge your similarity to the Children of Israel who danced around a Golden Calf can you find the modesty, humility and loyalty to move forward on the journey of your life with less ego, not more.

Your soul is like a room in your house. It isn't the bathroom or bedroom. It isn't the place you eat, sleep or find relief. Your soul is your living room. And yet many people save it for Sundays, or use it only when they have guests over. They don't want to use their living room themselves. They lock themselves up in their den, like a bear in hibernation. They don't want to live in their living room if that means they have to be in there all alone. Their ego tells them that they're much too fine a specimen of a human being to have to live all alone.

You're the architect, interior decorator and housekeeper of the home you make inside for yourself. If you want to improve on what it feels like to be at home alone with yourself you're going to need faith in yourself to clean up the mess you've probably made inside after decades of self-neglect. There are probably rugs you've swept all sorts of stuff under that you're going to have to deal with before you can love your inner dwelling like a home, and not simply a place to hang your hat when you come back from all your outings with others. If GOD wanted to plague humanity in the worst of all possible ways, HE'd force him to have to stay home.

The Emotional Indicators Of The Need For Guilt

When we fail to alert ourselves to the need to transcend guilt by moving through it, not going around it, we move into the default emotions: anger, fear and sorrow. These default feelings are indicators that the infant within has chosen to postpone its confrontation with guilt. It's chosen to conclude it's the victim of abandonment, betrayal and conspiracy instead, the A.B.C.'s of life.

Feeling guilty is actually much harder than feeling frightened, angry or sad. Feeling guilty is an achievement when you compare that to all the anger, fear and sorrow we see in the news instead.

When you feel frightened, angry or sad, you're identifying as the forbidden fruit. You're identifying as a victim in life instead of a student of life. This is normal. But it's not ideal. To be an Adam or Eve with forbidden fruit inside of you, you have to unify all your feelings just to feel what it feels like to feel guilt.

Perhaps you didn't do anything to deserve the harsh outcomes you're having to deal with. Perhaps your intentions were always good. But life is a *school* for those with the good intentions. For those with bad intentions life is just a *game*.

It may feel harsh to be told that it's the people with the good intentions who are going to be tested in life. It may seem unfair to be told that pain and suffering are *sticks* our Teacher uses to move us in new directions. But life has wonderful *carrots*, too. And you can learn how to increase the carrots and decrease the sticks.

Perhaps Moses shouldn't have called it "forbidden" fruit. Maybe the fruit in The Creation Story isn't only permissible; it's obligatory if you wish to seek self-love. Perhaps the idea that GOD forbade it is a misnomer. Maybe we should look at forbidden fruit today as that aspect of life we're most tempted to pick because we secretly know that this is a school and that we're here to learn.

Modern man is so far along in his understanding of life that he consumes forbidden fruit unconsciously. It's a necessary and important part of his spiritual diet. Without developing a conscience, how would a man learn how to become soulful? And without fruit that impart guilt, what would his conscience survive on?

Fear {sharp}, anger {sour} and sorrow {bitter} are the emotional indicators that signal that one of the five inner voices of The Creation Story {Adam, Eve, serpent, GOD or fruit} hasn't been personalized, internalized and resolved. These tastes will never go away. But we can learn to combine them with the sweet {loving} and salty {wise} attributes of introspection.

When we get frightened, angry or sad, the only good answer to the question "Why me?" is "Because you're here to learn about the best you have to offer yourself. You're not here to compromise your love for yourself with just external happiness. You're here to learn tranquility."

If you're afraid to love yourself, you'll feel abandoned. If you're angry about having to love yourself, you'll feel betrayed. And if you're disappointed about having to love yourself, you'll feel conspired against. All that happens out in the world is a reflection of lessons you're learning about yourself. Life is no joke. It's no game. It's a palette of experiences you're learning to appreciate. You're not on a diet of milk any longer. You've been spiritually weaned.

Review

The process of spiritual consumption as presented in the first story of Torah isn't only physical, but emotional and spiritual as well. Spiritual consumption is about foraging and feeding yourself the best knowledge you can possibly find that will teach you about yourself. It's a crime against your nature to use your mind to know without engaging your imagination in ways that will also teach you love and hospitality. The advancement of your soul sets up situations that will stretch you morally. Your desires {penis} have tempted your heart {Eve} to convince your mind {Adam} to choose to learn to love yourself the way GOD made you. But to do so, you're going to have to deal with a lot of self-imperfection and guilt.

What used to be a sin is, in today's language, a sickness or a process of repair. The only way for you to proceed in healing or repairing yourself is to recognize these five forces within that call to you for acknowledgement. Pick your "self"! You deserve you! {I can't say you'll like everything you learn, but I can say that self-knowledge will make you wiser and more capable of self-love.}

You're going to have to engage your conscience in this process so that your desires {serpent} won't override your judgment [the process of balancing your thoughts {Adam} and feelings {Eve}]. Power is so inebriating that it's unlikely you'll be able to pursue self-love without first having experienced some disappointment in other-love. Without acknowledging your own unique and crazy kind of love for others you may not find the chesed {loyalty} you need to move through humiliation to soulfulness.

We all have to busy ourselves with other people's best interests before we can use the power of self-love affectively to improve ourselves. You may have to care for others through your job before you'll be able to break through the love you're giving to (or withholding from) others. You may even have to take on the responsibility of a spouse and a family to love you out of laziness. Modesty and humility always have to be practiced first on others before you'll let yourself apply them to yourself.

You may even have to heal some part of our world in order to earn the wisdom to see how to heal your inner world. A mission in life is no different from any other projection of self-love.

Faith in yourself will come as the result of your intentions to do good elsewhere. All you have to do is try to help others heal. But you'll have to try constantly and consistently. The road to heaven is paved with good intentions. But the true believer must use self-loyalty with the morally best of intentions to find his way out of hell.

Questions Of The Heart

Eve must have heard the three questions GOD posed of Adam:

1. "WHERE ARE YOU?"
2. "WHO TOLD YOU, YOU'RE NAKED?"
3. "DID YOU EAT FROM THE TREE THAT WAS FORBIDDEN TO YOU?"

When Eve is viewed as the personification of the heart of man, we realize that the heart knows the answers to all three of these questions. The heart knows everything the head doesn't because the answers to GOD's questions are rational not logical:

1. “WHERE ARE YOU?”
Our heart knows where we’re really at inside ourselves.
2. “WHO TOLD YOU, YOU’RE NAKED?”
Our heart knows the feelings of being naked {embarrassed, ashamed and humiliated}. The heart even knows that these feelings come upon us when we’re selfish/egotistical.
3. “DID YOU EAT FROM THE TREE THAT WAS FORBIDDEN TO YOU?”
Our heart doesn’t need permission to eat from The Tree of knowledge. It does so innocently and naturally in conjunction with our desires. The heart has its own kind of wisdom. The wisdom of the heart is called: self-love.

GOD doesn’t bother to ask Eve the three questions HE asked Adam, perhaps because HE realizes she already knows the answers to them. The question GOD poses to Eve is simply, “WHAT DID YOU DO?” And Eve responds very candidly to GOD, without any fanfare, saying, “THE SERPENT BEGUILED ME AND I DID EAT.” [Genesis 3:13] Eve demonstrates chesed {loyalty to herself} paradoxically by not blaming Adam, even though he’d blamed her.

Adam and Eve’s intentions were the same until they met up with GOD. Only then did the differences between them become apparent. Only when Adam blames GOD and Eve, saying “THE WOMAN YOU PUT HERE WITH ME – SHE GAVE ME SOME FRUIT FROM THE TREE, AND I ATE IT” does GOD question each of them separately. [Genesis 3:12] Only then do the differences between them become apparent.

Even if Eve doesn’t know that GOD never directly forbade her from eating from The Tree of knowledge, she has sufficient self-knowledge to see herself as Adam’s partner in life {as well as his partner in crime}. Eve’s sense of “we” is inherent in her nature. Every Adam has to be banished from his Eden to learn “we” the hard way, from life experiences in which blame and humiliation become teachers that humble him.

We can unite with one another if we can appreciate where the other person is coming from. We all know what it feels like to have a sense of “we” within, even if we didn’t arrive at that revelation the same way. We all know that the struggle within between “me” {mind} and “we” {heart} is a tough row to hoe.

Subtlety

GOD doesn’t ask the serpent its side of the story. The serpent is the subtlest of all GOD’s creatures, but not because it can talk; all creatures figuratively talk to us. The natural world always mirrors our own nature if we’re subtle enough to observe it.

GOD doesn’t ask the serpent its side of the story for the same reason our conscience doesn’t ask us to reflect on the contribution our penis {wants} and anus {desires} are making in our life. Thirty-four hundred years ago that topic of conversation would have been totally unapproachable. Today it’s not new, merely novel. A man’s desire to deliver his “goods” or to receive the “goods” of others is a personal matter that is physically mirrored in the combined efforts of his penis and prostate gland that he has to reconcile with himself by himself. Telling others what to do with their penis or what’s lodged inside his anus is like questioning the serpent in The Creation Story. If GOD decided not to go there in polite society, you don’t need to either...

Subtlety is a delicate sort of cleverness. That which is subtle is difficult to analyze. It’s complex and understated. That which is subtle is arranged in an ingenious manner that has

many fine distinctions. All the characteristics of the serpent are subtle; one might even say crafty.

And the innate power of man's penis is equally hard to describe. You might say that your penis sometimes slurs its words making it difficult to understand what it's really trying to say. You might say that sometimes it raises its head and can be quite pushy and intrusive. Describing the effect of your penis and prostate in your life is as subtle a task as describing why the serpent in The Creation Story is described as beguiling. It's a personal matter that you should explore by yourself. (But I recommend you use a vanity mirror that will magnify what you see.)

The unique shape of snakes and the way they move are keys to the subtlety of man's desire for power and how he tries to achieve it. Snakes glide seemingly effortlessly because they have no legs. And they move silently because they use friction to propel them.

As a penis is moving into erection it also slithers and slides as it climbs up the trunk of its own male Tree. Typically the pubescent boy can't stop this from happening, while the old man has trouble getting it started. The seemingly independent, mobility skills of the penis has led men to believe that man's delivery system for power has a mind of its own.

But the unique way in which snakes propel themselves is also symbolic of the way we're forced to move through life. Snakes move on their belly. And men can be so obsequious, groveling and unctuous that it's as if they slide along on their belly to get where they want to go, too. It takes modesty to grow arms. It takes humility to grow legs. And it takes loyalty to learn how to coordinate them. But it's best if you learn to coordinate them for your own good.

A man's body moves as a metaphor. It was created with the intent to *tempt* and draw *contempt*. If you don't open your imagination to the way GOD created you, you're going to limit your understanding of the meaning of life.

Intention

The serpent in the story speaks to Eve about GOD as though it knows HIM personally. It may know a great deal about GOD's power, but from its conversation, we can see that it has nothing to say about HIS love for HIS creations or HIS wisdom. The serpent has a big mouth. It's no surprise that a snake's jaw can be unhinged. The serpent can spit out a great deal of GOD-consciousness, but it can't chew on it. The serpent has no substantial understanding of GOD's nature. It subtly stands for some understanding of GOD's design, but it has no knowledge of HIS feelings. It can't grasp HIS wisdom, love and generosity of spirit. It can only perceive the enormity of HIS power from its lowly position on the ground as it makes its way through life without arms or legs.

The serpent has no way to literally pick the forbidden fruit for itself because it has no limbs. It can wrap itself around the branches of The Tree of knowledge and celebrate its proximity to the forbidden fruit, but it has no way of achieving man's goals. It must collude with Eve to get what it wants, without appearing to be the perpetrator of her crime. It instigates and obfuscates. It doesn't elucidate.

A man's penis can't achieve orgasm without his whole body participating in the act. But the more his head, heart and soul are also included in the deed, the more meaningful the orgasms become. That's an observation of the wants and desires of man that he must discover for himself.

Mark Twain suggested that Adam should have eaten the serpent rather than the fruit. It's a clever retort, but it misses the point. The character of GOD in the story obviously allowed the *chat* between Eve and the serpent to occur. The way things turn out is what we're obliged to deal with.

Men have a tendency to try to impress others with their proximity to power, and then they use others to get what they want. Those who've learned to beware of their previous tendency to use their power unethically develop a suspicious regard for duplicity in others. The desire of man to hold power in his hands is natural whether that's in the form a trophy bride, trophies on his mantle, financial portfolios, physical manpower in the form of muscle or even proximity to the "button." It's human. It's pleasurable to feel powerful. It feeds the ego. A man who's powerful from the outside in is *attractive* in his own eyes. But the man who's powerful from the inside out sees himself as truly *beautiful*. And this is the secret to eternal youth.

The serpent is the subtlest of all GOD's creatures because it knows that power feels good. Power makes men feel vital and alive. Everyone is excited by power, whether in giving or receiving it. Power is the delivery system of self-love.

But it's just the thruster. It sends chills up and down our spine with the hope that there'll be something more coming. Empty words don't promise more than power. If we hope to achieve any more than that depends on what we know about our inner options.

A man who listens only to his heart and penis, and not to his conscience, is a fool. He may look virile, successful and masculine on the outside, but he isn't smart. He won't deliver the goods you really want over time. He knows little about the fruits of knowledge. He only knows that there's a serpent in his Tree and wants to do his utmost to use it to his advantage.

But the man who ignores his lust for power lives life as though he were a mechanical device. He's divorced from the source of his passions. He doesn't caress life. He's afraid to stroke himself lovingly and passionately. He doesn't want others to see him as a body in emotion. He stagnates.

Blessings And Curses

And GOD said to the serpent, "BECAUSE YOU HAVE DONE THIS, YOU ARE CURSED ABOVE ALL CATTLE, AND ABOVE EVERY BEAST OF THE FIELD; UPON YOUR BELLY WILL YOU GO, AND DUST SHALL YOU EAT ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE." [Genesis 3:14]

Our conscience {GOD} blames our scheming mind {Adam} and naïve heart {Eve} for causing our misfortune. But our conscience curses our serpent {or worm if you're a woman} for its misuse of power.

GOD curses the serpent for what it's done, as our own conscience would figuratively curse us for being a dick or cunt for getting us in trouble. But blaming ourselves is too easy. It may relieve us of our shame, but it does nothing to avoid the threat of future humiliations.

GOD says that "THE BEASTS OF THE FIELD WILL FEAR THE SERPENT," and HE puts "ENMITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND THE SERPENT." But all this is, on the surface, only a clever confirmation of the way a snake already is received in the natural world. GOD's curse in making the serpent crawl on its belly {something that, by definition, it already does} could be seen as no punishment whatsoever for its crime.

What's the curse in metaphoric terms in making the serpent have to crawl on its belly? Many ancient paintings picture the serpent as having arms and legs before its confrontation

with GOD. Of course, with arms it would have had hands with which to pick the forbidden fruit itself. And with legs it would have had feet with which it could have stood tall or also run away.

What a snake doesn't have are ears. You can't talk to your penis, guys. And women can't talk to their clitoris. "It" can't handle your problems for you. It can't even run away from them. And if you try to talk to it, it can't hear you. In life you have to find ways of getting your wants and desires met without getting anyone into trouble, especially yourself.

There's really no consequence for being misguided by the thirst for power, whether that power is for sex, domination over others, or whether you just want to live a life of peace and quiet with enough money to make it through to the end. GOD grants us the freedom to yearn for power to get our dreams met; HE even seems to encourage it. HE doesn't appear to want to curtail our lust for influence and control in either of our worlds. But to do so we need experience in the world we share to have something to apply to the world within us.

GOD doesn't lecture Adam and Eve on the nature of snakes and how to learn to live with them in the future. HE doesn't tell Adam what to do not to get embroiled in another mess the next time Eve has a bright idea. The mind is as naïve to power as is the heart. Every Adam and Eve is going to repeat the lessons of this story over and over again. And the next story in The Old Testament will describe much more horrendous consequences when the sons of Adam and Eve think with their dicks instead of letting their conscience be their guide. The story of unbridled power and the jealousy and envy it creates has just begun.

GOD gives us a delivery system of power without telling us how to use it. But it obviously takes courage {testicles} for us to use the delivery system of our power {penis} with wisdom {head} and love {heart}. Our conscience gives us the integrity that grants us the results it wishes for when we do the right thing. Integrity is the integration and alliance of the forces that make us human {head, heart, penis, and testicles}. It's the integration of these inner dynamics that turns us slowly from boys into real men.

To exercise physical power over others without love is no more than a form of rape. And to use people emotionally unwisely is almost as great a violation. If we can see that GOD is penetrating us slowly, mindfully and lovingly with awareness of HIS presence through our conscience, we can then learn to integrate our desires with our virtues to deliver to HIM a better world. This is what your reward in the "afterlife" will probably be based on.

The Blessings In GOD's Curses

GOD curses the serpent and the ground Adam will have to till. {GOD never curses Adam or Eve. HE makes it clear that HE disapproves of their behavior, but HE doesn't curse them for it.}

If a *blessing* is a sign of approval then a *curse* is a sign of disapproval. GOD's curses have metaphoric implications that must be unpacked with HIS Self-love. The metaphor the character of GOD employs is 'curse as a clue to the need for self-learning.'

GOD disapproves of Eve's behavior saying, "I WILL GREATLY MULTIPLY YOUR SORROW AND YOUR CONCEPTION; IN SORROW WILL YOU BRING FORTH CHILDREN, AND YOUR DESIRE SHALL BE TO YOUR HUSBAND, AND HE SHALL RULE OVER YOU." This has been literally true for most women worldwide in the past, and for most, still is the case today. But GOD doesn't

offer a clue as to why HE curses her with the pain of childbirth and having to suffer a world run by men.

And unto Adam GOD says, “BECAUSE YOU HAVE HEARKENED UNTO THE VOICE OF YOUR WIFE, AND HAVE EATEN OF THE TREE, OF WHICH I COMMANDED YOU, SAYING, YOU SHALL NOT EAT OF IT; CURSED IS THE GROUND FOR YOUR SAKE; IN SORROW WILL YOU EAT OF IT ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE.”

BTW, THE WORD “YOU” in “I COMMANDED YOU” in the above quote is in the second person singular in Hebrew. This confirms that GOD never told Eve she couldn’t eat from The Tree of knowledge. But because she spoke about her and Adam to the serpent as “we,” she should have known that she had a responsibility to live up to his agreements with GOD. Whether Adam listened to the voice of his wife {externally} or his heart {internally}, he made a mistake in letting Eve override his own judgment.

Guilt is the clue that we need to face GOD’s disapproval of our behavior by atoning individually and collectively for our imperfections if we want to receive the rewards of our own self-love and the outward signs of security that come from a peaceful society.

A man’s penis must always be modestly concealed in polite society; its behavior has to be regulated through laws of civil obedience; and although it may be a symbol of pride and power, he must learn to manage his penis with modesty, humility and loyalty at all times. In that sense, being an obedient follower is as important as being a wise leader.

Whether a man blames his penis for literally being too small or figuratively for its influence over others’ being too small, there’s no coincidence about the shape it has. And its preference for the places it likes to burrow into is no coincidence either.

Rather than suffer with the way we were made physically or the way our life has turned out, we should instead make an effort to learn how all our curses can be looked upon as blessings in disguise. We should come to peace with our penis. That will be the first spiritual step toward loving our desire for power over ourselves.

Modern society is replete with symbols of the penis. Skyscrapers; monuments; towers; little, red, sports cars; trains; electric plugs; and ladders - all hold the symbolic virtues of the shape and intent of the penis. They penetrate, pierce, infiltrate, access, fill, enter and raise us in ways we hardly notice. Our penis stiffens our resolve and erects a new view of ourselves each and every day.

There isn’t a man who doesn’t want to use the penis he’s got to the best of his ability. But his penis can also initiate death and intimidation. The penis has the power to bring life into the world, but it’s the template for the gun and STD’s that remove life from this world, as well. The penis symbolizes the delivery system of power to do good or evil.

A man may curse himself for the lazy ways he lies around like a flaccid worm without motivation to stand up and do something to improve himself. Or he may find that others curse him, wishing he’d slither away in remorse or shame. He may even curse himself for acting like a “shmuck” {Yiddish: penis, perpetrator} or sounding like a “putz” {Yiddish: penis, victim}. All these curses are clues to what a man must learn not to do with his penis.

Until he can transform his embarrassment at the way he looks; his shame at the way he acts; and his humiliation at the way he behaves towards himself – a man won’t come to peace with his penis. Nor will he be able to embrace the ground beneath his feet. He’ll always feel humiliated at having been forced to slither on his belly before GOD and man. He’ll yearn to stand up for himself. Or he’ll hang loose and not do a thing to help himself.

More than you want GOD's blessings, you really want your own. You won't feel truly powerful and grounded until you can approve of yourself. With your approval, you're in the enviable position of offering your approval to GOD. Curiously, very few people really do approve of HIM. It takes a whole lot of self-approval before you can approve of GOD or HIS plan. And if you can't approve of HIS plan, you'll never be able to approve of HIS or H I S.

You can't project a supernatural cause or illness onto the harsh circumstances of your life. You can't blame the "devil" for the talking dick GOD gave you. Sooner or later you have to grow up and realize you've been blaming GOD for this penis that HE gave you. Sooner or later you'll have to admit that the "devil" lies between your own two legs.

Mother And Life

Though Adam never speaks to Eve directly, he eventually comes to see her importance in his life. He comes to know her as the first "you" {AT} in his world. Near the end of the story, before they're banished from paradise, Adam gives her a name. This is the first sign of his ability to care about anyone other than himself. He calls her CHAVA. "CHAVA" means "LIFE."

Because Adam has a greater sense of who he has the potential to be by the end of the story, he can give greater awareness to the woman in his life. Knowledge of the mind leads to the love of life.

By naming his wife "Life," in his own crude way Adam gives her a sign that her presence in his world is a gift without measure. For the infant Adam who humiliated himself by voicing his conspiracy theory between 'GOD and that woman HE put him here with,' this is a big step. Naming Eve connects the dots from *mother* to *life* as a gift from GOD. This is the great spiritual lesson learned by every infant that shouldn't be understated or taken lightly. Adam is the first sign in The Old Testament that man evolves from *knowing* himself to learning to *love* himself thanks to having picked forbidden fruit from The Tree of knowledge.

GOD: The Conscience

After HIS "lecture," the character of GOD makes Adam and Eve garments of skins. HE clothes them, so they won't have to go out into the world naked. HE embellishes upon the leaf and trees that they crudely used to conceal themselves from HIM with a wiser form of cloaking.

The skins GOD gives Adam and Eve are a metaphor for something much deeper that we all wear. The metaphor is 'skin as psychological shell.' These skins are given to us to protect us from more knowledge of ourselves than we can handle. These skins hold answers to why the composition of our life looks as mysterious as it does.

And yet, at the literal level, we've all been given a skin, which is the boundary, the picket fence, between the world around us and the world within. In this way, The Creation Story tells us what we have, not what we will have. It tells us how it is, not how we wish it to be.

The circumstances of your life you have no control over, such as your parents, religion, nationality, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation, are the *skins* you wear that were given to you by GOD. To reveal the truth of your beauty, you must disrobe yourself modestly and

slowly from these skins to see yourself as you really are in the privacy of your imagination. These aren't aspects of your GOD-given attire that anyone has the right to question.

There's nothing more insane than polluting the oceans and the air. There's nothing crazier than poisoning the ground and denuding the forests. Killing the animals is utter madness. Man is psychiatrically disordered, but only because he doesn't understand how he operates. He curses the land, the water and the sky. His conscience stands a great distance from GOD pretending to do as HE does. But he can't see the big picture because he's in it. He's sick, and the only way to heal his relationship with HIM is for every man to heal his relationship with himself. Some will need to call on Him {Jesus} for help doing this. Others will not.

Declarations From GOD

After clothing Adam and Eve, GOD declares, "THE MAN HAS BECOME AS ONE OF US, TO KNOW GOOD AND EVIL." [Genesis 3:22] There's no linguistic method of capitalizing letters in Hebrew, but this declaration from GOD is deeply meaningful from a linguistic point of view because GOD refers to HIMSELF in the first person plural objective case pronoun "us" while including others {presumably in HIS realm} or other aspects of HIMSELF HE doesn't wish to give voice to, but nevertheless wants us to know about.

At the beginning of the story, Eve demonstrated her sense of the first person plural {we} at a time when Adam could only speak about himself in the third person {he}. But now Adam hears that GOD has a sense of "We." And every Adam should take the time to think about the difference between GOD's "We" and Eve's "we."

Although this visual difference in capitalization isn't possible in Hebrew, the concept is emotionally possible to us regardless of our mother tongue. When GOD uses the equivalent of the word "Us," HE might be including HIMSELF in with you and me. Therefore we might like to conclude that there's an "Us" in "us," even if we can't easily perceive it. We should see everyone as an aspect of GOD, whether or not we agree with his methods of interpreting HIS plan.

The "us and them" that we all have in our mind is manmade. In this quote from Torah HE's declaring, in essence, that now that Adam and Eve have eaten from The Tree of knowledge of good and evil "We're" all in it together. Humanity is no longer an outsider to HIS intentions. Knowledge leads to participation in HIS plan, and the more knowledge you have of that, the more you can participate.

GOD is with us. The Hebrew WORD for "GOD is with us" is "EMANUEL," which also is the Hebrew name that anticipated the coming of Jesus in The Book of Isaiah [Chapters 7-8].

Knowledge of GOD's design isn't limited to any one religion. In fact, knowledge of HIS plan requires great understanding of the interrelatedness of HIS faiths and philosophies than any one of the Abrahamic faiths has been able to show up until now. Only by understanding the depth of Torah; the breadth of The Gospels; and the length The Quran goes to uniting mankind – can we work cooperatively together.

GOD didn't forsake Adam and Eve in The Creation Story. GOD doesn't forsake anyone. There's always a rhyme to HIS reason. There's always a poetic answer to HIS miraculous ways that you'll never be able to understand with only an intellectual look at life that's prosaic. Sooner or later, the pieces of the puzzle will come together for you, and things will begin to make more sense in a poetic sense.

GOD couldn't have let HIS one and only Jewish Son get crucified without good reason. There must have been an "Us" in "Him." The rich, ancient Jews at that time Jesus lived may have turned their back on our Jewish brother, Jesus, but Jews have learned since never to allow our disinterest in a cause affect our relationship with another Jew. A difference of opinion between two Jews is no reason to give up hope of GOD's intentions.

Because of Christian misdeeds in the past, many Jews today are cynical of Christian intentions. But this, too, was a part of GOD's design. Just as Joseph learned to praise GOD for how his own life worked out despite his crazy family's values, Jews will learn to praise Christians {and eventually even Muslims} for what they're putting us through to bring GOD's design to consciousness. If the Jews could survive the cruelty of this world for 3,400 years, we can move forward with faith in HIS intentions as we continue to learn about ourselves with the participation of all others.

If every Jew were to kill another Jew over a difference of belief, there'd be no more Jews left. If there's one thing Jesus has contributed to Judaism, it's that we, Jews, need to hold one another's opinions and beliefs with respect. Our anger at the way Christians treated us in the past is no reason for us to blame Jesus. He was one of our own, regardless whether any of us; all of us; some of us; or none of us - believe Him. GOD is no different from GOD, and They are parts of Us all.

Man can think about GOD globally, but he has to live with HIM locally. Man must love life by preserving it. His thoughts and feelings have to use his conscience appreciatively, or his integrity will suffer, and he won't live up to his own hopes and expectations for himself.

But wisdom and love aren't enough to demonstrate our loyalty to ourselves. We must find a generosity of spirit that will help us wait patiently for GOD to bring us greater enlightenment of HIS intentions. This is the generosity inherent in the P R O P H E T Mohammed's encounter with GOD through an intermediary. This is the truth Islam must now concretize in this world through peaceful means.

GOD's "We" is mirrored in the "we" within, whether or not we can always see that in society. Our thoughts, feelings and judgments can either act separately or united. Without conscious awareness of the possibility for psychological integration, man will never achieve peace on Earth or peace of mind.

The Middle East is a laboratory of love. Jerusalem is home to the "we" in everyone's "me." Israel is the first Land of milk and honey. But the world needs to express its generosity of spirit for Israel and to let her be herself.

Small children are always asking the question "why." This is because they're trying to make sense of reality with a voracity seldom seen in adults. They're working toward self-integration. It's cruel not to tell them *why* they're here. But it's even crueler if you make babies, but don't know why *you're* here.

You're here to learn about yourself. But there's so much to learn that you need to learn *how* to learn before you're going to be able to decide *what* you want to learn about. Your ego will cause you pain, and suffering will overwhelm you if you don't learn how to learn humbly.

The "Angry" GOD Of The Jews

The role of the conscience is first personified and projected out by the author of Torah as an angry GOD. But, paradoxically, GOD will appear to evolve emotionally in subsequent

stories in Genesis. As the characters personify more mature levels of self-awareness, GOD's character will seemingly change as HE guides the other characters toward greater moral awareness of themselves.

The role of the angry GOD of Torah will eventually leave Torah entirely to become the sorrowful Father of the Christian Testament who has to hold back HIS tears at what happened after giving HIS one and only Son to the world. The rest of HIS children will be asked to learn from HIS sacrifice not to be mean spirited with one another. If they don't, Christianity has created a place for them to go where their sorrow will know no end {hell}.

From the lessons of learning about GOD's loss of one fruit and one Son, mankind is expected to glean the answers needed to overcome our jealousy of what our Father had and what our Brother {Jesus} received from HIM that we weren't privileged to receive. Taking from GOD or taking a life is not the answer.

The emotional development of GOD from angry through sad continued evolving into The Quran as GOD demonstrated even greater wisdom and love in fashioning a soul out of the clay of the P R O P H E T Muhamad as shaped by the Archangel Gabriel.

Charity proves you have the gratitude to GOD to deserve his generosity. "A L L A H K A R I M " {Arabic: G O D I S G E N E R O U S} is what they say in Arabic. But HE's generous to the degree that you demonstrate your gratitude for your own generosity. Islam isn't a happy faith, but that may yet happen the more tranquil each Muslim becomes from within.

You can see GOD/GOD/G O D any way you like in your imagination, but you can't hear the differences between GOD/GOD and G O D when referred to on the written page. You have to imagine the differences in the three interpretations that create the Abrahamic faiths. If you come to perceive the differences between your own head, heart and soul, you'll come to understand the Jewish, Christian and Islamic GOD/GOD/G O D. Only in this way will you develop the imagination necessary to unite these three into One.

Humanity won't come to know the wisdom, love and generosity of GOD's creation without all three Abrahamic perspectives. Nor will man be able to wisely embrace the gift of life without the faiths and philosophies of the Far East. The big picture will get bigger until it includes everyone in the whole world. Whether your Holy Book was signed by GOD/GOD/G O D or written by HIM/HIM/H I M anonymously, you have a responsibility to use all of reality as your guide. Why else would HE/HE/H E have brought you into the modern world?

It won't be possible to squeeze out the Jews, gays, blacks, poor, women or disabled from inclusion once you learn to see everyone as one of GOD's creations. Everyone has been given a piece of the pie, and everyone must learn how to earn his just desserts.

The agnostic looks for the proof of GOD's existence in outer place instead of inner space. The atheist refuses to look for it at all. But the true believer suffers with the confusion of where *he* ends and HE begins. The challenge of the three Abrahamic religions isn't in proving the preeminence of GOD over man, but for man to understand that he needs all his classmates on Earth to take our Teacher's curriculum to heart.

Although we have the option of living our life any way we choose, the real purpose of our familiarity with earthly knowledge is to strengthen our conscience sufficiently so that our intimacy with ourselves can come to fruition. The more we can take responsibility for how we think and feel, and strive for moral authority over ourselves, the more progress we can make toward knowing how to make our personal journey as meaningful as possible.

Forbidden Fruit As Aspect Of The Self

The forbidden fruit in The Creation Story wasn't literally an apple, as common knowledge asserts. Even though the leaves Adam and Eve covered themselves with did literally come from a fig tree, the species of The Tree of knowledge is presumed to be an apple by some and a fig by others because the exact kind of Tree was never stated.

But if The Tree of knowledge is a metaphor created for spiritual insight, not botanical revelation, the absence of this detail is hardly pressing. The desire to turn metaphoric language into prosaic jargon is tempting, but should be avoided. Doing so with Torah leads to misunderstandings that have already been shown over millennia to have disastrous socio-political and personal results.

From the point of view of the unnamed species of fruit, the deed of Eve is irreversible. You can't glue apples *or* figs back onto branches in the hopes that they'll continue to grow. In literal terms, once a man leaves this world he doesn't come back. Life moves in the direction of death. People can believe whatever they want, but the facts matter.

Feelings of victimization can be undone. Anger, fear and sorrow can end, return and even come back again and again. From the heart, anything is possible.

From the fruit's point of view, and from an emotional perspective, separation and loneliness are the first extensions of the metaphor 'fruit as moral awakening.' Separation leads to fear of death. Loneliness results from fear. Those who deny their separation and loneliness are the equivalent of plastic fruit. They'll last forever, but they'll never be real. They'll never grow.

But the real separation in life isn't death, but ignorance. We live by striving to learn, and we die at the hands of ignorance every time we think it's not worth learning something new. Ignorance is at the core of the victim mentality. It's so easy to conclude that we're victims of life simply because we must eventually die. It's when we find ourselves suffering or in pain that it's hardest to remember to make life a hopeful, learning opportunity at all times.

Separation anxiety is a spiritual, as much as a psychological, dilemma. We may only have to die once, but we feel the injustice of being picked like fruit against our will millions of times in our lifetime. And like the fruit in The Creation Story, that leaves us speechless.

What can we say when we don't find the answer to the question "Why me?" We're left with the maddening conclusion that life's unfair; that we've been bad; or that supernatural forces are malevolently working against us. The sense that we can't do it alone or that we're doing it all alone is something every Adam has to learn to overcome. Our hope and desire to learn is the magic glue we have with which to prove our faith in ourselves.

Nobody understands this separation from the self and loneliness better than the infant. He can't walk or talk. He can't feed himself. He can't even scratch an itch. There's no one on Earth more separated from himself and in need of help than an infant. And when he cries, you can clearly see that frustration on his face and hear the reproach in his voice. He's the very personification of victimized fruit.

If anything in life separates the infant from GOD, it was birth, not death. Death will be a reunification process, and life should be the joyous journey between the two. But to use death or threats of death as ways to change people's opinions will always backfire. People want the freedom to think for themselves; the liberty to learn how to feel better about themselves; and the sense of emancipation to believe in themselves.

After eating the forbidden fruit, traditional interpretations of Torah claim that Adam and Eve discover they were mortal. They then realized that banishment from Eden would lead to death.

But this conclusion isn't true to the text. When the serpent asked Eve if GOD said they would die if they ate from the forbidden Tree Eve said, "GOD DID SAY, "YOU MUST NOT EAT FRUIT FROM THE TREE THAT IS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GARDEN, AND YOU MUST NOT TOUCH IT, OR YOU WILL DIE." [Genesis 3:3]

And although this conversation is reported by Eve as having happened in the second person plural {you}, GOD only said it to Adam. And HE spoke to him in the second person singular [you {ATA}], not plural {you {ATEM}}. Eve had not yet been created at the time. So this recount by Eve is an exaggeration of the facts. It's gossip between her and the serpent.

Nowhere in The Creation Story do Adam and Eve die. Adam dies at the age of 930 two chapters later in Genesis 5. But Eve's death is never reported. So neither of them immediately dies from learning the difference between good and evil. And, apparently, Eve never dies at all.

Figuratively speaking, the mind {Adam} dies, but the heart {Eve} lives on forever. The purpose of the mind is to make choices, to discern and learn. Thoughts come and go. Ideas live and die. But feelings are eternal. It's your moral education that you'll probably take with you as you exit this world, not your Earthly knowledge. We all come into this world through one door {our mother's womb} and we all leave through the door of death. The mystery lies in what we learn about morality as we move from one door to the other.

Once the head, heart and penis have been united consciously to create a holistic human being, it becomes the role of a man's conscience to teach him to value his reason for being. Every fruit in a suit must be taught to talk about himself with moral purpose. A forbidden fruit must speak up about what it means to feel chosen, picked and blessed for a very special, mysterious mission. A forbidden fruit must learn to say, "I refuse to allow you to pick me without my permission."

Later in Torah, GOD will teach the Israelites how to deal with sin and guilt through scapegoats. But when the world later decided to use Jews {and others} as scapegoats, it became necessary for everyone to learn to identify as forbidden fruit, band together, and never again allow themselves to be ravaged as the Jews were as scapegoats ending with the Holocaust.

If you don't succeed in learning to love yourself, you'll feel like the fruit in this story *should* have felt: unfairly plucked and disconnected from your source. You'll feel singled out, not chosen. And that may leave you feeling incapable of expressing yourself.

Many such people feel ashamed for the perpetrators who accuse them unjustly. Many confuse blame with shame. When you're unjustly blamed, you have a moral responsibility to yourself to stand up for yourself, even if you're overwhelmed with diffused and ill-defined shame on a deeper level of life.

Hope is associated with your heart. Courage is associated with the life-giving force in your testicles. The strength you need to be yourself must be gleaned from Eve's conversation with the serpent, not Adam's conversation with GOD. If you don't explore the 'x' factor in you, you're going to die with more questions than answers about who you really are and why you're here.

You were picked for this mission just like Moses, Jesus and the P R O P H E T Mohammed were picked for theirs. So don't abandon yourself with ignorance of your own dignity. Don't blow yourself up with arrogance or go off on yourself with frustration and anger at not having yet achieved full integration of the voices within you. It may be harder being you than it looks. But you should be glad you're saving everyone else from having to do it...

Name Calling

Although the narrator told the reader the name of the first man just after he was created, GOD only calls Adam by name for the first time after he gets in trouble and is cajoled into expressing himself before GOD. A feeling of terror might well have shot through Adam when GOD calls him by name as he's hiding from HIM among the trees.

Nobody likes to be called by name when he's done something wrong because that's the time when the sound of his name resonates down to the marrow in his bones. The name "Adam" means "of the Earth," but because of the moment when he learned it, it would have been easy for him to conclude that his name was more synonymous with dirt than good, clean earth.

When a man feels associated with dirt – especially if he's singled out for having done something wrong – he's likely to feel more like the rotten apple in the barrel than a sweet, budding flower of hope on a branch of a tree.

Perhaps so many men have treated the Earth like dirt because they felt so guilty about having needed to be admonished in childhood. For a man to feel he's learning about himself in an environment that's safe and nurturing, he has to be made to feel that he's a miraculous creation of GOD; that his feelings of guilt aren't queer or unnatural.

Unfortunately keeping little boys alive, despite their tendency to do reckless and dangerous things, requires that parents sometimes do use fear tactics in child rearing. Children who don't receive a healthy dose of negative emotions from their parents may not make it *to* adulthood or live long far *into* it.

Adam must have thought he was the world's first victim once the forbidden fruit was in him and was being digested. He had good reason to feel disrespected by GOD's timing in calling him by name, even if he didn't say so.

Adam is the maligned mind of everyman without experience. A man must learn to love the name he was given. It was, after all, another one of those gifts, like naming his wife "Life," that needs to be understood to be appreciated.

Despite Adam's probable disapproval of his own name because of when he learned to recognize it, he has the emotional epiphany of giving Eve a name that can't be more positive and affirming. In naming her "Life" he affirms her place in his life. Who wouldn't like that part of this guy by the end of the story?

Intuition And Knowledge

The GOD in The Creation Story is, as I've already stated, a projection of man's conscience onto a caricature of our Creator. It's as if The Creation Story is two stories happening simultaneously: our creation of GOD and HIS creation of us.

We generally think of GOD as looking like a grumpy old man. GOD, the young man will appear in The New Testament as Jesus, a new aspect of the conscience, the voice that

will preach to man's need for awareness of life beyond this lifetime and the need for mercy once a man has learned all he can about justice.

But the "Old Man" of The Old Testament is more concerned with man growing up. HE's The Father that holds humanity as HIS very young child. With a child in your life there's a greater need for training and order in your home. Educating a well-trained child is never child's play. Even if you start out the process correctly, there's much to learn along the way.

The problem with Islam today boils down to bad parenting. There wouldn't be the number of sociopathic terrorists out there if Muslim parenting skills were more psychologically sophisticated. Look at how much more peace loving the Christian world has turned out. And look at what Jewish society looks like everywhere in the world, including Israel. Even gay communities, which were condemned for immoral and perverted values in all the Abrahamic faiths in the past, model the highest level of respect for brotherhood, no doubt because of good training from parents combined with a peace loving education and agenda.

For fanatically "religious" Jews, Christians and Muslims to dismiss psychology as a gift from GOD is very unwise. You can be religious as well as modern. But you can be faithful as well as psychopathic.

The GOD-consciousness exhibited by Adam and Eve is totally instinctive. They're in GOD's presence, but they take everything about HIM for granted. They have no idea of their proximity to HIM at all times. HE seems more like a nuisance that sets down rules and invades their privacy. And when HE starts to ask questions, Adam resists HIM with an excuse rather than admit his guilt. And Eve offers no more than the barest of facts to explain her behavior.

As a man's conscience grows, his sense of GOD's presence in his life may or may not grow with him. But whether or not it does, his intuition will grow, and his relationship with himself will become more secure. Although the four stages that lead up to intuition are (1) instinctual; (2) impulsive; (3) impetuous; and then (4) reckless, with a good conscience, a man can develop an intuition that guides his moral inclinations. These four stages in the development of the intuition have been personified in the first four stories of Genesis.

Once a child has been trained, not just with the words, but also with the spiritual depth behind the meaning of the words "please," "thank you," "I'm sorry" and "I don't know" he's ready for a proper education. And the use of his intuition in applying these words in every situation will require a great deal of intuition before he's ready for GOD/GOD/G O D-consciousness.

Victimhood

The absurd conclusion our grandparents taught us about The Creation Story was that men are victims of women because their feminine wiles are irresistible. And for this crime of passion perpetrated on Adam by Eve the whole human race has had to suffer the wrath of GOD. Well, that simply makes no sense at all, if it ever did.

First of all, most men love sex. Most men have thoughts about sex frequently over the course of every day. And it's ridiculous to blame women for man's preoccupation with it when gay men are no less preoccupied with sex than straight men. Women have no seductive power over gay men, and yet gay men think about sex as much as the next guy.

Secondly, if men are victims of women in the biblical sense, then women are victims of talking snakes. And that's hard to explain without moving out of the literal and into the realm of figurative speech. But if you say that women are victims of men who behave *like* snakes, suddenly Torah makes a lot more sense. A simple simile makes the idea reasonable.

In truth, we're all victims of ignorance, not reptiles. The less we know about ourselves, the more we suffer. And the only way out of victimization is with a thorough education. Dogma holds no immunity against self-knowledge. The more we know about ourselves, the harder it becomes to hold onto "religious" dogma. Psychology answers questions that bigoted, hateful people cannot. The "devil" dies in the realm of faith when you turn "him" into man's penis personified psychologically.

Birth is the "Little Bang," the creation of our own universe. This is what The Creation Story is really describing, not the "Big Bang" theory. The expansion of our psychological universe leads us from one wonderful level of self-discovery to the next. This will become more evident in the next three stories of The Old Testament as the boy {Cain} discovers his antipathy toward his heartfelt feelings {Abel}; the adolescent {Noah} discovers what really floats his boat; and the young man discovers that building a tower to his own power {babble} will lead to unhappy consequences at some point down the line.

The Prison Of Consciousness

The American prison system is an orchard of green apples crying out for a chance to redden and ripen. Would that we could teach inmates to use their time incarcerated to figure out who they're really meant to become from the inside, in. There's so much wasted spiritual energy locked up in our prison system and nursing homes. The greenest and most spoiled of our apples are doing little to teach us how to be good gardeners.

Those who are physically incarcerated in prisons or old age institutions are only locked up literally. Many outside these places are locked inside themselves. Because we don't train our children to know themselves and don't educate adults to love themselves, we're afraid of violence erupting everywhere we go.

No group of people expresses this fear more viscerally than the N.R.A. {National Rifle Association}. The promotion of guns is a psychological illness that's the result of too little spiritual education and too much dogmatic, "religious" indoctrination. People are scared, confused and unable to say, "I need to know more about how my penis influences my thinking."

Our society has made us all feel as though we're imprisoned inside ourselves for our own safety. Would that we could create a better world where we were taught how to feel so safe inside that we could reach out at all times to help others do the same.

The power of GOD that the serpent tempts Eve to discover is raw. Psychological power has to be picked and consumed fresh before you can imagine the wonderful possibilities of cutting it up and preparing it in more processed ways. When you add the heat of love to raw power it changes it dramatically for the better. A spiritual compote is what we're creating for the new age. The evidence is there that modern man is finally turning into spiritually stewed fruit.

GOD's Goodness

GOD doesn't ridicule Adam and Eve for their instinctive modesty in covering their genitals. HE doesn't scorn them for running away from HIM and humbling themselves

amongst the trees when they hear HIM coming near. HE doesn't deride Adam for his loyalty to himself when he literally blames Eve and indirectly blames HIM for his own misdeed. GOD doesn't just give the two of them consequences for the choices they made.

HE thinks ahead to what they're going to need to develop themselves down the road. HE tells them what their lives are going to be like in the future, and HE makes clothes for them out of animal skins before HE sends them out into the world. HE plans for their success by warning them of challenges in their future.

The GOD of The Hebrew Testament is *vengeful*, but HE isn't *vindictive*. And the difference is paramount. HE wracks vengeance on us for our mistakes. Another way of saying that is that he responds to what we've done with lessons that will give us an opportunity to better ourselves in ways we can't imagine at the time of our misdeeds.

Vindictiveness, on the other hand, is based on apathy, not loving concern. Vindictiveness is something only humans exact on one another. Vindictiveness is the result of apathy for ourselves that emanates out from within with a desire for revenge on anyone who happens to get in our way.

GOD is vengeful. HE'll frighten you if HE decides fear will motivate you. HE'll anger you if HE wants to motivate you to act with more passion. Or HE'll sadden you if HE wants you to feel apologetic and contrite. But HE'll never ignore you or treat you vindictively. You're always in HIS heart. The purpose of Torah is to open you to hold HIM lovingly in yours.

Jesus understood this message from Moses, and embodied it. He was the first Jew to crack the Mosaic code, so to speak. What His Disciples wrote about Him became GOD's message of pure Self-love imparted to the world in Israel a very long time ago. But you can't appreciate the love He stood for if you don't understand what He accomplished in terms of the wisdom Moses imparted to Him.

Although GOD gives Adam and Eve leaves and trees to hide from HIM when they need to, we don't give GOD credit for how thoughtful HE was in this story for having done so. And in our own life we take a vast number of HIS gifts equally casually. We call these gifts "circumstances at hand," "coincidences" or "lucky breaks." We don't admit that it's all "K I S M E T" {the Muslim concept of A L L A H's secretive intervention in our lives - brought into English through the Turkish language}.

The alcoholic pursues spirits rather than spirituality. The drug addict gets high rather than contemplate the place he's striving for in heaven. The foodie is more consumed with what he literally eats than the biblical concept of consuming self-knowledge. The shopper has to overdraw his bank account before he's able to see his inner poverty. The gambler looks for GOD's love through luck. And the sex addict lusts over others instead of struggling to love himself.

Addictions and compulsions are metaphoric train trips you take without bothering to look out the window at the scenery in your soul. Passengers on these trains are interested in any destination they can find that will bring them to a pleasurable outcome. When you're more interested in where you're going than why you're headed in that direction, you often end up on a train of thought carrying boxcars of addictions and compulsions. You find yourself going round in circles doing things that have little to no real meaning.

Most young people are so consumed with fear of rejection, betrayal and minor snubs that they don't realize they're predicated on vindictiveness. They may want to get back at

those who've rebuked and rebuffed them. They may want to even the score for having been brushed off or even insulted. The heart of man is extremely sensitive, even hypersensitive.

Our conscience has the power to clothe our thoughts and feelings or expose them. The garments GOD gave to Adam and Eve are the leathery skin we have to learn to be comfortable in. Our conscience will protect us from insult and injury if we've developed enough callous. We don't have to react to every prick and pinhole that perforates our hide.

Getting what you want in life is possible, but you may have to become more thick skinned to achieve it. You won't be able to turn the other cheek unless your neck isn't stiff and your body isn't rigid. There's a moral layer of protection you must earn to protect yourself from the harshness of the world. Being good is more powerful than being bad even though acting badly is everyone's prerogative.

The characters of Genesis are parables not real people; Adams of allegory, not individuals you'll ever get to meet. Despite their increasing awareness of love and decreasing need to act vindictively, each character in Torah finds yet another way to humiliate himself. But in so doing, they all warn us of all the ways we move from error to insight at each stage of our psychological growth.

The serpent may have been the catalyst that caused Eve to pick forbidden fruit, but she couldn't have been tempted in the first place if she'd been in dialogue with GOD from the start, and hadn't depended on Adam's relationship to GOD's authority for the truth. The third lesson in guilt {humiliation} is that GOD relates to each of us differently when we become aware of our individual lessons with HIM.

When you admit you're forbidden fruit unto yourself, you learn to have compassion for women, for they consumed forbidden fruit before you did. And when you identify as forbidden fruit you become passionate about being yourself. It's at that point that your personal purpose in being here comes to light.

Crime And Punishment

The punishment for stealing one, silly, little piece of fruit from GOD's precious, little garden hardly seems to fit the crime from an infant's selfish and inexperienced point of view. The conscience {GOD} of the infant-like appears to be a force outside itself that's capricious, pedantic, out of touch with reality and judgmental. The infantile can't conceive of the fact that GOD might be leading them on a journey to benevolence.

At this first stage of self-awareness, the infantile can only feel unfairly locked in a box of flesh, a prison they want to find a way out of. They can only scream out in anger and resentment every time they feel constrained. They can't yet speak about their experiences, so they hide inside from developing a relationship with themselves.

Those who are unaware of the depth of their self unconsciously think of life as a crime they committed at birth. They think they were caught, sentenced, and will be jailed for a lifetime until "capital punishment" will end their felony once and for all.

Conventional "religious" dogma tells them to grin and bear it until the day they're released. Spirituality agrees with the premise in the general sense, but insists that if this metaphor is primary to your mental reasoning, then there's a lot you can do to rehabilitate yourself while you're stuck here.

Knowledge of wisdom {Jewish spirituality} without love {Christian spirituality} is unjust. And knowledge of love {Christian spirituality} without wisdom {Jewish

spirituality} is unmerciful. The message of the Muslims {generosity of spirit} must be brought into the mix with awareness of both spiritual systems that came before them.

The Abrahamic religions weren't created to be separate. Each branches out from Torah in three, GOD-given, directions, so that they'll be linked through the world we share. They're interdependent faiths that share a common root, not separate religions that pray to a different GOD/GOD/G O D. Since GOD/GOD/G O D has developed the conscience of each faith differently with good reason, it behooves us to learn how to appreciate each other's gifts.

All "religious" wars of the past began within. The crusades between the Christians and Muslims and all their battles with the Jews have been historically mirrored in the wars we're all personally fighting between our Jewish thoughts, Christian feelings and Islamic beliefs today. Power *plays* in the 21st Century have, thankfully, now reached the level of power *plays* in every man's living room and bedroom. Peace on Earth begins with peace of mind. And gay people and women aren't going to hurt anyone's precious penis or whack his bouncing balls in our quest for our own journey to tranquility. Thanks to psychology, everyone is beginning to see the correlations between war-and-sex and religion-and-sex.

There's only one wise way through life, and, at some point, that must take you onto the path of guilt. You have to use your conscience to decide good from bad; right from wrong; and better from worse – with every step you take, or you'll suffer without the pleasure and importance of knowing and loving yourself.

Judaism is the first faith to bring awareness of GOD to the world, and Islam is the last. But they're bridged with the middle path, the path of Christian love. GOD-consciousness won't interfere with the desires of your genitals. GOD-consciousness will only improve the ways you learn to use your genitals.

Hopefully you embody the efforts of Moses, Jesus or the P R O P H E T Mohammed because you, too, believe in GOD/GOD/G O D. The concert of Christianity and the symphony of Islam require the song of Judaism to make them real. THE WORD of GOD will never sound the same as THE WORDS of GOD, because the message of the latter is built upon the foundation of the message of the former. And although Muslims are dedicated to spreading T H E W O R D of G O D, they don't yet realize what that means in the holistic, Abrahamic sense.

THE WORD/WORD/W O R D of GOD/GOD/G O D is no less obvious than the words, "to," "two" and 'too.' If there can be three twos there can be three Ones. Nobody has to walk away from the Abrahamic faiths feeling like a loser.

Summary Of Guilt

Sacred Text As Instruction Manual

Life is a moral school, and The Hebrew Testament is the oldest and one of the most popular textbooks on morality on Earth. The problem with man's grades in school isn't that his sacred texts are inaccurate, unethical or out of date. The source of man's problem emanates from his conscience because he behaves like a recalcitrant student who refuses to perceive the importance of learning to express the WISDOM of his HEART G E N E R O U S L Y.

The subtle challenge in becoming aware of guilt comes first with the challenges of physical survival. Then it comes out of the need to survive emotionally with hope in something resembling a life everlasting. Lastly, it comes to us through spiritual survival with a promise of just rewards all along the way. If we focus our attentions on the world around us while, at the same time, looking at the world within, the importance of this world to whatever comes next will become clear.

Torah is the microscope that reveals the secret to survival. Christianity is the magnifying glass that reveals the secret to spiritual comfort. And Islam is the telescope that reveals the secret to the reason for why it is the way it is. If you peer through only one of these spiritual instruments of GOD's grace, you're going to get some of the big picture, but not all of it.

Guilt is required for a successful relationship with yourself, but you first have to practice your ethical lessons on others before your conscience will allow you to practice on yourself. People are for practice. If you don't treat them with the highest ethical regard, you won't allow yourself to learn about self-love. You'll be cursed to learn using anger, fear and sorrow. You won't trust yourself in your own hands.

But if you think you can make an exception by hating gay-Jews because we contradict everything you hold dear, know that you're barking up the wrong Tree. Once you give up your respect for gay-Jews, the blacks, Muslims, women and disabled are right behind us in line. You're going to find yourself disrespecting them as well. Then you'll see that there's something inherently wrong with your conscience.

If you find yourself telling yourself that the obese person you see in the restaurant shouldn't be there, you're using your conscience as someone else's guide, even if you don't say a word out loud. If you feel uncomfortable because the people around you don't have your "class," aren't you really telling The Teacher you shouldn't have been enrolled in that course of study to being with? If you've got your nose in someone's vagina or anus imagine how incensed you'd be if someone stuck their nose in yours.

The Creation Story describes how GOD introduces Adam and Eve to the feeling of guilt in order to allow them discover its effects for themselves. The most common visualization of GOD in the imagination of man is as an old man. But GOD is neither an old man nor a young one. These are P.R. techniques by which religion in the past chose to make HIS/HIS/H I S message known.

We all share the same GOD because we were all poured into the same kind of container of consciousness. We're like snowflakes, all made of the same substance, each with a unique pattern. If you see GOD as an old man, it's because you see yourself as young. If you perceive Him as a young man, it's thanks to the fact that you're spiritually aging. And if, like a Muslim, you refuse to paint any and all pictures of G O D altogether, it's because

you realize that personification and projection influence your perception of H I M, and so, out of deference to HIM/HIM/H I M, you abstain from doing either.

GOD is presented in Torah with the attribute of vengeance to warn us that although there are gifts in pursuing HIS wisdom, love and generosity, there are consequences for foolishness, hatred and mean-spiritedness. But GOD isn't literally wrathful or angry with us. HIS beneficence is beyond all description.

The GOD of the Jews isn't Jewish. HIS isn't ours. And HE isn't angry. GOD is neither judgmental nor compassionate. HE's utterly perfect. All the adjectives we use to describe HIM diminish HIM. Nouns and adjectives only describe us. GOD is more like all our verbs rolled into one.

From The Creation Story, we can conclude that a little guilt goes a long way. But rather than struggle to transcend our guilt, we, more often than not, either choose to avoid it like the plague or we use dogma to claim we can magically erase guilt from our heart altogether. The religions have all tried their best to turn guilt into something we should try to feel, and yet, ironically, it's the one feeling we all do our best to avoid. Nobody likes to feel guilty because that's associated with being wrong.

Guilt mysteriously leads us through the wisdom of the Jews to the love of the Christians, ending with the generosity of the Muslims – whether or not our personal history looks like it embodies a process that includes all three of the Abrahamic faiths. Guilt lies at the root of every Tree of knowledge. And even though there's more to a Tree than its roots, if you don't appreciate the roots you *can't* see, you'll never be able to fully appreciate the flowers and fruits you *can*.

Man has to be the biggest fool GOD ever created. He was given a Jewish-like nose, a Christian-like heart and a deep, Muslim-like soul. And all three are as plain as the nose on everybody else's face. But man insists on biting it off others' faces to spite his own.

The Joy In Telling Secrets

Some of the most emotionally intelligent students of life avoid themselves and the holy Scriptures of their tradition rather than read people like good books for personal insight. And that's dangerous because every leader in the military/industrial complex of his country uses guilt to market his particular brand of crowd control. Once we can all clearly distinguish matters of the head from those of the heart, we'll be well on our way to seeing the importance in developing the conscience of man much further than it is today. And then we won't let them lead us by the nose. Once we all learn to apply our guilt to ourselves, madmen will no longer be able to use guilt against us (and they're experts at doing so). We'll be able to transform the three levels of guilt {embarrassment, shame and humiliation} with greater positive self-regard.

This will make us all better followers in the same way that it takes a good gay bottom to make a great male top. You have to know how to guide to know how to follow. You have to know what pleases a woman to learn how to please a man. If you think you born on top, you'll have nowhere to go but down.

To plummet the subtlety and depth of Torah, Jews, Christians and Muslims should read the entire text to personalize it for personal insight into their contribution to GOD's design. It's more like a DESIGN/DESIGN/D E S I G N.

In so doing, the details in The Creation Story will reveal the noble struggle of all men to learn to express themselves. Of course, those of other philosophies and faiths ought to

help themselves by reinterpreting their sacred text through a comparison of it to Torah. There's no sacred text GOD/GOD/G O D gave to any group of people that doesn't relate to the foundation HE gave the Jews in Torah.

Narcissism And Self-Love

Modern, Western society insists we learn to love the stranger and downplay the effects of the stranger within us. People are afraid that if everyone loved himself we'd create an even more narcissistic and apathetic society. This is actually quite realistic, but the problem Narcissus had was that he didn't recognize himself even though he was staring himself in the face. Narcissus confused himself with someone else.

The reason it's against the law to feed the bears at Yosemite National Park in California isn't because human food is bad for bears, but because bears don't know where chocolate bars end and fingers begin. (The laws aren't in effect for the sake of the bears.) Like the bears at Yosemite, the narcissist can't tell where he ends and the next person begins. He can't separate himself from his own projections. And that's emotionally dangerous for everyone.

Self-love will clarify the boundary between your fingers and the chocolate around you. Self-love relieves you of narcissism; it doesn't create narcissism. You're much more delectable and tempting than you might think. You're chocolate to bears. If you don't realize you have what they want, you're going to figuratively lose fingers, and maybe your life.

You don't have to meditate in the light of an open refrigerator to look for something to nourish you. The fruits of knowledge of yourself will feed you from within if you're hungry enough to take a bite. You're a blue-white flame surrounded by a dark, bittersweet, chocolate vacuum. You're a star in your own night sky. There's nothing in your refrigerator to illuminate you or teach you about that when you can't sleep. That's something you have to find by consuming another kind of food.

Unfortunately, people don't have the strength to go through guilt to do it. They find guilt just too unpleasant a feeling. So they choose instead to go around it. And that's not wise.

Unfortunately, even the science of psychology has tried to steer us away from self-love by implying that man suffers from an Oedipal Complex; that he wants to kill his father and then marry and have sex with his mother. This is an ancient, Greek myth resurrected by Freud during the 19th Century to explain man's motivation to mutilate himself, not enlighten himself.

Freud was as intimidated by the thought of loving himself just as everyone else in the 19th Century. He probably thought self-love would turn him into a homosexual, or that having loving feelings for his mother would lead him to an incestuous relationship with her. This part of Freud's theory was based on the fear of love, not the love of love.

Don't be frightened by gay love or mother love. Fear of your own serpent and its conversation with your inner Eve is the cause for your competitive nature with other men. Love the one you're with, and you won't have to hate the ones around you.

Stages Of Intimacy

There are 11 major stages of increasing intimacy with our conscience described in Genesis, each with clues to the possibility of growing conscious participation with GOD

along the way. These are psychological transformations everyone goes through, although often unconsciously. The 12th stage is that of the true believer, the man who has no further doubt that in death he'll finally transcend himself as he is now. This man knows he has to transform the world in the process of living his life if he wants to die without fear of transcendence. {The 13th stage of Torah is insinuated, but not unpacked and explored until you get to The Quran.}

These stages are presented in Torah in the stories of:

1. Adam and Eve
2. Cain and Abel
3. Noah and the Ark
4. The Tower of Babel
5. Abraham and his nephew Lot
6. Abraham and his illegitimate son, Ishmael
7. Abraham and his legitimate son, Isaac
8. The relationship between these half-brothers
9. The fraternal twin sons of Isaac: Jacob and Esau
10. Jacob's sons: Joseph, and Joseph's ten half-brothers
11. Judah's relationship with guilt
12. Moses and Aaron, the PROPHET and priest of GOD
13. Joshua, the savior within you

Before a man is ready to go on the journey of life as a Moses and Aaron unto himself as described in The Book of Exodus, he ought to assure himself that he's fully prepared for the journey. There's a great deal of footwork to do before he takes the first step. But who has time to do it by the book?

The Book of Genesis is the footwork you've unknowingly been doing all your life. The other four books of Torah are your journey out of an inner prison {Egypt} to an inner Land of milk and honey {Israel}. Once you learn how to read Torah for personal insight, you discover how much of it you already know by heart and what you're still missing.

Praise GOD For We Are With HIM

Jesus

The name “Jesus,” as I said, is a Greek translation of the name of the Hebrew rabbi who’s attributed to being The Son of GOD. His name was described in The Book of Isaiah as “EMANUEL,” which means “GOD IS WITH US.” {But it literally means, “WE ARE WITH GOD.” Those who translated this name were so arrogant that they assumed HE’s going to go wherever they choose to go.

The awe and beauty in GOD’s second name, Jesus, can’t be fathomed until you remember that Eve was capable of referring to Adam and her in the plural {we} right from the start. The sense of unity began with woman. It’s men who have to learn what the word “we” means to us. Once we have that down, we can talk about whether we’re going with GOD/GOD or in another direction.

The “We” of The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit is not unlike the “we” of Eve with Adam. If you know what the word “we” means to you in terms of your head and heart, you’ll have no difficulty understanding the Christian concept of GOD.

Jesus, unlike Adam, has this sense of “Us” from within right from birth. It may have come to Him directly from GOD; but it also came through Him from His mother, Mary, as it does for every child through his mother. It’s only possible to perceive that GOD is with “Us” if you’re a Christian who appreciates the gift that one special, Jewish woman brought into this world through her relationship of love for GOD.

The horror in the history of Christianity lies in its insistence in differentiating between “us” {the Jewish people} and “them.” Their sense of Christ in their lives wasn’t catholic with a small “c,” meaning wide-ranging and universal. They forced many peoples worldwide to convert to Christianity when the message of love and forgiveness should have been seen as a universal right, right from the start.

The whole world will feel Christian when you believe in the spirit of “Us.” And this is still an impediment because of the ulterior motives many Christians have. They blame the Jews for being untrustworthy, but they, themselves, are thieves who’ll rob you blind. They’ve raped the planet, raped your sons and daughters, and they’ll continue to rape anyone who stands in their way of making another almighty dollar. They stand behind capitalism and GOD/GOD/G O D, giving both a bad name.

There’s no reason to convert anyone to your belief in Jesus as The Son of GOD unless you’re looking for money and power as a reward for doing so. Believing in love and forgiveness doesn’t require a change of faith, or, at least, it doesn’t anymore now that the Jews have proved to Christendom that we’re capable of loving them without believing in Jesus as a part of GOD.

Jews don’t have to love one another. Therefore we don’t have to love Jesus. We have to acknowledge the wisdom of our words and the righteousness of our deeds. If a Jew acts foolishly we condemn his actions, and universalize his behavior as an example of what not to do. Jews who love or hate Jesus are fools. They don’t appreciate His message. They don’t understand how wisdom leads to heartfelt intentions regardless of your faith.

GOD, in HIS infinite wisdom, decided to teach the Jews to love HIM without having to believe in the message of any particular Jew. We were given the right to learn to love ourselves without having to love any other Jew to do so.

It’s very likely GOD chose one from among us without us even knowing it. HE didn’t require our approval for HIM to create a second faith. We can love whomever we choose

whether or not we believe in Jesus. There's no punishment for loving GOD in your own way in Judaism. And GOD can love HIS one and only Son without that conflicting with his love for us. Any parent will tell you that their love for their children knows no bounds. Each is special in a different way.

Fanatical Christians who haven't received this aspect of the Good News are still trying to exclude anyone whose beliefs differ from their own. They're still playing the game of "us and them." They're still sticking their nose in places where it doesn't belong.

The fanatical Christians' reasoning for excluding those who don't fit into their formula rather than including everyone changes from century to century, but their "religious" quest is always the same: world domination in order to monopolize entry into heaven. In terms of their end view, they're no different from Muslim fanatics.

The church isn't literally the body of Christ. The body of Christ is a metaphor for the human body regardless of what religion you call your own or what you choose to do with the casing GOD/GOD/G O D gave you. We're all part of the body of Christ if we have the compassion to abhor the pain and suffering He went through. It's our capacity to be compassionate and forgiving that unites us all in the body of Christ. It's our heart, not our head that tells us that GOD is with Us because we are with HIM/HIM/H I M.

To Jews, I say, "Don't be a 'Jew *for* Jesus.' Be a Jew who's opposed to Jews who are *against* Jesus. When you, as a Jew, go into a church, there are two Jews there, even if you're the only Jew who's literally in the room. Support the ideals Jesus preached that are evident in His people, not the horrible lessons the Christians had to put others through to finally become humbled enough by their own guilt to open themselves up to His love.

And, if there may be one or two ideas in their believe system, such as their abhorrence of gays, that you disagree with, don't let that change your attitude about Him. He's just one third of Them anyway. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all One, even if Christians claim They're not one and the same. Capitalize His name in bold in deference to all those who accept His teachings in their entirety. Capitalize His name in deference to that aspect of GOD that they believe administers forgiveness and love.

The man who chooses to fight over whether to capitalize a pronoun is suffering from a bad attitude. He's just petty. He has a penis problem he's not willing to talk about. Whether Jesus was the Messiah or not isn't a wise, loving or generous question. Ask yourself better questions than that. There are many.

I don't look at Jesus as *insurance* against GOD's wrath. I look at Him as *assurance* of GOD's love. It takes so little courage to avoid wrath, and it takes so much faith to respond to wrath with love. Only by questioning our perception of GOD as angry with us can we improve ourselves without fear. But that takes faith in GOD's love and devotion to HIS role as Teacher and ours as students in a sort of school.

Whether or not Jesus is The Son of GOD really doesn't change the outcome of the spiritual lessons you're being given by our Father. Whether He's your Tutors or the one and only Student/Teacher won't change your grades in the slightest. What counts are your test results, not Who's administering them.

We're all human. No one can believe in another person's assurances before he can adequately assure himself of his loyalty and devotion to himself. Self-love must come before all other loves, even the love of GOD. You can't give GOD {or Jesus or A L L A H} something you haven't first tried out on yourself. All that you give goes through you before

it leaves you. Your love will be received by you before GOD gets any of it. And from what HE receives, HE'll determine what you need to do next.

Assurances from others are only meaningful if you've already successfully assured yourself. But you can't stop your fears with either intellectual reasoning or pep talks. You need a head and heart that are thoroughly convinced of what they're telling you through experience. You need a conscience that believes you for all the right reasons and feelings.

Ultimately, other people's opinions will neither strengthen nor weaken your opinion of yourself. You'll do that in reaction or response to how they try to make you feel. People affect your heart, giving you reason to question your actions before you take them.

The fact that the Jews were angry at the German's after the Second World War didn't *change* a thing. But it did *transform* the Jewish psyche for the better. It made it possible for us to say, "Never again," to Christendom and to say so from our heart and soul, not just our head.

The present-day Muslim attempt to annihilate the State of Israel is getting messier all the time. It's caused a fraction in Sunni/Shiite politics that Iran hopes to deal with by getting and using the bomb. Most Muslims still don't quite believe that the survival of the Jewish people from the Holocaust and the creation of the State of Israel were GOD/GOD/G O D-given. They're still betting they can finish the job Hitler started. And until they vociferously declare their approval for the existence of Israel, their silence is going to continue to contribute to their hopeless cause.

The strength of your feelings will contribute to your convictions. But the immoral decisions you make will only weaken your resolve. You won't be able to feel good about yourself and what you believe in if you hurt others, whether intentionally or accidentally. GOD/GOD/G O D sees everyone's unconscious prejudices and intentions.

Israelis call up Palestinians before they bomb their houses to let them know that they're doing it intentionally, but without malice. Has there ever been a war in the history of mankind where one side went so far out of its way not to kill its enemies? Just imagine how hopeless extremist Muslims must feel in their bloodthirsty quest to kill anyone who doesn't agree with them. Their spiritual insolvency is only bankrupting their whole faith.

Although the secret to forgiveness has to be unlocked from within, Torah only tells us how in the third book: Leviticus. Only after learning how to read Leviticus for personal insight will you be able to digest forbidden fruit without it coming up on you when you see how nauseating some people in this world can behave. Only then will you learn to stomach this world as it is.

For those Jews and Christians still earning their wings, spiritual insight will hopefully make them yearn for bigger and better wings that will allow them to soar high overhead, not simply skim the ground like a hovercraft. And for those who've already earned their wings, forgiveness will earn them the dimmer switch they always wanted for their halo.

Mohammed

"Mohammed" means, "P R A I S E" in Arabic. But there's no way we can praise A L L A H if we can't praise ourselves. Muslims who condemn the Jews as "Zionist pigs" that have invaded their Land can't fully praise A L L A H for H I S mysterious ways in the 21st Century. Muslims who appropriate the ingenuity of American and European material comforts that are the result of hard-earned knowledge, while condemning our cultures and cultural diversity, can't fully praise themselves. They're still holding a hypocritical, jealous

perspective on the gifts that have been given them by their spiritually older brothers. They're still using people to get ahead, and claiming that G O D condones them doing so.

These Muslims don't yet have the head and heart to fully plummet the depth of their soul. They're caught in a morass of stinking thinking and faulty feelings. And that's a loss to us all because the world needs the Islamic perspective on our one GOD/GOD/G O D. They have to learn to praise A L L A H for the wisdom and love HE/HE lavished on Jews and Christians, not just for the generosity H E bestowed upon them.

A L L A H may be generous, but Jews are known to be stingy, especially when it comes to being hospitable to guests at our table who don't know how to behave. I'm sure the Israeli's will become more hospitable when Palestinians start to behave like guests, and not disgruntled hosts, in The Land GOD gave the Jews.

The more THE WORD of GOD {Torah} is spread by the Muslims through T H E W O R D S of G O D {Quran}, the more they'll come to understand A L L A H'S D E S I G N in having given The Land of milk and honey to Isaac, not Ishmael.

For us to praise A L L A H we, the other two, older sons of GOD/GOD, Judaism and Christianity, have to be convinced that the name A L L A H holds a perspective on G O D that's even more generous than the one we've been given. We have to find good reasons to give sincere smiles of encouragement and pats on the back to our younger brothers if we expect to receive them in return. Ours is a spiritual family dynamic that must be explored and understood from within each of us if we're going to succeed in making lasting peace on Earth.

The Creation Story is the first story of loss. But if you shrug your shoulder because it was GOD's loss, you're missing the point of the story and it's place at the beginning of GOD's WORDS to the world. Anyone who refuses to take the main metaphor of Moses to heart will be left guilt ridden. GOD's loss became our loss. It's got nothing to do with sex, and everything to do with the lessons in learning to love your neighbor as yourself so that you can love yourself as you would love GOD/GOD/G O D.

But you had to start by loving yourself in projection; you had to love your mother. And when you lost her breasts and the juicy fruits from her Tree, you had to learn to suck it up like GOD did in The Creation Story and the Jews did after the Second World War.

I can give you 6,000,000 reasons why loss has to be personalized. My father was a slave in Dachau concentration camp, and yet, my losses aren't his losses. My losses, like everyone's losses, are personal. But they're not separate from history. You can't erase the past and start over. You can't excuse your ancestors and call your faith whole because you say so.

You have to live with the guilt created for four generations. When the great-grandchildren of the Holocaust come into this world with the intention of healing the whole planet, the guilt will be fully assuaged. That generation will be able to live without the Christian guilt in having murdered one third of the world's Jews in cold blood. They won't have to deny it.

GOD resonates with loss. HE knows how it feels to lose something important. HE lost a piece of fruit and a Son. If you think you know better than HIM how to respond to loss, show us. We'd all love to see it.

The first four stories in Genesis explore the arrogance of man. Arrogance comes from loneliness. Every man thinks he, alone, was made in GOD's image. He thinks he's alone

because he doesn't see himself from the inside in, but from the outside in. He looks in at himself on the outside and feels sorry for having to be so different from all the rest.

India is the home to Hinduism, the faith that embraces many gods $\{\pm 1\}$, and India is the home to Buddhism, the philosophy that knows no god $\{0\}$. Hinduism is going to be very important to a greater understanding of GOD's diverse roles in our lives in the decades to come. And Buddhism has already helped us unravel the paradox of HIS mysteries here in the West.

There were a few times in history when Jews, Christians and Muslims did live together in peace. One memorable place was Spain in the 15th Century. But with the Inquisition, during which Catholics forced Jews and Muslims to convert or leave the country, our Abrahamic family figuratively chose to disown one another. The bad blood between the faiths didn't begin there, but it was exacerbated there because the Protestant Reformation in Northern Europe put pressure on Spain to prove her loyalty to Rome, home to Catholicism.

No one in the modern age could be more sensitive to the pain and suffering disowned family members can feel than gay people who've been disowned by their own families simply over a difference in lifestyle. Our role in the reconciliation of the family of man will be crucial to healing all spiritual familial ties worldwide.

Heterosexuals have done such a piss-poor job of bringing peace to the nations that it's virtually a given that they're going to have to rely on gay men and lesbians who are far more loving of our own gender. We'll teach people to heal their relationship with themselves. And then straights will then teach their children that the sense of "we" begins within.

Fearing GOD, thinking HE's angry at you, is terribly misguided, but it's unavoidable when you're young and spiritually inexperienced. It's the result of fearing the forbidden fruit that's in you $\{\text{guilt}\}$. When you're the one authority you've been told to avoid, you make horrible mistakes in bestowing your loyalty and obedience on everyone $\{\text{including GOD}\}$.

The metaphor 'man as a forbidden fruit' leaves each of us having to decide whether to come any closer to our Tree of knowledge from within. If you touch yourself you may find yourself with reason to feel embarrassed. If you pick yourself first you may feel ashamed. And if you eat yourself up inside with worry or grief at how things are turning out for you, you may end up feeling humiliated by how dispassionately you've treated yourself.

You're really not forbidden. You're just hard to swallow.

Cain And Abel

The Childish Stage Of Man

We can't praise GOD for being *for* us until we can see that we're there for ourselves. Most people take GOD's presence in their life for granted, or, at best, casually. They work at building connections with others through social networks or business contacts. But they use GOD only to ask for things they want. They don't realize that HE works with them through all people, including the people they hate.

When you feel like a loner, someone standing back from the crowd, alienated and separated from others – the mere mention of GOD can sound like some kind of crazy glue that promises to bond you wherever you feel broken. The introvert intuitively knows that what goes on around him is in relationship to what goes on within, even if he can't draw a one-to-one correlation. And the extrovert intuitively knows that what goes on within him is in relationship to what goes on around him.

Although they're both right, they're also both misguided. These perspectives go in opposite directions, but they originate from a third perspective that's rooted more deeply within. The story of Cain and Abel describes this first fork in the road.

This story begins after the expulsion of Adam and Eve from paradise. Adam and Eve have two sons, Cain, a farmer, and Abel, a shepherd. Cain comes to the magnanimous decision to gift GOD in appreciation for all HE's bestowed upon him by presenting HIM with "SOME OF THE FRUITS FROM THE SOIL." [Genesis 4:3] And then Abel decides to copy his brother by doing the same with a sacrifice from his herd. But when GOD chooses Abel's gift over Cain's, Cain kills his brother.

THE WORD "CAIN" means, "SPEAR." Cain is the fusion of the head {Adam} and penis {serpent}, the man who thinks with his dick. Once a man's serpent starts to talk to his head, desire marries discipline. And this marriage is a most valued aspect of the delivery of power.

THE WORD "ABEL" means, "VANITY" or "BREATH." Knowledge of a man's container creates vanity, but it also imbues a man with his first glimpse at the beauty of spirituality. You've got to enjoy your physical beauty before you can appreciate the deeper aspects of yourself that make you potentially even more attractive. This process of spiritual expression through physicality is experienced in sports and dance, which young people excel at. Their heart is in love with their young body.

The second stage in the development of a conscience is the *childish* stage. Those who survive childhood physically will grow up, but whether they grow up emotionally as well as physically will determine if they're *childlike* or *childish*. A boy's heart will remain psychologically arrested {infantile, childish or juvenile} depending on how he parents himself on the path to adulthood.

The first metaphor presented in this story is 'generation as a stage of moral development.' This metaphor is implied, not literally stated. But the idea that the generation of Cain and Abel is far different than their parents' will be evident from the start with the very different relationship each of these brothers holds with GOD.

Our parents' ceiling becomes our floor. And today's generation lives in a penthouse on the roof of the skyscraper of humanity with the best panorama on life in history, a view that's supported by all our ancestors who strived to give us the perspectives we enjoy today. Such is the spiritual, architectural design upon which all societies are constructed. Tomorrow's generation will construct their view of life on top of yours.

Through this implied rather than specified metaphor, Torah will make the claim that each generation in the unfolding of Genesis is a stage of moral development in man, a story that builds one upon the other to create the spiritual height and scope from which humanity will be able to look out onto reality to see the big picture.

This revolutionary concept of looking up to GOD as the Architect who holds the blueprint to our moral construction was given to the Jews 3,400 years, at a time when architecture was associated with mysticism. The ancient Egyptians had mausoleums built by slaves to house their pharaohs who they considered gods. This architectural concept of religion continues in Catholicism today with the Pope at the capstone and the laity at the base. The architectural view of religion implies that history is HIS story, and that in HIS design lies everything each of us constructs.

The early Egyptians didn't yet have words to describe this moral edifice that GOD was teaching man to build one generation upon the next, but they did perceive it, and wished to express what they knew as best they could. The pyramids were their unwritten understanding and response to this relationship of man to GOD, albeit their slave force were more in touch with GOD than them. This allowed the ancient Arabs to build pyramids so future generations would see in HIS/HIS/HIS later creation of Islam an expression of HIS gratitude for what their ancestors had only been given a clue to.

Ancient Egypt was the motherland that carried the embryo of GOD-consciousness when it was just a religious design. Jerusalem was the site where GOD-consciousness was borne into Temple practice; Bethlehem was the manger where HIS Son was brought forth; and Mecca, was where the mystery of HIS/HIS/GOD plan grew to consciousness in the Middle Eastern mind.

Boys With Designs

Cain, the farmer, personifies the head that's in a new space. Cain is the first son of Adam. As a farmer who tills the land, he's in the perfect position to resonate with GOD's loss and to offers HIM the literal fruits of his labors. Cain is disciplined, determined, and he's spiritually going in the right direction. This is the mind of man in league with the delivery system of desire that looks at a good idea like fruit ripe for the picking and ready to be served with gusto. Cain wants to give the best he's got and thank GOD for his ability to till the Earth as HE had told Adam his progeny would have to do. At this point in the story, Cain personifies every child of man. He has the best of intentions.

Abel, the shepherd, personifies the heart of the boy who's undergone its first transformation. Abel signifies the emotional knowledge Eve gleaned from her experience in picking fruit. Abel is heartfelt, the child of Eve, the mama's boy. He has a heart that wants to use his power to deliver emotional influence over others. He wants to help, care for and heal.

A man's inner Abel behaves with the same innocent and passionate regard that a shepherd would care for his flock. Abel unites his desire to give with a thirst for love.

Both boys are different from their parents in that they have no interest in disobeying GOD, taking something that isn't theirs, or getting into trouble with HIM. Both want to glorify HIM with the fruits of their labors. The farmer is hungry for the facts of life, and the shepherd has a thirst for the love of life.

The younger, innocent, inner brother inside us {Abel} who cares deeply for his older, worldly brother {Cain} unknowingly forces our conscience to choose which one it will

acknowledge. A boy will choose to identify more with one of these two characters than the other. Cain is the son who came up with the idea of thanking GOD. Abel is the one who came up with the idea of copying his older brother by thanking GOD. Cain represents the clever mind that believes gifts need to be appreciated with self-sacrifice. Abel is the humble heart that learns from a good example.

Cain gives thought to what happened to his father and comes up with a clever plan not to get caught with his pants down in front of GOD {to avoid humiliation and the feeling of being exposed}. He presents GOD with an appreciation of HIS efforts on his behalf. He cleverly decides to butter GOD up before he inadvertently does anything to offend HIM. Cain's gift is given with regard to what happened to his father after Adam made his mistake. Cain wants to avoid being duped.

Abel sees what Cain has done, likes what he sees {not realizing Cain's motivation}, and copies his brother as an expression of appreciation of his own loving intentions. The heart of the boy gives without ulterior motive. He naively hears his mother's voice echoing within him, and acts spontaneously in the moment, without duplicity or reflection on what might come next.

Adam concluded that Eve had betrayed *him*. And Cain concludes that Abel has betrayed *him* after Abel copies him and GOD chooses Abel's sacrifice over his. The mind at this level of awakening can't grasp the motivations of a heart that has no duplicitous intentions.

Adam never blamed the serpent. And Cain, whose name is even associated with the shape of the penis {spear}, has no idea how influenced he is by his persona's proximity to power. Cain is going to use the power of his penis like a spear, to pierce, not like a delivery system of life, to penetrate.

The innocent who come from their heart {Abel} don't plan what they're going to feel in the future. The goodhearted are naïve and well intentioned. They know it's impossible to anticipate what they're going to feel next. Abel gives his loving sacrifice to GOD without deceit or disloyalty. He doesn't scheme about how it'll be received. He gives with his heart because he simply loves the feeling that comes with giving.

Even though GOD gives no reason for HIS decision to choose Abel's gift over Cain's, it hardly comes as a surprise which gift GOD chooses. A man's conscience {inner GOD} compares and contrasts the efforts of his head and heart to determine which kind of action holds greater moral intention. The answer is obvious.

A child makes a decision between the two sacrifices presented in this story. And as the result of his choice, he becomes more head or heart oriented. A man's conscience decides early in life whether to go more in the direction of science {left brain/outer world} or religion {right brain/inner world}.

But this decision is thrust upon the conscience of a boy at a time in life when he has no experience with which to make his choice. He has to do so impulsively. He can't reflect yet on what he's chosen. In this way man's head and heart both grow, but his conscious self-regard will emanate out more from one or the other until his conscience becomes his guide.

Common sense tells us that a child needs to be taught exactly the opposite of what Torah advocates in this story. Children need to be encouraged to use their head. They need to understand discipline and learn to take on responsibility. And this is especially the case for boys because they tend to behave with greater physicality and unrestraint. Without

obeying authority figures, the very survival of boys is at stake. Letting them do exactly as their heart desires is the last thing young boys need to be encouraged to do. And yet GOD chooses Abel's sacrifice over Cain's.

We all instinctively blame our parents a little for pulling us away from the paradise of infancy, the Eden of our inner experience of life. Our parents never told us why they were doing so. They just taught us to use the toilet instead of diapers, a cup instead of breasts, and clothes instead of going around naked.

It took years to figure out that our parents' intentions were wise and loving even if their methods weren't well explained at the start. Our parents acted like gods. They didn't tell us why we were banished from the Eden of infancy, but we know and feel that we were. That left us to make choices for ourselves without teaching us to reflect on what our choices said about what kind of person we were going to become.

When Adam conspired with Eve, they both got hell for it from GOD. But Cain acts independently, as is typical of the intellectual side of man. He doesn't include Abel in on his plan to gift GOD, which would have been the brotherly thing to do. The man who acts out of clever thinking may not give sufficient thought to how his behavior affects others. His naiveté comes out indirectly in not anticipating how his behavior may affect those around him.

The problem with life is that life lessons are given in stages. Each step takes you in the right direction, but without seeing the big picture, it's impossible to assess the results of what you're learning as you're learning it when you're young and insufficiently experienced. Because each of us is predisposed to take actions based more from our head or heart, the lessons in *better* from *worse* have to be preceded with the lessons in *right* from *wrong*. And those lessons have to be preceded with the lessons in discerning *good* from *evil*. This is difficult for a child to understand. This is why each of us has to develop patience with ourselves. Life is a process. The more thoroughly we get through good and evil, the sooner we'll get to right and wrong, better and worse.

Although Cain didn't conspire against Abel, Cain didn't confer with his brother, either. And Abel could have included Cain in his gift to GOD, too. They could have given GOD a sacrifice they'd planned together. This is what truly loving brothers would do.

Cain set up a competitive tension between the two of them by giving his gift first. He set Abel up for failure, even if Cain didn't realize what he'd done by going it alone.

The GOD {conscience} of the inexperienced allows the games between left-brain thoughts {Cain} and right-brain feelings {Abel} to begin. The conscience knows that the two sides of our brain have got to learn to work with one another if our body is going to learn to function morally effectively.

But the child without experience is morally caught in a dilemma in which he can't see all his options before he takes action. Life is too complicated not to act impulsively at times. A child has no choice but to behave childishly.

The Conscience In Conversation With The Mind

The reason Cain kills Abel is never given. The facts are simply presented, and the reader is expected to interpret them for himself. If the author(s) had wanted to moralize, they'd have told us exactly how to interpret the facts. The value of being given the facts in story form without interpretation is that it begs us to question their meaning. And for 3,400 years, Jews have been doing just that.

Religious followers of the Abraham tradition who come to Torah too obediently, too willing to embrace it without question, do themselves a disservice. Granted Jews have only one sacred text to learn from. Christians have two, the entire Old Testament and The New. And Muslims have aspects of Torah and The Gospels to contend through Quranic interpretations in coming to understand Islam.

But all three Abrahamic religions have a responsibility to interpret Torah. And that responsibility became greater than anyone {Jew, Christian or Muslim} ever imagined once psychological interpretation was added to the mix in the early 20th Century. Today the faithful must find a way to address psychology in with their dogma. And this is what's forcing all the Abrahamic faiths into a frenzy in the 21st Century. They feel they have to choose psychology or religion. And that's just not so.

A sacred text is sacred because you're expected to question it with open eyes, an open mind and an open heart. What makes a sacred text sacred is that it's opened a little further from one generation to the next. The goodness in other sacred texts will be revealed to those who approach Torah in this manner. Jews, Christians and Muslims who don't study Torah from a personal perspective will build stories on a foundation that won't support the weight of their outdated arguments.

GOD already knows Cain will react badly if HE snubs his sacrifice. Any parent would anticipate trouble if he shows favoritism to one child over another. And an observant parent would know that the intelligent child is more likely to use logic to deal with his feelings than the empathetic child. The question isn't whether Cain will be upset with GOD if HE chooses Abel's gift over his, but rather how upset he'll be, and what he'll do about it.

As the story unfolds, we see that Cain couldn't be more upset with GOD's choice of sacrifices - because Cain ultimately kills Abel. When a man's mind {Cain} conspires with his unconscious desire for power {the beguiling serpent} the results are always disastrous. Adam and Eve brought guilt into the world, but Cain brings murder into the world.

The mind {Adam} and penis {serpent} of man will blame and retaliate if they don't get what they want. Their conversations aren't about raw power, as was Eve's conversation with the serpent, but about revenge. The mind coupled with the desire for power for the sake of revenge is totalitarian in its approach to getting what it wants. You can see this inclination is every little boy who pulls off the wings of a butterfly.

Logically speaking, Abel did nothing wrong. Imitation is the highest form of flattery. When we choose to come more from our heart than our head, our tendency is to act in harmony with our thoughts, not in opposition to them.

Unfortunately Abel doesn't anticipate the worst. He doesn't anticipate how his sacrifice will affect Cain. Abel is only focused on how it'll be received by GOD.

Feelings are like railroad tracks that might appear to be pointed in the right direction, but a train of thought is free to take a track in either direction. You can conclude another person is loving or loathsome given the same set of facts. You have to understand someone's motives to understand which direction he's going in.

It's up to our conscience to decide which direction our trains of thoughts are headed, and whether that's a direction we really want to go in. When our conscience is young and inexperienced, we don't understand figurative speech and how a train wreck out in the world can, from a moral point of view, be meaningful and relevant to us, whether we know anybody on board or not. The outer world is a way to make sense of the world within if we're introduced to metaphor, symbolism and simile early in life.

It's easy for a kid to enjoy crashing his toys, but it's hard to get him to look at why he likes to do so. It's hard to get him to look at the Cain {train} and Abel {track} at play within him. It's hard to get him to identify as the character of GOD in this story or the engineer in the locomotive. It takes a clever parent to teach his child to identify with the separate motives of his head and heart.

Thoughts can't feel. They carry reasons like boxcars full of cargo to the destination chosen. Feelings can't think. They direct trains of thoughts like tracks, without effort. Neither can determine whether what's being transported is right or wrong. That's the job of the engineer who operates the train.

GOD gave the Jews Torah to determine how to believe in HIM. We, Jews, didn't create Christianity and Islam. We aren't responsible for their misdeeds. Nor are we to be rewarded for their deeds. We are the keepers of the scrolls. We teach people how to believe in themselves whether or not they believe in GOD/GOD/G O D. We show the world how our beliefs can mirror the best of man's intentions, the combination of thoughts and feelings that determine what our conscience is going to decide to do.

Jews who believe in GOD study Torah to grow their operating skills so that they know more than they did the day before in how to run themselves. They don't profess their faith. They live it. They don't profess knowledge of the "afterlife." They believe everyone will have to wait and see.

Cain personifies the mind of man that wants the power to think for himself and do what he thinks is best for himself. But Cain also wants his desires met. And when the mind of a child doesn't get what it anticipates, a boy finds his thoughts traveling to the end of the line in the direction of loathing, a place where murder is the only action he can think to take. Retribution is the only logical behavior a boy can come up with when his desire for power and control isn't realized.

What Could GOD Be Thinking?

One of the implications of this story is that GOD {conscience} doesn't acknowledge the efforts of Cain {mind} because GOD wants Cain to strive to learn to question his own actions.

The character of GOD in The Creation Story told Adam what not to do before he did it, and punished him afterwards for disobeying HIM. The character of Cain in this story has been given more freedom and more power to act out his desires. Cain is free to determine for himself what he wants to do for GOD. He's also free to then decide what he's going to do after GOD chooses Abel's sacrifice over his.

Hypothetically GOD could have asked Cain to cooperate with Abel in creating a single sacrifice to HIM. Hypothetically GOD could have made it possible for human beings to come out fully integrated internally. HE could also have made us capable of coming out of our mother's womb fully capable of walking. But that would have deprived us of the process of learning to sit up, crawl and stand.

Teaching children to share their toys with their playmates before they understand how to separate and reunite their thoughts and their feelings doesn't teach them cooperation from within. The story of Cain and Abel is important in developing the steps needed to make choices for yourself. This step is imperative in becoming truly free.

Thoughts on sacred texts are useless opinions without including your feelings and experiences into the mix. Torah will inspire you, but only if you look for its timeless

message in your own life. If you use your sacred text as a weapon against others, you're missing the point in becoming a true believer.

The Bible is but a book, and people who quote the Good Book without feeling its loving intentions are being overly rigid within themselves and unnecessarily literal in their interpretations. This will cause them to become rigid in their appraisal of other people's behavior.

Reading any holy book for a particular, literal meaning is something only the self-ignorant do. The adjective "ignorant" comes from the verb "to ignore." We adopt blind obedience to concepts handed down to us by those who were strict with us in fear of what will happen if we don't do as they say. To trust in other people's opinions, we often have to ignore our own doubts. And that's a betrayal of self-love no one can afford. If you can't doubt yourself you can't enjoy the process of learning to love yourself.

The ignorant are ignorant because they've ignored themselves, not because they didn't collect the information you and I collected. Their treatment of others is a reflection of not only what they're doing to themselves, but also what was done to them. They're emotional children who require charitable understanding. They need to be held with kid gloves.

Convincing Cain

Cain thinks GOD turned HIS back on him, and he's determined to retaliate for it. This is *childish*, not *childlike*. But such is the mind at this level of learning. Cain's crime really has nothing to do with Abel. Abel was just the unintended victim {personified fruit} of Cain's anger at GOD for giving him freedom and power and then not commending him for how he used it in the manner Cain anticipated.

In childhood, we weren't taught to acknowledge ourselves for how hard we had to struggle to learn. Our parents gave us the impression that without them being proud of us, nobody would ever do it. We never came to believe we could learn how to be proud of ourselves. We dragged ourselves through our chores hoping to be rewarded by our parents for our efforts. And when we grew too old for compliments, we demanded monetary compensation for our good deeds. The greatest gift parents in today's world can strive to give their child isn't acknowledgement or money, but rewards for affirming himself.

Learning to obey outer authority can be difficult for some because it's a dynamic that should have begun within. Our thoughts and feelings have to be acknowledged by our conscience, not other people's. If our conscience doesn't commend us for the mental and emotional sacrifices we make that contribute to our learning, we aren't going to enjoy learning.

Society is predicated on its citizens loving to learn. The more its citizenry do that's spiritually productive, the more democratic the society becomes. America is supposed to be the most democratic place on Earth because never before in the history of mankind have so many people embraced the concept of learning about themselves through freedom.

Although everyone feels, not everyone thinks very much about what he's feeling; and even fewer acknowledge how positively they feel about themselves. The aspect of GOD {conscience} in this story acknowledges the sacrifice of Abel {heart} over the sacrifice of Cain {head} to wake us {reader} up to this inner fork in the road. The question whether thinking should take precedence over feelings is the wrong question. The question should be how our conscience can learn to deal effectively with both.

When we were children our conscience had to make dozens of choices a day whether to acknowledge ourselves for our thoughts or our feelings. But because we weren't taught to recognize this challenge consciously, we may have felt guilty regardless of which we chose. We either did what we *thought* best or what *felt* best. And we may have concluded whatever we chose was always the wrong choice.

The moral of the story of Cain and Abel is, first and foremost, to bring to consciousness the choices your own conscience had to make when you were a child so you'd be better able to appreciate the struggle your conscience is making today. It doesn't matter if you are, or aren't, literally your brother's keeper. What matters is that you recognize what GOD allowed to happen to Abel, and question what your conscience {GOD} is posing to your mind {Cain} about your responsibility to yourself.

When parents don't teach their child to acknowledge himself, the child retaliates by striking out at them. We accept this behavior in toddlers. We frown on it in children, and we're appalled by it in teenagers. And although parents are quick to teach their children not to hit them, they don't know how to explain why striking out at authority is wrong even when done figuratively. Children demonstrate behavioral problems when their conscience isn't aware of its own internal choices. Children need to be taught how to reward themselves for using their conscience as their guide.

Simply put, when our mind {Cain} isn't acknowledged by our conscience {GOD}, we retaliate against our heart {Abel}. We figuratively murder ourselves. And when we haven't been taught to see what we're doing to ourselves, we project that dilemma out onto the world around us to work it out, there.

Speaking in broad strokes, boys generally strike out. Girls generally strike in. Boys generally inflict pain. Girls generally inflict suffering. We treat others in whatever way we think we might best get back at ourselves.

Our conscience {GOD} understands that our mind {Cain} has to shut down awareness of our feelings {Abel} when our mind doesn't get what it wants to avoid having to experience guilt. Our conscience realizes that there's nothing else our mind can do, but to go on the offensive, as Adam did with GOD.

Using our anger, fear and sorrow constructively or destructively becomes a moral issue whether or not we use these feelings against ourselves or others. These three emotions, like the primary colors that make up the rainbow { red, yellow and blue} will bring us hope if we can see the underlying guilt {black} behind every night sky.

The Cain within us figuratively murders our inner Abel thousands of times in childhood because a child doesn't yet understand his ethical responsibility to acknowledge his feelings of guilt in making mistakes. If children were taught to recognize guilt, they'd have a far easier time later in life recognizing all the rest of their feelings.

But our inner Abel dies a thousand deaths and we never hear about it. The suffering we go through each time we feel like a victim of circumstances fills childhood with untold bruises of the heart that follow us into adolescence and across that bridge to adulthood.

It's no surprise that most men live in silent grief at the father who was missing in their life. What they believe to be a man missing from their childhood was really the personification of guilt consciously held by someone who could explain to them what they had been through.

The inner struggles of a child at this stage of his development shouldn't force him to have to side with either his head or his heart, his father or his mother, religious life or

secular life. No one wants to have to choose life or death from within. Everyone wants to have thoughts and feelings he can acknowledge and enjoy. But that's easier said than done after interpreting only two stories of Genesis. Most people can't even recognize the difference between a thought and feeling, let alone unify themselves in their conscience to create a sound belief about the meaning of life.

Because of the famous rhetorical response by Cain, "AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?" this story is usually interpreted as a moral lesson in our duty to care for others. But it's much more psychologically intense and sociologically valuable when viewed as a personal, moral dilemma for every man's conscience to solve.

When Cain doesn't get what he wants from GOD, he kills his brother because Cain can't very well kill GOD. He's no longer in Eden where he can hear GOD's footsteps, so he can't even get close to HIM. GOD is now figuratively too far away for Cain to literally do anything about how angry he feels toward HIM. If Adam thought he was alone, that's nothing compared to how his first son ends up feelings: empty.

Man has little choice but to conclude that he *isn't* his brother's keeper. He hears his heart crying up from the ground of his being over and over again, but he doesn't know why he can't stop it. The source of the problem lies in an unresolved relationship within.

Where The Heart Goes

After Cain kills Abel, GOD asks Cain, "WHERE IS YOUR BROTHER?" GOD is asking Cain the kind of question HE asked Adam that HE didn't need to ask for HIS sake because HE already knew the answer to the question. HE's GOD! HE knew where Adam was and HE knows where Abel is! HE's really asking Cain what's motivating him. {This is again why taking Torah literally is a fool's errand. Torah begs for interpretation.} Implied in GOD's question lies the judgment of Cain for being a bully. Also implied is the accusation that Cain's father knew what guilt was, so Cain should, too.

For the student of self-love who comes to Torah for self-enlightenment, the purpose of the question, "Where is your brother?" is to prompt us to reflect on the consequences of the psychological murders we unknowingly perpetrate against ourselves. Few of us are ever going to actually try to kill a human being. But when we don't know where and when our feelings of guilt arise, we have to begin by asking about the wellbeing of our brother to discover how we really feel about ourselves.

It's in our inner world that this story makes much more sense than in trying to take it literally. When our mind {Cain} is focused on getting our desires {penis} met without regard to our feelings {Abel} our mind will kill off a miniscule amount of our ability to feel, just for the sport of getting back at ourselves. We bite off a piece of our heart to spite our face. And, needless to say, there's no change on our face that anyone can see. The changes all happen within.

A man can kill hope {spiritual murder}, disappoint himself {emotional murder} and get into accidents {unconscious, attempts to physically harm himself} that turn self-vindictiveness into a bad habit and an unconscious personality trait. A man will avoid guilt unless he's disciplined to do otherwise. And if he doesn't activate that discipline himself, GOD will step in to do it for him.

GOD compensates for these sins against ourselves with lessons that are intended to teach us to overcome our habitualized, internal bullying. Needless to say, man invariably

concludes that GOD's decisions in how to do this are unfair. But when you don't fully understand how the system works, you naturally judge GOD rather than yourself.

That doesn't mean that everything that happens to us should be passively tolerated without question. The struggle for self-understanding, worldly knowledge and appreciation of GOD's/GOD's/G O D's designs are all interrelated.

Near the end of Torah GOD says, "VENGEANCE IS MINE." [Deuteronomy 32:35] GOD implies from this that HE has the right to use any means at HIS disposal to teach us what HE wants us to learn about the way we're treating ourselves. HE has the option of stopping us from harming ourselves by any means at HIS disposal, regardless of our opinion of the effect that might have on the world we have to live in together, or on our world within. HE/HE/H E permits physical pain and emotional suffering {i.e. the consequences of loss}. Therefore the more you learn to appreciate the main metaphor of Moses, the more wisely you'll be able to live with loss.

As we learn to reflect on the difference between GOD's *vengeful* nature and our *vindictive* nature, our conscience grows by leaps and bounds. Most people of faith would never think of killing another human being, but they also never think about the one human being they're torturing and killing slowly with little murders day-by-day {themselves}.

The character of GOD in this story is depicted as taking it upon HIMSELF to teach Cain the next level of responsibility: that befitting a child. HE's The Father who knows best. HE figuratively sits Cain down and has a talk with him because Cain, unlike Adam, is able to talk with GOD. Cain doesn't need to react with rage when GOD asks him a simple question.

Adam ignored GOD when HE asked him where he was. The mind of an infant doesn't have any prior experience to determine his psychological setting within or sociological location vis-a-vis others. But Cain does respond to GOD's question about Abel's location, albeit first with a lie. He says, "I DON'T KNOW," and then snaps back with the famous rhetorical question, "AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?" as if to defend himself before he's even been accused. [Genesis 4:9]

Cain's response actually brings up the ethical question of whether the mind is even responsible for knowing the location of the heart, let alone the moral purpose of having been given feelings in the first place. The moral answer is (obviously) "Yes. We are our brother's keeper in the sense that we're responsible for our feelings." We sometimes have a responsibility to others, but our responsibility to other people begins from within, the responsibility of our head to account for where our heart is at all times.

It's imperative that we give thought to our feelings because our feelings may cause us to react rather than respond in new circumstances. Our responsibility to our brothers in society must first be resolved with the brother within before we can treat others with the compassionate regard we're struggling to bestow upon ourselves.

This is the personal moral of the story of Cain and Abel for today. Anybody who reads this story only as a prohibition against murder is using an historical approach to the morality of The Old Testament that's way out of date. HE's hiding in the past to avoid the present.

Adam reacted to his introduction to guilt with a knee-jerk reaction of blaming others, demonstrating that the psychologically infantile can only react to behavioral transformations; they have no ability to respond to them. Adam experienced all the ramifications of guilt: embarrassment, shame and humiliation. But he also exhibited an instinctual understanding of guilt by responding to it with a modicum of *modesty* in

covering his genitals with a leaf; *humility* in hiding his whole body among the other trees: and *loyalty* in acknowledging Eve and giving her a name that meant something positive and personal to him: Life.

A baby can only react to guilt with fear, rage, and self-pity. That's why adults who react in these ways are called big babies. But the farther you move away from your spiritual beginnings at birth in the direction of life, the more experienced you become, and the more complex your responses can be as you become aware of the moral journey you're on.

Guilt And The Development Of The Conscience

Cain and Abel are the next generation of users of guilt in the unfolding awareness of the formation of the conscience. Cain personifies the mind that knows guilt in an intellectual sense, and can question it by responding to the conscience {GOD} rhetorically. But the mind at this level of development scorns its conscience by (1) lying, and (2) insinuating that the responsibility for keeping track of feelings belongs to the conscience, not to man's mind.

In truth man's mind is responsible for his feelings. His heart is responsible for his feelings. And his conscience is responsible for his feelings. If we're not all in this together, than we're not in it at all.

The GOD in The Creation Story warned Adam before he ate from The Tree with forbidden fruits. Only after Adam and Eve made their mistake did HE question each of them about what they'd done. But the character of GOD in this story doesn't take the same approach. Yes, HE first asks Cain where his brother is. But then HE replies to Cain's rhetorical question giving Cain more moral direction than HE gave Adam. "WHAT HAVE YOU DONE? LISTEN! YOUR BROTHERS' BLOOD CRIES OUT TO ME FROM THE GROUND. NOW YOU ARE UNDER A CURSE AND DRIVEN FROM THE GROUND, WHICH OPENED ITS MOUTH TO RECEIVE YOUR BROTHER'S BLOOD FROM YOUR HAND. WHEN YOU WORK THE GROUND, IT WILL NO LONGER YIELD ITS CROPS FOR YOU. YOU WILL BE A RESTLESS WANDERER ON THE EARTH." [Genesis 4:12]

The newer and improved depiction of the conscience {GOD} in this story personifies a higher, Higher Power within the child than was possible when dealing with the infant. This is a conscience, which, like a parent, can see that the child can now handle more of a moral challenge than he could when he was a baby.

Cain replies with much greater reflection on GOD's decree, saying, "MY PUNISHMENT IS MORE THAN I CAN BEAR. TODAY YOU ARE DRIVING ME FROM THE LAND, AND I WILL BE HIDDEN FROM YOUR PRESENCE; I WILL BE A RESTLESS WANDERER ON THE EARTH, AND WHOEVER FINDS ME WILL KILL ME."

Adam guiltily hid from GOD, but now, in the next generation, Cain admits that he'll be sorrowfully hidden from HIM. The mind is always hiding from GOD to some extent. Only the heart is open to HIM. And the heart informs the mind. With the transformation of emotional perspective, the mind can then changes its perception of its proximity to GOD.

Everyone in The Creation Story can talk (with the exception of the fruit). Each character {Adam, Eve, serpent and GOD} represented a distinctly different dynamic that corresponded to an aspect of the human, spiritual toolbox. It was the interplay between these characters that depicted the initial stage of inner, spiritual awareness and integration.

But Cain and Abel can do more than *talk*. They can *speak*. Talking comes only from your head. But *speaking* is a combination of thoughts that have already been integrated

with your feelings and desires. And those who can speak can also demonstrate a certain amount of ability to listen.

Hearing happens in your head after your head has been influenced by your desires. *Listening* happens from your heart after your heart has been influenced by your desires. Cain wants to give GOD a sacrifice to get in good with HIM. Abel wants to do so, too, but just because the idea feels good to him.

Listening is very hard for a headstrong child because he doesn't realize he has a responsibility to himself to feel guilty when he makes a mistake. Reacting with anger, fear or sorrow isn't as useful as responding with embarrassment, shame or humiliation.

The purpose of corporal punishment is, of course, to turn guilt into a negative sensation that will become associated with making mistakes. But pain only creates a temporary correlation between errors and effects. Pain doesn't create the feeling of guilt. In fact, in many instances, pain only drives home the desire to avoid getting caught, not the desire to do better. This is why corporal punishment doesn't teach children to become better human beings.

By telling Cain {mind} to listen, GOD {conscience} implies that the mind can be shaped even after a child has made a mistake. The headstrong child can learn to listen to the absence of loving intentions within himself. He can learn to listen for the presence of guilt, which is so unpleasant that it often requires help from adults to be recognized.

Teaching adults to listen for the presence of guilt in their actions is even harder to do. It's actually much easier to get a child to hear what he's sensing because his imagination is so much less complex. It's not usually children who have difficulty dealing with poetic discourse as a moral teaching tool. It's adults.

If you consider yourself someone with integrity, you have to be able to claim that you can debate moral issues using poetry as well as prose. Integrity, when poetically described using your entire body, looks like the sign of the cross. Integrity is an integration of thoughts {head} with desires {penis} that passes just over the seat of your judgment {breastplate} that then combines with the integration of your feelings {heart} moving to the extreme right as they pass over the seat of your judgment {breastplate} a second time toward the right side of yourself: your soul.

There are many who claim to have integrity because they can really hear others and feel for them. But there are few who can claim integrity from within because they can listen to the forces within themselves for guilt or lack of guilt. A man must be able to integrate the vertical and the horizontal forces within himself to do so.

This was the spiritual essence behind the torture the Romans put Jesus through. They barbarically tried to physically instill these forces in criminals by nailing them to crosses. And this is the spiritual reason why their empire ultimately failed. You can't use pain to imbue men with awareness of their errors of judgment. That only backfires.

If you're going to profess to be a good Christian you're going to have to admit that you're responsible for integrating two sacred books. As a Jew that's not my problem. I solved the essence of Jesus's moral message for myself by the second story of Genesis. I know how to manage the forces within me. I know the meaning of love from within because I know how to operate myself as a spiritual being in a human vehicle. I can listen within for guilt.

If GOD had wanted everyone to be Jewish, HE would have devised a plan to make 8 billion Jews, not 18 million of us. The challenge for the world is to learn how to learn from

the small number of Jews and the great number of Christians. This isn't only a Muslim problem, although they certainly do personify this universal challenge today. The whole world is slowly learning to appreciate the moral intentions of Jesus and the Jews whether or not they ever read The Old Testament or The New. And in return, the world will learn to appreciate HIS/HIS/H I S other faiths and philosophies for their unique contributions.

If you profess to be a good Christian, you're always going to cross yourself as a reminder of what Jesus died for, an integration of {N} thoughts; {S} desires; {E} feelings; and {W} beliefs with His moral intention to love, forgive and profess mercy. This is what Christian integrity looks like when expressed using the outside of man's body. And this is a ritual reminder in how universal integrity could be experienced on the inside.

The Victim Personified

In the story of Adam and Eve, the victim was symbolized as a piece of fruit; it had no ability to speak up for itself. But in this story, drops of Abel's blood, like little, red apples, fall to the ground and cry out for justice after he's dead.

Knowledge of the feelings of the fruit Eve ingested has been passed along to her second son: Abel. Cain becomes the personification of the perpetrator, and Abel, the personification of the victim. This is the fork in the moral road that separated man from woman, head from heart and humanity from GOD-consciousness as people choose one or the other of these roads instead of getting to their destination with a bird's eye view of both.

Abel is the next generation in the development of man's emotional regard for himself, the personification of his feelings as male, not female. The feeling of victimization has found a voice in the heart of man in this story, and the first thing he cries out for is "JUSTICE."

GOD created every boy in HIS image, not just man. As young as boys are in terms of their experiences, they can always mirror their association with GOD through a desire for justice. Dead or alive, who wouldn't laud Adam for having brought a son like Abel into this world?

The character of GOD held justice in HIS hands in The Creation Story, but now the desire for justice has been passed on to Abel. The love of justice is in the blood of some people. And that's apparent when they're still children. Such a child needs extra protection.

The voice of justice is much louder in these children than in some grown-ups because these children can feel injustice without making any excuses for what they're feeling. Granted, every child will simply cry when he doesn't get what he wants. But only a few children are moved when they perceive injustice perpetrated against others.

In The Creation Story, we witness the birth of man. In the story of Cain and Abel we witness the sorrowful birth of justice. Justice is born out of injustice. And we can already predict that truth and beauty will be the children of justice.

The literalist says that the story of Cain and Abel is about murder. The fundamentalist tells us that we must become our brother's keeper, and kill him if GOD decides otherwise. But the poet will tell you that the story of Cain and Abel isn't about either.

It says in Psalms (one of the books of The Hebrew Testament) that the meek shall inherit the Earth. What this means is that the childlike quality of justice shall become apparent everywhere on Earth over time. Those who hold to the wonderment of childhood will strive for greater justice in the world, and in that way the desire for justice will spread far and wide. People will eventually be attracted to GOD as our moral Teacher because

they'll finally relate within themselves with the highest attribute of every student of life. This Jewish, religious fruit {justice} isn't perishable. It just takes a long time to ripen before its seeds can be replanted.

Forbidden Fruit Is Sweet

The fruit that Eve picked never got the opportunity to fall naturally from The Tree. It was visually selected, intentionally chosen and then physically ripped from its source. But the blood of Abel in this story resembles ripe fruit spilled open and lying on the ground.

Man identifies with death on many levels. He suspects that mortality is there for a reason. But murder brings death out of the realm of the inevitable and into the hands of man, because every man has the power to be a moral agent of change.

Murder doesn't make *death* a moral issue. Death is already a moral issue. That you must die is a personal commentary from GOD on who you are and what you've done in life, good and bad.

Murder makes *justice* a moral issue. Even if there have been no murders in your family or among your loved ones, you're still going to have to question the morality of your own death one day. And every drop of blood in your body is surely going to cry out for justice on that day when you become like Abel and you accuse GOD of being like Cain.

We should identify Abel's blood with the forbidden fruit in The Creation Story that had no voice because we intuitively understand that murder creates the ultimate victim, the person who's lost his moral authority. But the blood of the victim in this story has been personified. It can speak up for itself from beyond the grave. Isn't that what you wish for your blood more than you wish to live forever in the body you were given?

Unlike the forbidden fruit that must make itself manifest through Adam and Eve through their body language, Abel's blood not only can speak, it lives on after his death. And this is a clue to understanding this story from a psychological perspective. Abel's cry for justice is the cry every victim in this world hopes will be heard long after he's gone, even if he won't live to see how the fruits of his labors will contribute to the progress of humanity. Abel's cry for justice is every child's cry for eternal reward for his sacrifice.

Life is too precious to have it taken away forever, especially when you're just a child. Justice demands that we be morally fruitful in our lifetime by protecting our children from harm in the hopes that we'll thereby earn good reasons to ask for and receive something "after life" for our efforts in our lifetime.

The fact that Cain doesn't hear Abel's voice and has to be told to listen for it indicates that justice isn't yet heard by the childish. GOD has to tell Cain to listen. The conscience of a child has the awesome task of teaching its mind the importance of justice. But without help from his parents to understand this process, many children don't learn to listen. They grow up childishly content with what they have to say, without the ability to listen to what comes out of their mouth.

Sorrow is the consolation prize when guilt can't be transformed into wisdom. We feel disappointed when we realize we missed an opportunity to glean the rewards of modesty, humility and self-loyalty. We feel pity for ourselves when we see that nobody even told us what we were supposed to be learning. We feel sad whenever we're misunderstood, and we resolve that we don't want others to have to go through that kind of pain and suffering.

Fear is the clue to our need to always approach intimacy from within. *Anger* indicates we don't want to face all the awkward moments when we're not poised and prepared to

listen. And *sorrow* is the emotional indicator that we pity ourselves for not knowing how to participate in this spiritual process more fully. When we don't understand the value of guilt, our struggle for personal integrity has to be projected around us. Not until we make an effort to break the projection and face our moral journey from within do we realize why GOD gave us feelings.

The *embarrassed* would clutch their crotch if they had the freedom to do so. The *shamed* would clutch their heart if they had the liberty to do so. And the *humiliated* would stick their arms out like Jesus, crucified on the cross, if they had the emancipation to do so. But people don't express their passage through guilt in these ways because they don't want to admit that they don't know what they need to know about guilt.

The Consequences For Not Having Listened

GOD tells Cain he'll be a fugitive and a wanderer on Earth as the result of what he's done. And when Cain tells HIM his punishment is more than he can bear, GOD then forswears vengeance against anyone who tries to kill him. [Genesis 4]

Cain must also feel like a victim, but a victim of circumstances because he lost control of himself. He never expected to be let down by GOD. He came up with the idea of give HIM a sacrifice, yet his sacrifice was overlooked in favor of his brother's. Cain can't yearn for justice after what he did to Abel. After he took matters into his own hands by reacting as he did, he finds himself needing to yearn for mercy.

If GOD in heaven doesn't acknowledge you for what you've done right, you're going to feel pretty pissed off. But if you think you have the right to take out your resentment on your brother, you're barking up the wrong Tree. Take your disappointment back to its source. Ask GOD what you need to do differently to get what you want.

Maybe it would have been nice had Abel thanked Cain for the idea. Maybe it would have been even nicer if Abel had put in a good word to GOD on Cain's behalf. But none of that happened so far as we know by reading the story as Moses wrote it. If you think you're not appreciated by GOD and country as much as you think you deserve to be, welcome to Scripture. You're not the first person to feel that way. Cain is.

Knowledge of the process of transforming guilt into wisdom means different things to the head and the heart. When the head makes bad decisions, it wants to be forgiven {Cain}. But when the heart acts out of naïveté, it wants justice carried out on its behalf {Abel}. Our conscience has to decide to what degree to grant us both: justice and mercy. And this is the mixed, moral messages in life that often leave us confused about whether GOD is even paying attention to us.

The leather garments GOD fashioned for Adam and Eve fit each of them differently because they had to be Tailor-made for each of them. When our conscience acknowledges our thoughts, it recreates the next generation of leather garment that GOD first gave Adam. The armor of logic is what we see in Cain. Logic puts thinking before feelings; winners ahead of losers; and calls on rationality to embrace reality as it appears to the mind as a linear progression with clear goals and expectations of rewards.

When we take the position of the character of GOD in this story personally, our conscience *hears* the voice in our head {Cain}, but it *listens* to the voice in our heart {Abel}. Our conscience, like the character of GOD in this story, always stands up for the underdog {Abel/heart} over the tyrant {Cain/head}. But the outcome later seen in our actions doesn't always indicate how our conscience has chosen to deal with each part of us

separately. These moral decisions cause subtle conflicts within us, struggles between the voice of our head that wants to be heard and our heart that wants to be listened to. Ultimately, the doctors refer to this conflict with the word “stress.”

The choices our conscience had to make in the first few years of life were so great, and came so frequently, that we either copied our parents or chose to do something very different from what they modeled. Over time, we habitualized these responses internally to produce a persona we took for granted and a personality others simply had to live with. The possibility of changing our mind and transforming our heart by transcending our conscience with self-knowledge through Torah hadn't been considered.

In psychological terminology, we pushed this spiritual process out of our consciousness {mind} and into our subconscious {heart} or unconscious {soul}. But there comes a point in adulthood when a man looks inside and has to admit to himself that he really doesn't know himself as well as he should. He's been flying on automatic pilot. He's been asleep at the wheel. And he may feel very frightened and vulnerable at the awesome moral task before him of waking up to the way he was made and the challenge to be real before him.

After Cain kills his brother and proclaims his guilt, GOD tells him HE won't abandon him. HE puts a sign upon him and banishes him to a special place where he'll be protected from retribution from others. That place today is a psychological space within where we have the privacy we need to sort ourselves out. Cain couldn't see the mark on him, but we can see that mark on everyone. And we should thank GOD for it.

Adam went through the stages of guilt instinctively. But Cain, the next generation in the formation of manliness, is able to admit his guilt when it's pointed out to him and recognize his impulsivity. Cain represents the mind that sees his own hand in the guilt he's wrought upon himself. And it frightens him. Cain doesn't conclude he's apathetic to his own evil intentions. But because he shows no remorse at his brother's demise, we know he has a long way to get through his fear of what he might do to the next guy.

It takes time for every Cain to realize that guilt is more than a sign placed upon him; it's more than a psychological space where he can relieve himself of his fears. The mark of Cain is an opportunity a man can see in himself to take action to reform himself. A man can get beyond rhetorical questions like “Am I my brother's keeper?” to scrutinize himself more thoroughly. Once you internalize that question and see yourself as your own brother, the answer to that question looks a lot different.

If GOD is willing to go out of HIS way to demonstrate HE can work with a murder, HE can work with anybody. The little murders you've committed against yourself that GOD allowed to happen could turn out to be blessings in disguise. You could become your own keeper, and you could humbly embrace yourself as your brother and best friend.

It would be valuable to return to the metaphor of trains as thoughts and feelings as the tracks they run to take another look at the bigger picture with some spiritual distance. Literally murdering a human being signals a train wreck of unprecedented proportions. It destroys trains and tracks in the inner world of the perpetrator of the crime, and, of course, it destroys the entire spiritual, railroad system of the victim.

The weight of the cargo onboard your trains of thought determine the engineering you need to do the job right. The heavier the train, the more powerful the engine and more reinforced the tracks need to be. That means that a child figuratively hauling a heavy load needs well-constructed bridges within to ford the obstacles of his inner world. He needs

great reinforcement from his parents and teacher, and he's going to need to be taught how to carry a great load by himself.

Some of the greatest geniuses the world has ever known ended up in mental institutions because they couldn't deal with train crashes within. They couldn't ford their own inner terrain because the weight of the goods they were carrying to market put too much stress on their inner infrastructure. They couldn't trust others because they had no understanding of what was happening from within.

Thoughts And Feelings Growing Closer

Thoughts and feelings can never really be truly united. The trains ride over the tracks. Your head and heart are exact opposites of one another in function although they work together to get every task at hand done. Thoughts and feelings are comparable to left and right hands. They mirror each another in shape and in many ways, function. But they weren't created to be equals. The fingers and palms of our two hands come together perfectly, but one hand can't literally replace the other. They're more like mirror images of one another.

Few people end up literally killing their own brother, and Torah was never intended to be so banal as to be making the same point about fratricide for 3,400 years, *ad nauseum*. In war, men kill men they never personally met or know by name. But if we're going to end warfare, the bonds of brotherhood have to be first consciously formed within if they're going to be evident as real in our relationships with our brothers in other societies.

The typical bonds of brotherhood we speak of are within our tribe and sub tribes. But in the 21st Century, brotherhood is going to become personal and intertribal. And taboos against gays and Jews are going to be thrown out the window in the process.

The moral of the story of Cain and Abel in today's world is that man's conscience must guide his thoughts, especially at those moments when he realizes he's denied his feelings because he didn't get what he'd hoped for. Only by looking at the ways he consciously or unconsciously weighs his own intentions will a man learn to better judge the moral conduct of those around him.

The character of GOD in the story of Cain and Abel is the first clue to the loving, not angry, GOD the Jews were introduced to through Moses. Any child can see that GOD's motive is to help Cain despite his transgression. The parents of every infant or child know that they're sometimes perceived as monsters by their offspring. Unless you've been a parent or can take the side of parents, you're never going to see the GOD of The Hebrew Testament as having loving intentions. You're going to remain a victim, and only identify as forbidden fruit.

Growing Closer To Our Conscience

We aren't GOD's children literally speaking. But we are *as* children when we compare ourselves to HIS moral role in our life. Our thoughts and feelings are also like children to our conscience. Therefore, we've been given an opportunity to emulate GOD's ways within ourselves.

Many children, males in particular, turn off their right brain in order to get "a head." They pull up tracks in an attempt to avoid train crashes, or they live in their head creating train crashes in their fantasies to avoid having to feel altogether.

Once you can appreciate your conscience for its efforts to teach you how to be better to yourself with nurture, you can come to GOD with a new and improved attitude toward HIS nature. You can admit that your conscience is the GOD of your inner world whose side you have to take, not the side of either your thoughts or feelings.

GOD is The Lord of both your world and the world around you. HE must manage every god {conscience} in man as well as the moral outcomes HE wants us to achieve. HE's given you a unique opportunity to play god to yourself, but most people prefer to use that power on others instead. The story of Cain and Abel gives us a second look at GOD and HIS intentions to help us learn to help ourselves. It makes us realize what a big job HE really has.

Noah And The Ark

The Juvenile Stage Of Man

The infant doesn't question GOD; he just blames HIM with anger and tears. The child does question HIM, but only rhetorically through his defended view of his own little world. The first two biblical stories describe two of the four levels in a man's development of GOD's role in his life through conscious awareness of universal actions. This awakening mirrors the ego formation every male goes through in creating a sense of self.

A man can't fully love himself unless he sees the spiritual process that's fashioning him. He needs to see GOD's hand in who he's becoming. Once he sees himself as soft clay being molded, a man has to harden, be fired and then allowed to cool. The spiritual container {body} for wisdom, love and charity must not leak. This is what's described using the nautical metaphor of an ark in the story of Noah.

The infantile personality type isn't ready for *freedom*. The childish personality type isn't ready for *liberty*. They'd only abuse them with self-indulgence. They don't have a fully enough understanding of the need for self-discipline at these early emotional stages of life. They can only use fear and anger to impress others with their power. They still have to be told what's right and wrong.

Emancipation is the spiritual goal of the juvenile, but *autonomy* is what he yearns for instead. This third story of Genesis takes a quick look at the world of childishness, a world that GOD decides to cleanse, leaving only a spiritual adolescent to carry the inheritance of humanity forward: Noah.

In the story of Noah and the Ark, GOD informs Noah that HE's going to destroy mankind, and tells him to build an ark to save himself, his family and a token representation from the animal kingdom. And Noah obediently does what he's told. [Genesis 6-9]

Although Noah doesn't bother to lift a finger to alert or help anyone else, Scripture describes Noah as the most righteous man on Earth at that time. He doesn't run from GOD, as did Adam, or lean upon HIM to protect him, as did Cain. Noah walks with GOD, but all the while remaining in his own little world.

To begin to make the story of Noah and the Ark personal, I have to present you with a Hebrew word that doesn't exist in biblical Hebrew: DAFKA. This ancient Aramaic word that means "PRECISELY" was twisted into Yiddish to mean "SPITEFUL." Noah endeavors to enact GOD's instructions precisely, but his underlying motivations are spiteful.

Why would GOD praise someone who does nothing to help others? Why would Torah imply that those who are contrary, defiant and spiteful walk at HIS side? What could our Scripture possibly be using as a definition of righteousness?

Every teenager is DAFKA, but his reason is only to protect his conscience from his thoughts and feelings. He doesn't want to be judged by others until he can figure out how to judge himself. His conscience {GOD} is located above the gray skies that cloud his vision; skies that will soon lead to a massive downpour.

The problem with being righteous is that everyone thinks he's righteous, or, at least, that he's doing what he has to do to as well as he can just to survive. Therefore it's not difficult for us to believe GOD's praise of Noah, while, at the same time, question Noah's apathy toward others. Many grown adults are like Noah, juvenile at heart, righteous in some ways and apathetic in others. Many people don't want to admit that they're cruising toward moral maturity without a sail or a rudder.

The teenager has no trouble exhibiting his juvenile intentions for all to see because he'd rather look bad than look as hypocritical as the adults he sees around him. What he doesn't realize is that his sincerity mixed with his guilt generate a flood of emotions from time to time that descend in torrential downpours inside when he least expects it.

The spiritual adolescent isn't usually able to admit that his generation wasn't the first to discover righteousness. He unconsciously recreates this biblical story without identifying as a child approaching the path to adulthood who's been called by GOD to build a boat seaworthy enough to carry him across the flood that's coming. He isn't ready to admit that the story is old. Only the reader is brand new.

A Noah thinks he's going to be safe and secure in the ark of his own making, while everyone else will be exposed to his inner elements and may therefore drown. He sees others struggling to keep their head above water and secretly scorns them for not being like him. It's not that he doesn't think to throw them a life preserver. He's simply too involved in himself to care about the fate of the world. So long as he's safe in his ark, he's fine.

A Noah will be very compliant with authority one moment and very resistant to it the next. He hasn't a clue to his proximity to GOD or HIS plan for him. A Noah is *near* GOD, but he isn't *close* to HIM.

GOD: The Weather

In this biblical story, GOD deluges Noah's world with HIS tears, so to speak. GOD's sorrow rains down for 40 day and 40 nights, submerging the whole world. But Scripture is equating the physical landscape to man's inner landscape. The world around us may sometimes look harsh and foreboding, and the weather within is sometimes no better.

Many people feel that they're drowning in their tears. They feel that their entire inner world has been submerged. They have no grounding, no sense of place. People in this sort of an emotional circumstance often feel hopeless and alone.

People still make the mistake of judging the GOD of the Jews in The Hebrew Testament as angry. They forget HE understood your anger and indignation at that woman HE gave you when you were born and the injustices you cried out about then that were completely overblown. They forget that HE understood the anger and indignation at the inner brother HE gave you that you struck down with evil intention when you were upset as a child.

The angry adolescent is a joy to GOD when he's upset for the right reasons. Those who become DAFKA {CONTRARY and DEFIANT} because of inequality and prejudice hold a special place in GOD's design. But those who berate HIM for HIS anger are really saying that HE's out of control and needs reigning in.

Every teenager feels life intensely and deeply. Teenagers just don't have the experience to control their feelings any more than we can control the weather. GOD, the Weatherman, tells young Noah it's going to rain and to construct the ancient equivalent of an umbrella {ark} to protect himself from the deluge.

Mark Twain said that everybody talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it. In the story of Noah and the Ark in Genesis, Noah does something about the weather. He anticipates it and therefore survives it.

Many people know they're going to get upset about circumstances they're going to have to face down the line, so they don't anticipate the weather within themselves. They don't build a boat. The man who doesn't plan ahead for how he might feel in the future may find himself without a future.

Noah is the personification of the third generation of man, the third psychological stage in the shaping of the men who'll learn to survive in this dog-eat-dog world we live in. He's a combination of all the previous characters in the first two stories of Genesis plus the forbidden fruit. He's the adolescent who's survived spiritual infancy and childhood. He's you, metaphorically speaking, in late childhood just as your body was changing and your inner temperament was forming.

In this chapter of Torah GOD claims that "EVERY INCLINATION OF THE HUMAN HEART IS EVIL FROM CHILDHOOD. [Genesis 8:21] And so as GOD cleanses the world of "children," Noah naturally sees himself as the older, wiser adolescent who's going to be able to avoid GOD's wrath.

GOD doesn't kill people in natural disasters to teach them a lesson. That would make no sense at all. Death only becomes a lesson in life for those who survive calamities. Those who die in natural disasters have graduated the school of life. They're no longer involved in the learning process the rest of us are going through. Their deaths become our life lessons.

GOD doesn't take people out of this world with natural disasters because HE's angry at them. HE doesn't use the weather to express HIS feelings. It's the spiritually juvenile who react to the weather as though it were an expression of GOD's wrath who needs to learn how to use Scriptural stories to grow up emotionally. Right wing Christians are spiritual juveniles who do the same today by blaming the gays for tornadoes and hurricanes that pummel the South.

Nature can be very frightening, especially when we realize we haven't prepared for it with proper, survival skills in place. But survival takes more than planning ahead. It takes cooperation and teamwork. Yet Noah works alone.

Adolescence is the bridge between childhood and adulthood that teaches us many things about working with others and working independently. Puberty is also the physical bridge that separates the adolescent from his past and unites him with his future. But the biological ordeal he has to go through is also a purification process that will give him strength and insight to endure the vicissitudes of life. The adolescent who understands his moral responsibility to himself to stay alive will likely learn to cooperate with civil authority. He'll know how to respond responsibly in a disaster.

Noah personifies every adolescent who floats vacantly, but securely, in his imagination. He can be cool, calm and collected despite the downpour within himself because he's planned ahead. Although his mind can take him cruising anywhere it wishes, he has the luxury to dream about what he's going to do when he gets on land.

The boat every Noah is aboard is a self-made inner refuge from a life that previously seemed so unfair. Infancy and childhood were difficult to survive without the words to speak or the power to act. But the adolescent is on the verge of the independence and authority of becoming an adult, and he can't wait to embrace it. He builds his wooden boat from The Trees of knowledge he's seeded and grown in his short life. His vessel is a conglomeration of conclusions he's come to about the meaning of life on Earth derived from the stand of Trees he grew up in. And he's going to find out if his ideas about how it can be is going to keep him afloat, or whether his notions are going to leak and drown him with blunders, inaccuracies and miscalculations.

The adolescent stage in the development of a conscience isn't about a negligent GOD who suddenly looks up from HIS newspaper to see that everything has gone to hell in a hand

basket down here. This story describes the inner expectation every adolescent perceives that holds greater purpose and meaning than in the previous two biblical tales.

The conscience of the adolescent isn't GOD. It's "the God within who doeth the work." The spiritual adolescent isn't anywhere near a mature associate of his Creator. He's stuck onboard a metaphoric boat and his hull is packed with animal instincts he has no way to express.

The story of Noah couldn't possibly describe a real event. There's no scientific evidence for a flood of worldwide proportions. And it would be physically impossible and morally abhorrent for one family to repopulate the world. This story can only be interpreted archetypically to describe a stage every male goes through. I call this stage "spiritual puberty."

Someday the grown man will look back on his infancy to see that his relationship to GOD is no longer as if GOD were walking with him in the garden of his imagination, as described in the story of Adam and Eve. He'll see that GOD isn't emotionally near at hand as HE was when he was a child, fantasizing about life in the countryside, while gifting HIM with his sacrifices.

But at this point in Genesis, the GOD of the adolescent now looks down from above a thick layer of clouds where HE can see him, but *he* can't see HIM. The GOD of the adolescent reigns from afar. But HE sees only one family because there is no one else HE's interested in look at.

Selfishness Personified

Noah typifies every teenager who demonstrates a determination to appear to be obedient, but only because he's really thinking about how to get away with what he wants to do by doing he's told to do, (and not one bit more). A Noah sees Abel as a victim and Cain as a fool because they both got caught. Instincts and impulses don't faze him. A Noah thinks he's smart because he's decided to get along with GOD and his plan. The spiritual adolescent chooses to be cooperative to get out of it what he wants.

But he's always looking to find a way to beat the system now that he knows there is one. The spiritual adolescent impetuously rocks back and forth like a boat on high seas, between the two extremes of selfishness and selflessness, past the point of the golden mean, all the while proving to others he can keep his sea legs in stormy weather. But he hasn't got a clue how to navigate this tempest in a teacup. He has no sail and no rudder. He just wants to get the shores of adulthood to do as he pleases.

Just as there are good babies who rarely act infantile, and children who are childlike, not childish, there are adolescents who don't typify this stage of spiritual development. They don't act impetuously. Therefore Torah presents these first three biblical tales with adult characters, but they personify psychological steps everyone has to go through in his own way and at his own time of life. Each of us has to look back with a more mature conscience to assess for himself whether he's traversed these psychological stages completely, or whether there's more growing up he needs to do before he's ready to consider himself wise, self-loving and generous of spirit.

Just as it's possible to read ahead in Scripture to learn about what will happen next, it's possible to go back to stories you've already read to glean more from them about your past. The Old Testament holds a psychological fluidity that doesn't necessarily have to conform

to time or the normal stages in the development of man. These stories are *markers* you should be able to recognize in your own life. They're not *formulas*.

The Conscience In Relation To The Body

The imagination of an infant lives with GOD. The imagination of a child visits HIM often. These two stages of man have the ability to perceive GOD with a candor and openness that's no longer possible once a boy crosses over into adolescence. The character of GOD in the first two stories of Genesis can be literally seen and heard. In the story of Noah GOD appears to have moved quite some distance away from man. Only the rough seas, cloudy skies and rain are visual clues to HIS presence.

GOD tells Noah to build a wooden boat, giving him exact measurements on what the boat is to look like. The ark is to be made of the same building material that The Tree of knowledge is made from: wood. The main metaphor of Torah 'knowledge as a Tree has now been extended to formulate a new metaphor 'knowledge as a vehicle that contains man.'

In psychological terms the adolescent uses planks of information from The Trees of many orchards, including the "woods" {woulds} and "wood knots" {would nots} his parents' imparted to him. The adolescent is guided by his conscience to prepare for the journey of life by building a container for all his ideas, concepts and conclusions.

The conscience of the spiritual infant communicates with the mind consciously. The conscience of the spiritual child communicates with the mind subconsciously. But the conscience of the spiritual adolescent communicates with the self unconsciously. Every adolescent goes through this biblical story, but until the modern era gave us the science of psychology, there was no way to see what he'd been through until it was long over.

If a Noah's vehicle is shipshape and ready to carry him through the horrendous, inner storms of puberty, he'll get through this segment of his journey and reach land on the other side. He'll be prepared for adulthood and feel grounded. But how long it'll take for the waters to recede in each individual is impossible to say. Only time will tell.

Noah is like the adolescent whose penis is physically stiff, whose heart is emotionally wooden and whose conscience is spiritually hardened. His emotions are like a current that take him where they want him to go. His life is, as yet, still out of his control.

Thanks to a GOD-given inner sense of survival, he's buoyant, able to rise above the tempestuous feelings he holds inside. He has all the outrageous injustices of childhood behind him, and he has all he needs in the way of infantile instincts locked up inside him as well. Many an adolescent will tell you he likes the thought of being a drifter; that he's care free, that he doesn't yet have to care.

And so each spiritual adolescent reaches land when and where GOD wishes him to moor. For some it can take a few short years to feel well grounded in adulthood. For others it can take a lifetime to achieve a sense of grounding. And those who look to Scripture as their guide may even find themselves shuffling in and out of Genesis their entire life as they seek to complete the process of growing up at their own, individual pace.

The myriad, wild beasts a Noah has been told to bring onboard two-by-two are desires that are locked up inside his ark for the duration of the voyage. Some day he hopes to release them and then watch them multiply to repopulate his inner world with forces he doesn't yet have the space inside or power to express. These inner animals are symbolic of adult fantasies and desires for power every youngster hopes will one day emancipate him

into the world of men. But for the time being these wild, emotional beasts have been escorted to the bottom of his boat where they have to be held deep inside the hold, most of them below the waterline of consciousness.

In the privacy of his own mind, a naïve Noah may think he's the only real man left on the face of the Earth. He may think he's one of a kind. He might even conclude he's the only man with animal instincts still inside him. Or he may believe he's the only one GOD chose for this special task.

The mind of the male in the second decade of his life has plenty of self-awareness with which to listen to his conscience {GOD} and obey it, even if he can't yet fathom where obedience to older, wiser men might lead. He may look for good reasons to respect wisdom and want the role of leadership in his community. For those who do, they reach land in what may seem like only 40 days. For those more DAFKA {DEFIANT, SPITEFUL or BELLIGERENT} this sense of grounding can take 40 years or more.

The mind of a Noah waits patiently onboard for the inner storm to cease so he can let out the positive attributes of the animals inside him, his hopes, dreams and aspirations to become king of the jungle of his choice. If his elders repressed his anger in childhood by not giving him the tools to turn his dreams into discipline, he'll behave in a DAFKA {CONTRARY} manner whenever he's allowed to hold responsibility.

At those times, a Noah will suffer through the squall absent-mindedly and angry at his fate. He'll curse the weather, or worse, those drowning around him. But he won't have a clue to where he is within. He's got to land to be able to look back on where he once was. He's got to be grounded.

The character of a Noah builds his ark out of the orchards of experiences he amassed in infancy and childhood. But he probably cut down the biggest and nearest Trees {his parents and teachers} with his sharp tongue, or he simply claimed their wisdom and love as his own. If he wasn't taught to give credit where credit is due, especially to authority figures whose power branched out above and beyond his own, he'll secretly scorn the efforts his parents and teachers made on his behalf.

Although a Noah's instincts and impulses have been herded two-by-two into what feels like a very confined space, he may believe he has a new and improved way to make the lion lie down with the lamb. He's impetuously going to push his ideas on others, whether or not they're realistic because he doesn't have the experience in life to know better.

Little does he know it's his lion that will have to learn to lie down with his lamb. He's at a psychological stage in his development that was described thousands of years ago in Torah. But he'll denounce Torah rather than admit he's still adrift at sea.

Tricks The Conscience Plays

THE WORD "NOAH" means, "COMFORT." Noah is the man who's been given the path of least resistance. He's onboard a vehicle of his own making that moves effortlessly through his feelings. He may not have a sail or a rudder, but it makes no difference. He has nowhere to go.

Noah chooses to be obedient to GOD's authority, but only in those ways and at those times that it serves his own interest to do so. He's really deeply dark and DAFKA. His inner sky is cloudy and overcast; he can't yet identify with the voice of his conscience because it's speaking to him unconsciously. Although the sun is really always shining above the

clouds, day or night, Noah doesn't know it because he doesn't want to build his own truth on other people's discoveries. He wants to do it all by himself.

Noah sees the world through an opaque, gray light that's filtered down to him from above. He's powerless over the overcast conditions and the pitch of his boat. And there's really no way for anyone else to quell the rock 'n roll within him. He has to go through it alone. There's no convincing him we've seen all this before.

The conscience {GOD} at this level of awareness has tricked the mind {Noah} into believing it's been given a task that no one has ever been given before in the history of mankind. The adolescent {and spiritually still juvenile} doesn't realize that by capturing all his wild ideas and dreams in late childhood, and later releasing them out on the world, the adolescent is actually doing exactly what his conscience wants him to do at a time in his life when his physical power is so great and his experience of life so limited.

The Metaphor Of Water To The Adolescent

A strange, new metaphor appears in this story, one that's unique to the spiritually adolescent, 'water as the death of guilt.' Water signifies everything that obscures and blurs personal truth at this level of ego development. Water appears to interfere with all Noah's plans, water from above and from below.

Water symbolizes the destructive characteristics that douse guilt like a flame. Water floods the inner landscape; it erodes a Noah's sense of psychological grounding. Water drowns the anger, fear and sorrow that will later signify the emotional tools he'll learn how to navigate through consciously. Water will become a friend to those who love life. It will signify cleansing, growth and renewal.

But for the adolescent, water extinguishes the fire that he associates with guilt. In the emotional and spiritual sense, water is dangerous to adolescents. The emotionally juvenile melt, rust, corrode and leak. It extinguishes them. They need this purification by water to cleanse them of childhood, but they don't want it. The adolescent may literally love surfing and the sea, but deep down within he's on the deck of an ark smirking at all that he sees.

Although the storm in the story of Noah and the Ark only lasts 40 days, the negative forces of spiritual puberty rain down on some men for what seems to last a lifetime. They become more emotionally weak, disoriented and unreliable over time. Many a man is unmoored for decades until he finds a way to anchor himself with a passion for maturity. But this can only happen when the weather improves within.

The sky does clear up for Noah in this story, and the floodwaters do subside, but the first dove {sign of peace} that Noah releases to look for land doesn't return. Noah can't wait to get the hell out of the houseboat he's been in and walk the Earth guiltless and free. But the time still isn't right.

In the same way, every adolescent sends out signs that he's ready to put adolescence behind him. He's impatient for change. But the rainbow of promises that keep every teenager moving forward toward adulthood is longer and more mysterious than it appears.

The typhoon the body unleashes in puberty is always described in terms of being normal and hormonal, not as a moral tempest that every adolescent goes through naturally. The youngster in his teens has no way to equate the source of his anguish to a maturation process that he should be working on spiritually as well as physically and emotionally.

Society simply tells the adolescent to be patient for personal power, to do what he's told. No words could be truer or more impossible for him to achieve without a big picture

to help him make sense of what he's going through. Patience is ne'er impossible for grown men and women; how can we expect patience from adolescents who feel they're drowning one moment and are told they can sail through life the next.

It's ridiculous to think GOD looked down on humanity and suddenly decided HE needed to do something drastic because people had gone too far. It's preposterous to conclude that a flood that lasted 150 days once wiped out humanity leaving only one extended family with a sample representation of every creature on Earth in a boat.

This story makes no sense if you try to hold THE WORDS of Torah to the test of literal truth. If you're a grown man and believe that the story of Noah and the Ark really happened, then you're still a child at heart. You haven't yet reached the level of spiritual puberty.

No man can give up entirely on the child within him. He can't give up on the idea of innocence and hope even if he hasn't yet experienced them in his heart for himself. Hope will appear to the adolescent depicted in this story as a rainbow. The story of Noah and the Ark is the miraculous spiritual arch of color that appears in the sky of the adolescent between childhood and maturity. Each of us must see it for ourselves, and each of us must learn to bring it out of our inner sky and down to Earth.

Albert Einstein {a straight Jew} said, "There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle. And Walt Whitman {a gay Christian} said, "Who makes much of a miracle? As to me, I know of nothing else but miracles."

The miracle of Scripture is retold generation after generation so that it'll be better understood. Those who cling to it as it was told in the past won't grasp it as it'll be told today. The Old Testament is always being reinstated in new and improved ways. It's the classic that's timeless and enduring because it changes you only on the inside.

The Metaphors Of Doves And Olives

When Noah sends out a second dove, it returns with an olive branch in its beak, the sign that the floodwaters have receded. Noah realizes he'll soon be able to release the animals, abandon the boat and do what he wants.

The dove is the symbol of flight toward spiritual freedom. The dove is the biblical symbol of spiritual desire that rises up from the ground to penetrate GOD's world of spirit. A spiritual person is like a dove; he can miraculously fly over an ocean of tempestuous waves of emotion in search of a place to land.

An olive tree produces a fruit that's virtually inedible until it's been cured. And the fruits of knowledge growing on the olive branch are equally harsh and unpleasant in their raw state. Although the olive branch has come to symbolize peaceful intentions, the fruits of peaceful intentions have to be properly prepared before we can benefit from them.

The teenager has constructed a spiritual vehicle that will carry him through the storms of adolescence, but he doesn't yet have a way to bring himself closer to GOD. A man at this time of life is a drifter. He knows that all indications point to the fact that GOD resides in a world above the waterline of consciousness. GOD lives in the air, in spirit, but he can't get to HIM without HIS help. You can't go to heaven by boat.

GOD knows that the spirit of man must fly free. His spirit must rise into the air like the dove in flight and move in HIS direction, whether we believe GOD is above us in the clouds or behind the stars in the night sky.

Jesus will be the hope in the flesh of The New Testament that originated in this story, the rainbow that will come down from the sky that will be made real in the body of one man. Christianity will become the spiritual adolescent who tells a second spiritual tale, a tale about GOD's heart.

The Metaphor Of Drunkenness

When Noah reaches dry land he immediately plants a vineyard and gets drunk. Wine is the spiritual thirst quencher for those who fear water and wish to put milk {mother's liquid love} behind them. Wine is like blood; wine fills man's veins with a sense of power. Wine makes man feel vibrant and alive.

Noah just wants to forget the trauma of the past 150 days. He only wants to empty his mind of what he's had to go through. He plants a vineyard to help him forget. (He doesn't start a farm.)

Wine is the liquid spirit man uses to cut the corner in our pursuit of GOD. Spirits in liquid form are a substitute for the spiritual life that quenches the thirst of more mature men. Getting drunk can make you as silly as a kid. Those who are inebriated return to the state of folly and giddiness of a child. Drunkenness is the spiritually poor man's excuse for acting irresponsibly. It's the Eden express train to an open heart; peace of mind; and a clear conscience. Getting drunk epitomizes juvenile behavior. Liquor lifts a man's spirits without changing his place in GOD's realm. Getting drunk is the shortcut to spiritual awareness that men have been taking for thousands of years.

Noah, the man of comfort, chooses the expedient and comfortable path of life. The emotional suffering of having been through more than you can bear leaves him impatient for material rewards and resistant to further stressors. He focuses on the wellbeing of his body to relieve his frustrations with his unexamined life. Noah doesn't have the time or attention to live any more intimately with himself than that. He doesn't want to have to talk directly to GOD anymore, even though HE was willing to initiate a conversation with him.

The Rape Of Noah

After Noah gets drunk, he falls asleep naked. This state is, of course, reminiscent of the emotional vulnerability Adam was subjected to when GOD made Eve out of his rib, and the emotional exposure Adam later felt when he awakened to the fact that he was nude before her and naked before GOD.

But Noah has put *himself* to sleep. He's the cause of his nakedness. He wasn't always asleep at the wheel. And while in this inebriated state of helplessness, two of his sons, Shem and Jepheth, cover him respectfully. But his third son, Ham, rapes him, and is later cursed by Noah.

"SHEM" means, "NAME" in Hebrew. {You'll see THE WORD "SHEMOT" {NAMES} in Exodus, the second book of Torah, when GOD give Moses HIS name.} "JEPHETH" comes from the verb "TO ENLARGE" or "INCREASE." {You'll see this verb in the story of Joseph whose name is also derived from this verb.} And "HAM" is an adjective that means, "HOT" or "WARM." "HAM" is much too "HAM" {Ham is much too hot}.

Every adolescent is consumed with making a name for himself. He's interested in increasing his status in society. But he's also much too hot. If he's not hot under the collar, his loins are too hot.

The sons of Noah are like the paths every adolescent may find himself having to take. He can follow the paths of fame and fortune to become a respected member of society, or he can bide his time and wait for an opportunity to screw his father instead. Spiteful motives {DAFKA} are often lurking somewhere deep down in the heart of young men.

A Noah may have a hard time admitting he's more than physically nude and emotionally naked before GOD. He may not even see how transparent he is to others. And that leaves every man of comfort with a sneaking suspicion that deep down inside he's still uncomfortable with himself.

The father who's been "raped" by his son, whether financially or with emotional abuse, will discover that his relationship with his inner child is also too hot to handle. At this stage in the maturation process, it becomes apparent that what's happening around us all gives us a glimpse of what's happening within. Issues with sex, violence, money and emotional negativity are clues to issues we need to deal with, with our inner child.

GOD can alert us in advance to problems HE already knows we can't avoid, like HE did when HE told Adam not to eat from The Tree of knowledge. HE can allow others to die to teach us a lesson {as HE did with Cain}. HE can alert us to problems HE knows we can avoid with proper instruction, as HE did in telling Noah to build an ark in order to survive.

But HE can also let us walk right into problems without warning, and that will leave us humiliated and displeased with our outcomes. This is what HE did with Noah and Ham.

They say you shouldn't blame the victim, but you should look at every victim to discover what you might avoid. Maybe in retrospect once his ship came in, Noah should have spent his time working on a starting a farm, not a vineyard. And maybe by the end of the story it's Ham who personifies the quintessential adolescent who's flame needs to be turned down.

GOD can use HIS power to further develop our conscience any way HE chooses. And the best we can do is become more sensitized to HIS intentions and techniques, learning from our experiences how to play god better than GOD in the future.

Noah's conscience, the character played by GOD in this story, doesn't bother him with questions like "Where are you?" HE warns Noah in advance of a problem; gives him a way to solve it; and then lets him do what wants after the fact to see what he'll do next.

But a Noah only wants autonomy, freedom from the God within. He wants to get away from anyone telling him what to do, even if it's advice given with the best of intentions. The conscience of Noah is always having to work against the interests of his head and heart who think that any idea that comes to mind that he falls in love with must be a good one.

Ultimately, Noah ends up having to curse Ham for what he did to him. It never occurs to Noah to question his own behavior. {I wouldn't want to be GOD, the Judge, when Ham's attorney presents his defense of his client. When dealing with juvenile delinquents, even if they turn out to be father and son, there are no clear-cut cases.}

The conscience of the spiritually juvenile has to give himself time and space to decide what he's going to do with the newfound freedom of adulthood once he's achieved the grounding in life he always dreamt of. He can plant a farm to assuage his hunger or plant a vineyard to assuage his thirst.

The Adolescent Conscience

GOD illuminated the infant Adam with his first experience of modesty, humility and grace. GOD marked the childlike Cain to protect these virtues in man. And although he

doesn't yet know it, GOD will use the experiences of spiritual puberty to inspire the pubescent Noah with hope for the moral progress he's made in working *with* GOD instead of *against* him.

It would be so easy to judge GOD as the adolescent in this story, to see HIM as reacting irrationally to the evil in the world by killing everyone except the one and only guy with a desire for more comforts in life. It would be so easy to judge GOD as playing favorites by overlooking Noah's disregard for the wellbeing of others. It would be easy to blame GOD for letting Ham rape his father. But who could ever believe in or trust a GOD like that? If you want to put your faith in GOD, you've got to study your *own* motives.

Noah was ready to receive the rewards, but he wasn't ready to take on the responsibilities that came with them. He may not have condemned the whole world for the evil they brought upon themselves, but he was very quick to condemn his son for the evil perpetrated against himself.

The conscience {GOD} at this pubescent stage of development could be viewed as capricious and unfair. It arrives like a malevolent force of nature that can't be tempered or controlled. It has to unleash its fury like a tempest and drown people to achieve justice. The conscience of the spiritually juvenile doesn't seem to want to put its moral indignation into words to inspire people to learn to cooperate. It simply presents itself as a force of nature that the shrewd adolescent chooses to work with to get what he wants.

It appears as though the GOD of Noah is just as DAFKA and devious as he is. It looks as though GOD is prodding the morally unformed adolescent with threats if he doesn't learn to survive on his own. Doesn't HE know that force won't ever convince anyone to believe in HIM?...

What's the good of a GOD who forces you to think? What's the good of a GOD who leaves you open to humiliation, a feeling which only makes you feel miserable about yourself? What's the point of GOD's tough love if you're always having to figure out HIS motives just to keep up?

It's the job of your mind to think; it's the job of your heart to feel. And your conscience has the right to inflict blame on both of them if they don't do their jobs up to its standards. The character that represents the conscience in this story sets a new standard for the mind personified in the character of Noah.

With greater awareness of the forces within man, it becomes apparent that the "Why me?" implied by the forbidden fruit in The Creation Story is only getting louder by the third story of Genesis. Adam humiliated himself by blaming GOD for his own transgression. Cain humiliated himself by killing Abel when Cain didn't get his way with GOD. And now Noah is humiliated by Ham, a fate worse than death, something GOD allows to happen to the most righteous man in his time.

The bridge between childhood and adulthood is so difficult to traverse in your teens because the humiliation heaped upon the adolescent is physical, mental, emotional and spiritual, and virtually all at the same time. He constantly feels accosted by injustices perpetrated against every aspect of his being. And there's no one who can explain to him why he has to endure this humiliation, all for his own good. There's no one to explain how important it is for him to move through spite, especially when you're unaware that you feel it.

Rainbows And Promises

After the flood, GOD creates the rainbow as a token of HIS promise never to flood the world again. The rainbow is The Hebrew Testament's symbol of hope. Hope is as real as the resurrection of Jesus and the P R O P H E T Mohammed's flight to heaven. Hope is as real as a rainbow, and just has hard to grasp.

A rainbow is, of course, a beautiful and mysterious natural phenomenon of nature. If not inspiring, a rainbow must, at the very least, leave anyone who reflects on the beauty of the natural world with a modicum of curiosity and awe. A rainbow is wet fire in the sky held aloft as though by magic.

The well-seasoned cynic would say that a promise that can be seen, but not literally held, isn't tangible and real. He'd say it isn't possible to believe in a hope that's empty of feelings. Rainbows, like apologies, should shimmer with regret, or they're devoid of sincerity. Yet rainbows always shimmer in a way that looks cold.

Promises of forgiveness need to be grounded with amends. Promises that appear suddenly out of nowhere that begin at one end of a distant horizon, and end equally far away at another, can't be taken seriously, says the cynic; and rightly so. The promise from GOD in this story is highly suspect to the man who walks the thin line between feeling like a child and trying to act like a grown up.

The adolescent is emotionally seasoned enough to take this sort of promise in the sky skeptically. A rainbow of hope is a bridge that appears and disappears. It goes nowhere. And yet, for the spiritually adolescent on the road to the meaning of reality, hope is so crucial that he can't look down into himself to see how deeply he yearns to hold onto the rainbows that occasionally appear in his inner sky.

The rainbow of hope in The Hebrew Testament is a sham in the eyes of the cynic. If water is the adolescent's symbol of destruction then the rainbow is his symbol of deception. He can't believe in a GOD that plays him for a fool.

The adolescent hasn't yet advanced to the word "maybe." *Maybe* opens the spiritually immature to the possibility that life might still unfold the way he wants it to if he's prepared to earn his outer rewards from within. The rainbow in this story is GOD's skywriting. *Maybe* is about as close to *hope* as someone in his spiritual teens is likely to get.

A Noah doesn't have to give a second thought to hope. He's got drive and determination when he needs it, at the beginning of his quests. But there are many youngsters without drive or determination when they first start out. For them, good enough would be good enough. They must begin the journey of life far from the road of gratitude. They've seen horrors all around them, and so they're suspicious of every little thing that doesn't go bad for them.

GOD's gifted students will have to learn the meaning of good enough by the end of life. But the youngster who feels life is a school he's been forced to go to will only be challenged to learn about gratitude later on in life. For him, GOD will bless him with exposure to the story of Noah and the Ark, without giving him the details.

A youngster born into a world of comfort isn't going to have to be grateful. He can take good fortune as his due. He may feel alienated from family, abandoned by humanity, and ignored by GOD. But when he feels lonely, beaten up, raped, abused and discarded, he realizes that Scripture was written *for* him, not *against* him. He can identify with the feelings of the forbidden fruit that had no voice. He's not only had to ask himself many

times, “Why me?” He can proudly admit to himself that he may be green, but he’s not spoiled like so many of his generation.

Puberty isn’t a *promise* for adolescents. It’s the first *sign* in a boy’s life that there may be promises to come if he’s willing to work to see them realized. But he’ll have to come to believe in himself through hard work and discipline. He’ll have to develop a father within that can control that unruly adult, inner child who wants to screw with him. He’ll have to find a way to make himself comfortable inside and out. And he’s right if he concludes that none of this is going to be easy.

The Tower Of Babel

The Young, Immature Stage Of Males

In the tale of The Tower of Babel that follows the story of Noah, people collude with one another to build a tower to heaven. [Genesis 11] Their intent is to work together using ingenuity and technology to try to reach for the sun, to get to the source of physical light, which they mistake to be the source of spiritual illumination. Their goal is to stop GOD at HIS source above the clouds in heaven, to prevent HIM from exacting another deluge upon the world. They want to use their power to dethrone GOD and take control of the Earth to insure that there won't be any further floods.

The Tower of Babel is the final stage necessary before all the pieces are in place in the psychological puzzle that will allow a mature man to achieve an appreciation for all three aspects of guilt including the promise of hope. This fourth stage of learning is the "young, immature male" stage of the conscience, mirrored in that time of life when young men try to build their careers like skyscrapers, and their resume often takes on the appearance of one story cleverly constructed upon the next.

The spiritual infant who's moved through his *instincts* to childish *impulsivity*, and from there made it to juvenile *impetuosity*, is ready to explore the *reckless* behavior of the immature, young adult.

By demonstrating that they can work together in teams toward an end goal, young men develop the collective feeling of being worthy of material success. In that way they think they can avoid the guilt of being beholden to GOD for something they didn't do. They come to believe that the material rewards of being responsible members of society are their due. They don't yet have to think about who they *are* and the arrogance inherent just in *being*.

They refuse to have to apologize to anyone for who they are or how they acquired what they have. They may say they care deeply about the moral implications of what they're doing. But guilt at what their company, industry, nation, religion or ethnicity is doing to others simply has to be swept under the rug in order for them to get ahead as individuals. Survival takes precedence over moral indignation for these young and immature adults. The promise of everlasting life in exchange for just being good makes the spiritually young man snicker.

The young man's participation in the military and/or industrial complex of his country may denude the Earth's resources; pollute the land, sea and sky; it may obliterate animal species and natural habitats. But if jobs are at stake, the young and immature conclude that morality simply has to take a back seat to survival, guilt notwithstanding. Young men have to eat, and their parents aren't going to feed and house them any longer.

The spiritually young man who's passed the pubescent stage of a Noah may have been rewarded with hope after cooperating with GOD, but now what? He's now a card-carrying member of the human race who sees no option other than to collude with other human beings to make it up the ladder of success. He may even look down on hope from his vantage point as something only for losers. He may even have the audacity to think he's GOD's precious, little darling who'll be able to make up for anything he does to displease HIM over time.

In this biblical tale, GOD now communicates with all mankind {although not individually by name} telling them *en masse* to spread out all over the world. But the masses choose to strive to reach up to HIS realm in the sky instead. They figuratively stand

on one another's shoulders to create a tower that will act like a ladder, one they're prepared to climb a rung at a time to reach GOD's realm, however long that may take.

But, of course, GOD sees that man wants to get to heaven to take HIS power away from HIM. HE sees them coming and has devised a clever plan to stop them. The question they now pose subconsciously is, "What's HIS plan, and how can we circumvent it?"

The GOD in this story chooses to wait until the tower is nearly complete before HE tears it down. And then HE adds insult to injury by creating the languages of the world to make it more difficult for people to repeat their efforts a second time.

We've seen these towers to worldly power come and go throughout history. They were called: civilizations. Today we even have the Internet for immediate translation of the major world languages to avoid the nuisance of communication problems in the future.

GOD didn't explain to man that HE gave him two fruits, metaphorically speaking, one good and one evil, and that the evidence for them is hanging between his legs. HE didn't say that the secret to making life, sustaining life, appreciating and enjoying life lies within each one of us, not high overhead in heaven. The spiritually young think they're clever enough and experienced enough to decide for themselves where they're going in life, but they have no idea that the game is rigged from the top.

It's the young man who spreads out when he's young and saves the construction of his tower to heavenly power until he's old enough to understand GOD's ways who'll avert material and financial losses along the way. It's the young man who humbly walks with his head bowed, serving his fellow man who'll be given the patience to allow the mystery of life to come to him.

Snakes crawl on their belly; women are in pain during childbirth; and men struggle to produce food from the land. The fact that the truth conveniently agrees with the evidence only makes it more difficult for young men to break through their enchantment with reality to see GOD's hand in everything they do in life.

Today people get news from around the world instantly on line. They can use their electronic devices to translate languages without a human translator. They can invest in the construction of any kind of financial tower they choose anywhere in the world in an effort to hedge their bets against the next stock market crash.

The GOD in this story doesn't look like lightening or sound like thunder. HE doesn't act impetuously. HE simply gets even; but this time not with water to cleanse the world of sins. This time GOD chooses to give man concrete evidence of the errors of his ways. This lesson is given with the exact, same stones the young man carried in place himself. This time stones will figuratively come raining down from the sky instead of water.

These figurative stones are called: acts of GOD. They create more damage than tornadoes or hurricanes. They rock society to the core more than earthquakes. Today's acts of HE come in the form of epidemics that destroy the livelihood of nations. And if there were a pandemic, just imagine what damage that would cause to world markets.

Some spiritual lessons in life really hurt. They don't just make us morose and disagreeable. These mistakes make a man's world crumble and fall like a Tower of Babel. When things fall apart literally, medically or financially, the lessons of life may bring a man to his knees, whether he's religious or not.

Examples of the collapse of towers of Babel are mental illness, physical disabilities, financial insolvency, emotional collapse and, of course, death. These sorts of ruin lead sensitive young men to conclude that they've been spiritually bankrupted. It raises their

eyebrows, making them wonder what more GOD could want of them. And that's exactly the right question to ask. Body language says it all.

The immature, young man who doesn't have a sufficiently developed conscience can't measure his deepest, darkest intentions. He can't measure something he can't see. Ignorance is bliss until ignorance becomes baneful.

The immature, young man can still pretend to be a child at heart. He doesn't have to admit he's crossed the bridge of puberty to adulthood unless it's in his best interest to do so. He can, at last, collude with others by choosing not to grow up. He can hide behind others. He can hide with them in towers of their own making. He doesn't have to hide behind other Trees.

The question the young, immature male asks himself is what the good is in having a conscience if he's only going to use it to make himself feel guilty. If his conscience is always going to point a finger either at his head for not being sharp enough or his heart for being too weak, why bother to listen to his conscience at all? Nobody else seems to be!

The gale Noah had to endure for 40 days and nights just to prove to himself he could cooperate with GOD has turned into a brain-storm in this story. The mind of the immature, young man is now taunted with spiritual dilemmas of increasing severity and complexity as he moves further into adulthood.

Can a spiritually young man unconsciously collude with goodness {not just with evil}? Can he be good enough for GOD with just his conscience as his guide? Torah votes, "No." Torah says a man needs time to learn how to live with guilt as a *gift* from GOD, no less valuable than love or gratitude. Torah says the road to wisdom is circuitous and paved with guilt regardless of the direction it happens to take a man in the moment.

The forbidden fruit has been picked {Adam}, chewed {Cain}, swallowed {Noah} and is now being digested {Babel}. The nutrients in this story are being disseminated to every cell in the spiritual body of the immature, young man. Man may have once consumed guilt, but now guilt is consciously making its way through him. The young, immature man is a victim of something so big that he can't comprehend what its affect will be on him. He can turn his head any direction he likes, but everything he sees, hears and smells pervades his system with a sense of wrongdoing. There's only one place left for him to hide: in denial. And spiritual psychology will dare to come looking for him there, too.

The Metaphor Of A Ladder

The metaphor in The Tower of Babel is 'Tree of knowledge as ladder to the conscience.' The young and somewhat inexperienced mind of man combines his knowledge with others to gain collective control over their conscience. They realize adult life is something so difficult that they can't do it alone. They know that two *heads* are better than one, and take it that that means two *consciences* are better than one, too.

But they unconsciously collude with one another against a greater Authority than their own; they forget that their intention is to learn to cooperate with GOD by way of their conscience. They forget that the informed conscience needs time to develop into a soul that can commune with GOD/GOD/G O D in all HIS/HIS/H I S manifestations.

The conscience of the spiritually young and immature male has no sense of how *transparent* he is before GOD because he's only *translucent* before himself. His methods are cloudy and opaque, and together with others, he creates the polluted sky that figuratively hovers over communities, cities, nations and faiths. GOD hasn't yet revealed

HIS deepest intentions to the young, immature man. HE wants him to sharpen his conscience by seeking justice within himself by working for the good of all. GOD wants his head and heart to learn to use his conscience to *measure* himself, not *judge* himself.

But many a good, young man measures himself, and concludes he's either flawed or faultless, depending on the time of day. He can only admit to being *doubtful* intellectually and/or *insecure* emotionally. He can only measure the length of his fully erect penis, not his desires.

When a whole society goes through such a crumbling of infrastructure, it's sad. But when the whole world goes through an event like this simultaneously, it's simply jaw dropping. The idea that GOD could see through everyone at once, and respond to everyone simultaneously gives the immature, young man a view to the meaning of life that he's never seen before. This is what's described in The Tower of Babel story. And this is what those colluding to climb this tower can't imagine ever happening again. But GOD made no promise to the young and immature.

The immature, young man may tell you he has problems with self-esteem, but he won't tell you that the reason he doesn't esteem himself is because he hasn't done enough for others. Instead, he'll tell you he needs more confidence or that he's waiting for someone to give him a break. He's still waiting for luck to come to him from the outside in instead of from the inside out.

You can't turn onto the road to self-love without first acknowledging that the pavers will always be made of guilt even if they're smoothed over with self-acceptance. Only wisdom will make you self-loving. Only self-love will make you charitable. And only charity will bring tranquility into your life.

The possibility that life could have a fairy tale ending is inconceivable to the spiritually young man because he doesn't want to look so young as to still believe in fairies. Even when a real, live, Jewish fairy tells him how to make his dreams come true, he'll only admit that he doesn't know anymore *what* to believe...

The modern, immature, young man can literally touch the forbidden fruit between his legs without guilt, but he still can't pick 'em. He can entertain the idea of being familiar with the ways of this world, but he's more seduced and enchanted by outer reality than he thinks. He knows he's made the mistake Adam made, and he knows the forbidden fruit is inside of him, making its way out his other end. What he doesn't know is how to accept that life is a mystery he can't solve only in his head. He needs himself. He needs every bit of what GOD gave him.

The GOD of Adam was angry and punitive. The GOD of Cain and Abel was prejudiced. The GOD of Noah carried a grudge against everyone but one. And the GOD in this story is meanspirited and conniving to the whole human race without a single exception. What's with HIM? Why is GOD so beguiling? Why does HE suddenly look more like the serpent in The Creation Story than the angry old man we first envisioned HIM looking like?

Paradise Within

Paradise might come from THE WORD "PARDES," which means "ORCHARD," but we don't literally live in an *orchard*. We live in an urban *jungle*. In a jungle each tree is in competition with the others for light. The sapling has to grow in the shadow of the bigger, older trees. Illumination is very precious to those who are in the dark because of the giant shadows cast by bigger trees.

In an orchard the trees have been planted with ample space between them to give each enough light to grow. If life were only like an orchard, it would be a paradise here on Earth. But the spiritually young man knows it's a jungle out there, and, so far, he's right. At his time of life and level of awareness he has to learn to fight for everything he's given, especially enlightenment.

But we must each try to teach him how to fight fairly. We must give everyone enough space to grow without forcing anyone into utter obscurity. And even if we don't have to pick leaves from trees to cover ourselves from embarrassment, it would be helpful if we pruned ourselves from time to time to let some light in for others.

The Tower Today

It's too easy to compare man's ego to a penis, a skyscraper pointing up toward the sky, erect and aroused, poised to penetrate heaven, to flood GOD's realm with man's life-giving power in retaliation for not getting his way. It's too easy to get puritanical or for man to worry about exposing his ego to GOD. GOD's seen it all. Penises and egos don't shock HIM nearly as much as violence toward his fellow man.

The Manhattan skylines of today's cities look like orchards of penises piercing the sky with just enough room between them for cars and pedestrians to go by. We all contribute to this orcharding process one way or another. September 11th looked like the chopping down of two Trees, the two tallest Trees in one of our most precious orchards. The Twin Towers were like parents to all the other skyscrapers in the New York skyline. This was an obscenity perpetrated by Islamic fanatics that we swore we'd never allow to happen again.

But America reacted with such force to 911 because it felt more like New York had been castrated. The Twin Towers were more emblematic of the life force of New York than the delivery device of that city's power. It was an act of infamy because it was a destructive act that held poetic meaning, just as the destruction of Israel would hold poetic and divine meaning.

The young man of today lives his life like an Empire State Building. He strives to be famous, high and mighty. He may want to see the grandeur of his penis in his achievements more than he may even care about making love in the flesh. He may care about the length and the breadth of his influence. He may care less about the life-giving properties of what literally comes out of his testicles via his penis than what his portfolio exudes with regard to his figurative life-giving juices: money.

The young man of today lives his life in a glorious past because the present is too painful for him to peruse. He wants vengeance for all that others have that he's missing. He wants to be gifted here and now without having to earn the present.

The young man is too modest to admit that his deeds are only the delivery system of his greatness. He's too inexperienced to know that true greatness depends on the attitude he brings to his activities. The greater his *attitude*, the greater his *altitude*. What he produces and how he delivers it are of equal importance.

You've got to be fruitful in your own way, and then allow GOD to let the rest unfold in accordance with HIS plan. While in HIS/HIS/H I S classroom unconsciously learning gratitude for what you've got, you've also got to pass HIS tests in "good enough." Good enough has to be good enough. If good enough isn't good enough, you've got to earn better in a way that won't martyr you to a cause.

Even Jesus, the Jew chosen from among the Chosen People, had to deal with people who disagreed with Him. But He demonstrated a good attitude and was rewarded with a heavenly altitude. You can, and should, make an effort to do the same. You don't have to be an ordained rabbi to understand how to glean wisdom from Torah. I'm not. Neither was Jesus. And no Muslim has to be literally ordained a rabbi to become a wise Jew.

Your children are not fruit that come out of you. They're mirrors of the child within you. Your children reflect who you are, would be, would like to be, won't be, or will be. Therefore, it behooves you to take more interest in them as they are.

The forbidden fruit that had no voice was made flesh in you. And then it was internalized as a voice that began to whisper within you in childhood. But after the adolescent in you screamed for so long to be heard, the young man in you became hoarse.

You may now think you speak your own language, but not even your own words can express all that you feel inside. You may have to reconnect with body language to say without words what you can't fully put into words. You're forbidden fruit yearning to be in greater touch with yourself. You're silence learning to speak.

Aristotle said that man is a meaning-making machine; that life is without meaning until man gives it meaning. Torah claims the opposite, that life has meaning whether or not man chooses to see it. Torah says there's a GOD whether you like it or not. Torah says HE's got a plan whether you're on board with it, or not.

The history of Western civilization is a series of conflicts that reveal the mystery of mankind through its infancy, childhood, adolescence and early adulthood. Each civilization rose and fell like The Tower of Babel, like fruit that went from unripe to ripe, and then fell and rotted on the ground because it had spoiled.

Jews, Christians and Muslims have always been in an Abrahamic 3-D game they had no choice but to learn to play together, whether cooperatively or in collusion: two against one. The tower to power can't be climbed by any one faith to the exclusion of the others. The only way to come before our GOD/GOD/G O D is cooperatively. All other attempts will force GOD to tear our towers down. And by the look of it, it's the Muslim tower today that's under the most stress. The more the Christian countries side with Israel, the more successful and powerful they become.

The immature, young man who can't identify with the forbidden fruit in his system will bite off his Jewish nose to spite his Christian face. And even if that causes his Muslim hairline to recede, he'll slit his Hindu throat and then stab himself in his Buddhist back rather than admit that there really is a GOD/GOD/G O D whose presence is all around him. He may believe he isn't guilty of having abandoned, betrayed or conspired against anyone – surely not against himself – but we know better.

The man who believes in GOD is banking on HIM having to keep promises HE makes. But he may not yet be ready to keep the moral promises he's unconsciously made to himself. If you don't love yourself, you'd be well advised to learn about the life of Jesus, the greatest example of a man who did. If you don't treat yourself wisely, you ought to continue reading to learn more about Moses, the greatest man who ever was wise. And if you have a very uncharitable, inhospitable and mean-spirited attitude about the possibility of people improving, the P R O P H E T Mohammed is the man to go to, to learn about that.

Power And The Masses

The people in The Tower of Babel story are beyond the stage of comfort that Noah sought; they're so impatient and frustrated with life that they want raw power. And they're willing to go to the Source of all power recklessly to get it rather than put their faith in themselves to do it honestly and sincerely.

But why would GOD allow them to collude with one another up to a point to get what they want and then tear down their efforts? Where is the wisdom in GOD waiting to exact vengeance, and where is HIS Self-love in razing such men's efforts to the ground?

By questioning the psychology of GOD we inadvertently created the science of sociology. People act on mass to get their group needs met when they can't get them met individually. They realize there's power in numbers. They just don't yet associate their collective power with the collection of voices within them. They don't yet know how to associate spiritual *sociology* with spiritual *psychology*.

Sociology is the conglomeration of inner voices in The Creation Story projected out onto the outer world as viewed in mass movements with disparate perspectives. Sociology is a chorus of Adams and Eves, and serpents insisting before their consciences that they're guilt free, that others {Jews, gays, blacks, women etc.} are the perpetrators, and they're the victims. Sociology is the struggle for the autonomy we see in the world around us that mirrors our struggle with ourselves within.

But the forbidden fruit's perspective will allow you to see through all that. The original fruit may have been picked a long, long time ago. Your fruit may be chewed, swallowed and have come out the other end looking different than it did on your Tree. It may feel like you've been baked, frozen or stewed. But that one view won't go away.

Sociology mirrors the creative forces of men and women who want to do better than they did before. There are people who actually come together with hope, positive intention and goodwill. Look at Israel. Look at gay people. Look at the Jewish, black, gay and the women's movements. You'll never find sociological groups with less chance of success based on previous prejudices and more of a sense of hope and good intentions. Look how the world admires the best examples of wisdom, love and generosity of spirit. Model the many heroes and heroines around you, and you'll come to admire yourself.

I admire the fruit seller in Tunisia who self-immolated in order to bring illumination to the Muslim cause. He started a world movement through the Arab Spring. He spoke to the sociological injustice Islam has created by ignoring the forbidden fruit's perspective.

Happy are the guilt ridden! America is, after Israel, the most guilt-ridden nation on the face of the Earth. The more we, Americans, recognize these disparate, spiritual voices within us and work with them to recognize the importance of serving our own conscience first {despite the discomfort that brings us}, the more stability we'll derive from ourselves, and the more everyone will be able to contribute to our society.

Power is personal. Power is the product of our head and heart in cooperation and consent with our conscience. And if you can convince your sorry serpent to figuratively exude the product of your right testicle instead of your left, you'll infuse a great deal of good into this world, too.

The success of Jews and gays is based on controlled concern. We don't allow ourselves to get overly emotional about the development of other peoples' consciences. We interfere with other people's decision-making process when they behave hypocritically. But we

don't set ourselves on fire in the process. We model the way we hope others will try to interface with us {rationally}, defending ourselves with truth and modernity.

If we all have to obey the laws put in place by our country, global corporations, the military and local industries in order to get our personal needs met, let's make sure those laws are as just and fair as possible. Let's raise the consciousness of everyone, not just members of our local tribe. Think spiritually. Act globally.

Life is the real deal, not a rehearsal. The "world to come" will be the personal product of what you accomplish here. Don't just know yourself. Find good reason to love yourself. And then stay out of other people's personal business. Don't make your conscience other people's guide unless they're doing something that's affecting your physical wellbeing. Live, and let live. Don't use your Scripture as a weapon against gays and Jews, even if you're gay or Jewish.

Other people's emotional and spiritual wellbeing shouldn't be any of your business. In fact, there are lots of people you wouldn't want to correct. You'd rather see them graduate life with an elementary school, spiritual education than a spiritual, college degree. Imagine the surprise on their face when The Teacher shakes their hand and gives them the diploma they deserve...

But if, in the course of business or national affairs, you find people behaving hypocritically, say something about it. Gays would never put a sign on their store saying they reserve the right not to serve Christians, so let's remind Christians that "so called" Christians do that to gays. Jews would never reserve the right not to serve Muslims, so let's remind Muslims that "so called" Muslims do that to Jews. That's as odious as previous attempts to reserve the right not to allow Jews, blacks, the Irish and dogs into "so called" Christian establishments.

Teaching people how to behave in a modern, civilized manner toward everyone requires very careful construction of towers to power in every country, not just Second and Third World countries. If we're not building our society ethically, GOD/GOD/G O D will, no doubt, make sure our civilization, too, comes tumbling down. That's what acts of GOD/GOD/G O D are for.

The Source Of Belief And Faith

The spiritually young male can take pride in knowing how to think, feel, imagine, hope, wish, wonder, fantasize, dream and speculate. But he can't consent to something he can't yet understand. He can't get out of the tower to power he's constructed around himself until he can see himself in it.

Faith in GOD isn't magically bestowed upon us with "religious" rites and rituals, as many fanatics would have you believe. Faith isn't a gift at all. Faith takes hard work. Faith without inner works is dead. But the spiritually immature think they don't have to prove their faith in GOD with good works for themselves. They take it for granted that GOD will have faith in them regardless of whether what they do to themselves is morally clean and sound. The Teacher's pets never study for their exams. They always assume they've got HIM under their thumb.

Those who are spiritually young and immature build their tower to power without regard for their GOD's/GOD's/G O D's opinion of them. They think HE/HE/H E has no negative opinions except about their enemies. They think HE/He/H E only created them in HIS/HIS/H I S image physically and they can do whatever they want.

Those willing to do good work often do so with a head and heart that are in complete agreement with what they've chosen to accomplish. What's missing in them is moral scrutiny over their unconscious intentions. It's so easy to live life according to the script your parents gave you and so difficult to find your own moral direction through trial and error. It's so difficult to ask yourself if you're as rich on the inside as you are on the out.

Throughout history, religions, nations and economic skylines have been constructed on the moral standards of spiritually young men with a limited level of understanding of their GOD/GOD/G O D in their life. The deeds of the masses have often endured decades, sometimes centuries, even at times millennia, without great awareness of what moral laws they're breaking by hating just who they were told. Because they haven't yet come to hear what the chorus of voices within them is whispering, the masses of spiritually young males collude with one another rather than look for consent within themselves.

This is why history often looks like people in the past were more against their GOD/GOD/G O D than with HIM/HIM/H I M. That's why The Tower of Babel has to come down time and again. {This story is hardly a Sunday school story for little kids.}

Speech And Universal Self-Knowledge

"Babbling" is the language infants use to practice the sounds they're going to need in order to communicate in the language spoken by their parents. Babbling is the initial way we practice the fundamentals of speech, our first vocabulary of sound pairs before we unite them into words.

But it's far more difficult to learn to speak from the heart than simply to learn how to use sounds that are associated with particular meanings. Free speech is actually a spiritual gift from GOD/GOD/G O D that comes through your head, heart and soul. Humanity has been earning the right to demand free speech over millennia. We should be grateful enough for it to vote in every election, even if some politicians abuse it with hateful and mendacious rhetoric.

Free speech gives you the right to lie. It gives you the right to be insincere. And it gives you the right to be duplicitous. You've always used free speech to gossip. But when the laws that give you the right to speak freely also curtail your head from lying, your heart from insincerity and your conscience from behaving duplicitously, people scream out that their right to free speech has been trampled.

Before you can speak openly to others, you have to learn to open yourself to speaking candidly with yourself. Silence begins within. Shyness begins within. If you don't overcome your reticence and reserve in being with yourself, your tower to power will come tumbling down. If you don't learn to speak up, you may find yourself speechless when your luck runs out.

His unwillingness to talk to himself is the bane of man's existence. All speech begins with the freedom a man has to talk to himself, a freedom most men ignore, disdain or reject outright. Free speech is the reward of countless generations of men, women and children who have found the courage to tell themselves what's in their heart, and for their heart to relay that message to GOD/GOD/G O D through their soul. The result of the messages you send to yourself will determine the way in which GOD/GOD/G O D will determine your next lessons in the school of life.

But when your head and heart are colluding with your penis to get what you want, your conscience can no longer be your trusted guide. This is why you can see that the Russians

and Chinese are working on developing a conscience while the Americans are working on developing a soul.

When you don't talk to yourself, you don't discover consciously what you're thinking or feeling. The young, immature male is still building his tower to the power of free speech. He's still reaching for the stars to figure out how to get into heaven.

The young man has no idea how the words he uses out loud undermine or support the integrity of his spiritual structure. He has to evolve beyond this stage in his spiritual development to look at what he's building with his words within.

Everyone claims to be innocent, but everyone is guilty of something unstated. Only when you can overcome the illusion of your own innocence and guilt with appreciation of your education in the school of life can you pursue justice and mercy at every moment of every day. Only when you can give up the presumption that you deserve to be treated well by GOD can you use your fortune and misfortune to your advantage.

Your desire to do good is the most powerful force within you. Your penis could be the delivery system of your greatest good if you allowed yourself to get figuratively erect for the right reasons. Desire what's best for yourself, and, of course, by that I don't mean to suggest that you should use your penis only for procreation. I mean you should use your penis in conjunction with your head, heart and conscience to make the best choices you can for yourself.

The creativity and devotion needed to build your conscience like a tower reaching up to the sky can't be accomplished in a day. Rome wasn't built in a day; Rome was built day-by-day. And the realization that you're like a whole civilization in the making is a daunting idea until you begin by seeing yourself as a product of HIS story. You're the product of 3,400 years of Jewish effort to civilize Western man, 2,000 years of Christian effort to do the same, and 1,400 years of Islamic effort to do so, too.

The man who feels he's babbling inside when in his own company is working on forming spiritual sounds that will become more meaningful over time. He'll learn to talk to himself with the intention of teaching himself something he doesn't yet know about life. He could, over time, become his favorite teacher.

THE WORD of GOD {Torah} holds the secret to how you could succeed in becoming yourself. The more you scrutinize what you say to yourself, the more you're going to discover what a magical mystery it is being you.

But the more you tell yourself that you need guns to protect yourself from gays; the right to life to protect yourself from liberal Jews; and a need to vote tyrants into office to keep away the "colored" people – the more you're building your tower to power on shaky ground.

The tower described in this biblical tale is a spiritual function of communication within yourself that you must build with the proper motive to see the kind of results around you that you wish to leave the world as a legacy. The real purpose in building this tower isn't to get somewhere. It makes no sense that humanity would have gotten together to build a skyscraper to get to GOD's abode. You'd have had to have lost your mind to believe this story literally.

The Tower of Babel story says something about a stage in your development you can look back on or forward to. But uniting the various voices within yourself into your mother tongue takes time. Everybody has learned how to *talk*, but very few have learned how to *speak*. At the end of this story, GOD takes away the ability of people to talk to one another.

But HE would never take away anyone's ability to speak. Speaking is inner expression using words. Not all that people talk about speaks to what they say to themselves.

Even the body language you speak is unique to you. It's the external clay you've been given that you can use to passionately shape every sentence you utter. You have to search for your voice to find it. Only you can find your way of speaking to yourself that will say something wise and loving in the way that you talk to others. *Free* speech is, paradoxically, quite pricey.

THE WORD of GOD has to come alive from within. You have to make words spiritually personal and meaningful to you before you can spread their goodness around you. You have to find a way of turning the fertilizer that came out of you into clay. That takes time.

GOD isn't working against you. HE's trying to show you that you're working against your own better interest when you don't consciously put the development of your conscience above all else. If you don't look at Torah as the Rosetta Stone of spirituality, you're not going to come to THE WORDS of Jesus or T H E W O R D S T H E P R O P H E T Mohammed spread with proper preparation. You're going to blame the Jews, not laud us as GOD's first Chosen People who have miraculously survived 3,400 years of oppression to bring messages from GOD to the world that have relevance today.

Yes, freedom means you have the ability to choose. The freedom to choose is the primary message of The Chosen People. All the rest of Torah is commentary. The ancient Jews chose GOD freely even though it meant giving up their autonomy to do so.

When you meet a Jew today, you should be reminded that you have no reason to fear the consequences of your own choices if your relationship with yourself is morally meaningful and current. It's not the conscience of a particular Jew that you should emulate. It's the history of The Chosen People who've survived all odds and who hold the key to an important part of GOD's design, whether they're individually aware of it or not.

Jesus Christ was probably a *gay*-Jew chosen from among the Chosen. But He was only the first. Harvey Milk turned His cause into a spiritual movement by telling all gays to come out of the "ARON" {Hebrew: Tabernacle/closet}. What a great rabbi was he!

The spiritual adult in the course of becoming has to learn to *like* his own penis. {He doesn't have to love it.} And he certainly doesn't have to love mine. I'm quite content loving mine in my own preferred ways. You're not expected to like me based on my relationship with my penis. That relationship is personal. You're expected to decide whether you like me based on the relationship between my head, heart and soul. What these forces within me are doing with regard to the influence of my penis is personal.

You wouldn't interrupt a man having a conversation with another human being, so why would you interrupt him having a figurative conversation with a part of himself? If you don't like the conversation my heart is having with my serpent that could only be because you don't have a satisfactory relationship with your own serpent. If you'd bother to listen to what your feelings and desires are saying to one another, you'd discover it has nothing to do with me.

If a man's polite discourse displeases you, don't listen. If what he does in bed disgusts you, think about something else. If he kisses someone in public you wouldn't think of kissing, turn away. GOD gave you two cheeks, so that if one blushed, you could turn the other.

The problem with most men is that they didn't get the penis and testicles they were hoping for. They secretly wish they'd been fashioned by GOD differently at that most

intimate place on their body. They try to make up for their lack of length with intellectual strength. They try to make up for their lack of girth with emotional breadth. What they don't realize is that the motivation to erect their metaphoric tower to power is founded upon gratitude, not spite.

In short, all men ought to become more aware of their sensuality because sensuality leads to creativity, while sexuality only leads to jealousy and rivalry. You'll never get beyond the level of the babbling you're having with yourself if you don't learn to express your sensuality in the company you keep. The more you can participate in the conversation between your Eve and serpent, the more you'll be able to cooperate and not conspire against yourself.

Sensuality is even the key to peace between the nations. Men who love to love don't love to kill. Sensuality is one of GOD's primary techniques for transforming guilt into wisdom. The man who's been socially conditioned to be ashamed of his body will end up turning everything into a pissing contest.

GOD didn't make you the way you are for you to point fingers at yourself. If you can't see your penis and anus as parts of your spiritual cleansing process, your Bible Belt is probably cinched too tight.

To keep your tower to self-power erect; to see that it doesn't come crashing down when you least expect it; embarrassing you – you need to love the one you're always with. You don't have to skip the young male stage of collusion with the world against GOD. It's natural and appropriate that you love the autonomy GOD gave you. You only need to be aware of what you're doing, so you can remain sensitized to the guilt the young male side of you tends to deny having.

Until you take a very close look at your own penis and testicles and ask yourself what your heart really thinks about what you were endowed with, your head is going to conclude you're a victim of an enormous conspiracy. You're going to believe everyone is in on a secret they didn't tell you or that you've got a secret nobody else will ever be able to understand.

The Tower of Babel story is the final stage of self-awareness necessary for a man to recognize that his penis {serpent} colludes with his heart {Eve} to the detriment of his head {Adam}. Only once a man has united this story to the following three, and taken them all personally, can he embark on the tale of the Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Once a man has completed this tale about his own little tower to power will he be able to bring his subconscious to consciousness. That's when the fun in being with yourself begins. That's when you can go back to The Creation Story to truly identify as forbidden fruit that GOD was egging you to pick from the first time HE spoke to you.

The man who can hear himself asking GOD, "Why me?" can then see himself as one of billions of personifications of guilt. The question itself implies that man guilted GOD to try to emotionally blackmail HIM into giving him what he wants. It's at this point in reading Torah for personal edification that you should realize you see your father and mother in Adam and Eve, and yourself as the forbidden fruit they picked from a secret garden and brought into this world.

Torah is THE WORD of GOD, and THE WORD of GOD also holds the secret in GOD having created Christianity and Islam. Those who think they can denigrate GOD's chosen; steal Israel out from under us; and take Jerusalem out of GOD's hands – are doomed to watch civilizations rise and fall like penises delivering goods in a meaningless manner, a mastery

of mistakes without any desire for personal atonement. They're doomed to watch as the modern world will come grinding to a halt through an act of GOD/GOD/G O D that no one can predict.

To feel like a member of the human race, you have to embrace the past all our ancestors went through. Their loving intentions have given us the comforts we enjoy today. Their mistakes made, and not atoned for, present us with today's challenges. And if today's challenges aren't met with modesty, humility and loyalty to life, our children will have to solve our problems for us. And that just doesn't seem fair to them.

Abram And Lot

Selflessness Isn't Sexy

Every boy wants to grow up to become mature, a dignified and illustrious founding father in some area of life in contrast to the infants, children, adolescents and immature, young adults he sees around him. The story of Abraham, the father of the three Western religions, begins with ABRAM, whose name means, "EXALTED FATHER." Abram is exalted in his own eyes because he reveres GOD. This puts him head and shoulders above other, less mature men living at that time, and in man's distant past. The story of Abram {whose name GOD later changes to Abraham} is one that can be personally applied to your own.

The three stories of Abram/Abraham that I've chosen to retell reveal how you can revere yourself by striving for an inner sense of "we." This isn't the royal "we" that kings used when speaking about their country in terms of themselves. It's the inner sense of "we" that comes from a head, heart and conscience that are have been integrated with one another.

Only when our desires are brought to consciousness with feelings of unfair treatment of ourselves is it possible for our conscience to become our own guide. Working together cooperatively within ourselves is the key to working cooperatively with others. Bringing a sense of "we" into the world is the consequence of first bringing a sense of "we" into our inner world.

But this inner "we" can't happen until you separate out the generations within you with psychological insight. The adult, inner child {ego/head}; father {id/heart}; and grandfather {superego/conscience} have to be clarified and recognized. And that inner work is a spiritual matter that someone can do *with* you, but no one can do it *for* you.

The first four stories of Genesis correspond to the formation of your inner adult-child, your ego, the awakening of your head to the outer world you were born into. The instincts, impulses, impetuosity and recklessness you experienced in the first two decades of life are probably now behind you.

In the description of ego formation embedded in the first four stories of Genesis, GOD sought out man to teach him about himself. In the stories of Abraham that I'm about to discuss, man will seek out GOD and ask proactively to be taught. The desire for fruit from The Tree of knowledge is now being requested, not appropriated. Knowledge is something Abram's conscience believes he doesn't have the right to simply take. He's willing to ask for help in becoming knowledgeable.

Abram is the bud that's clearly in the process of flowering, but he doesn't yet see he's that precious fruit GOD spoke about with such love and concern that HE was figuratively growing in HIS garden. Above all else, Abram wants to avoid anything forbidden, unclean, disrespectful or frowned upon by society at large. He doesn't want to be disobedient to GOD. But he doesn't know where people end and GOD begins. He's "Co-dependent."

Abram wants to demonstrate his obedience to GOD directly, rather than indirectly by way of respecting and loving his relationship with himself. Abram doesn't realize he's going to have to earn self-respect before GOD will allow him to revere and venerate HIM. An Abram doesn't realize he can't give GOD something he doesn't yet have to give himself. He just knows he wants to do better.

The inner voices from The Creation Story have fully coalesced in Abram's imagination, just not in the metaphoric manner I've described. The limited knowledge of himself that Abram will personify will become apparent when he demonstrates a charitable nature to

strangers, but not to his own family. He wants to give his love far and wide, but not at home.

Unlike the characters in the first four stories of Genesis who all suffer from a superiority complex, Abram suffers from low self-esteem. He wants GOD to love him; but he doesn't want to have to do that hard work for himself.

To earn the name change from ABRAM {EXALTED FATHER} to ABRAHAM {FATHER OF MULTITUDES}, Abram/Abraham will begin the journey to self-respect (but he won't complete it). His journey will be a legacy to his sons, Ishmael and Isaac. Abram/Abraham will discover how selflessness will treat, but not cure, selfishness. But he'll never achieve self-centering. He'll achieve a sense of "We" with GOD, not "we," a sense of Abram with Abraham.

Abram/Abraham is Torah's founding father, and the father of all three Western religions because he personifies the struggle every spiritually young adult will have to graduate to in order to embrace the challenge of self-respect as a spiritual process. He personifies the spiritual legacy bestowed upon you.

The stories I'm going to focus on from this section of Genesis are:

1. Abram's relationship with his nephew, Lot.
This relationship will teach you not to *excuse* yourself for your errors of judgment. Abram's lack of embarrassment will be exposed in the outcome of his bargain with GOD concerning the people of Sodom.
2. Abram's relationship to his illegitimate son, Ishmael.
This relationship will teach you not to *forgive* yourself for your mistakes of character. Abram's lack of shame will be exposed in the way he behaves toward Ishmael.
3. Abraham's relationship with his second son, Isaac.
This relationship will teach you not to *absolve* yourself for your misunderstanding of GOD's design. Abraham's lack of humiliation will be exposed in trying to kill Isaac for GOD's sake, rather than use his conscience as his guide.

What we do wrong to others we have to atone for to those we've hurt. But what we do wrong to ourselves we have to atone for in the privacy of our own head, heart and soul. We have to discover our nature, and then ask GOD to help us through each of our seasons in the sun.

If you can't find anything wrong with yourself, you're living in defiance of GOD, keeping your head and heart cut off from HIM because of your unconscious anger at HIM. If you can't find anything right with yourself, you're living in denial, keeping your head and heart cut off from your soul in fear of yourself. Either way you're behaving spitefully. Either way, the lessons of Abram will apply to you.

Abram/Abraham personifies the mature man who begins the transformation process willingly with GOD as his guide. Abram is able to create and maintain a working relationship with HIM because he's, figuratively speaking, man in the springtime of the second year of his life. The fruits of his endeavors aren't new and strange to him. He's seen himself flower before. He sees the spiritual process in reformation within himself. Now it's just a question of how tall he can grow and how much fruit he can produce each season.

Through the name change from Abram to Abraham you're going to see the importance of making mistakes and feeling bad about it. If you don't feel guilty, you aren't going to have any reason to seek GOD's opinion of you. Anyone can state he made a mistake to others. Anyone can admit he's imperfect. But that's too easy for a soul seeker such as you.

Loving GOD without fearing HIM won't motivate you to grow closer to HIM. Praising HIS generosity without being awe of HIS intentions to teach you moral cleanliness and hygiene isn't going to serve you well in the long run. Your mistakes are your greatest asset, for they'll not only awaken you to your guilt, but also to your misunderstanding of your basic nature. It's when you know your basic nature that you can discuss your opinion of yourself with GOD. It's when you know yourself that you can begin the hard work of learning to feel for yourself.

Learning Compared To Eating

After you literally pick fruit from a tree, you bring it up close to your eyes to inspect it. The fruit will be more enticing if it's attractive, unblemished and smells appealing. Only after inspecting the skin for infestations will you be willing to bite into it.

You have to learn to inspect yourself the same way you'd inspect a piece of fruit freshly picked from a tree. You wouldn't want to find blemishes in your character any more than you'd want to find a worm in an apple. And even slight imperfections of your body should make you feel a little guilty about not having remained perfect and beautifully whole from the day you were born. All this is necessary before you can bite into learning how to love yourself enthusiastically.

The destructive aspects of making mistakes are obvious. You have to bite into, chew, and swallow your pride before you can digest your errors of judgment. The consumption process of all your experiences not only breaks evil down into building blocks of wisdom that can be used in making future decisions. It breaks guilt down into smaller and smaller pieces so that as much of it as possible can be used to fuel you with the intention of treating yourself better than you have until now.

These are the parts of the process of self-understanding that eventually lead to self-respect and self-improvement. The more you know about yourself, the more you'll focus on discovering more about smaller and less obvious aspects of your nature. You'll become a stickler for the details that you're made up of once you can see those details for yourself.

To put it crudely, the problem with the consumption of self-knowledge is that what goes in must come out. Besides consequences to what you *do*, there are spiritual consequences to the way you *are*. Leading a spiritual life offers great spiritual nourishment, but there will also be spiritual waste, and that, too, will need to be dealt with on a daily basis. {Some people are literally constipated or have diarrhea. Others suffer from these conditions emotionally or spiritually.}

Torah previously presented the anatomy of guilt in the first four stories of Genesis. But now guilt is going to take on day-to-day moral issues that will reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the conscience of a mature man. {To put it bluntly, you're going to see that Abram/Abraham is a peach of a guy when it comes to relating with those around him, but he's a nut case when it comes to his family. He treats them like shit.}

What Goes In Must Come Out

Forbidden fruit fuels the soul in the same way that natural fruit fuels the body. The less a man gulps down his food as though it were stolen goods that he wants to hide, the more comfortably he's able to digest it. By the same token, the more a man can digest his experiences consciously and slowly, the more he learns to be grateful for all that he's been through – and the more he'll revere GOD for HIS help in atoning for his embarrassment, shame and humiliation.

Adam knew how to speak about himself using the first person objective pronoun “me.” But *Abram* has projected this aspect of himself onto his nephew, Lot. Therefore, Abram won't be able to witness himself going through life as intimately as later characters in Torah. Lot's fate won't be a reminder to Abram of what Abram should learn from those close to him. In fact, Abram won't reflect on Lot's fate at all.

Abram will only see his inner “We” with GOD. He won't grow enough to see his inner “me” projected onto his nephew, his wives or his children. Therefore he'll confuse his inner voices with GOD's, thereby ending up with a very close relationship with GOD, but a very underdeveloped relationship with others. This isn't very different from many “religious” people today.

Modern man projects himself onto those around him. And then he spends a lifetime seeking the secret to himself out in the world we share. The answer to the question, “Who's ‘me’ inside me?” is one modern seekers don't bother to ask. If they did, they'd discover the discomfort in separating “me” from “myself” from “I.” This is what it means to have a head {me}, heart {myself} and soul {I} with a sense of unification from within.

The “religious” fanatic has an itch and scratches GOD, confusing himself with HIM. The secular man has an itch and scratches other people in an effort to show GOD that he can tell the difference between the two of Them. Only the spiritualist has an itch, scratches himself, and asks GOD why that had to have happened to him.

‘Eating knowledge’ is Torah's metaphor for learning. Torah is food for the brain. Torah doesn't tell us what kind of fruit Adam and Eve ate, but GOD never admonished them for *what* they stole anyway. HIS focus was on them taking knowledge without moral consideration for the spiritual process it entails and the rightful Owner of everything they knew.

The action of eating unlocks the mystery of growing spiritually with the right kind of education. You are what you eat. But Torah's interpretation is on learning how to learn to love the process of learning. Torah becomes ambiguous when you try to use it to quote right from wrong.

If you can't help yourself from being moralistic, use The Ten Commandments from The Book of Exodus to preach to others. Quote these WORDS of GOD if you want to tell others how to conduct their life. Don't go diving into Leviticus for one-liners to hold up in people's faces. That book is much deeper than you think.

Learning how to love yourself for your moral acuity is a lot harder than it looks, just as learning to eat with a knife and fork, a spoon or chopsticks is harder than it first appeared after you gave up suckling. Even eating with your fingers appropriately in public is an art in some societies. Your appetite for food encouraged you to learn how to eat skillfully and in ways that won't repel others. Your appetite for knowledge should encourage you to learn all you can about self-knowledge and wisdom. You can't get to love without wisdom. And you can't get to redemption without both.

The Search For A Place To Call Your Own

The story of the biblical Patriarch Abraham begins with a man named “TERAH” who leaves his homeland where one of his sons has died and moves his family to Harran, a place in upper Mesopotamia, present day southern Turkey near Syria. Terah lives 205 years and died in his new homeland. [Genesis 11]

GOD then tells one of his sons, Abram, to leave that place for a Land HE’ll reveal to him when he gets there. So, at the age of 75 Abram takes his wife, Sarai, and his nephew, Lot and follows GOD obediently, ending up in Canaan, which is present day Israel. GOD tells Abram that his descendants will become the owners of that Land in perpetuity. [Genesis 12]

The “Covenant of Abraham” begins as an unconditional promise GOD makes to Abram. “I WILL MAKE YOU INTO A GREAT NATION, AND I WILL BLESS YOU; I WILL MAKE YOUR NAME GREAT, AND YOU WILL BE A BLESSING. I WILL BLESS THOSE WHO BLESS YOU, AND WHOEVER CURSES YOU, I WILL CURSE; AND ALL PEOPLES ON EARTH WILL BE BLESSED THROUGH YOU.” [Genesis 12:2-3]

Abram is willing to put his faith in GOD, and GOD, in return, makes further promises down the line to encourage Abram to give HIM more and more of his allegiance.

The conscience of the mature man does something similar. The more his head and heart cooperate with his conscience, the more his conscience rewards him with good reasons to do its bidding. The wise man can do what Abram did in less than 75 years if he repeats the process internally that Torah describes as though it happened in the external world.

Abram wants to feel at home in his new home in Canaan, and owning Land there would solve the disquieting feelings he has about his family’s nomadic past. GOD knows this, but at this stage in HIS relationship to him, HE only promises a future of continuity between Abram and his descendants. This part of GOD’s Covenant with Abram makes no mention of Land.

The importance of Abram’s relationship with his father can’t be resolved. But it is handed down from Abraham to his sons, Ishmael and Isaac, and through them down through the ages. But the pain and suffering of Ishmael and Isaac, unconsciously inherited, marks the sibling rivalry in Torah that’s at the root of all land disputes in the Western world in the past 1,400 years, not just between the Muslims and the Jews in the Middle East today.

For those of us in the Abrahamic faiths, GOD/GOD/G O D makes covenants with each of us as individuals and as members of a faith, promises we must approach cautiously, so we don’t take away more from them than we were actually promised.

The Adolescent Stranger Within

The story of Abram and his nephew Lot describes the universal relationship between older men with adolescents, a generic uncle/nephew bond. Abram begins the story as a married man without children who finds himself saddled with an adolescent nephew who decides to tag along with Abram and Sarai.

Lot is the outer example that corresponds to Abrams inner adolescent, a juvenile, spiritual nature of his own he has to learn to contend with that runs parallel to the nephew who lives under his roof. Lot is the personification of the “me” in Abram projected out onto someone he loves.

Abram's inner adolescent lies deep within, in his unconscious, in a place he can't fathom because of his lack of interest in himself. Lot is with Abram on his journey because GOD has intended that his nephew's path in life will interface and elucidate his own.

"LOT" means, "VEILED" or "COVERED." And Lot will prove to personify that aspect of Abram that's concealed, just as the fig leaf concealed Adam's embarrassment of himself with modesty. Abram is the older man, and Lot is the impetuous, adolescent-type who makes it possible for us, as readers, to compare and contrast Lot's values with those of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah where he chooses to go and live.

Torah, like all sacred texts, is a record of life lessons presented in theoretic terms that we must be wise, loving and generous of spirit enough to interpret with greater meaning from one generation to the next. It's up to each of us as students of life to learn to look deeply at the tests given to Lot and Abram to determine how we can pass such tests with less pain and suffering today than at the time in which these characters live. Only in such a way do these characters come to life.

Abram and Lot {descendants of Shem, one of the sons of Noah} are the first students of life with conscious awareness of GOD as their Teacher, not just as their Weatherman who brings rain. They know they're here to glorify GOD. It just doesn't occur to them that life is a school and that GOD is their Teacher. Consequently, we have to look at the two of them for insight into what we should and shouldn't do.

When Abram and Lot arrive in Canaan, and it becomes apparent that the grazing needs of their respective flocks require that they separate. Abram gives Lot the choice of directions to go in, and Lot chooses to go southeast to the plains near Sodom and Gomorrah where there's plenty of water. Several years after they separate, Lot is captured in battle by the local tribes, and Abram comes to save him. [Genesis 13-14]

Abram is the loving uncle who makes two sacrifices on his nephew's behalf, (1) giving him the better agricultural Land, and (2) fighting for his freedom when Lot gets into trouble with the authorities in his new home. Despite the fact that they're both strangers in Canaan – with Abram defending his nephew at considerable potential peril to himself – Lot accepts these gifts without voicing appreciation for what his uncle has done for him.

Later, GOD will declare that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah are evil and will want to kill them. Abraham will bargain with GOD to save the righteous, which includes Lot. This will mark a third gift Abram/Abraham gives Lot, albeit indirectly. [Genesis 18]

Several ideas are presented here for us to consider:

1. Lot's missing bond of gratitude to his uncle.
2. GOD's decision to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah in light of what we've already learned about the character of GOD in Genesis seemingly growing as we grow.
3. Abraham's strong desire to bargain with GOD over who HE wants to kill this time. Wasn't it enough HE killed almost everyone in the story of Noah and caused tremendous havoc and destruction worldwide in the story of the Tower of Babel?

Lot's lack of gratitude is typical of the spiritual adolescent who does what he must, and forgets about the rest. Noah was like that. He bent over backwards to please GOD, and then watched as the world drowned around him. Lot represents the next level of "religious" fanatic who will bend over backwards for strangers, but ignore the needs of those closest to him {his own wife and daughters in this case}.

The character of GOD in Noah and the Ark decided to rid the world of evil by destroying almost everyone on Earth. But the GOD in this story is only interested in destroying a couple of towns. And even then, HE's willing to bargain with Abram about it. Clearly, GOD's nature is improving...

We hear GOD debate this issue within HIMSELF in the first and third person singular in this story, saying, "SHALL I HIDE FROM ABRAHAM WHAT I AM ABOUT TO DO? ABRAHAM WILL SURELY BECOME A GREAT AND POWERFUL NATION, AND ALL NATIONS ON EARTH WILL BE BLESSED THROUGH HIM. FOR I HAVE CHOSEN HIM, SO THAT HE WILL DIRECT HIS CHILDREN AND HIS HOUSEHOLD AFTER HIM TO KEEP THE WAY OF THE LORD BY DOING WHAT IS RIGHT AND JUST, SO THE LORD WILL BRING ABOUT FOR ABRAHAM WHAT HE HAS PROMISED HIM." [Genesis 18:17-19]

GOD actually sounds a bit guilt ridden in this passage. It's as though HE wants to get in good with Abraham. But it's as if HE wants us to know about HIS reservations and concerns before HE takes action. And HE even uses the third person {Lord} in speaking about HIMSELF to HIMSELF to do so.

Abraham is very willing to debate GOD on the topic of killing the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, but, later, he won't give a second thought to HIS request to sacrifice his son, Isaac. Abraham, like Lot, is very morally involved in the lives of strangers, but neither is very good at caring for the ones he (supposedly) loves.

The Internal Conflict Projected

Like Noah, Lot is the kind of guy who assumes he deserves everything good that happens to him, but not the bad. He's comfortable within himself to the point of being spoiled. Lot is blasé to the fate of those he should care about the most {his family}. He's the most righteous man in a new time, a good guy overall; just not yet in touch with the important feelings of loyalty and gratitude to those he ought to care for the most. He's the first example of a biblical character who doesn't know how to access his feelings for those he loves, and then express those feelings throughout. Lot's loyalty to the townspeople and the visitors will be a projection of his own loyalties; misplaced. It's still all about "me."

The problem for someone who's spiritually juvenile is that he's a forbidden fruit with a very thick skin. The boundary between his inner world and the outer world is impermeable. He can't recognize the synchronicity between his two worlds. He actually thinks people move serendipitously around him. He doesn't see the confluence of their roads intersecting with his own in mysterious ways that should be teaching him spiritual lessons from GOD. Lot is like the adolescent who comes to school for the social life, not the education.

Unbeknownst to Lot who bargains with the townspeople, Abraham bargains with GOD to save all the good people in Sodom and Gomorrah, ostensibly to save his nephew, Lot. Abram is morally more mature, closer to GOD, but still lost in projection himself. Abram decides to box with GOD on behalf of righteousness for the sake of all those who'd be innocently slaughtered by HIS wrath. And because GOD never shirks from a good moral fight, Abraham comes away feeling enriched by his moral workout with HIM. And Abraham can even appreciate himself for not being apathetic to those suffering far away, especially since a family member is among them.

Abraham is the prototype of the man whose conscience works overtime when it comes to those on the other side of the horizon, while Lot is the prototype of someone willing to

go out of his way for total strangers in his midst. But neither of them will show the spiritual awareness necessary to know how to deal appropriately with matters at home.

Life is a school, and The Teacher has the right to expel those students who are lazy. HE previously dismissed class for everyone except Noah, his family and a sample representation from the animal kingdom. And now the people of Sodom and Gomorrah are presented in the light of students whose grades run the gamut from C- to F. And although Lot looks good compared to the rest of the class, he survives the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah only to blow it all on the next test.

Lot's Story

GOD decides to destroy the five cities of the plain where Lot is living. But first HE sends two angels to the city of Sodom where they meet Lot at the city gates. Lot wants the angels to spend the night in his house for safety, but the angels insist they wish to spend the night in the city streets. Lot eventually convinces them to come to his home, but then the men of Sodom surround Lot's house and call on the strangers to come out. The motives of the townsmen are interpreted as with "carnal intent," but their homosexual motives also seem mixed with the intent to do the strangers physical harm, i.e. to rape them. Lot bribes the men of the town by offering his daughters to sleep with instead, whom he says are virgins. But the townsmen aren't interested. [Genesis 19]

Although Lot's hospitality to strangers is commendable, his selflessness for their sake sinks to the level of ridiculousness. To offer his daughters to his neighbors as a bribe isn't heroic; it's absurd. Sacrificing your children for the wellbeing of strangers is the sort of decision only someone gravely immature and obsessed would make to quell the displeasure of his peers.

Lot's decision is not only counter-intuitive; it indicates that his judgment is seriously impaired. We must conclude that his example of low self-esteem could hardly go any lower. His thoughts are somewhat integrated with his conscience, as evidenced by his willingness to think about the wellbeing of strangers, but his feelings for his children are sublimated to what the world will think of him.

Does Lot not love his children? Of course he does. The problem lies in his conscience, which is only getting input from his head and penis, not his heart. His thoughtfulness to strangers can't be weighed against his feelings for his daughters in his conscience because his heart isn't capable of contributing that evidence. His feelings are disconnected from the other forces within him. His sense of "me" and "mine" is completely screwed up.

This sort of undeveloped moral structure is still evident in some Muslim communities in third world countries where daughters are promised to suitors in exchange for dowries. The payment is made when a girl is still a child, and the marriage is expected to take place as soon as the girl reaches puberty and can produce offspring.

The relationship between the father and the future husband in this arrangement is highly formal and held with great social indebtedness and formality between such men as signs of their faith and goodwill. But the needs of daughters and wives are virtually nonexistent in these societies. Women are bartered as though by pimps with johns for whores. And by degrading women in this way, the men unknowingly degrade themselves. Spiritual juvenile delinquents, all of them!

We see the same sort of bargains made between political leaders who sacrifice the wellbeing of their country for accolades and honors from enemies. When the self-esteem of your leader is as low as Lot's, your whole nation suffers for it.

Lot's disconnect from his own inner source of spiritual power {his conscience} isn't the result of him not being thoughtful {head}. It's probably not even the case that he's not a compassionate and heartfelt man on occasion with his peers. He simply hasn't evolved spiritually enough to weigh his thoughts against his feelings. When he becomes overly concerned about his reputation in satisfying the needs of a couple of strangers and his peer group, he casually leaves his family ties vulnerable and exposed. And because his wife and daughters don't receive the love they need to develop sound moral priorities of their own, Lot, his family and his town lose everything in the end.

Decisions And Selflessness

GOD warned Noah of the impending flood; gave him strict instruction on how to build the ark; and what to fill it with {animals}. This was Torah's example of the conscience {GOD} disciplining the mind of the spiritual adolescent {Noah} in preparation for the journey of life into adulthood.

But in this story, GOD sends emissaries {angels in human disguise} to warn Lot rather than doing so HIMSELF. HE sends messengers to bring HIS values down from heaven to man. And then GOD lets Lot decide for himself what he wants to do next, although HE gives him clues to what HE'd like to see happen.

Lot decides not to listen to the angels who try to convince him to take his family and leave Sodom. Devotion to his neighbors, desire to impress strangers and allegiance to his new residence supersede his own wellbeing and the wellbeing of his family. But, at last, he's convinced he needs to take his family and go. Like an emotional adolescent, he first needs to be instructed on right and wrong, and then coerced to do what's right.

From GOD's perspective, the only difference in this story, compared to Noah and the Ark, is that HE uses fire and brimstone on a select number of people rather than a flood that destroys the whole world. HE's literally true to HIS WORD never to kill off everyone on Earth a second time, but that turns out to be no consolation to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Although we're given a look into GOD's mind as HE debates within HIMSELF whether to tell Abraham that HE's thinking about destroying five cities on the plain, the way in which HE decides to take action on that thought is rather curious. HE says to HIMSELF, "THE OUTCRY AGAINST SODOM AND GOMORRAH IS SO GREAT AND THEIR SIN SO GRIEVOUS THAT I WILL GO DOWN AND SEE IF WHAT THEY HAVE DONE IS AS BAD AS THE OUTCRY THAT HAS REACHED ME. IF NOT, I WILL KNOW." [Genesis 18:20-21]

First GOD asks HIMSELF whether to talk to Abraham about this issue, but decides to do so based on HIS expectations of Abraham's success and the success of his progeny in the future. Then HE decides to see for HIMSELF whether the sins of Sodom are as bad as reported, {presumably through reports from the angels, outcomes and prayers}.

"Angels" in this story {and throughout Torah} are human beings who come into the main characters' lives to trigger their conscience into making moral choices they wouldn't otherwise make. We're all angels in each other's lives nowadays. We're all emissaries from GOD who act as spiritual forces that spur others to exercise their conscience rather than only listen to their heart and penis.

We do this by helping one another promote a good future for those we care about and presenting evidence of the sins of those we believe are behaving badly. The media is in a special position to illicit angelic powers when it comes to helping us make these decisions.

What's called "fake news" is sometimes the truth that bad people don't want to have exposed. And sometimes it's the news that bad people promote. It's up to each one of us to decide for ourselves how we're going to be morally moved by the news that reaches our ears.

Most of us take on the role of angel in disguise unconsciously, subconsciously or with undeveloped moral intentions. We don't always realize how our actions are a part of GOD's design to tell others what's truly right or wrong. We don't realize how great, and yet subtle, a function we play in our own life by telling ourselves what's right and wrong. In other words, we have very strong opinions about how those far away should lead their lives, but we don't care to look closely enough to what's happening within ourselves.

More than we need to tell others what to do, we need to let GOD know what we'd like to see happen to us all. HE's got a plan for us that can include our desires if we're willing to work with HIM. HE's got a plan that will include us all if we're willing to use the struggles in the world around us to inform us of our own unconscious struggles within.

Just because we all want peace in the Middle East, for example, doesn't mean we're going to get it in advance of making peace with ourselves. Working from the outside in isn't the way GOD works. It's the way Abraham and Lot operate. And both men are going to hold failed policies, one {Lot's} much worse than the other {Abraham's}.

There are four "gods" in the modern world despite the fact that everyone agrees there's just one:

1. GOD
The Creator of the world and the Jewish people. Known to the Jews as Y.H.V.H.
2. GOD
Known to Christians as the Co-Creator of the world through Christianity: GOD, The Father, Jesus and The Holy Spirit.
3. G O D
Known to the Muslims as the Creator of the world and Islam: A L L A H
4. God
The God within each of us who does the work.

Modern man couldn't possibly be as morally mature as he might like to think because he isn't even able to agree on what GOD/GOD/G O D means to him. Even if he doesn't want to depend totally on others for advice, he could still run his ideas past HIM/HIM/H I M if his adolescent ego wasn't so threatened by doing so. It's not that hard to tell GOD/GOD/G O D that you can't decide what's right from what's wrong and what would be better or worse. It's not that hard to ask HIM/HIM/H I M to teach you how to be the best person you can be. The problem lies with who you're talking to: GOD, GOD or G O D. And if you can't even talk to yourself, how are you going to discern whether you're speaking to HIM, HIM or H I M.

Lot finally agrees to leave Sodom, but on the way out of town, the angels warn him and his family not to look back. But Lot's wife does look back on her home in Sodom as it goes up in flame, and she's turned into a pillar of salt. Lot ends up in a cave far out of town with

his two daughters. The daughters believe the whole world has been destroyed, not just their whole world, so on consecutive nights each gets their father drunk, has sexual intercourse with him, and both become pregnant. Because they didn't believe GOD's promise never again to destroy the world, Lot's daughter's think they need to repopulate the world. They believe GOD has {once again} killed off everyone except them {albeit this time with fire rather than water}. [Genesis 19]

Lot's first juvenile decision was to recklessly invite the angels to his home despite the danger to his family in doing so. His second bad decision was to urge the townsmen to have sex with his daughters to protect strangers over his own children. And lastly, he chose to keep his entire family in Sodom despite the impending doom. They only got out when they did by luck, and by then his daughters concluded that the whole world had been destroyed, when the truth was that *their* whole world had been destroyed.

It's no surprise that with such poor judgment Lot ends up a loser. He loses his home when GOD destroys the town; he loses his standing in the community when GOD kills the townspeople he's devoted to appeasing; he loses his wife who dies when she's turns into a pillar of salt; and when he later gets drunk, and his daughters are able to convince him to have sex with them, he loses all dignity in our eyes as well.

Lot's choices are juvenile because they're based on selflessness, his desire to look good in others' eyes. His interests are projected onto a nebulous "them" who he insists on appeasing rather than those truly in his heart. And although he claims to be a GOD fearing, upstanding member of his community, his decision-making abilities are unsophisticated and impetuous from any wise man's point of view. In our eyes, Lot is still as "me" oriented as Noah. Only Lot hasn't learned a thing from his relationship to his own little world. And so both of them end up getting screwed over by their children.

From Lot's daughters' point of view, it must have been a shock to see their father put the safety of strangers before their own. Although the girls are portrayed as having good reasons for seducing their father, they're not unlike their father who wouldn't listen to reason, or their mother who wouldn't listen to warning. Lot's daughters, too, are overly devoted to *their* world and insufficiently devoted to their own dignity and self-worth. Their idea of a sacrifice for the wellbeing of the world {sex with their father for the sake of procreation} is an appalling solution. It could only be the result of a naïve and narrow interpretation of the facts.

A moral philosophy that isn't based on common sense can never aspire to become a righteous model of moral conduct. Lot's daughters' decision to solve a world problem with incest was as misguided as their father's resolve to satisfy the sexual needs of his neighbors by offering them his daughters. These two apples didn't fall far from the same sick Tree.

Wishing To Turn Back The Hands Of Time

The angels warn Lot and his family not to look back as they run away, but Lot's wife does so anyway. "Looking back" refers to more than nostalgia at the ways things used to be. It's a neurotic hunger to want to recapture the past instead of looking forward with strength and hope to a better future. When we look back out of fear of looking forward, we're figuratively turned to stone; we become spiritually frozen, incapable of taking actions that will improve our lot in life.

Salt has been associated with wisdom since people realized its value for preserving food and our hunger for the taste of it. The "salt of the Earth" refers to the wisdom of the

masses, the cooperative behaviors of groups when they respond in morally like kind. A “pillar of salt” is simply many granules of wisdom that have been united into one lump. A “pillar of salt” is, therefore, a *sign* of wisdom not an *example* of behaving wisely.

Lot’s wife personifies every mother who wishes to go back to the way things were, however, dysfunctional the family dynamics in her household had been before. Perhaps because Lot’s wife didn’t previously stand up for her daughters, their father used them as bargaining chips for the wellbeing of others. Perhaps because she raised them to submit to their father’s whims, they later felt the need to have sex with him for a greater cause than their own.

Lot’s wife personifies the kind of woman who’s too weak to handle the role of mother. Looking back with regrets is all she can do. Lot’s wife had no voice in her family to change the past, and after being turned into a pillar of salt, she has no voice with which to change her future.

The apathetic may feel they care deeply, but when push comes to shove, they care more about their stuff or their reputation than their loved ones. Their family ends up compromised and in ruins. When sons are driven out of their parents’ house for being gay, and pregnant daughters are forced to conceive unwanted babies, you’re trying to squeeze blood {love} from a pillar of salt {an apathetic person} or a hypocrite {Lot} who behaves in a juvenile manner with strangers.

Lot’s wife is a pillar of the community; a pillar to appropriateness; a pillar of family values who looks like a loyal, loving wife. Lot, himself, is a pillar of the community; a pillar to appropriateness; a pillar of family values who looks like a loyal, loving citizen – until GOD wreaks havoc on their world.

It’s not wise to look back on your past with a desire to return to the way things were. It’s not wise to use your wife and children to advance your status in society. The journey of life must always move forward with righteous intentions.

Reading Torah and concluding that Lot’s wife was literally turned to stone diminishes the value of the moral message. It turns the outcome into revenge from GOD instead of a lesson in wisdom from HIM. People who take The Bible literally make the same mistakes over and over again because they don’t want to think about the moral importance of Torah for every new generation. They’d rather conclude that the moral importance of this story lies in GOD’s retribution for participating in sodomy or contracting gonorrhea. Like Lot and his wife, they’re more consumed with what others will think of them than what they think of themselves.

The Consequences Of Selflessness

Lot’s daughters wouldn’t have come to the conclusion they had to sacrifice their dignity and the dignity of their father to repopulate the world if they hadn’t observed their parents sacrificing *their* own dignity. Their father was anything but selfish when it came to strangers; but he was selfless when it came to his own family. And their mother did nothing to set a good example when she worried more about what she’d left behind than what lay ahead for her and her family.

Girls who learn wisdom from parents who demonstrate care and concern only for the world outside the family grow up to make severe errors of judgment, often in the men they pick as father for their babies. Their sense of self-importance is warped by the lack of regard they got from their family of origin.

GOD was obviously angry with the people of Sodom because their *values* were screwed, not their *bottoms*. From the sons of Noah and the daughters of Lot, Torah takes us on the journey of the lives of children whose parents are spiritually juvenile. Such kids are prone to make decisions that are extreme and based on spite toward their parents, not love.

When parents don't model morally appropriate priorities, their kids have a tendency to make decisions that will screw over their parents, regardless of what it may do to their own self-esteem. This is especially dangerous in politics and boardrooms of industry where men and women are elected who have an unconscious need and the power to make people pay for the parents GOD gave them. A son of Noah {or daughter of Lot} is someone who may have a tendency to express his anger and disgust at his upbringing if he gets a chance (and if we let him.)

It's up to the student of Torah to make moral connections between the characters in Genesis before we move on to the story of Moses. Once you begin by taking all the characters of The Creation Story to heart, it frees you to do the same with the characters in the subsequent chapters of Genesis.

The Inner Adolescent We Can Identify And Observe

Relationships with all people are for practice, but relationships with family members are particularly revealing when it comes to self-improvement. Familial relationships accentuate the importance of developing an intimate, caring relationship with yourself. GOD may have planted you in a particular familial grove of Trees, but it was *your* job to root yourself in it in some ways while branching out from it in others.

An older, wiser man like Abram should have been able to look upon his young nephew, see the unhealthy and destructive decisions Lot made, and then ask himself if his own family values are any better. Unfortunately, Abram doesn't take advantage of this opportunity. He has unprecedented faith in GOD, but little faith in himself.

The reason why acts of GOD aren't easily understood is because we don't take our experiences as GOD-instigated. We're afraid of guilt. We're afraid of admitting how imperfect we are. We'd rather react to our family origins with anger, fear or sorrow, when guilt is the only sensible way to grow. If Abram had learned from Lot's mistakes, Abram wouldn't have behaved inappropriately with his sons, and the Middle East wouldn't be in the hot mess it is now.

You can never fully know what GOD is thinking or what HE wants to teach you about HIS loving intentions for you. But if you look at the little lessons HE brings you through others, your life might become much more meaningful to you day-by-day. When your study partner {Lot} fails his test, and the two of you {Abraham and Lot} had been studying together, it should alert you to something important about your own curriculum and The Teacher's intentions for you, too.

Look at your misfortunes as lessons from GOD, given to you with your name on them. Even the weather is something you should take personally. The more signs you see from GOD, the more you can make your life a spiritual experience.

GOD is always interacting with us with loving intent, even if we only appreciate a few of HIS mysterious ways. HE's speaking to each of us personally from HIS heart, regardless of how that might make us feel. Nobody aces HIS tests. The days of the perfect score have already been described in the world's sacred texts. Today we just have to use the best

students we can find to tutor us, while asking The Teacher as many questions as we can every day in class.

Learning From Our Mistakes

We all live in a linear reality where we're physically fixed in this present moment in time moving in the same direction toward the future. We can never leave the here and now to return to the past. And no one can get to the future before anyone else. Our thoughts can move into the past or future, and we can recreate feelings from our past, and even imagine what we'll be feeling down the line. But we can only exist here now.

Our body is locked into the physical pain or pleasure of this moment, and our heart is locked into the love or loathing of this moment. Our head is autonomous; and therefore it can move anywhere in time. But everything below our Adam's apple is subject to learning the meaning of now.

This is the way GOD created us and the reality we're all a part of. Although there are many talking heads who insist they know what's going to happen down the line, the future is better discussed by those who are *wise* rather than just those who are only *knowledgeable*. But listening to the predictions of the "religious" fanatics is a complete waste of time. They always think GOD will do everything for them.

Moses wrote five books {Torah} to describe his understanding of our experience of reality from his head. Jesus found four secretaries to write down His experiences of reality from His heart {The Gospels}. As the result of these two perspectives, we have two faiths that look at life from very different perspectives.

The purpose of your head is to use past experience to plan the future health and wellbeing of your body. Good thinking will lead you in the direction of a healthy lifestyle and a strong financial portfolio. Your head has the autonomy to find the best way to use the advice of your conscience to achieve the best possible results externally. Every decision your head makes can take into consideration your past and potential future outcomes, as well as the future for the rest of humanity.

But every decision of your heart will change how you *feel* about yourself, and others. That means that it's important for you to get to know how people feel about you, and how you feel about them. You can't plan how you're going to feel tomorrow. Nor can you simply erase a feeling you had yesterday.

This is why we must triangulate our head {thoughts} and heart {feelings} with our conscience {beliefs}. It's this effort over time that turns a conscientious person into someone who's soulful.

We're all in this together, but the game of life is much harder than it looks. Only GOD {Y.H.V.H. Jesus A L L A H} stands outside the system working with each of us any way HE/HE/H E chooses. Therefore, the more you know about how the other faiths operate and why HE/HE/H E created them, the more you'll discover how to operate yourself more successfully.

If we don't use our conscience as our guide, there will be consequences sooner {in life} or later {"after life"}. You should probably worry more about trying to protect other people's noses when they're busy trying to bite off their nose to spite their face. But they may already have very little nose left for you to bend out of place after all they've done to themselves until now. Anything you can do to keep them from hurting themselves and making bad decisions, the better you'll feel about yourself in the long run.

But this must be done within reason. Unless their decisions affect you personally, you should mind your own business. The gay lifestyle, abortions and responsibly, well-planned suicides aren't going on your report card. If people choose to graduate with these grades on their transcript, it's no skin off your nose.

Tender or tough love on others is the consequence of the tender or tough love you exact upon yourself. If you have trouble with expressing either tender or tough love on yourself, you'll have the same problem expressing it on others.

Apathy toward how your decisions will affect others is also a mirror of how you feel about yourself. If you don't understand that spite begins within, you're not going to understand what really motivates most people. It's sad, but true. Most people are their own worst enemy. They're terribly jealous of other people's containers and terribly envious of their contents. So if you want to learn to love yourself, you're going to have to move outside the system of protocols and politesse to become real. We're not here to learn how to pretend to respect one another. We're here to get our own job done. But that can't happen if you care more about how you look on the outside than how you look within.

I have a tendency to be much nicer to others than I am to myself. Self-discipline has been good to me in the outer world, but I've paid a price for being so disapproving of myself within. But the more I raise my standards of respect for me, the more I become as nice to me as I am to everyone else.

I no longer worry about being inauthentic just because I don't express my feelings to others. I felt that I was different all my life. I don't expect that feeling to change. I allow myself to feel the way I feel. I even allow my opinions to be whatever they are. I just don't act on them. I don't even talk about some of them because my conscience is my guide, and not theirs. Such are the secrets of an introvert.

Torah presents the character of Abraham as the first man whose conscience is in a transformative process of growth. He's receiving assistance from GOD at all times, and HE seems to know just how HE wants to morally sculpt him. Abram, like all of us today, is clay in GOD's hands. Abram signifies the good man who must learn to struggle with imperfections that GOD is well aware of.

We hope three things for the development of Abram into Abraham:

1. That he'll come to see his virtuous nature
2. That he'll appreciate it by developing greater faith in himself
3. That GOD will see his growing faith in himself and will reward him for it.

Sadly, none of our wishes will come true for this character. Abraham only learns to love GOD for having rewarded him. He never learns to love himself. And it's doubtful from the text that he has the reflective nature needed to see and admire his virtues.

Abraham personifies the man who takes the first step in the direction of wisdom, but clearly that's a road every generation since has had to go down a little further. His sons, Ishmael and Isaac, will prove to be very morally damaged, human beings. And they'll bestow great blessings {and curses} on future generations of Abrahamic man in all three traditions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Fortunately, it's all about progress, not perfection. No person of faith has all the answers.

The Spiritual Paths Of Torah

The father/son bond Abram will create with Ishmael, and Abraham with Isaac, will be unenviable. And as the result of his poor relationship with his children, Abram's/Abraham's progeny will hand down an emotional debt from fathers to sons. That dues is still being paid down today, not just in the Middle East, but worldwide. The spiritual legacy of Abraham and the Abrahamic faiths in the 21st Century has now become of global proportions and importance.

Today, The Hebrew Testament, Christian Bible and Quran have to be taken personally because the threat to dismiss classes and close this school is becoming all the more likely. Taking Scripture literally, as our ancestors did in the past, has gotten us into the trouble we're in now.

An Abram who makes a concerted effort to hold a bond of generosity between his thoughts and feelings for GOD will create a righteous inner atmosphere of being exalted in GOD's eyes. He'll see his own generosity with strangers, and he'll feel good about himself in that one respect.

But with his family, he'll be in denial of the bounty of inner riches he's been given. He may go to work happy, but come home miserable. He may talk about his work-world freely, but get silent when it comes to his home life. These are the limitations of an Abram in the modern world. This is the chapter of the story in Torah of the modern man who's moving in the right direction externally, but not internally. And the consequences of his inadequately transformative steps forward are becoming increasingly obvious to one and all.

Those aspects of a father's character that he's unaware of are always mirrored in his sons. Children aren't just the benefactors of a man's virtues; they're mirrors of his unconscious vices as well. A father may not be as juvenile as his sons. He may not behave as recklessly as an adolescent or young man in obvious ways. But the father's heart is mirrored in his sons' in some respects. And if a father can distance himself from his sons {like an uncle observing a nephew} he should be able to see something in his sons that reminds him of himself.

Distance in viewing the uncle/nephew relationship gives greater meaning to the story of Lot. It links the violation of Noah by his son with the violation of Lot by his daughters. And it should distance every father from his own progeny to insure that he learns from mistakes of biblical proportions.

Those of us without children don't have to make babies to identify with our parents' generation or the younger generation. The concept of family makes everyone who comes into our life a reflection of the debt we're paying down from our fathers. You don't have to have children to know that everyone is a child of GOD, and, as such, shaped in some ways masterfully and other ways, comically and even appallingly.

If you can look at your nephews and question what you see of yourself in them you may bring the issue of your humanity out of the abstract and into the concrete. Every young man in your life should be a mirror of some part of you, you don't want to go back to in some ways, and who you admire and want to inspire in other ways.

Abram And Ishmael

The Need For A Male Heir

Abram and Sarai are husband and wife, aged 75 and 65, respectfully. But “SARAI,” whose name means “QUARRELSOME,” is barren. Since there’s a famine in Canaan, the two of them go to Egypt where, for safety’s sake, Abram claims to be Sarai’s brother, not her husband. In this way Abram avoids being murdered to get at his wife. When they return to Canaan, Sarai, who’s still barren, convinces Abram to conceive a son through her Egyptian servant, Hagar. Abram and Hagar name their son “Ishmael.” [Genesis 16]

A man’s relationship to himself is projected in adulthood onto his choice of romantic partners. So a man who marries a woman who’s quarrelsome has projected his inner turmoil onto her to engage with that character defect within himself from the outside in. Sarai becomes the symbol of Abrams’s struggle for peace of mind. In some ways, he’ll have to work through that projection over his entire lifetime in the world around him because he doesn’t succeed in piercing that projection from within.

In giving others the impression that they’re siblings rather than husband and wife, Abram and Sarai create an artificial aura sibling bliss. They pretend to be a couple, just as siblings may pretend to be in a loving relationship in their parents’ home to receive the admiration their parents yearn for.

A real couple is nothing like a sibling relationship. A real couple is always moving into uncharted ground for the sake of the self-love. That comes out of a transformative relationship with another person that reinvests yourself in your bond with yourself. (Granted siblings can have transformation relationships with one another, but because their intimacy isn’t sexual it never rises to the level of intimacy and intensity found in romantic partners.)

In prompting Abram to have sex with another woman, Sarai initiates a struggle in family dynamics that bring out Sarai’s quarrelsome side. His offspring, Ishmael and Isaac, inherit their father’s struggle with their mothers.

Torah tips its hand by telling us that Abram’s second relationship is with a woman named, “Hagar.” “HAGAR” means, “FORSAKEN.” So we can assume from the start that their relationship will be sorrowful and bittersweet. A man who is first attracted to a woman who mirrors his quarrelsome side may choose to find a second relationship with another woman who mirrors the sorrow and disappointment in himself that he’s also disassociated from.

Abram’s quarrelsome wife {Sarai} and forsaken concubine {Hagar} personify Abram’s unresolved anger and sorrow with himself that he’s projected onto his wives. {He’s married his problems with himself. He isn’t experienced in problem solving from the inside out. This is common in men who don’t know themselves well, or want to.}

The transformation in Abram and Sarai, which is the result of the goodness they do unto others out in the world, is acknowledge and rewarded by GOD by changing both their names. {When apple juice ferments into spirits you change the label on the bottle to “cider.” In the same way, Torah alludes to something having changed inside them over time. Nowadays, people simply give themselves a new name when they feel they’ve become a new person.} GOD changes Sarai’s name to “SARAH,” which means “PRINCESS,” and then HE grants her, her wish to have a child.

Peace with your spouse occurs when you choose to internalize your criticisms of your spouse and make peace with him/her issues from the inside out after you realize you can’t

resolve them from the outside in. The man who achieves this spiritual feat turns into a prince of a guy in his partner's eyes, and comes to appreciate the princess by his side who has remained with him through thick and thin.

This looks like a fairy tale ending to a very real world, psychological problem, but the wisdom of Torah lies at the foundation of all European fairy tales. European fairy tales couldn't be incorporated into local cultures as Jewish wisdom because of the anti-Semitism they'd wedded themselves to through church doctrine. Fairy tales are lessons from Torah that entered the hearts and minds of European Christian children at a time when these two faiths weren't yet on speaking terms with one another.

The truth we embrace in the Judeo-Christian modern societies of Europe and the New World today is that GOD is everyone's King. Women are, in fact, like Sarah, HIS princesses. And the men who are beloved and cherished by women become princes in GOD's Kingdom through the righteous deeds they achieve in the eyes of the women who love them. Treating a woman well is the only way for a man to achieve his title of prince in GOD's Kingdom. Men can't become princes unless someone loves them.

This might seem like a romanticized, gay view on Torah, heterosexual relationships and spirituality as a whole, but isn't that what you were really hoping for when you chose to read a book on a "fruit's" perspective? This is the most generous gay-Jewish perspective on a straight world that any fruit could tempt you with. And I give it to you freely despite how straights vilified gays and Christians vilified Jews throughout European history.

Torah describes Sarai as barren. Abram and Sarai live together like brother and sister {as though they were a gay man and his "beard"}. The struggle Abram and Sarai have in getting pregnant magnifies the childish relationship between them. Abram acts more like a weak, older brother figure, and Sarai acts like an overbearing, quarrelsome, younger sister. It's their personal bond that's barren. And Sarai's willingness to go so far as to encourage him to have sex outside their marriage in order to give Abram a son compares with Lot's wife's willingness to let Lot do anything he wants with their daughters.

Lot's wife is turned into a pillar of salt. Hagar suffers greatly under Abram's roof. But Sarah walks away with everything she ever wanted. What's the message?

Women, like Lot's wife, who do nothing to protect their children are punished. Women, like Hagar, who come between a man and his wife are punished. But women, like Sarah, who support their spouse in his/her external efforts are rewarded.

Male Progeny As Heir To Ourselves

The metaphor presented in the story of Abram and Sarai is 'family tree as a shadow of one's own Tree of knowledge.' Abram wants an heir very badly. He wants his Tree to blossom, bloom and produce fruit from his loins. He not only wants to be successful and influential out in the world; he wants to make a difference to future generations.

Abram is the first man in Genesis who has a personal and positive relationship with GOD, but it's obvious he wants GOD to love and respect him more than he wants to do that hard work for himself. And, of course, he wants GOD to bless his progeny as well.

Because Abram personifies the man who produces children before he's given birth in consciousness to his adult, inner child, {before his relationship with the forces within him are fully and consciously integrated} the heirs Abram produces will mirror aspects of himself that he isn't aware of. His sons will personify unconscious aspects of himself that

he'll literally have to deal with in projection because he isn't evolved enough to hold these issues figuratively within as a father to his adult, inner child.

Abram's feelings are entirely focused on his relationship to GOD. His love is only for GOD, and all his hopes come directly from GOD. His relationships to strangers is one of loyalty, probably because he's just as interested in expressing that loyalty to GOD. But his relationships with his wives feel empty and his relationships with his sons, shallow and cruel. Abram is mature enough to hold a relationship of trust and regard for strangers. But from within, his undeveloped relationship with himself will cause suffering for his family.

When a man tends to the needs and feelings of strangers, he develops high hopes that good things are in store for him. He sees himself as a good guy with a kind heart and a sound spirit.

Unlike the religious man, the spiritualist doesn't try to love GOD directly. He doesn't try to give HIM something he knows he hasn't got to give to himself. In the privacy of his own inner world, the spiritualist conceives an inner child with himself. This is the immaculate conception {no caps} he achieves psychologically for himself in an attempt at self-love. In this way, he brings hope into his life from the inside out. The heir this sort of man wants to produce in the outer world will first be conceived with his desire to see the fruits of his labors blossom in his world within.

The spiritualist learns to feel guilty for how he's treated himself in the past because he now sees both a perpetrator and a victim within. He realizes that because life happens from the inside out, he's responsible for building both his worlds, not just one. And since GOD can be found in both, the job of loving himself becomes harder than it first looks.

The GOD of the Jews doesn't exempt us from the God within. The GOD of the Christians doesn't exempt them from the God within. And the G O D of the Muslims doesn't exempt them from the God within. The problems today in the Abrahamic faiths aren't with their GOD/GOD/G O D, but with man's understanding of himself.

It's harder for the God within to do His work than it looks because so many people feel like a victim and blame others for being perpetrators. Many feel badly held by others, and use that as an excuse to justify transgressing. And that's not fair. They have a responsibility to hold their standards high regardless of how low others go.

The challenge for the 21st Century is for men to learn to feel guilty for holding themselves so poorly. Only then can they discover the enormous challenge GOD/GOD/G O D has in blessing and cursing each of us in the ways HE/HE/H E does. Our Creator is the Ultimate Initiator. But some turn HIS causes into a reason for doing as they please.

The man who's in touch with himself, who picks what's best for himself first, becomes a spiritual poet/ artist/philosopher without putting others down. He becomes the inner heir to his own fortune. He comes to believe he's free to be fruitful and multiply in certain ways that are natural to him. He comes to see that his good ideas will be multiplied as a gift to everyone around him because he can first instill them in his adult, inner child before he tries to make babies or fruit the world with a devotion to GOD he hasn't tested on himself.

Wisdom will come with time and experience. Your gift to this world will be multiplied slowly but surely. If you're a spiritualist, time will always be on your side. Aging will be a good thing, and tears of joy will be a celebration of the hope you've gleaned from putting one foot tentatively but consistently in front of the other.

You look like a pig to some people. You look like a dog to others. Some might see you as a rat, a cockroach or a scorpion. You may be perceived as a bottom feeder, a shrimp, a

clam or even as an oyster with pearls of wisdom inside. But you could look like a hero in your own eyes if you could do something brave and courageous each day to prove to yourself that you know where you're headed.

It takes guts to love yourself. When people judge you (and they do), they're unconsciously trying to decide to what degree you love yourself, and how you express your self-love before them. That's what they secretly want to know how to do, too. There are myriad ways of doing so. And GOD gave you tough and tender love to fashion like clay.

Walking is a process of moving in which you're constantly falling and off balance in a coordinated pattern. Walking mirrors the joy of engaging in the spiritual process. The "golden mean," on the other hand, is a fanciful ideal perpetrated on the masses to keep them from making any progress at all. Small, cautious, baby steps are far preferable to striving to stand perfectly still. Greek statues never go anywhere. They're frozen examples of the golden mean.

I'm trying to tell you not to strive to balance yourself perfectly without moving forward. Even those on a tightrope are trying to get somewhere. Inch forward. Don't stand still. Find a reason to take one tiny step in the direction best for you every day. Those who only strive for the golden mean are doomed to fall.

In Judaism, the heir to a good *idea* joined in holy matrimony to a good *feeling* produces a sound moral decision on which to take action. This is called a "MITZVAH," a "GOOD DEED." The heirs to MITZVOTH {plural} are multiplied millions of times as they cascade from each moment in time into the next.

But the tradition in Judaism in the past was always to do mitzvah for others, not for one's self. In this day and age a mitzvah can be personalized. You can permit yourself to do yourself a mitzvah by becoming the heir apparent to yourself.

But doing so is harder than it looks. Doing a mitzvah to yourself isn't the same as indulging yourself. It's often a very difficult decision that requires great self-discipline, even possibly heartache. Treating yourself wisely, lovingly and generously is much harder than you may have previously believed. That's why our Teacher gave us lessons in learning to do so through three departments in the school of life: head, heart and soul.

An Abram who's locked in a sterile relationship in his head isn't able to perform mitzvah for himself, on himself, or by himself. He's confused and disoriented about what he's doing here on Earth. If he isn't dropping the ball in one area of his life, he's dropping it in another. He's inconsistent. In some ways he's working from the inside out, but in others he's working from the outside in. He may entertain some ideas that he thinks are open-minded, but he can still be closed-hearted to himself in many other ways because he doesn't understand the spiritual process he's engaging.

That's sad. If it angers you that's because you're doing it, too. Seek sorrow. Feel sad for those who are failing. Don't get angry at them. "FORGIVE THEM FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO./FORGIVE THEM FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO." [Psalms: 22:18, Luke 23:34]

Many who can give of themselves through the world around them are afraid self-love is forbidden, selfish or misguided. They're afraid that loving themselves leads to moral perversion, typically embodied as homosexuality; an excess of cellulite; poverty; or addiction.

The heir {Ishmael} that Abram produces with Hagar won't replace psychological proof that Abram is an exalted father unto himself. It'll only turn him into one more father who wanted a son to prove to the world that he's a "real" man.

This character in Torah isn't ready to parent himself. Abram will be the "exalted" father of what Torah describes as a "WILD DONKEY OF A MAN." {Ishmael} [Genesis 16:12] Abram will eventually throw Ishmael out of his house. Yet, ironically, *wildness* within is precisely the psychological problem Abram has within himself that's mirrored in Ishmael's behavior. Later, Abraham, will become the father of "multitudes" for yet a second unfortunate son, Isaac, who Abraham will attempt to kill because he thinks it's for GOD's sake. "ISAAC" name means "LAUGHTER." Killing laughter in others in an attempt to get serious with yourself is no way to behave, either.

The story of Abraham and his two sons is filled with paradoxes when you have the courage to reshuffle your own spiritual priorities with curiosity, questions and a sincere desire to learn how to do better than those who came before you. Abraham is the father of all three of the Abrahamic faiths because he personifies the spiritual starting point, not the finish line.

Abram is impatient to become a father precisely because he's can't perform the mitzvah of conceiving his child first from within. He doesn't have enough love for himself before he makes the effort to bring another life into the world. *He's* the one who's barren, not Sarai. Abram cares more about getting it up; getting it in; and getting on with more important things out in the world. He never really learns to respect himself even though he claims to "love" GOD. He thinks he can give HIM something he can't even give himself. Abraham stands a great distance away in awe of GOD. He can't cozy up to HIM because he doesn't know how to become intimate with the one's he's with {himself}.

An Abraham will jump to attention when GOD asks something of him. He'll do what's asked of him without questioning why. He's like a Noah who's ahead of the curve in thinking about his own survival, but only because he can't feel good about others. Noah does what he's told, and Abraham does what he believes to be for the best, without either questioning himself or the moral horror in their sacrifices.

Some people profit from the Abrahams who enter into their life, but they usually also suffer because of them. An Abraham is a pillar of society who holds a position of strength out in the world, but who suffers a miserable home life. Those who know these Abrahams well can see right through them.

Parents who are nothing more than emotional adolescents themselves produce children to practice spiritual propriety on. But what they are really producing are Barbie dolls, Ken dolls or teddy bears that they hope will strengthen their moral position in society or comfort them personally in old age. They can't hold their kids in their heart like real people who they respect. They're usually little comfort to their children. And their children grow up to suffer the pangs of feeling made of plastic or stuffed with some sort of filling that makes them feel somewhat 3-D, but still unreal.

Such children spend a lifetime wondering why they feel artificial or unnatural. They don't really feel they're made of flesh and blood. They usually try to fill themselves with drugs and alcohol or they seek power over others because they were so objectified and spiritually misused as children. They strive to be real, but they may not yet really believe they're made quite as much in GOD's image as others claim to be.

The Spiritual Famine

Famine is a reoccurring theme in Torah. The famine in Canaan at the time of this story coincides with the hunger for self-knowledge we see in every age. The world is as starved for ways to find inner peace now as it was then. The hunger for food is a universal metaphor for man's appetite for self-respect and self-love.

When Abram and Sarai return to Canaan from Egypt after the famine, Abram's physical hunger has been satisfied, but his spiritual hunger has only been prodded. The three of them {Abram, Sarai and Hagar} are figuratively starved for solutions that will satisfy their individual desires. They team up in the *worst* of ways, but, because of their deep faith in GOD, they anticipate the *best* of results.

Modern man takes it for granted that "life is bowl of cherries," but that's really not the case. In truth, a man's body is the bowl. He has to learn how to fill himself with cherries from Trees of knowledge day-by-day. Not understanding this adage has produced many who discover late in life that they're really full of sour cherries. And that doesn't paint a pretty picture.

The forbidden fruit {guilt} of The Hebrew Testament, first consumed by Adam and Eve, will set in motion a hunger for spiritual satisfaction. This spiritual move from forbidden fruit to the Christian gift of bread {body} and wine {blood} isn't well understood by Abrahamic men. They choose to follow The Hebrew Testament, Christian Testament or Quran because they can't understand the spiritual progression from metaphor {Moses} to symbolism {Jesus} to simile {Mohammad}.

Modern man sees GOD, The Father, as an old man who's out of touch with life today. They see him as grumpy and annoyed at the world HE created. And then Semitism raises its head every 50 years so people can take out their dissatisfaction on our "Jewish" GOD. This is just enough time for the younger generation to blame the Jews for the parents GOD didn't give them.

Jesus's gift of Self-love triggered a new understanding of the purpose of guilt as a vehicle to wisdom of the heart. But His spiritual path from The Hebrew Testament through the Christian Testament has been fraught with spiritual malnutrition and dehydration that the whole world is still suffering to overcome today.

Modern man would love to walk in the light of his Creator. But he suffers from spiritual rickets and a host of other spiritual ailments that he isn't prepared to admit. If he doesn't see himself as a pig, dog, rat, cockroach, scorpion or bottom feeding scum, he sees himself as an *invalid*. He sees himself as *invalid*.

He needs help. He needs a spiritual doctor to heal him. But the only one who can diagnose his illness lies within.

The Attraction To Sorrow

Abram is attracted to Hagar. She personifies the feeling of being forsaken, a mystery we all want to penetrate. Those who have A.B.C. issues {abandonment, betrayal and conspiracy} are going to feel forsaken whether they *admit* it consciously or *admit* it into their life in another way. Abram's relationship with his mistress will be a bad match and an unlawful union. But it'll demonstrate normal, human emotions that call to us all for greater spiritual awareness of what we're attracting.

When Hagar becomes pregnant, Sarai picks a fight with her, and Hagar flees her masters' house. But GOD comes to Hagar while she's crying at the side of a spring, and HE

convinces her to return to Abram and Sarai with the promise of a son whose descendants will be too numerous to count. She does, and her son, Ishmael, grows up under Abram and Sarai's roof.

"ISHMAEL" means, "MAN OF G O D." "ISHMAEL IS A WILD MAN; HIS HAND IS AGAINST EVERY MAN, AND EVERY MAN'S HAND IS AGAINST HIM." [Genesis 16:12] In modern parlance, he's described as the "stubborn mule" who's descendants are going to end up spreading T H E W O R D of G O D.

Ishmael will grow up with three parental figures in his home. He's in a house where he has to worry about his survival because of the unhealthy, psychological dynamic between the adults in his life. He'll be perceived as illegitimate in everyone's eyes. And with a father who gives more attention to strangers than his own family, Ishmael will probably grow up believing that his feelings won't ever be fully acknowledged by anyone other than G O D.

Ishmael is the forefather of every jackass who looks for faith only in G O D because he didn't feel emotionally well held in his parents' home. Ishmael's dark secret is that there was never a man in his life who worried about him. His mother worried about him, but his father wasn't capable of that level of love. An Ishmael always has to worry about himself, and he doesn't know why, and that makes him as stubborn as a mule among his peers. His "exalted" biological father was really more like an emotional adolescent who wasn't mature enough to make babies. An Ishmael will have to outgrow his father.

Ishmael's forsaken mother, Hagar, is alone and misunderstood by everyone but GOD/G O D. She's a pitiful victim of circumstances. She isn't able to do much to help her son or his father, so she has no choice but to turn to her fuzzy understanding of GOD/G O D time and again to beg for HIS/H I S assistance.

But at least she isn't like Lot's wife who only looks back in yearning for the way it used to be. Hagar personifies a higher level of mother who knows her son is suffering because of the father she gave him. A Hagar is forlorn with good reason. Lot's wife cares more about outer place than inner space.

Hagar will receive GOD's/G O D's help in Torah, proving to her that she's not forsaken. But she won't understand HIS/H I S motives in putting her through so much suffering. The world of Muslim women today is way behind the psychological insights Jewish and Christian women have gleaned from Torah's insights into life. And the only way for Muslim women to enter the 21st Century spiritually will be to embrace the spiritual goals of America and Israel unequivocally.

The Fruits Of Sorrow

Ishmael is Abram's first biological heir. Ishmael's spiritual descendants will become the Muslim people. But the Ishmael within us all is universal. He's Torah's next generation in the maturation process of every adult male.

Every man is in a way an Ishmael, a wild child. He's part beast and part man. He's an animal on the way to becoming human. He's in the process of evolving, but he doesn't value guilt as much as anger and autonomy. He wants what he wants, and he doesn't care how he gets it. Like his father, he exalts himself for bowing before GOD/GOD/G O D, but the idea of bowing before himself is odious to him. He'd rather kiss the hand of kings and prostrate himself before "religious" leaders than smile at his own reflection.

Abraham is only consumed with external matters, but Ishmael will have a rich, but wild, inner world. He's the next branch of the inner family tree of man. A man reaches this

psychological level consciously only once he loves himself just enough to wonder why he worries so much when he's alone. An Ishmael is always worried about something.

Worry is the feeling that arises in everyone whose head and heart are weighed on the scale in his conscience, and they just don't balance. The child of parents with good intentions, who, for whatever reason, weren't able to give him the emotional security he needed in childhood, turns into an Ishmael; a man who has to worry about his own wellbeing at all times. He doesn't feel that he can depend on anyone to help him get through life.

This spiritual hunger goes from one generation to the next. But external wealth will never compensate for emotional poverty. A lack of trust in men for men is at the root of the problem of every Ishmael. If he doesn't earn his spiritual reward with hard work on himself, in himself, then his toys, appliances and devices aren't going to relieve him of his anxiety. They're only going to distract him from it.

The worrywart needs physical comforts plus emotional reassurances. His worry won't go away with religiosity or technology. It won't go away with more money or more material alliances out in the world. An Ishmael today will continue to create problems for himself, whether they're personal, public or political, until he identifies as the wild donkey of a man in this story.

The Defiant Hand Of Man

Ishmael actually had good reason to worry about his wellbeing under Abram and Sarai's roof. The three grownups in his life may have colluded to bring him into the world, but when Sarah gives birth to Isaac, Abram will throw Hagar and Ishmael out of the house for good.

An "illegitimate heir" is a description of a branch of the family tree that produces a variation of the original fruit. Ishmael is a later variety of fruit from a branch of The Tree of self-knowledge. He'll feel separated from the rest of the family tree in a way that's different from all others. He'll hold a feeling of alienation and concern that makes expression of his emotional makeup hard for him to reach.

Ishmael is a cultivated variety in GOD's/GOD's/G O D's garden. He's exciting because he's wild and different. He's a variation on the theme. But it isn't always easy being different, especially when you're not very different.

There's reason to be proud of differences, but Ishmael is the personification of shame in a tribal society. Being illegitimate makes him different, but hardly special. That which is *legitimate* is lawful, legal, justifiable and valid and approved of. Some may see that which is *illegitimate* as outside the law, altered or even in some way deformed.

In some ways, everyone feels unnatural, different, wrong and bad from time to time. Everyone feels as though he's eaten forbidden fruit and that he's disobeyed GOD. But everyone also feels as though he's bruised and misshapen, an exception to the rule; and his conscience allows him to live a bit outside the law for that reason.

Everyone, at some time, identifies with the forbidden fruit: feeling victimized and unjustly treated. Only with maturity do we begin to acknowledge the feelings of being strange, unsanctioned and illegitimate as originally emanating out from within.

The man of G O D reaches a level of self-awareness that separates his differences from other men with a special, spiritual significance intended by our Creator. He realizes that his circumstances were GOD/GOD/G O D given to test his loyalty to his father. An Ishmael

is in a position to learn how to exalt his spiritual differences without making others suffer for his process. But that will leave his past in disarray.

It's easy for us to use our conscience to condemn every man. It's much harder to use our conscience as a tool of self-repair. To see yourself in Ishmael will humble you. It'll force you to admit those ways in which you behave like a spiritual criminal, with loveless opinions of yourself that are heartless and go against the way you were taught to be. If you can see yourself spiritually mirrored in Ishmael you'll do far better convincing yourself to change your ways over time. You'll see that you're not so different from the rest of us, that *your* shame is like our shame. We're all like Adam and Eve, running away from the God within us, hiding amongst the other Trees in this garden.

It's no coincidence that Islam is the world's second largest religion. {Christianity: 33%, Islam 21%, Non-religious 16%, Hinduism 14%, Other 16% - including Judaism which accounts for about 0.2%}. The challenge to be like a Muslim who sees that G O D loves him generously is a challenge to us all. The Middle East is not only the home of spiritual illumination {wisdom} and spiritual heat {love}. It's the home to the bounty that comes from the purification {burn} of HIS/HIS?H I S ways.

It does no one any good to think one religion has a monopoly on GOD's/GOD's/G O D's good graces. We're all in this together. We all have to learn to share one GOD/GOD/G O D with one another from the inside out. Cursing gays and Jews is the occupation of the man of G O D who's more worried about his relationship to GOD/GOD than he'd like to admit.

The Promises Of Sorrow

The character of GOD in Torah weaves into Abraham's life several times, just as you or I might be inexplicably awed or inspired by GOD over our lifetime. The first call to Abram from GOD comes in Genesis 12 when GOD tells him to leave his country and that the world will be blessed through him. GOD asks him to give up one place on Earth to receive HIS gifts in another. But this sacrifice requires little faith on Abram's part. He only has to have enough faith that GOD will get him where he needs to go geographically. Abram doesn't have to be bothered with inner space. He only has to focus on outer place.

In Genesis 13, after Lot and Abram separate, GOD gives Abram all The Land he can see in every direction. This provides Abram with concrete remuneration for his troubles.

In Genesis 15, GOD marks the exact borders of The Land for his descendants. This concretizes the gift in the outer world, but it also curtails Abram's greed for more than he's legitimately earned. It presents him with evidence for a need for boundaries within as well as around him. Self-discipline becomes the inner boundary that indicates where Abram ends and GOD begins. Self-discipline is GOD's way of expressing to us the responsibility that comes with HIS limited generosity.

In Genesis 17, when Abram is 99 years old, GOD appears to him yet again, changing his name from Abram to Abraham and Sarai's name to Sarah. GOD tells Abraham that the rite of circumcision will be a physical sign of HIS Covenant with him. This is the sign of devotion GOD requests of Abraham that HE didn't ask of Abram.

To receive GOD's blessings, we don't have to change our mind. We don't need to agree with other people's opinions or follow anyone's lead. We need only recognize that our heart is going through a transformative process. It's our feelings that demonstrate who we really are and who we're becoming. As we strive each day, like Abram, to make a new

name for ourselves, we discover the bounty of life, as well as new boundaries from within. We become an Abraham who discovers he's no longer the man {Abram} he used to be.

GOD commands Abraham to circumcise his son Ishmael and his slaves. Ishmael is 13 years old at the time. GOD tells Abraham, "AS FOR YOU, YOU MUST KEEP MY COVENANT, YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS AFTER YOU FOR THE GENERATIONS TO COME. THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS AFTER YOU, THE COVENANT YOU ARE TO KEEP: EVERY MALE AMONG YOU SHALL BE CIRCUMCISED." {Genesis 17}

Sarah is the one who circumcises Abraham when he's 99 years old. According to the Islamic tradition there's no fixed age for Muslim circumcision. It varies depending on family, regional preferences, culture and country. Circumcision among Muslims can take place as soon as the first week of life or as late as puberty. Circumcision for Muslims is a sign of purity. It's a sign of their Covenant with A L L A H.

Jews circumcise their sons on the first day after the first week of life. This is a sign of illumination. It's the outward sign of our Covenant with GOD. Because Christians are linked to Torah through Jesus, they aren't commanded to circumcise their sons as a sign of GOD's covenant with them. They've been spiritually guided to a New Covenant through baptism, a brief submersion in holy water, water that's been blessed by a member of the clergy. But if a Christian circumcises his son, it's a sign of GOD's warmth, not illumination or burn.

The rite of circumcision is a trial by fire for the body. It's the physical shock to the system of male Jews that holds a spiritual meaning that wakes us up to our Covenant with GOD, whether we consciously know it at the time, or not. Our Covenant with GOD and HIS plan begins after one week of life. The contrast between the first week of life and every week thereafter is a subtlety of difference that no man can consciously record or appreciate. But I can tell you this: your fatal flaw was formed in your first week of life.

Each of the Abrahamic faiths is given a different awareness of GOD/GOD/G O D through its unique relationship with HIM/HIM/H I M. It's not each other's faith we must share, but our appreciation of our faith in ourselves that comes to us through respecting all others. It's by being proud of what GOD/GOD/G O D gave each of us that makes it possible for us to see how HIS/HIS/H I S gifts stand one beside the other.

More Blessings And Curses

In Genesis 17, when GOD comes to Abraham, HE compliments him and tells him he and Sarah are going to have a baby. First Abraham laughs at such a preposterous idea at their age, and then he blesses Ishmael saying to GOD, "OH, THAT ISHMAEL MIGHT LIVE BEFORE YOU."

Abraham's relationship to his son Ishmael will never be abandoned or diminished, but Abraham clearly needs GOD's help to solidify his relationship with Ishmael. Abraham obviously hasn't done a good job of building that relationship on his own.

The verb "to bless" literally means, "to approve." Abraham asks GOD to bless Ishmael because Abraham can't approve of himself, not Ishmael. He, Abraham, isn't worried that Ishmael has, in some way, let him down. He's afraid that he's let Ishmael down by bringing a son into this world without giving him the legitimacy he deserves.

Needless to say, GOD approved of Ishmael or HE wouldn't have allowed him to be born. So it's not really Ishmael's legitimacy that's in question. It's Abraham's poor conduct and guilt toward Ishmael that spurs Abraham to ask GOD to bless Ishmael.

Abraham asks GOD to bless his son one moment, but then he throws Hagar and Ishmael out of his house the next. Abraham is confused. He's emotionally torn in two, and each half of his heart guides him at different points in time. The problem with having children from more than one marriage or successive relationships is difficult to manage since a man may be emotionally influenced by his wives in ways that may appear irrational and capricious when viewed from the outside. Abraham may think he knows how he feels, but when feelings motivate you to do bad things to family members, you're really not in control of your emotions. Your heart is torn, even if it hasn't been broken.

Once GOD gives a man permission to feel his embarrassment, shame and humiliation, he becomes transparent to a part of his self in the privacy of his own head, heart and soul. Only then can he commit to transcending guilt by witnessing his growing modesty, humility and faith in himself, day-by-day. This makes it possible for a father to treat all his children as equals. Only then can he treat people of other faiths equally.

Ishmael: The Man Of God Within

Ishmael can't possibly feel that his father approves of him because of the timing of Abraham's blessing. Ishmael may be 13 years old when Isaac is born, but Ishmael is like any brother who has covetous feelings when another child enters the family. Ishmael has ample reason to worry about his future and whether he feels beloved enough by the adults in his life. Sarah may be a princess in GOD's eyes, but she's still quarrelsome and jealous of Hagar and Ishmael. Once she realizes she's gotten what she wanted from GOD, she says to Abraham, "GET RID OF THAT SLAVE WOMAN AND HER SON, FOR THAT WOMAN'S SON WILL NEVER SHARE IN THE INHERITANCE WITH MY SON ISAAC." And Abraham complies with her request despite just have blessed Ishmael before GOD. "THE MATTER DISTRESSED ABRAHAM GREATLY BECAUSE IT CONCERNED HIS SON. BUT GOD SAID TO HIM, 'DO NOT BE SO DISTRESSED ABOUT THE BOY AND YOUR SLAVE WOMAN. LISTEN TO WHATEVER SARAH TELLS YOU BECAUSE IT IS THROUGH ISAAC THAT YOUR OFFSPRING WILL BE RECKONED. I WILL MAKE THE SON OF THE SLAVE INTO A NATION ALSO BECAUSE HE IS YOUR OFFSPRING.'" [Genesis 21:10-13]

Hagar and Ishmael find themselves in the wilderness on the brink of death. Hagar separates herself from Ishmael because she doesn't have the heart to watch him die of thirst. An angel directs her to a well; mother and child are saved; and GOD reiterates the promise HE gave to Hagar that Ishmael will be the forerunner to a great nation. [Genesis 21]

Hunger for *knowledge* led Adam and Eve to pick the forbidden fruit. But the thirst for *love* is what's at stake here. Both Hagar and Ishmael are emotionally parched. Hence the reason for the well the angel directs her to. Abraham has rejected her twice now, and there's no one else in the tribe to quench her thirst for deliverance, security and respect.

Hagar left herself physically and emotionally vulnerable to Abraham and Sarah's irrational and fluctuating feelings. She painted herself into a corner by having a baby out of wedlock. Women today are warned in this story to protect themselves and their children from boyfriends who don't have the wellbeing of the children they create at heart. Abraham is just such a cad. He's Torah's depiction of the deeply disturbed dad.

The emotional scars of the illegitimate son whose father has abandoned him and his mother who should have been treated much better will echo into future generations right up to the present.

The prophecy at Ishmael's birth does come true: his descendants will struggle with everyone else on Earth. But Ishmael personifies every man with a chip on his shoulder at what he's being put through because his parents didn't provide an emotionally safe home for him to grow up in. An Ishmael will continually have reasons to worry about his fate throughout his life. He'll behave like a wild and stubborn ass until he develops the self-love needed to compensate for the love he didn't witness at home growing up.

It's not enough for a man of G O D to have faith in G O D. It's not enough that G O D is generous to him. Man's *hunger* can be sated with bread. But his *thirst* for unconditional love must be quenched. He must find a way to approve of *himself* if his mother is so forlorn that she has to depend on G O D to make up for her mistaken choices. And if his father behaves irrationally because his heart was torn in two, an Ishmael has his work cut out for him.

A man of G O D will worry if he doesn't feel he can put his faith in others, especially those outside his immediate tribal alliances. The descendants of Ishmael don't have to prove that G O D loves them; they have to prove that they're worthy of their own love. Sunnis and Shiites; Protestants and Catholics; orthodox Jews and reformed Jews – they all have to prove to themselves that G O D/GOD/GOD loves them. And that isn't going to be easy if they don't love themselves.

Worry As A Spiritual Axiom Of Any Faith

Ishmael and Isaac are half-brothers; they share the same father, but different mothers. From a psychological point of view, Abraham has been given two children who personify two halves of himself he isn't insightful enough to identify with. GOD has projected these parts of himself onto his sons so that Abraham will try to work out his issues externally as best he can. His first child {Ishmael} brings him in touch with his need to *be* loved; his second {Isaac}, with his need *to* love. Abraham reacts to both challenges with disrespect and cruelty. Love is something Abraham can only express to members of his tribe *outside* his family.

Heretofore, Jews identified only as the descendants of Isaac, and Muslims only as the descendants of Ishmael. But when we personalize Scripture from the forbidden fruit's perspective, we can identify with both characters as two halves of our own spiritual challenge.

Hunger for the meat of the fruit {wisdom} isn't enough. We also thirst for the juice of the fruit {love}. And this then becomes the spiritual motivation to bite into ourselves deeper to get down to the core.

If we use Ishmael and Isaac as emotional signposts, they signify a process that's crucial to us all. Ishmael personifies worry. Those who don't know love will worry about how to get it. Worry must be expressed in relation to the three primary, negative feelings. See below:

1. **Anger**
2. **Worry**
3. **Fear**
4. **Sorrow**

Red
Orange
Yellow
Blue

The emotional mix of anger {red} and fear {fear} produces the feeling of worry {orange}. The emotional mix of all our feelings produces the rainbow of feelings we all go through when we refuse to embrace the guilt {black} that's motivating us to learn about self-love {white}.

Guilt	Black
1. Anger	Red
2. Worry	Orange
3. Fear	Yellow
4. Green	Jealousy/envy
5. Sorrow	Blue
6. Indigo	Awe
7. Violet	Joy
Love	White

You can't get out of the negativity of your heart any more than you can pretend to be colorblind. You can only go further into your own negativity to discover what this inner rainbow means to you and how to derive hope from it. Self-love is the result of the mastery of guilt and the joy {violet} that will come from the modesty, humility and grace in having done so.

The name "ISAAC" means "LAUGHTER," and all those who are gifts from GOD will become knowledgeable of themselves and will have good reasons to laugh. But knowledge is far from enough in life. It's the pursuit of wisdom {mistakes made and atoned for} that we're here to attain.

Happiness is greatly overrated. *Happiness* only comes from the outside in. It's the pursuit of *tranquility* that comes from the inside out. It's this inner tranquility that leads to outer happiness. Happiness will never lead you to tranquility. The kind of laughter personified by Isaac in Torah should be seen as the wisdom inherent in *tranquility*, not the cheap laughs that come with *frivolity*.

An Isaac has invested himself in getting approval, acceptance and security from the world around him. Loving others wisely has brought him great gifts, but at a cost. He doesn't know how to love himself. The self-hating Isaac is a classic Jewish stereotype. He's a talking head. And he's not just the stereotypic Jew we saw in the past. He may even be the Jew in you.

If Jews could only see that they have an inner Ishmael, and Muslims, that they have an inner Isaac, their faith based differences would unlock secrets of personal importance to them both. If they could transcend their prejudices from within, they'd discover that each holds a piece of the spiritual puzzle the other needs for redemption.

A "half-brother" in Torah personifies a psychological aspect of the self that's only half-seen. Every character in Torah who's in relationship to a half-brother implies a head that's only half way through breaking through a projection of his heart. This creates ambivalence. Ambivalence for our half-brother mirrors an attitude of arrogance that needs to be explored psychologically to understand how it plays out sociologically.

Just after Isaac is weaned, these two half-brothers are separated, so they can never realize how crucial their individual emotional challenge is to the other. Each comes to the challenge of loving their father from the opposite direction. Ishmael grows up to be angry at him; Isaac grows up to be afraid of him. That makes both of them sad, often without conscious awareness of what triggered that feeling.

Isaac is yellow. He's afraid of Abraham because Abraham tried to kill him. Ishmael is red. He's angry at Abraham because Abraham threw him and his mother out of his house to die. Ishmael is also orange. He's worried about how he's going to survive on his own. But both Ishmael and Isaac are blue because neither was every able to build a real rapport with Abraham. And it's this sorrow that we need to help today's Ishmaels {Muslims} and Isaacs {Jews} come to the peace table.

So far, it's only gay-Muslims and gay-Jews who have succeeded in doing so. Only we aren't afraid of sharing our hunger and thirst candidly with one another. We know how blue our fathers really are. And we know how to bridge that rainbow to arrive at the other side where the *skies* are blue, not us.

Ishmael becomes quarrelsome, ironically, like Sarai. Isaac becomes forlorn, ironically, like Hagar. Ishmael wants what Sarah has given Isaac that Ishmael has to work out in himself: legitimacy. Isaac wants what Hagar has given Ishmael that Isaac has to work out in himself: illegitimacy.

The psychological dynamic of half-brothers will reach a crescendo in the story of Joseph when ten half-brothers gang up on one. Then the great-grandsons of Abraham will act out the issues that Abraham wasn't mature enough to look at in himself. This issue will spread into family dynamics over the next 400 years until it overflows into The Book of Exodus and spreads out of Egypt with the national characteristics that will be typified as Egyptian against Israelite. These characteristics will then be used to portray the reaction of master against slave that we've seen repeated throughout history.

What isn't psychologically healed within the individual becomes psychically contagious, and spreads out into mass movements. There are no coincidences in the relationships we're left with when our relationship with ourselves isn't in order.

Today, we live in a world where there are 100 Ishmaels for every Isaac. We live under Jacob's roof with 100 half-brothers scheming against every Joseph. Do you really think that this story isn't going to play out over time with plagues? Egypt has a great role to play in the future of Israel. But we're all waiting to see what it is.

With enough insight into yourself, you can explain why your life looks as it does, and then do something about it. This is all part of GOD's design, a spiritual dis-ease that each of us is healing from within day-by-day. If not, you're only going to get sicker.

As yet, we're unable to talk about this spiritual process because of our lack of appreciation of the depth of the main metaphor of Moses. If you can't take the first story in The Hebrew Testament personally, you won't be able to do the same with the Christian Testament or Quran. And the results will have to become more and more evident by what you read in the newspapers, instead. But what will happen when the plague comes to you?

Worry: The Universal Axiom Of The Abrahamic Faiths

Jews, Christians and Muslim have to increase their capacity to love themselves and one another to love our GOD/GOD/G O D. Our Creator created each man equally emotionally capable of developing loving feelings for himself. We all have the same capacity to love

ourselves and to bestow that love on those around us and our Creator. What differs in each individual is the desire to do so. In this day-and-age, it's gay men who personify the ability for every man to learn to love one special guy more than all the others. But, this, too, is still a projection.

In HIS infinite wisdom, GOD wants us to help heal one another, but HE's given each of the Abrahamic faiths parts of HIS cure. Only once our Western Abrahamic faiths understand this spiritual challenge can we go to our Eastern philosophic brothers in Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism to make sense of those philosophic pieces of HIS puzzle that HE didn't sign HIS name to.

What we in the West have inflicted on one another is a lack of interest in one another's belief systems. Torah eludes to this by separating Ishmael and Isaac because of circumstances beyond their control. Islam and Judaism have also been spiritually separated from one another by GOD/GOD/G O D because of spiritual circumstances beyond our control.

Neither faith has much spiritual interest in the other at this time in history. If not for gay-Jews, gay-Christians and gay-Muslims whose thirst for male love supersedes the dogmas of each faith, it's doubtful there will ever be peace on Earth with straight men running this world the way they're doing now.

Sarah, Hagar and Mary are the three mothers of the Abrahamic faiths, making us all half-brothers and half-sisters to one another. Jews share the same father {Abraham} with Muslims. Jews share the same Father {GOD} with Christians. But until a man becomes a father to his own adult, inner child, the concept of parenting won't be internalized and purified. The spiritual apathy and political animosity we see in straight men in the Abrahamic faiths will change only as they learn to internalize their faith through faith in themselves.

Learning to express brotherhood begins with love for your half-brother. If you're Christian, you can't love our Father's Son {Jesus} if you can't love our Abrahamic father's son {Ishmael}. If you're Jewish, you can't love our Abrahamic father's son {Ishmael} if you can't love our Father's Son {Jesus}, a man who was no less Jewish than the rest of us. And if you're Muslim, you can't love our Abrahamic father's son {Ishmael} if you can't love yourself.

What's so encouraging today is to see the profound interest of many Christians in Judaism. In many ways, Christians are starved for understand of the core of their faith, while many modern Jews find themselves with little appetite for it. This schism is played out politically in America with the vast differences in beliefs between Democrats and Republicans. The Republicans are hungry for Judaism from a religious perspective, while the Democrats are only thirsty for expressing Christ's love from a secular perspective. Until love is internalized in Judeo-Christian Americans through self-love, we're going to continue to see this misunderstanding played out politically to the detriment of the poor and disenfranchised.

And, until Jews and Muslims internalize the concept of "father" and heal from the age old, psychological issues that separated Ishmael and Isaac, the Muslims will continue to look for love from G O D, finding only more grief and heartache at their own hands. And Jews will continue to look for love around them from the world, and find their quest elusive and disappointing.

Ishmael and Isaac are indifferent to one another when they meet at the grave of Abraham in Torah. “HIS SONS ISAAC AND ISHMAEL BURIED HIM IN THE CAVE OF MACHPELAH NEAR MAMRE, IN THE FIELD OF EPHRON SON OF ZOHAR THE TITTITEE.” [Genesis 25:9]

All that’s mentioned in Torah is where it happened, not how it felt. Ishmael and Isaac stood side by side without standing together. They couldn’t share their feelings with one another because each had been intimidated and traumatized by their father, although each at a different time and in a different way. And their posttraumatic, spiritual stress continues in us to this day.

Anger (red); worry {orange}; fear {yellow}; green {jealousy}; sorrow {blue} will only take you back to embarrassment, shame and humiliation {black}. Guilt won’t move you in the direction of eternal as love {white}. If you think love lasts forever, you’re not thinking straight. You’re thinking gay. Only gays believe in fairy tale endings with the prince getting the one he loves. Only the gays have moved past sorrow {blue} through awe {indigo} to gay love {lavender} and joy {violet}. If you want to get learn to pray {ultraviolet} you’d better get onboard our gay agenda.

Ishmael and Isaac really suffer the same emotional fate: ambivalence to themselves that their father inadvertently taught them, that they then act out on one another. Spiritually, they’re both devoted to GOD/G O D. But they can’t give HIM something they can’t give themselves. The source of their ambivalence is Abraham, not eternal love. What they don’t realize at Abraham’s gravesite is that they need each other to heal from what he did to them.

Ishmael is the exotic branch of the family that’s was grafted onto The Tree of knowledge with Hagar because of Abram’s yearning to blossom before his time. Isaac is the branch of the family who yearns to love himself despite GOD’s later edict to love everyone in the whole world. But the two of them share the same spiritual trunk and roots.

Everyone worries {Ishmael}. And everyone knows that sorrow and disappointment {Hagar} is the mother of all worries. This is what makes each of us so forlorn. To turn from armament to argument, we first need to uncover the half-brother in ourselves. This, the characters of Ishmael and Isaac can’t do in this story of Torah. They’re both psychologically too immature to understand the spiritual concept at the root of their apathy toward one another. It will have to be addressed by their progeny in Torah and The Quran, and in the real world over time.

When Abram invites the strangers into his home a few days after his circumcision, and they tell Sarai she’ll bear a child at her advanced age, “SARAI LAUGHED WITH HERSELF.” [Genesis 18:12] Abram was 75 and Sarai was 65 when they left Haran. Abraham was 99 and Sarah was 89 when the promise of having a child together comes true. {It’s very possible her laughter may have been more out of scorn than joy, since the possibility of giving birth at the age of 90 was next to nil.}

When Sarah gives birth to Isaac, she names him laughter, surely more out of relief, saying, “GOD HAS MADE ME LAUGH, AND ALL WHO HEAR WILL LAUGH WITH ME.” [Genesis 21:6] GOD takes what was, at first, her scornful laughter and turns it into joyful laugh. This why HE’s a GOD we can learn to love. This is why love has to be proved to us by the God within over long periods of time.

Laughter moves us along in the continuum from scorn to joy. And, as we find ourselves laughing with more positive regard for ourselves, laughter brings hope along with it. Sarah personifies this continuum of hope through laughter. Everyone who begins quarrelsome

{Sarai} and becomes regal {Sarah} give us reason to laugh joyfully. And when people see the progress others make in discovering this principle, it leaves them hopeful that it could happen for them, too.

But we, who come from the Judeo-Christian cultures, are more like the character of Ishmael than we might like to admit. We're men of GOD who only want to be like children to GOD. We want to be included in HIS family, but we don't want to have to grow up to do so. We don't want to cross over from childhood to adulthood. We're afraid GOD might abandon us for acting in a juvenile manner if we act out immaturely.

If you don't unlock the meaning of The Creation Story and then apply its message to the subsequent three stories that make up the psychological foundation of Torah, you can't truly progress to see yourself in all of the other characters of Genesis. The man who can't see he's the personification of Adam, Cain and Noah certainly won't be able to see the Lot, Abram, Ishmael and Isaac in the spiritual development of his conscience.

Man has never lacked the courage to pick forbidden fruit. He simply lacks the spiritual appetite to eat its core, seeds and all. Most men are irritating, unaware, spiritual adolescents who expect more from others than they give. One moment they give us the impression they're mature human beings; the next, they act like recalcitrant children, or worse: wild animals. Abraham personifies the adult at this early point of self-awareness. He can be exasperating and lovable all at the same time.

With Isaac's impending birth Abraham is convinced by Sarah to abandon Hagar and Ishmael. The "father of multitudes" and "princess" have no further use for the "forsaken" and "worried." Ishmael and Hagar's physical survival is now at stake. Isaac's birth has brought up feelings of jealousy and envy in Sarah. She wants to protect her baby even before he's born from every possible source of danger.

Sarah is afraid Ishmael will want what Isaac will get. She's afraid Hagar will want what *her* descendants will get. And this gives every Ishmael and Hagar today the courage to ask themselves an important spiritual question with an emotional twist that hasn't been asked before. "Why not me?" This is the question every Muslim mother and child must ask A L L A H honestly and with curiosity rather than with enmity and blame.

It's never been about The Land of milk and honey. Muslims don't want to take that away from the Jews. It's about the feeling of illegitimacy that Muslims have refused to explore directly with themselves before A L L A H. Once they learn to accept the answer to the question, "Why not me?" they'll come to appreciate G O D's D E S I G N for them, GOD's DESIGN for the Christians and GOD's DESIGN for the Jews.

GOD's/GOD's/G O D's reason for creating both sons of Abraham can only be wise, loving and generous. We wouldn't expect less from G O D/GOD/GOD than bringing us human predicaments that will force us to worry about H I S/HIS/HIS intentions until we solve our problems in ways that HE'll/HE'll/H E'll approve of. HIS/HIS/H I S wisdom, love and generosity will always drive us deeper within to look for greater ways of creating peace on Earth for all.

The sibling rivalry that's played out in the Middle East today is based on a misunderstanding that Ishmael and Isaac had no idea needed to be dealt with at the time this story takes place. To excuse them because they're only characters in a book does a disservice to Torah as THE WORD of GOD.

When Torah was literally all one WORD, THEWORDOFGOD was the only clue to HIS connection with humanity. To build Christianity and Islam upon the foundation of THE

WORD of GOD brings space for HIS middle name {GOD} and last name {G O D} into being. You may be able to see the difference in HIS/HIS/H I S name made manifest in the world around you, but you can't hear these differences from within or when spoken aloud.

You can't build a second story of love and a third story of generosity of spirit upon a ground floor that you denounce with hate. You're only really saying that you hate GOD's design, and although HE can hear the difference in what you say and what you mean, you need to learn to do so, too.

Judaism doesn't denounce our neighbors above us and Israel doesn't denounce her neighbors around her. Jews understand that it was GOD's will to create these other two spiritual stories upon the foundation of wisdom HE gave us.

Our Christian younger brothers are beginning to see that love without wisdom produces nothing more than idol worship. And our younger Muslim brothers will someday spread the message that A L L A H is so generous that they don't have to continue to look like hypocrites and radical murderers who call themselves martyrs in this world of faiths and philosophies where all are equal.

By personalizing Torah, each of us in the Abrahamic faiths can now imply that we must work out our Creator's designs for ourselves, using what we've learned from *involving* and *evolving* our Jewish head, Christian heart and Islamic soul. You can't contemplate your Hindu navel or meditate on leaving your Buddhist body behind until you know what it is you've been given, and how you were created in HIS image.

The problem Islam has with sexual latitude in the Western world is never going to go away. People like sex as much as they like electricity and running water. They're not going to give any of it up. If you don't like how other people express the sexual side of themselves, take your complaint to GOD/GOD/G O D directly. HE created you in HIS image, and HE gave you the liberty to express the relationship between your penis and heart any way you like, so long as you don't do so violently or with children. In other words, *your* sexuality is up for question, not *mine*.

Israel is more than just a small strip of Land today's Ishmaels and Isaacs are fighting over. It's a message in metaphor from GOD that can, in the end, bring us greater spiritual grounding and hope. FREEDOM, LIBERTY and E M A N C I P A T I O N for everyone is a possibility if you start with yourself.

Since GOD promised only one Land in the world, and HE promised it to the descendants of Abraham through Isaac, the issue isn't which son will inherit The Land. We all already know the outcome of that issue based on GOD's design as described in the first 25 chapters of Genesis. The issue is how Israel will play a pivotal part in the unfolding of GOD's/GOD's/G O D's entire plan through SCRIPTURE/SCRIPTURE/S C R I P T U R E.

The Christians and Muslims have been fighting for centuries over something that was never theirs. They called it Crusades and Jihads. The Christians finally recognized that they lost their war with the Jews because they didn't have moral standing before GOD. The Muslims are now guests at our table in Israel, most of whom are treating us as unwanted hosts. And the longer they hold that attitude, the worse things are getting for Muslims throughout the Middle East. There's no way G O D will allow them to take what they want from their half-brother just because they want it. Israeli Muslims have a spiritual debt to their society. And they'd better start to pay it back with evidence that sings praises for Israel around the world!

GOD's Chosen People aren't perfect. GOD chose one from among us who was {Jesus}, but that doesn't mean the rest of us are gods or girls. We're still HIS sons even if Jesus is HIS only Son. GOD's design is a moral plan to raise all of us out of our animal instincts by acknowledging our humanity before one another. And the Jewish People have been a part of that process twice as long as Muslims and one-third longer than Christians.

The fact that the Christians couldn't see that until the 20th Century doesn't mean that they haven't learned that lesson by heart. The fact the Muslims still can't see it does nothing to change HIS/HIS/H I S design to emancipate everyone's soul. HIS/HIS/H I S design will include all of Israel as our Jewish homeland with all of Jerusalem as our Capital. Those who want to deny that part of H I S designs are free to become atheists and agnostics {like that will help...}. But spiritualists the world over will acquiesce to HIS/HIS/H I S designs from generation to generation as they learn how to appreciate themselves.

Half-hearted solutions between half-brothers {Jews and Muslims through our spiritual father, Abraham} and half-hearted solutions between adopted brothers { Christians through our Father, GOD} will never work. Each must follow the apple from his own Tree through his spiritual system to settle the score with GOD/GOD/G O D by himself. We each have to make peace with one Creator from the inside out before we're going to see more in the way of progress around us.

The real issue that underlies the geographic boundaries of Israel is the emotional boundaries between the descendants of Ishmael and Isaac, how they'll individually deal with millennia of historically unresolved feelings about their fathers and forefathers. As the descendants of one father {Abraham} who emotionally abused both his sons {Ishmael and Isaac} it's no surprise that the people of the Middle East are as far from happy as they are, and as close to tranquil as they could possibly be under today's circumstances. The fact that the Jews are far more contented with the way things are now than the Muslims only makes the obvious more obvious.

The Muslimification of Europe is making it increasingly unpleasant for the Jews to live on that continent. Once again, Europeans are going in the direction of ridding themselves of Jews, albeit this time without gas chambers. They're using voluntary emigration through fear tactics to get the Jews out of their societies. And the results are stunningly blatant and unattractive. Let's see what European Christians and Middle Eastern Muslims will be able to do without us!

The physical inclusion of Muslims on the European continent, without the inclusion of them in the hearts of Christians, sets a dangerous precedence for civil unrest. Fortunately, that's not what's happening in America. Here Jews are warmly embraced by a pluralistic nation that proudly remembers having stopped anti-Semitism in Europe, something Europeans weren't able to do for themselves in the last century and are now having to struggle with once again.

In America we have racial, not religious, problems. Some in America still look on blacks like Europeans once looked on Jews. Europeans marginalized Jews because they were afraid of the thoughts in their head. We marginalized blacks because we were afraid of the darkness in our soul. Muslims today remind us all in the secular societies we now live in, in the Western world that there's a soul in every man that needs attention. And so far as I can see, these souls are all black. There's no rainbow running through any of them.

There's a God within us, and we're not yet encouraging ourselves to do our own WORK/WORK/W O R K together. If you want hope, you'd better earn it. Do you really expect it to be given to you?

Worry Leads To Coveting

Jealousy is an expression of a desire for another man's spiritual container: his body. Although men may be jealous of one other, they know better than to show it overtly outside the well-established confines of the business and sports worlds. Monetary rewards for competing with other men through business and sports are winning social formulas around the world, acceptable because they deal with covetous feelings constructively. Sexual rewards for competing with other men isn't yet in vogue.

Envy, however, is a desire for another man's spiritual contents: the wisdom, love and generosity he has for himself, and can express for others. It's envy that men suffer more from than jealousy. Straight women may be stereotypically known to be jealous of one another's containers, but straight men are secretly envious of their brothers' contents. Men are more afraid GOD will judge them for what they're missing *inside* than *out*.

After all, GOD gave each man the container he was given. He didn't have any choice in the matter. And there's only so much you can do with what you were given. But how you fill that container is entirely in your hands. Therefore, straight men aren't usually as jealous of one another's containers as they are envious of their contents.

Today, because of the expanding cultural influences of gay men, straight men have begun to become worried about their jealousies among one another. Jealousy, thy name is man. Envy, thy name is man. Vanity: thy name is man. And we'll just have to let everyone fight over who's the most conceited. (But I can assure you, *I* will win...)

Militant Muslims are bent on conquering the world because they're envious of what Jewish and Christian men have accomplished spiritually in our Creator's eyes. Militant Muslims don't yet want to open their soul to their own gifts, for fear they'll find less inside than their older, spiritual brothers. They have "size" concerns. {Welcome to the club...}

There's no way Ishmael could have survived the family dynamics he was born into without coming out of that setup emotionally damaged, given the three "adults" who didn't have a clue how to behave normally toward him. He's Torah's first victim of a love triangle, and he wasn't even a part of it. He was the result of it.

GOD set Ishmael up with a father who had no man on Earth to envy. {Abraham was the most righteous man in his time. He had no reason to envy anyone his relationship with GOD.} Ishmael had a sad mother {Hagar} and a woman who was the vindictive head of his family household {Sarah}. Not only was tribal law against Ishmael; he must have concluded that GOD in heaven was colluding with them against his better interests. Ishmael doesn't just personify every man of GOD. He personifies the alienated man of GOD. And this is why Muslims, who believe in one G O D, and Jews who believe in one GOD are both so alienated from one another.

Ishmael personifies the incarnation of the Adam of his day. Ishmael felt Adam's loneliness and estrangement many generations later. And an Ishmael today personifies forbidden fruit consumed; the man who knows the A.B.C.'s of life: abandonment, betrayal and a "religious" family that's conspired against him.

Ishmael personifies the color orange: worry. Yet every generous thought that combats worry leads to a charitable disposition. And a generous heart leads to a bountiful lifestyle.

But only a man who understands generosity from his soul, who can weigh his thoughts against his feelings, will be able to lead others to benevolent outcomes when it comes to the deeper concern for the need of expression. Only the soulful understand what the hope of the rainbow says about man.

None of us can achieve awareness of our own love of GOD/GOD/G O D without coming to love our container just because it holds our contents. Whether the cherries inside us are sweet or sour, the bowl is important to us because it was the only gift we got. The cherries we've had to pick ourselves.

None of us can achieve an appreciation of Christianity without acknowledging Jesus's contribution of spiritual bread {body/container} and wine {blood/contents}. To know that you're a living symbol of GOD's love, you've got to see your flesh as a spiritual oven, and what's inside you as the flame. This idea is called: spiritual symbolism; not metaphor. This goes beyond anything stated in Torah.

Raw knowledge leads to embarrassment, shame and humiliation if you don't learn to appreciate what you know about the world around you by applying that knowledge to yourself. But what is *cooked* knowledge? What does it mean to consume stewed fruit?

The answer to this question can't be gleaned from metaphor alone. Torah can't solve this problem. It takes The Gospels to do so. It takes an understanding of the oven/flame symbolism of man as a container being slowly filled with spiritual contents. That's not the same as the metaphor of man as a Tree of knowledge. The question of stewed fruit involves self-knowledge prepared a different way.

If the illumination of GOD's light teaches us to know HIM, then the heat of that light teaches us to love Him. This makes Christianity so very different a spiritual system from Judaism. It helps us imagine why GOD needed to teach us how to understand HIM another way.

The idea that GOD would have a Son makes it possible for the average man to feel good about HIM as a Father. It makes it possible to understand why ancient Jews needed to explain the illumination that comes from fire on the one hand, as well as the warmth emitted by the flame on the other. {And I haven't even begun to speak about the purification {burn} of the flame that will explain H I S need to remind us of eternal losses, not just heavenly gains.}

"LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." [Leviticus 19:18] "LOVE THE STRANGER AS YOURSELF." [Leviticus 19:34] Most ancient Jews before Jesus probably got as far as "LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR," got stuck, turned around and claimed it couldn't be done. Only after a thousand years of almost uninterrupted control of Israel did they probably realize they hadn't finished the sentence, "AS YOURSELF."

But, it's taken two millennia since Jesus for Jews who were so fed up with Christians quoting Him, restating what had already been stated in Torah (and still killing Jews with glee), that they didn't move on to loving strangers. If Jewish and Christian men can't love their neighbor because they can't love themselves, what chance does a stranger have in their midst?

Today, there are strangers among all three of the Abraham faiths: gay men. And "religious" Jews, Christians and Muslims are discovering that it isn't only hard to love their neighbor; it isn't only hard to love themselves; it's hard to love queer people, as well.

The students in the school of life get smarter. The classes get harder. But the motives of the TEACHER/TEACHER/T E A C H E R then get more difficult to understand. And only the students who choose to move to the front of the class can really hear HIM/HIM/H I M.

Get away from the bozos at the back of the room. The longer you linger there, the worse your transcript will look when you graduate. The power the bozos want will last only a lifetime. What will they do on their deathbed with their money and power? What will they do with their penis {the delivery system based on money} and testicles {the source of their power}? A death shroud has no pockets. You should be grateful to GOD/GOD/G O D you aren't like them.

Abraham And Isaac

The Spiritual Necessity To Love Joy Humbly

The change of name from Abram to Abraham indicates a psychological transformation in the heart of every man who knows GOD. This is Torah's way of saying that the label needs to be changed when it no longer reflects what's now inside the container.

You're not the same person you were in your distant past, even if you don't change your name with every spiritual addition to your contents. Your container has changed on the outside, but your contents have also changed considerably over time. You're probably fuller than you once were, in every sense of the word.

You should be able to say that you're wiser, more loving and more generous today than you were yesterday. You should be able to say that life has deepened you, that you understand more than you once did. You should be able to say that what was once only a spark, turned into a flame that's ignited you with illumination and heat you didn't once have. You should be able to say that you're ablaze with self-love and the mystery of how that happened.

The differences in the way you *think* have changed your mind. The differences in the way you *feel* have transformed your heart. And both have made it possible for you to *believe* in the possibility of transcendence of your soul. That's what it really means to go from a metaphoric seed, to a sprout to a sapling. That's what it means to grow to be an old Tree in this orchard we call: humanity growing up in this soil we call: reality. This is what it means to be a participant in three dimensions, a world of spiritual length, breadth and depth.

Now that Jews have succeeded in getting Christians to acknowledge the rightful place of the Jews in GOD's Kingdom, it's *both* of our responsibility to teach the Muslims to acknowledge the rightful place of the Jews and Christians in GOD's overall plan. When the Muslims learn to respect their older Abrahamic brothers, the bloodshed will end between themselves and with us, and not before.

Arrogance isn't an Islamic invention, even if Islamic terrorism most poignantly exemplifies it these days. Arrogance is the absence of pride. You can't be proud of your goals if your methods are cruel and immoral.

Arrogance is a universal problem that can only be healed when you point a finger at yourself. But, I, personally, am sick and tired of having fingers pointed at me from the left for being a Jew who loves Israel and from the right for being a man who loves men. My conscience is sufficiently developed to point fingers at myself at the appropriate times for the appropriate reasons. I don't need any help from the left or the right. I've got enough WORK/WORK/WORK learning to be me without anyone making *his* conscience *my* guide.

Abraham transcended the Abram in himself; he rose in his own esteem. But he's Torah's prototype of the mind of the man who can celebrate the joy and sorrow of helping others from his soul. Abram started by helping his nephew Lot. He bargained with GOD for the wellbeing of strangers he never met in Sodom, and Abraham continued in this vein by inviting three strangers into his home and offering them his hospitality. All those people in his past were mirrors of the stranger in himself, a head, heart and soul he'd projected out onto the outer world. But, sadly, he never learned how to break through that projection with self-love.

Like Lot, Abram wasn't much in the way of a family man. His sense of belonging came from his relationships out in the world. This is the prototype of the man who's learning to

love himself from the outside in. He puts GOD/GOD/G O D first, and himself last, when it should be the other way around. If you don't put yourself first and people next in line after that, you're going to come before your Maker with your priorities screwed up. HE/HE/H E needs to see what you've done for yourself and others, not what you've done for HIM/HIM/H I M. HE/HE/H E doesn't need a thing. He doesn't even need you. You do! We do!

The question to ask is why GOD would reward Abram with knowledge of HIS generosity for others before knowledge of HIS love or HIS wisdom? Why would GOD teach Abraham generosity for strangers before teaching him generosity for his immediately family?

GOD rewards man with knowledge of the peel before the meat or the core? And, since Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit from the outside in, it stands to reason that HE's going to teach us all about ourselves the same way.

Small children need to touch the stove after the flame has been turned off to discover that the heat of fire is very different from its illumination. Adolescents only understand their motives *after* they take action, not before. Young people discover the myriad problems of playing with fire, but they aren't usually ready to express it in self-loving and illuminating ways.

Only those who've dedicated their life to questioning themselves will get to the burning core of the forbidden fruit. Only they will discover the wisdom that will guide their heart before they take action. Only they'll learn how to begin with wisdom, make their way through love and end with generosity of spirit if and when it's due.

Although the order of the Abrahamic religions historically is Judaism {1,400 B.C.E.}, Christianity 1 C.E. and Islam {600 C.E.}, the order of the virtues by which you'll be rewarded by GOD/GOD/G O D will occur in reverse. HE'll allow you to eat through the peel of yourself first with generosity or self-indulgence; you'll come to know love or lust. And you'll then struggle with those two before you find your way to the core of your being where the seeds of who you really are, are found: self-knowledge. This is GOD's design. Don't ask me why. I'd have done it in the reverse order if HE'd asked me my opinion. But HE didn't.

Even though you may be given answers that come to you from the inside out, you'll still have to engage those answers with question that come back to you from the outside in. Therefore you must learn to love your contents by way of your container; the source of all that you think, feel and then decide to do. You can never remove yourself from the main metaphor of Moses or the container/contents symbolism given first to the Jews by Jesus. You can never get out of yourself to discover yourself before the end of yourself as you now know you.

The Mother Of Man

GOD changes Sarai's name to Sarah when she's 90. This change of labels signifies the spiritual evolution of every woman beginning as a giver of "life" {Eve} through her contentious and forlorn stages {Sarai/Hagar} to become spiritual royalty {Sarah} in GOD's Court. This process of movement from giver of life to princess in GOD's Kingdom is a clue to the spiritual meaning of women, even if their individual purposes for being can be quite unique.

A woman can be much more than just a person who holds the role of mother or title of princess. A woman in the civilized world can also hold titles previously held only by men.

And if that title today can be prime minister or CEO, there's no reason why she shouldn't be able to hold the title of rabbi, priest, parson, minister, imam or cleric {even bishop, cardinal or pope} someday. Why not?

There's no title a woman can't hold other than the roles that require a penis and testicles, such as father, son, uncle, nephew, etc. And in the medically sophisticated world we now live in, even male roles can now be bestowed onto those women who were born female but wish to become male.

Roles and titles are changing, and organized religions aren't keeping up with their congregations' awareness of what these changes signify, needless to say, because men have very personal and highly exalted opinions about their own penis and testicles. If GOD can bestow titles on women, why can't man?

GOD gave Adam a name that was a clue to the location of his origins: earth. GOD gave Abraham a name that described his role in the family of man: father of multitudes. But because GOD gives Sarah a title rather than a simple name change, HE tips HIS hand by showing that all women hold a divine title beyond that of any earthly role.

In helping raise man from spiritual dust to dirt, to clay, to porcelain, to transparent glass - woman helps man discover that he's a morally fragile, earthenware vessel that's being shaped by GOD and that woman that HE put him here with.

Changing Sarai's name to Sarah brought heaven and dirt a little closer together. Thanks to the one princess who becomes the mother of the Jewish people {Sarah}, the Earth can be seen through a metaphor for GOD's Kingdom. This world is a place where our King presides over us all. When a woman goes from quarrelsome to regal, the heavens themselves seem to open, and rays of GOD's love seem to shine down for all to see.

Women aren't only base, selfish, vain and greedy because they've been made into mirrors of vice by that rib in original man. They're something spiritually independent of us. The man who sees the bigger, spiritual picture behind the roles of men and women becomes a prince of a fellow in women's eyes. This is how he receives his title in GOD's Kingdom, not by coveting the earthly titles he's only been willing to bestow on others who also have a penis and testicles.

There isn't a man on Earth who wouldn't crown another guy with a title if it served his own interests. This is why men have to receive their crown through women's eyes, and not their own. Men can't be trusted with sole access to titles because they've done such a piss poor job just with the roles they were given.

No woman, no matter how forlorn, no matter how quarrelsome, is without a touch of the princess within her. And no woman is incapable of gratitude to a man who treats her better than the men she met in her past.

Sarai does three things to demonstrate her virtuous nature, for which GOD may have decided to change her name. (1) She initiates the relationship between Abram and Hagar for her husband's sake. In doing so she expresses her love for him despite GOD's reluctance to let her give Abram an heir through her. (2) She circumcises Abraham to help him seal GOD's Covenant with him. (3) She helps him express his hospitality to the three strangers who mysteriously appear.

Although Eve circumvented GOD's authority by picking the fruit HE told Adam he couldn't pick, Sarai assists Abram in circumventing GOD's decision by helping him create a male heir. Again woman betrays GOD to help man.

The son of a woman who models the virtues of a princess in GOD's Kingdom has a better opportunity to grow up to become a prince of a guy here on Earth. The title of prince is spiritually conferred on a man as a result of the way in which he observes how his parents relate to one another. Some sons have to live up to the good example set by their father toward their mother. Others have to live up to the blessings set by their mother toward their father. And some have the champagne problem of living up to them both.

The complexity of every mother/son relationship is exacerbated by Sarah's heartless behavior toward Ishmael. Every Isaac has to wonder when his mother will turn, and treat him as Sarah did, Ishmael. If it happened to Ishmael, it could happen to anyone. Not even an Isaac can ever fully trust his mother unless she's shown no guile toward his siblings and half siblings.

The Other Mother Of Man

Laughter is a very powerful response in women. When they laugh scornfully, it's devastating. But when they laugh with joy, all who hear laugh with them.

The joys of laughter come from little miracles. A miracle is a blessing you couldn't previously receive. The miracle Sarah is given after a lifetime of living out her wish is a child of her own, even into advanced age.

A child is the mirror that most straight men and women want in life. But these are becoming selfish mirrors that are destroying our planet because of the resources it takes to raise a child in this day and age. There are other ways to reflect upon yourself.

What changed Sarah's laugh from scorn to joy is the promise of a child, and this is what makes us want to laugh with her. GOD grants her this miracle because HIS wisdom and love is sometimes generous beyond anything we can imagine or explain. Given the way Sarah treated Hagar and Ishmael all those years, it's hard to see why she deserved such a blessing.

Perhaps GOD approved of Sarah's loyalty and devotion to Abraham by granting them a son {Isaac} with no more or less approval than HE blessed Hagar's loyalty and devotion to the same man with a son {Ishmael}. Perhaps GOD doesn't love anyone less than another. Perhaps HE blesses everyone differently at different times in his life and at different times in HIS/HIS/H I S T O R Y.

It's easy to assume your Maker *loves* you. It's not so easy to take it for granted that HE/HE/H E *likes* you. Why HE/HE/H E does what HE/HE/H E does for unlikable people is a mystery we'll never fully be able to unravel, either. And yet, if you can see how likeable some are and unlikeable others are, you can imagine that GOD can see all that, too.

Some of the most odious men on the planet are blessed with some good fortune. And some of the most righteous are cursed with a rough road, indeed. A test measures what it measures. The yardstick you use will give you the results you measure. Use a meterstick and you'll come away with very different numbers.

Each of Abraham's sons is blessed with a separate trial and legacy for all future generations. The laughter and joy that brings an Isaac into the world is as mixed a blessing as the sorrow that brings an Ishmael in the world. Each of us is a mixed blessing in our own right. It's only when you learn to like yourself that you find good reasons for GOD liking you, too.

The differences between spiritual legacies only *begin* with the distinct paths set by Hagar and Sarah. These two women are the first spiritual fork in the road described in

Torah. Mary, the mother of Jesus, will be the next off ramp from the Jewish road that will take civilization a different direction. The question to ask your mother is what she taught you about people who are going another way. And the question to ask yourself is what roads you've traveled, and whether you can call them all your own.

Covenantal Promise And The Responsibilities Of Man

The Covenant of Abraham isn't another intangible promise of hope like the one GOD gave Noah with the rainbow. GOD gives Abraham a conditional promise, one that requires action on his part. GOD tells Abraham to get circumcised and to circumcise his sons as a physical reminder of the spiritual bond between Them. Abraham has to take action in order to get the Covenant fulfilled. But because his sons are circumcised at different times in their lives for different reasons, their promises to GOD/G O D will therefore be expressed differently.

GOD requires nothing of Sarah or Hagar. Their loyalty to HIM requires no confirmation or conditions. Women prove their virtuous nature through their humanity, not through circumcision, which is an abominable crime against their being. GOD tests women differently.

It takes wisdom, love and generosity of spirit for men to learn how to work together. Therefore, GOD's faith in men must be established through making promises men can make to themselves about themselves – and keep. For a man to keep his word is paramount to his self-respect. The rule of law obliges men to live up to their agreements, not necessarily the agreements made by their forefathers. The strength of a man's word comes from his relationship with himself.

Nowadays, it's become quite fashionable for some men to contradict themselves, to agree to whatever is being asked of them. They hope to produce ambivalence in others as the result of the ambivalence in themselves. In such situations life-and-death will be the only way to separate such meal-y-mouthed opinions.

A circumcised male should grow up to become a "BEN ADAM" {SON OF ADAM, GENTLEMAN}. Through the pain of circumcision and suffering in childhood, he should extend the main metaphor of Moses to conclude that a leaf may have succeeded in concealing Adam's genitals from Eve, but it won't be enough to conceal his genitals from GOD. A gentleman doesn't have to have consciously been present when he first converses with his own serpent. {It may have happened unconsciously as a nocturnal emission.} But he ought to believe that the stories from Creation through the Covenant of Abraham metaphorically describe what happened to him that separated him from the boys and moved him in the direction of becoming a man.

The importance of circumcision has been indelibly carved into the penis of Jews and Muslims with a knife. They've both been given a reminder that connects them to their father and spiritual forefather: Abraham. The man who's had the hood removed from his snake can listen all the more carefully to all that it says to him.

Circumcised males don't generally make a connection between their penis and Adam's expression of modesty in covering his genitals with a leaf before Eve. Judaism and Islam have never previously allowed themselves to be so open in their interpretation of The Creation Story because of their fear that sexual discourse would be seen as an abomination before GOD/G O D.

Because of the worldwide rise in awareness of sexual variation that gays have brought to society, a distinction between homosexual sex and self-love has been revealed. It's now possible for us to discuss Scripture more candidly today because of the physical differences in men's penises. Christianity holds the spiritual message of the uncircumcised male, which deserves spiritual tolerance for its natural state. Jews hold a metaphoric relationship to their penis as a Covenant with GOD. And Muslims hold a simile of that relationship as a Covenant with G O D.

But unless all straight men include gays at their table when studying their sacred texts, they're not going to get the differences in interpretation they need to open their eyes to today's deeper, more sophisticated truths.

People who don't update their belief system regularly remain stuck in the past. In America, they live out a 1950's imaginary world between males and females. In Europe they hold to a pre-World War Two fantasy about politics. And in the Middle East they practice a make-believe ideal from the 7th Century that wasn't ever created to literally come true.

The death of so many gay men to AIDS made it possible for you to read about Torah today with a sexualized, spiritual interpretation. You can't get to self-love without opening your eyes to the world of gay love. You don't have to interpret our attraction as a "gay agenda" intended to end heterosexuality as the world knows it. You should see gay people as part of GOD's spiritual plan to open the heart of frightened men and women to the personal importance of the genitals GOD gave them.

Embarrassment is physically best expressed by putting your hands over your genitals. Shame is best expressed by putting your hands over your heart. And humiliation is best expressed by opening your arms straight out to emulate Jesus on the cross.

You can then move through your embarrassment with greater modesty for the way GOD made you. You can move through your shame with humility in the way you've learned to treat people with more respect. And you can move through your humiliation before The Lord with loyalty to yourself. Only then will you have an understanding of the guilt needed to love yourself as GOD/GOD/G O D intended.

Circumcision is spiritually important to both Jews and Muslims. Therefore, when Jewish and Muslim men meet, they should first remind themselves that the other is circumcised, too. Their connection to GOD/G O D goes back to Abraham.

A man doesn't have to be gay to remember that GOD's presence was passed on to both Ishmael and Isaac through their circumcised penises, even though GOD's promises to each in Torah were different. If straight Jews and Muslims reminded themselves more often of the psychological trial given to both Abraham's sons, their unique spiritual inheritances might be easier for them to acknowledge. Muslim men might give up their claim of ownership of the Temple Mount and, by extension, all The Land that was promised by GOD to the descendants of Isaac. Perhaps then they'd realize that they're guests at *our* table and feel more humbled in our presence everywhere on Earth as they would humble themselves before an older brother.

If a straight Muslim finds a straight Jew overbearing, the two of them should learn from gay Jews and Muslims how we handle character defects. And straight Christians should do the same with straight Jews and Muslims. Since you've got a good example, use it!

GOD commands all Christians to undergo baptism rather than circumcision because the Christian gift to the world comes through the suffering of Jesus, that aspect of GOD brought

into the flesh through the one Jew chosen from among HIS chosen. His personal humiliation here on Earth is the spiritual prototype for all wisdom of the heart. But, like Ishmael and Isaac, Jesus is the personification of a spiritual branch of self-knowledge that's been given to us to test our ethical intentions.

As the result of these three Abrahamic associations with GOD/GOD/G O D, a Jew has a head like a glass that he should see as half empty. A Christian has a heart like a glass that he should see as half full. And a Muslim has a soul like a glass that he should see as overflowing. Filling and emptying each of us with the proper contents will require SHALOM {the experience of being filled or full, from the verb "LISHALEM" which means "TO FILL"}. Peace around us will only come with peace from within. Those who are opposed to peace will pay a price, whether in this world or hereafter.

Circumcision became popular in the United States among European-Americans in the aftermath of the Second World War. Many Jewish males in Europe had been discovered in hiding in Europe during the War, and killed simply because they stood out for being physically marked as Jews by their penis. I suspect that in order to avoid that happening in the New World, the medical community may have unconsciously decided to physically hide Jews in amongst the Christians in the United States by circumcising all European-American baby boys.

Penis As Bond To GOD

Jews have been called The Chosen People, in part, because the choice to be circumcised has been made for Jewish, male babies. The baby doesn't choose inclusion in the Covenant for himself. He's chosen.

All birth defects and physical abnormalities from birth, including those that occur later in life, are figurative circumcisions. They become a trial that parallels the sign of the Covenant that GOD asked of Abraham. All pain is a learning lesson from GOD because we all hold pain personally. Cutting through our container breaches our contents.

In some ways everyone is chosen against his will in life. Everyone is tried. Everyone feels a desire to rebel against some sort of authority in his life, and that expression of autonomy eventually gets turned into a personal desire for freedom that every man must learn to interpret his own way.

A man must learn to scribble before he learns to write. Authorship leads to authority, not power. He must come on stage at each age. He must watch himself perform. If he decides to close his eyes and ears to avoid stage fright, he's only going to have to come back and rehearse it all over again.

Freedom is a moral choice that begins within and differentiates authority from autonomy. Freedom is an ability to use your head to help yourself realize the highest meaning of morality you can attain. This turns the moral man into a good book, a Moses who can write and re-right his own story. {Jesus never wrote down a WORD, and the P R O P H E T Mohammed didn't even know how to read or write.} I'm not speaking about literacy in the literal sense. I'm speaking about spiritual literacy. If you don't learn how to combine THE WORD of GOD, THE WORD of GOD and T H E W O R D of G O D, you know very little.

Obedience to authority out of fear only leads to apathy, not love. And obedience certainly doesn't lead to generosity of spirit. Obedience has to be chosen freely if it's going to come without a struggle. Muslims who rebel against the authority of oppressive Muslim

governments; Christians who rebel against the authority of previous, social morés regarding sex, gender and corporate greed; and Jews who rebel against the authority of their parents – are all expressing the courage needed to change the world for a new age on a new stage. They’re all expressing Abraham’s promise to GOD/GOD/G O D as best they can.

All the world’s a series of stages, and all the men and women who don’t want to play their part at any particular performance should seek out the Playwright to ask for new lines.

Although everyone has the right to choose, we each should choose obedience *to* ourselves and *from* ourselves before we make choices to try to improve the lives of others. Few realize that the choice to obey the deep, intuitive voice that emanates out from their conscience is at the core of all their choices. Obedience to yourself is profoundly important to your spiritual development because you can’t obey the GOD/GOD/G O D of your understanding if you haven’t chosen to obey your highest sense of self. We know this because we see so many hypocrites in the “religious” world.

Most people are disobedient to themselves; not because they don’t follow the rules of society, but because they don’t listen, learn and love themselves authentically. If you refuse to bite into forbidden fruit because of the peel, you may be missing a nutritious and delicious snack intended just for you.

You won’t obey yourself if you don’t respect yourself. And you won’t respect yourself if you’re a hypocrite. The spiritual system we’re all a part of is rigged because GOD allows us to discover other love before we earn the self-respect to consciously learn to love ourselves, making the biblical adage to, “LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF” [Leviticus 19:18] extremely difficult to do until you devote your life to self-love.

Most people think they should only look forward, never back. By that they mean that they endeavor to progress. But what they don’t realize is that they turn themselves around from time to time, moving forward with their back facing where they’re going and their eyes peeled to where they came from. Consequently they’re living with a panoramic view of their past without a view to where they’re headed.

At times like that, a man’s past becomes more important to him than his future. He should look at his own history as well as the history of his people with his conscience and great focus on where he’s really going and how he’s positioned himself to get there. Your past, misperceived, won’t elucidate your future. It’ll only insure that you continue to move forward without looking where you’re going.

A man who isn’t interested in actively looking to see his bad habits won’t have any reason to want to parent himself more effectively. Therefore, he won’t improve himself much over time. His selfishness and selflessness will be magnified in his children and his own childish nature. His kids will adopt his character defects, thinking his defects are virtues rather than vices. And his inner child will become more and more recalcitrant.

Such a man is an Abraham who matures so slowly that his children will have to learn *not* to do as he did long after he’s gone. The world is filled with Abrahams who produce Ishmaels and Isaacs who have to struggle with the legacy given them by their father while, themselves, struggling to be a father and even a grandfather. Life doesn’t have to be that hard, guys. It doesn’t have to take that long to change.

Torah takes you on the journey to learn to stop fathering so many children literally, and to start fathering yourself. Every Abraham has to learn to recognize his adult, inner child

and treat himself kindly at those moments when he's earned it, and to discipline himself the rest of the time.

To be told that GOD loves you is easy to hear, but hard to listen for inside. To know in your heart that you yearn to love yourself even more than you yearn to love GOD is the greatest expression of obedience to HIM. For out of this desire will not only come self-love, but a love that will surpass your sense of duty to anyone. You'll come to love the father, son and brother within yourself. And you'll come to love your Creator who helped you become so pleased with your progress.

That's when you'll be able to love The Father and Son. That's when brotherhood will spill over from within out onto the world. That's when you'll discover that your classmates in the school of life are also your brothers and sisters under the auspices of our Teacher who is everyone's spiritual Father.

Cutting A Deal With GOD

When literally translated from Hebrew, the Covenant between GOD and Abraham isn't "given" to Abraham. It's "cut" with him, as in the expression "to cut a deal." GOD chooses to present Abraham with an offer he can't refuse because HE sees he's ready for it. GOD didn't cut a deal with Adam. Adam is uncircumcised.

Eve cut down the fruit and set the repercussions in motion. There were limits to what Eve could do for Adam with her good intentions and her limited emotional understanding of the difference between pleasure and displeasure. She had the ability to make Adam aware of the *goodness* of *pleasure*, but she knew nothing about the *pleasure* of *goodness*.

No woman can force a man to feel good about himself or believe in himself. She can't cut a deal for him with GOD. He has to become curious enough about self-love to want to love himself for his own reasons. In this way, he develops positive feelings for himself that he's then able to bestow upon others. If not, he remains a taker, an infant, a child, an adolescent, or the young man who pretends to give, in order to get from others in return. He'll learn the meaning of lust; not love. He'll develop an appetite and a thirst. He just won't satisfy or quench them.

The arrogant man can't love himself, and so, to cover up his shame, he ridicules wise, loving and generous men for having those attributes. The arrogant man puts women down for using emotions to influence him. And he puts GOD down for strong-arming him with the principles of religious tolerance that he can't apply to himself.

Arrogant men ought to humiliate themselves in the privacy of their heart to transcend their foolish thinking. They should force themselves to face the hypocritical relationship that exists between their heart and conscience. {This becomes the road so often described as paved with good intentions.}

The arrogant presume they love themselves, as though it were self-understood. But they dare not look for evidence beyond self-indulgence. They'll claim they like their life, but they'll never claim to like themselves. The road from their heart to their soul is, of course, paved with good intentions. But it's devoid of conscious, self-understanding. They're unwilling to bring their head along with their heart on their journey to soulful self-regard. They don't want to know what they're doing to themselves, for fear that GOD will expose them as HE did Adam and Cain with simple questions they can't answer, like "Where are you?" and "Where is your brother?"

Those who are well defended against the embarrassment and shame that comes to them from the outside won't stop humiliating themselves deep down inside. In fact, many of them will eagerly get up on the cross to show the world how they've been victimized and martyred by today's blacks, gays and Jews. They'd rather recreate history than make history.

If you're going to humiliate yourself, I recommend you do it in the privacy of your conscience with your head present when you start to ask good questions of yourself. I recommend you humiliate yourself before yourself with GOD/GOD/G O D as your Witness, not your Judge. Judge yourself. Make better use of your desires by using your thoughts, feelings and beliefs to ascertain where you're at in the privacy of your mind. Decide for yourself what you're made of.

America is such a free and democratic land, in part, because we so cherish our emotional nakedness. The freedom we have to express our wise and tender emotions candidly without physically harming one another makes it possible for us to grow spiritually at our own pace. We can celebrate our political differences of opinion precisely because we have the freedom to rub each other the wrong way without it leading to physical violence from our government or militia groups that think they know better than the majority of us.

But those who claim that gays are ruining family values and blacks are ruining our reputation worldwide are on a rampage within themselves. Those who claim this is a Christian country where freedom of religion only applies to approved, white, Christian values, not to Jews, Muslims, Hindus or Buddhists, are humiliating our American way. They're also humiliating themselves, but they don't even know it.

They're spiritual sprouts and shoots who haven't enjoyed their first spiritual fruits from their own Tree. They read The Old Testament with childlike wonder, but they can't take it personally. They dream about a "Land of milk and honey" but they're too ashamed to admit to themselves that they've tasted their own cum, the juice of their fruit. And that was something so forbidden and secretive that they've never told a soul. Well, we can see that truth on their face.

Our society may be predicated on the principle of free speech, but that doesn't mean we can talk easily about the process of spiritual progress. When our "religious" convictions reach the level of humiliating us by turning our political policies into purchases, we must question our standing before The Lord, for such are the indulgences of the time in which we live. Disclaiming climate change by claiming the tornadoes and hurricanes on the East coast are caused by gay life in San Francisco is absurd. GOD doesn't have bad aim. Those whirlwinds in the Midwest, snowstorms in the East and the draught out West must be exclamation from our Weatherman proclaiming something else...

No man would have to be humiliated by GOD if he used his head to avoid problems in the first place. Humiliate yourself. Don't humiliate anyone else. You'll look like a fool, and that will only give you more reason to hate yourself.

Gays And Humiliation

Gays are a social, political and spiritual threat to the establishment, not only in America, but worldwide. So long as arrogant, straight men and women insist on embarrassing and shaming us for the way we make love, they will continue to be punished in ways that they

won't be able to associate with us. Straights will sacrifice the lessons in self-love that they need so badly. But who misses what's missing if he's never had it before?

The more we return their embarrassment with modesty, and shame with humility, the more we'll raise the spiritual bar for everyone. The only thing humiliating about gay love is when we abuse it with alcohol, drugs or violence. But violence is very uncommon in our community. When you've been given such a great gift from GOD/GOD/G O D and have gone through such pain and suffering to learn to be proud of it, it becomes too precious to fight over. Wasting gay love with inebriation, promiscuity and infidelity are the only sins I see in gay San Francisco. Faith in ourselves comes when we love the way we make love; the one we love; and the freedom we have to do so.

The shaming of us by society hasn't hurt us; it's only made us spiritually stronger. And the humiliation we've put ourselves through in questioning "the love that dare not speak its name" is leading us to even greater faith in ourselves as time goes by. We're a great contributing force to society, and our contribution is only getting larger.

The "coming out" experience has always been the result of "going in." And many gay men are able to describe this spiritual process to our straight brothers in ways that emphasize the importance of loving wisely before you claim you love generously.

The wisest way of loving is to love yourself first. The wisest way of loving generously is by giving your love deeply to one person in holy wedlock. Gay marriage is a great gift to our spiritual quest for self-love.

Even though Jesus didn't express Himself as a gay-Jew, He surely would have come out had the ancient Jews been as evolved as most Jews are today. GOD's/GOD's/G O D's job has never been easy. Teaching us HIS/HIS/H I S ways takes time and patience because gleaning the best out of humanity requires generations.

Let's Cut A Deal

GOD couldn't have created a Covenant with Abraham without Abraham having agreed to it. You can't cut a deal with anyone who refuses to negotiate with you. You first have to convince him you have something he needs and wants. There'll always be men who'll look at strangers and conclude they're queer or odd or savage, and therefore have nothing to offer anyone. Hateful people don't care that arrogance, not pride, cometh before the fall. They've already fallen. They're apples looking up at their own Tree, not down from it.

Circumcision is a rite of passage chosen for the Jews and chosen by the Muslims, but it's not for everyone. Either way, every man has to hold his penis several times a day. Therefore, it should be a reminder to him of his relationship to GOD/GOD/G O D whether it's got a foreskin on it or not. If he doesn't think about self-intimacy, sensuality and sexuality through his relationship to GOD/GOD/G O D when he touches himself, a foreskin or the absence of a foreskin isn't going to change that.

There are many who have the head of their penis exposed, but their heart and soul is still spiritually concealed in a way that resembles Adam and Eve's embarrassment that caused them to put on a fig leaf. Such men sit under other people's Trees of knowledge eating the fruit that falls into their lap, while claiming they haven't touched a thing. They're afraid to get up and pick the fruit from their own Tree rather than live off the knowledge gleaned from others. They're afraid to know themselves in the biblical sense of THE WORD.

The spiritually uncircumcised in the Abrahamic religions aren't those whose penis isn't literally circumcised or whose heart isn't symbolically circumcised. The spiritually

uncircumcised can't be frank with themselves because their head isn't honest; their heart isn't sincere; and their soul isn't authentic. They aren't capable of being genuine. And so there isn't a word that passes their lips that's completely truthful.

They're envious of those who have more faith in themselves than they do. And because they're too arrogant to spend their time learning about themselves, they pursue money, power and prestige in the hopes that personal power will magically enter from the outside in. They're perfectly content using psychology to gain power over others. They're just not interested in using it on themselves.

The man who loves himself isn't threatened by people who are different from him; he's inspired by them. He's proud to set a good example to himself regardless what he sees others doing. He seeks to love himself through hard times all the more. He knows that social discomforts are temporary, but spiritual rewards are eternal.

GOD's Gift To Abraham

The cutting of the Covenant with Abraham is GOD's gift to Abraham, in part, because of the timing, just before the arrival of the three strangers who predict the birth of Isaac. This timing parallels Eve's gift of the fruit forbidden to Adam. Eve picked one of many fruits hanging from The Tree of knowledge of good and evil without contemplating which one to pick or when to pick it. She picked self-knowledge when it was still green: guilt. Eve's choice is testament to the unfathomable intuition of women and the grandeur of GOD's foresight.

The half-eaten, unripened fruit Eve shared with Adam will go through mankind's system for all eternity, sometimes leaving him feeling exhilarated; sometimes giving him a bellyache. Guilt will always come out smelling bad. It'll always remind him how much less than the angels he really is.

Reason not to feel guilty is the first gift a mother offers her child. She does so with food, comfort and warmth as she holds her child with the unstated, emotional stance of a heroine. But as her baby grows older, it's as though she changes her weight from one foot to the other. Slowly the child learns from his mother about the discomfort of balancing guilt. Slowly guilt is passed from mother to child and, later in life, back onto mother again. Forbidden fruit is the first gift one human being receives from another. It's a valuable gift both to give and receive because it teaches us modesty, humility and loyalty over time. But it's not the only gift we have to give.

GOD figuratively cuts the sweetest fruit hanging from the highest branch of every Tree of knowledge, fruit Eve could never have reached. And HE gives it to every Abraham when he's old enough to appreciate it. This is the deal every servant of The Lord discovers when he learns GOD/GOD/G O D has a plan just for him.

And HE/HE/H E offers that plan in the form of a tangible promise that a man can share with his progeny to learn how each of them can earn insight in his own way. *Love* is freely given and received, but you have to be worthy of *wisdom*. It's only dispensed to those who deserve it. You simply have to be interested enough in your own Tree to climb it and cut that deal with yourself.

The wisdom each of us gives to the world through the way we interface with ourselves is our personal contribution to this story in Torah. We may be no more than adolescents before GOD, an embodiment of Noah, a righteous man in this time. But we should do our best to help those who act unwisely to help them seek out their bigger picture.

GOD shared himself with Abraham with the understanding that his progeny through Isaac would plant their seeds of wisdom in the world, tending and growing them until they'd be ready to be harvested with HIS love and HIS generosity. The job of seeding the world with wisdom has been accomplished. Now it's time to sow the harvest of love and generosity that have been grafted onto wise Trees.

The Gift Of Promises to Ishmael

GOD is well aware of the fact that when HE gifts one of HIS children, the others are always jealous or envious of what their brother has been given. The first consequence of jealousy and envy was described in the story of Cain and Abel. In the story of Abraham, once again, GOD favors one son over another, Isaac over Ishmael. You'd think GOD would have learned by this point in Torah not to do that...

Clearly there are Jews who act unwisely, just as there are Christians who don't behave lovingly, and Muslims who aren't at all generous. GOD gave the Jews the opportunity to learn to aim for wisdom, but whether every individual Jew hits the mark is clearly a matter for him to decide for himself. It's not that the Abrahamic religions don't share in the virtues each faith brings to the world. It's that GOD gave each of them a special task to contribute that, as brothers, we must monitor to make sure the needs of one brother don't supersede the needs of the whole family.

GOD tells Abraham that HIS Covenant will pass through Isaac, not Ishmael. [Genesis 17] GOD could have shared HIS Covenant equally with both boys, but HE didn't. And herein lies the mystery of GOD's wisdom, love and generosity that we, in the Abrahamic faiths, must work together to understand while we're here together on Earth. This should be our primary mission. This sibling rivalry can't wait until the "world to come."

If you shoot an arrow at a target straight on, you develop a certain hand/eye coordination skills. But that skill is only useful when in a 90 degree, perpendicular relationship to the target. Let's call this the Jewish position in relationship to GOD.

But then GOD Co-created Jesus who came to tell us about a 45-degree purview to the right of the Jewish position. He didn't move any closer or further away from the target. He just shot His arrows of love from a different place, and still hit the mark. And the result created a world with architectural wonders, scientific achievements, musical and artistic creations, dance and sexual freedoms that were inspired by the way Christians interface with GOD. Their perspective surely would never have been achievable from the position held by the Jews, or GOD wouldn't have had any need for Christianity.

In that sense, Jews have learned from Christians how to entertain another point of view of GOD's design, one that can take into consideration HIS position, in addition to HIS. And Christians, over time, have finally developed an appreciation for our Jewish aim and marksmanship.

But Islam was a precursor to Judaism in the sense that GOD hinted at its creation through the formation of the pyramids during the early Egyptian idol worship dynasties and in the birth of Ishmael in Torah, which preceded the birth of Isaac. And yet GOD chose to confer HIS Covenant on the younger son {Isaac}, not the older one {Ishmael}. And HE chose to wait with the revelation of the P R O P H E T Mohammed until Judaism and Christianity were well differentiated more than a thousand years later.

It wouldn't be wise of Muslims to argue against G O D's D E S I G N. The importance of spreading history can only be found by studying HIS story, HIS story and H I S T O R Y.

The word for "sin" in Hebrew is "CHET" which means, "TO MISS THE MARK." In some ways all of us miss the mark despite our efforts to love GOD/GOD/G O D. And, although with each apology and amend we're given another arrow with which to shoot again, GOD is always bringing in additional marksmen with additional points of views from the target.

This metaphor is consistent with the story of Ishmael who becomes a skilled archer. [Genesis 28] What Ishmael does for a living isn't important until you link it with the charitable, overarching metaphor intrinsic to the Hebrew language of equating sin with bad aim. Only then does the skill of the marksman, Ishmael, make sense spiritually. It becomes a clue to his spiritual marksmanship, and why GOD chose to make his descendants a great people.

Think of Muslims as having been given a place 45-degrees to the left of the Jews. The P R O P H E T Mohammed didn't move any closer or further away from the target either. But he hit the mark from a different angle.

But the bull's eye is morality, not Jewish wisdom, Christian love, Muslim generosity or blacks, unmarried pregnant women or gays. Many Muslims in the Middle East are practicing shooting with an eye to morality, but they're missing the mark by a long shot. And the rightwing Christians and orthodox Jews haven't done an adequate job of explaining the game of spiritual "bow and arrow" because the West uses politicians paid for by radical, "religious" believers rather than spiritual leaders to make their point.

The wars in the Middle East are all "religious" wars between the Abrahamic faiths. Ground Zero is Jerusalem because that's the home of Judaism and where Christianity was born. When the Muslims agree with the premise that Jerusalem was given to the Jews as our spiritual home, not to the Muslims who've got Mecca, they'll stop their "religious" wars with the Jews and Christians. Israel is a place they entered with the sword centuries later. "THOSE WHO LIVE BY THE SWORD WILL DIE BY THE SWORD." [Matthew 26:52]

At the moment, radical Islamists are trying to do what Hitler didn't succeed in doing. Only this time, they're trying to eradicate Judaism *and* Christianity to create an empire that will last 1,000 years. Only when the good Muslims wake up to the reality of the times in which we live will there be hope for the Palestinians in securing a home of their own – inside Israel as renters in our building who'll agree to the house rules set by the owner.

Humanity has three archers aiming at the same target from different vantage points, and each of them is no closer to GOD/GOD/G O D than the other two. Although they all aim to please HIM/Him/H I M, they do so from different places for different spiritual reasons that HE/He/H E could really explain a lot better than I can if they only bothered to ask HIM/Him/H I M directly through study and prayer.

Moses aimed to tell us of GOD's intention. Jesus aimed to reveal our destiny. And the P R O P H E T Mohammed aimed to explain our fate. But if we don't all learn to shoot from all three vantage points {our head, heart and soul}, we won't become skilled at perceiving our Creator's will for us individually.

The Covenant given to Abraham and passed through him to Isaac is a Jewish blessing for the world, but our Coach positioned the other two Abrahamic faiths on either side of

us, giving each an equally distant and different perspective. Each Abrahamic faith holds a degree of separation from the others, with Judaism in the middle between the two.

Each of us holds promises from GOD that, when mixed together in our own unique way, will teach us all to appreciate ourselves more fully so we won't miss the mark as HIS story, HIS story and H I S story have so clearly demonstrated in the past when you take a closer, more personal look at history.

Strangers Within

A short time after his circumcision at the age of 99, Abraham goes out of his way to open his home to three strange men passing by [Genesis 18]. He demonstrates such hospitality to them that, when they leave, they reiterate GOD's earlier declaration [Genesis 17] that HE'll bless Abraham and Sarah with a son.

Sarah laughs when she hears talk of her having a baby because she's then 89 years old. Later it comes to pass that she gives birth at the age of 90, and Abraham becomes a father again at the age of 100.

Abraham's hospitality to the three strangers {angels in disguise} parallels the excessive enthusiasm of Lot's hospitality to the two angels {undisguised}. The man who can express his hospitality to strangers without sacrificing the ones he loves is in greater favor in GOD's eyes than the man who makes sacrifices for the sake of angels.

GOD allowed Lot to go on the journey with Abram because HE wanted us to compare the stories of these two men to give us clarity on HIS moral intentions for all men. By looking at Torah as a progression of moral intention, it leaves each of us open to the reasons for our generosity of spirit, which will further reveal GOD's moral intentions for us all.

The two angels in the story of Lot, when viewed personally, are reminiscent of the two aspects of guilt: embarrassment and shame. This caused GOD to humiliate the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. But the three strangers in the story of Abraham symbolize the modesty, humility and loyalty that Abraham had already achieved even before welcoming those strangers into his tents.

The strangers mirror Abraham's virtuous nature back to him in the form of blessings from GOD. When you give lovingly and generously, your gifts are returned tenfold. But you must understand the process and not use it with ill will.

When you can truly see, and are willing to acknowledge the attributes of others, you're able to acknowledge that their attributes lie abstractly in yourself. You could never see the virtues of others if they didn't hold virtues you already have somewhere inside yourself. Skills are unique to every one of us, but virtues are universal.

The three strangers who visit Abraham also prefigure Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Judaism holds the modesty of the body through the vital importance of the material vessel. Christianity holds the humility of the heart through the emotional vessel that holds mercy, forgiveness and love. And Islam holds faith in the soul through the spiritual vessel that readies a man for redemption. In this way Abraham, the father of the multitudes, is allowed a preview to his descendants who will become in biblical terminology "AS NUMEROUS AS THE STARS IN THE SKY." [Genesis 15:5, 22:17, 26:4; Deuteronomy 1:10]

Any man in the process of maturing who opens himself to the three blessings of guilt will recognize himself as a gift to the world. He'll identify as a star, and not as "darkness visible" [Milton, Paradise Lost]. An Abraham today who pursues virtue brings a preview of GOD's blessings for the future into the present moment in time.

Laughter Projected

The personification of Isaac as laughter is the miraculous consequence of a head and heart in a healthy relationship with a man's conscience. To find yourself truly magnanimous, you should learn to laugh with yourself and at yourself from your heart: with love. But that's harder than it looks. To laugh at your own feelings of anger, fear and sorrow is so much harder than laughing at other people's.

Snickering, sneering, snorting and jeering are not laughs. They're expressions of scorn and cynicism verbalized. Only through disappointment do you learn the importance of laughter. Nothing is quite as serious as it may seem. But neither is anything incidental.

To personify laughter, you have to have hope. You have to see your life as a rainbow in the making. You have to look through the clouds, the rain, the floods on the ground and the boat you're aboard that has no rudder. You have to find the patience to wait a lot longer than the 40 days of continuous rain Noah endured. You have to wait for the waters to recede within. You have to see proof that there's a chance you'll be able to walk on solid ground again.

Each time you go through disappointment, you have to appreciate the emotional grounding that comes after every flood. Whether the arch of your rainbow is on the way up {youth} or the way down {aging}, you have to see the seven colors of hope {red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet} that are creating your personal reasons to hold hope in your heart. GOD is helping you find reasons to love life through religion and science. If you've chosen one reason over the other, you have your first reason to laugh.

To Know In The Biblical Sense Of THE WORD

The Hebrew WORD "LADA-AT" means "TO KNOW" in the sexual sense of penetrating a person. You "KNOW" another person "in the biblical sense of THE WORD" through sexual relations with them that reveals a deep sense of knowledge about the other person. This level of knowing implies intimacy.

But to know yourself in the biblical sense doesn't literally produce a child. Knowing yourself in the biblical sense figuratively produces an inner child. This kind of knowledge conceives and gives birth to the psychological son of man. To know yourself in the biblical sense of THE WORD brings you knowledge and awareness of your desire for intimacy with yourself. To know you; to love you; and to laugh at yourself makes you your own "love child."

The Abraham in you must be able to look at the Ishmael or Isaac within who's upsetting you. You have good reason to be upset with your inner child if he's wild {Ishmael}. You have good reason to be possessive of him if he's joyful {Isaac}. Either aspect of your inner child is a cherished and important part of yourself. If you can't intercede between their desires with the wisdom that comes from your own experiences, you'll leave your real children exposed to your wrath, when such frustrations are really caused only by self-ignorance.

Masturbation is a physical way of having intimacy with yourself. But the physical level of intimacy with yourself is the most superficial. Masturbation is just the first step on a long road that will include an emotional and spiritual awakening to yourself. There's no good reason to ridicule anyone for masturbating. We should encourage masturbators to recognize that they're learning to know themselves at the initial stage of KNOWING in the biblical sense of THE WORD.

Some men prefer to have sex with themselves. Others prefer to have sex with others. Some prefer not to have sex at all. There's no reason to point fingers of guilt at anyone for his preferences. There's no need to legislate that a man must only have sex with a woman or that he must only do so with the intention of creating a child. Such demands only produce psychological pressures that come out sociologically in unhealthy ways.

All three of the Abrahamic religions in the past pressured men to have sex only for procreative purposes. And in so doing, they produced generations of men who were afraid of their own penis. Peace between the nations begins with peace between your legs.

Self-love is that intimate, emotional relationship of contentment and tranquility that most people experience unconsciously, and can't talk about. They don't realize that they need to consciously learn to love themselves so they can talk about their process. They're often uncomfortable telling themselves what they've accomplished in life because they're not consciously aware of how much good work they've already done in learning to KNOW themselves in the biblical sense of THE WORD.

When Torah states that Abram KNEW Sarai, it means he knew her deeply enough physically, emotionally and spiritually to finally conceive Isaac. This wasn't a medical diagnosis. It was a spiritual pronouncement. And it was a miracle because Abraham did so without fully KNOWING himself. The two of them had been physically infertile as a couple because they were so devoted to the path of GOD-consciousness that they were unaware of the path to self-consciousness. The name changes GOD confers upon them implies a spiritual intimacy with HIM that they were never able to fully achieve for themselves with themselves or one another.

The fact that Abraham is 100 years old and Sarah is 90 when they conceive Isaac is almost a joke. It's hard to imagine anyone so disconnected from his own ability to be fertile until so advanced an age.

Isaac is the personification of the spiritual achievement of fertility and fruitfulness. He's the personification of joy and laughter Abraham didn't achieve with himself. For him to finally father a son with Sarah and become a prince in her eyes is a monumental achievement. For Sarah's prince to finally give her what she always wanted is a miracle she can only appreciate by expressing her gratitude through laughter that signifies relief.

We don't have to make the same mistakes as Abraham. We can glean wisdom from his experiences. We don't have to hang on to the quarrelsome side of our nature as does Sarah with Hagar. The Old Testament presents us with their journeys so we can use our wisdom, love and generosity to take spiritual shortcuts. That's what it means to mature. And that's what it means to use Scripture figuratively.

But this can only happen when a man can see himself in every woman. The equation of man might be expressed algebraically as " $x + y$ " while a woman is " $x + x$ ". But they both equal "1". Half of what makes a man who he is $\{x\}$ has been personified and magnified in women. A man would be a fool not to learn from women and not to give their gender all the rights and privileges he gives his own, for she'll always be a magnification of one side of himself.

Reinventing the wheel of misfortune is a fool's errand. If Scripture is telling us anything of value in the age in which we live, it's that we don't have to make the same mistakes we once did or that our forefathers made before us. We can feel sorry for *our* misfortunes and *their* misfortunes, while vowing not to repeat them.

Those who can worry about themselves produce an inner Ishmael; but those who can laugh at themselves with resolve not to make the same mistake twice produce an inner Isaac. Needless to say, we need to do the former before we can commit to the latter. GOD blessed Abraham with two sons in the order given with good reason.

A belly laugh {unrestrained laughter} brings joy into a man's world. The man who can laugh at how ridiculously hard it can sometimes be to know and love himself acknowledges that his head and heart are entwined for life, even if they don't speak the same language. They need a conscience to guide them. He can also see that his heart has been broken with good reason, and that each half will be projected separately and personified differently in the world around him.

Learning to understand the forces within you teaches you to appreciate GOD and HIS plan for you. Learning about yourself teaches you that psychology is the study of you internalized, and sociology is the study of you projected.

When you can laugh with the God within you, you can still cry over the events you're having to go through around you.

The Needless Worries Of The Pregnant Man

The birth of an inner child is the miracle that turns a boy into a man. It creates a personal relationship within himself that he'll never relinquish. It forms an inner bond that produces a self-love that can't be replicated in any other relationship on Earth, not even with one's mother. It makes you a father unto yourself.

Your inner child of joy is the final proof of the "we" in "me." This is what makes all tender and loving relationships with others possible. This is what makes it possible to get angry *with* people, and not *at* them. This is what makes it possible to go beyond worry to cautious relief.

Your inner child creates the need for a "we" within. Your inner child brings the experience of "us" into your world. It creates a sense of possessiveness; a sense that what's mine is "ours" when speaking to yourself.

The character of Abraham in Torah doesn't achieve this end. Abraham is willing to give Isaac to GOD as a sacrifice because his own inner father hasn't been developed. There's no sense of possessiveness in Abraham for his son because there's no adult, inner child in Abraham.

In this story GOD is trying to teach you what it means to hold yourself so deeply in your own heart that you feel you possess yourself. It's this sense of self-possession that can never be relinquished once it's been formed. When you love another person as deeply as you love yourself, it becomes apparent that Abraham would have sacrificed Isaac to GOD had the Angel Gabriel not stopped him because Abraham's sense of self was so underdeveloped. He was Co-dependent.

GOD doesn't want you to own another person, but HE does want you to learn how to own yourself. If you look at the homeless; those who live in abject poverty; those who are addicted to drugs or alcohol; and those who aren't living up to their own potential – you see what happens when people don't birth an adult, inner child into existence.

Your lessons from GOD in self-possession will bring you a loyalty to life, limb and loved ones that you'll fiercely defend. You won't be quite so willing to sacrifice those you love without being certain that the values you're upholding are absolutely pure.

Your wild, inner child {Ishmael} simply ought to give up a little bit of your inner space for your second inner child, laughter {Isaac}. This will produce the inner glow that others see as charismatic, vibrant and passionate. It'll demonstrate the pop idol personality you might yearn for. This second child might even make you feel a superstar in your own eyes.

Do you remember the childish prank of asking someone if fire can burn twice? {You light a match, blow it out and then touch the blackened end to the other person's skin.} Abram lit a match with Hagar. He blew it out and then burned Ishmael with it after the fire had been extinguished. Men do that all the time. It's not funny now. It never was.

Abraham is the first of three Patriarchs. He personifies the man who takes responsibility for his life by fathering two sons that GOD blesses in different ways. He's the spiritual father of the three religions of the Western world, and yet, ironically, he never succeeds in fathering an adult, inner child. His sense of fatherhood is only projected out onto the world.

Through the wisdom of an Abraham and his faith in GOD, every man has the ability to produce great blessings out in the world. But Abraham surely dies a disappointment to himself, and his sons stand over his grave, while Moses, the author, implies the moral of this tale in silence.

You have to read between the lines of life to see the emotions of every man who doesn't succeed in loving himself; men who cause great pain and suffering to their children; and men who, nevertheless, make exaggerated claims about loving GOD/GOD/G O D.

Without laughter life isn't worth living. Laughter is the most important gift you have. Don't waste it only on others. Don't waste it with scorn instead of hope. Laugh at yourself, but cry for your father if he never succeeded in fathering himself. If that was the case, know yourself better than he knew himself. That's what he'd want you to do. Don't make his mistakes with your children. Don't even make those mistakes with your inner child.

The Progeny Of The Pregnant Man

The third Patriarch is Jacob, the son of Isaac. He'll personify the last of the three gifts in GOD's Covenant with Abraham. Jacob will literally be in a struggle with a stranger. And for associating that struggle with something GOD-given, GOD will change his name to "ISRAEL," which means, "TO STRUGGLE WITH GOD."

Because of Jacob's struggle with GOD, he'll be blessed with 12 sons. But one of them will be different from all the rest. Joseph will personify that aspect of Jacob's inner child who can dream about a world bathed in light and love. It's with the story of Joseph that The Book of Genesis will end.

Life is a gift, but only for those who choose to use it with moral intention. For those who don't strive to know and love themselves, life is a curse in the making.

Life is a gift of love, but only if you struggle to love your life. There's little to no value in trying to give to others what you don't have to give yourself {wisdom, love and generosity}. Struggle to give yourself these gifts before you try to share them with others, or, at least, witness yourself giving away your gifts before you bother to unwrap them.

Don't be too frustrated with yourself. Giving yourself what you don't yet consciously have is a process that can only be described using the word "growing." And the best way to learn about growth is to watch it closely as it happens day-by-day. Sometimes the smallest bud on the late winter branch can bring the greatest joy and hope for spring. It doesn't take money to watch yourself grow. It takes desire.

The snake in The Creation Story didn't disappear after it tempted Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. GOD later told the serpent," "CURSED ARE YOU ABOVE ALL THE LIVESTOCK AND ALL WILD ANIMALS! YOU WILL CRAWL ON YOUR BELLY AND YOU WILL EAT DUST ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE. AND I WILL PUT ENMITY BETWEEN YOU AND THE WOMAN, AND BETWEEN YOUR OFFSPRING AND HERS; HE WILL CRUSH YOUR HEAD, AND YOU WILL STRIKE HIS HEEL." [Genesis 3:14-15]

But the serpent reappears in every man's life as the voice of desire, a voice he can use for good or evil. Don't be afraid of snakes. They won't harm you if you treat them with caution and respect. You're old enough to know better than to let your instincts override soul searching.

The Metaphor Of Israel

Judaism foreswears that The Land of Israel is GOD's gift to the Jews through the promises HE made to the Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But when the story of Abraham is personalized as part of a journey to self-knowledge and wisdom, "The Promised Land" becomes symbolically universalized as a state of being, and every man can own a piece of it through the evolution of his conscience as it's manifested in righteous behavior.

GOD couldn't possibly have created the three Abrahamic religions just to have unending crusades with one another over a tiny strip of Land in the Middle East. The jealousy and envy of these three offspring from the one Father are tiresome and seemingly endless. But they don't have to be.

Using my conscience to explain to Jews, Christians and Muslims how to use their conscience more wisely is my way to improve myself. I, too, suffer from projection. And this is the best way for me to break through my own. My impatience with people mirrors my impatience with myself. It takes great hope to be patient, especially when you're not a great fan of humanity to begin with... The more I invest my hope in wisdom, the more love and generosity I find for others. Hence my motivation for writing spiritual literature.

Sometimes it takes a fruit to explain a fruit. If I can convey the words of the forbidden fruit in The Creation Story to you, you can use my words to help explain your reason for being. And I'm sure you'll succeed in explaining you to yourself much better than I ever could.

The resolve straight men continue to demonstrate in killing one another instead of looking within to find better solutions to their problems, amazes me. No gay man would ever treat his spiritual brother that way because we care so much for the skin of the fruit that we'd never do what straight men are doing to the flesh of those around them. The answer clearly lies at the core of each of us.

The crusade to become the recipient of your own state of inner Israel must be sought from within. Only when you realize you're getting exactly what you deserve in life will your jealousy and envy abate. All three of the Abrahamic religions will win their fight from within when they feel they've received what GOD has intended just for them. You are what you eat, and what comes out of you is the result of what went in.

A man needs to use his ears to listen to reason through the cacophony in his mind; his eyes to focus on his spiritual goals despite the distractions of a material life we're all a part of; and his nose to intuit GOD's loving reasons for everything that happens to him.

The Abrahamic struggle in modern man is happening within each one of us, and the promise of Israel is projected out everywhere if you're willing to face it. Your inner struggle with GOD/GOD/G O D will bring you the dignity and self-respect that we, together, will use to solve the border disputes in the Middle East and bring peace to the nations.

This will end useless proselytizing and tiresome coercion to convert people from one sect or religion to another. It makes more sense to work together to create better scales in our conscience to weigh our thoughts and feelings more accurately than to build bigger bombs. History is locked into a mystery that can't be solved in a day. But every man can find the key to tomorrow between his legs.

Jealousy over GOD's gift to the Jewish descendants of Abraham will never end until the descendants of Ishmael learn to love the descendants of Isaac. The Muslims won't be able to make peace with their Jewish neighbor until they've made peace with themselves.

Israel is a universal concept, not just a political state and refuge for Jews. Christians and Muslims have to concede that their paths to heaven are linked to their Jewish brothers' faith in GOD/G O D. They can't get to heaven without bringing us along. Muslim heaven without Jews and Christians will more resemble hell.

Christians can't be jealous of their older brother having been conceived by GOD before them. And Muslims can't be envious of the wisdom and love that their older brothers have attained before they were borne into this world. No man, no nation and no religion holds a monopoly on GOD's/GOD's/G O D's designs. Once you conquer yourself you lose interest in conquering others, and until that happens, you'll project that war onto innocent others.

Sacred Texts As One Universal Promise

The Covenant of Abraham is available today in a pact you can make with yourself. It's no longer just a deal GOD cut with Abraham and the Jewish side of his descendants. The Covenant of Abraham has been democratized in this country and century through metaphor and figurative speech, which hold the profundity of GOD's WORD in all HIS/HIS/H I S other sacred texts. Every man who's willing to expand upon the literal meaning of his belief system can be in a covenant with his conscience under contract with himself before GOD. Every man can hold a new *world* experience regardless of where in the world he resides.

Your life could be a covenant, not just a contract. It could be a marriage with yourself for better or worse, in sickness and in health until death when your spirit departs from your body. But you'd have to learn to love, honor and obey yourself through the myriad and difficult lessons of your life in order to honor that promise. You'll never be able to respect an adulterer until you can apologize to yourself for cheating on you.

The man who can't laugh at himself for not fully understanding the challenges in developing his conscience won't ever admit to feeling guilty. And then his guilt will never miraculously be transformed into self-love. He won't find the faith within himself that he'll then be able to offer up to GOD to use as an instrument of peace. The gifts of his life will frustrate, frighten or sadden him. He won't meet those inner angels who hold the gift of authenticity in their outstretched hands. He'll meet stranger after stranger instead of encountering himself.

The Bonds Of Abraham

In the "AKEDA" {THE STORY OF THE BINDING OF ISAAC}, GOD calls to Abraham and he replies, "HERE I AM." [Genesis 22:1] And GOD tells him to take his son to The Land of

Moriah {later named Jerusalem} and sacrifice him there. On the third day of travel, they arrive at their destination, and Isaac says to his father, “MY FATHER.” And Abraham replies, “HERE I AM, MY SON.” [Genesis 22:7]

When GOD asked Adam where he was, Adam ignored the question. When GOD asked Cain where his brother was, Cain responded rhetorically. Abraham is the first character in Torah who responds directly and honestly in the first person singular to everyone, including GOD. This is the man who’s willing to admit to himself “where he is” even if he’s not in the greatest psychological space at the time. After three days of walking and thinking about what he’s going to do to Isaac, Abraham can say he’s “here” in the sense of “present,” but we know he’s really not.

Abraham believes GOD wants him to sacrifice Isaac as a token of his faith in HIM. Figuratively speaking, Abraham thinks GOD wants him to return the forbidden fruit that he now associates with the fruit of his loins, the fruit he considers “his.” It would have been easier if GOD had asked him to castrate himself and give his testicles back to HIM.

When Abraham ties Isaac up and is ready to kill him, the Archangel Gabriel calls out to Abraham. He hears his name called and again says, “HERE I AM.” And the angel tells him to stop what he’s doing.

The sacrifice of your inner child for GOD is as abhorrent as the sacrifice of your son for GOD’s sake would literally be. GOD doesn’t want to maim, bloody or torture you to teach you the meaning of self-possession. Your flesh need not ache in pain, nor the heart, agonize in suffering. It’s all needless grief and misery that men foolishly impose on one another generation after generation.

Nor do you have to literally eat your testicles to know the mystery of creating life. You also don’t have to literally cut them out of your scrotum and give them back to GOD to redeem yourself for what Adam and Eve did.

You don’t need to take everything in Torah literally to become the recipient of its sacred message. You’re smart enough to choose when to be literal and when to be figurative.

The Binding Of Isaac

When Isaac calls aloud to Abraham, Isaac expresses the innocent depth of his loving attachment to his father, saying, “BEHOLD THE FIRE AND THE WOOD. BUT WHERE IS THE LAMB FOR A BURNT OFFERING?” [Genesis 22:7] This is like our humble heart that calls out to us to acknowledge the truth, regardless of whatever else we’re experiencing inside. This is the naïve, sweet side of ourselves that can see the fire of passion and the wood of other-knowledge projected, but not the lamb of God within.

Abraham binds Isaac as modern man binds himself, with thoughts that don’t acknowledge his truly innocent feelings. Modern man sacrifices himself to others instead of loving himself first. When we’re consumed with thoughts about what others will think of us if we don’t look good in their eyes, we project our conscience onto them. We turn them into a god, and we inadvertently and erroneously worship them. We idolize them. We give them something literal that we should have figuratively kept for ourselves. Other people become our false god.

A fool and his fruit are soon parted. Moral weakness, spiritual weakness and emotional weakness are signs of this departure. Even death is a sign of the separation of fools from fruits.

Abraham depicts the first psychological stage of the family man after the creation and formation of a man's ego. He may have been chosen by GOD to become a father in many ways to his own id, but he personifies the man who has no experience being a dad.

Abraham's relationships to Ishmael and Isaac are based on an unresolved relationship of alienation with his own father: Terah. Abram left home to get away from his father. But becoming a father, himself, brought all the issues of parenting home, as every parent knows. The way Abraham behaves toward Ishmael and Isaac reflects the first signs of a man in the throes of learning self-love. But he's just at the beginning of a very long journey.

Self-Possession

No man should possess another, and yet every man should have custody over his own heart. Our mind has a psychological responsibility to hold our feelings, and to hold them well. We don't want to repeat the story of Cain and Abel.

Our head sits above our heart. Our head is connected to our heart by our neck, a narrow passage where our Adam's apple reminds us that our struggles in infancy, childhood and adolescence were with good reason. Whatever you have to swallow in life, as well as everything that comes out of your mouth, has to pass your Adam's apple.

Breathing in and breathing out is a constant reminder of the movement between your two worlds. If you don't realize that you're inhaling and exhaling a spirit in a material form called oxygen, you may not recall that your heart has to interface with both your worlds. Air, like food, water and words also passes through your neck. If you're stiff-necked, like GOD will later describe the Israelites, you may find yourself with more problems than you could ever imagine.

The mind that isn't like a father to his heart will raise a son who remains at an infantile or childish stage of moral development. This "father in denial of his adult, inner child" relationship creates an intrusiveness others then have to bear. Such people often become strangely selfless and self-sacrificing because they're out of conscious awareness of the relationship within themselves that's missing. They're running away from their life, playing hide-and-go-seek with themselves.

We refer to someone who's helpful to others as an "angel in disguise." But the most disguised angel of all lies within you. A messenger from GOD doesn't have to be anthropomorphic. He doesn't have to arrive in human form you can see. He doesn't have to speak to you out loud. His message doesn't even have to come from someone with chicken wings and a ring of light around his head for you to believe there are messages coming to you from an intelligent source within yourself. You are the most disguised angel you ever met.

"THE ANGEL OF THE LORD CALLED UNTO ABRAHAM OUT OF HEAVEN, AND HE SAID, 'ABRAHAM, ABRAHAM.' AND HE SAID, 'HERE I AM.' AND THE ANGEL SAID, 'DON'T LAY A HAND ON THE LAD. DON'T DO ANYTHING AGAINST HIM, FOR NOW I KNOW THAT YOU FEAR GOD SEEING THAT YOU HAVEN'T WITHHELD YOUR SON, YOUR ONLY SON FROM ME.'" [Genesis 22:12]

There may be a voice screaming inside you to be heard that you can't hear. You may be the angel you aren't listening to. Yours may be the voice whispering to you within, telling you that you've always been in awe of the mystery of being you.

Abraham doesn't know he'd never be able to forgive himself if he sacrifices Isaac. He doesn't see that his selflessness is more bizarre than his nephew Lot's devotion to total

strangers. Lot was willing to give his daughters to his neighbors for sex to express his loyalty to angels; Abraham is willing to murder his son for GOD's sake.

The rape of Noah by his son, Ham, was seemingly without reason. Lot's incestuous relationship with his daughters was even more bizarre because they did it for the sake of humanity: with rational cause. But neither compares to Abraham's decision to murder Isaac simply because GOD told him to. The obscenity of selflessness has reached a crescendo by this point in Torah.

A father who'd plan to kill his son to appease GOD begs the question, "Why?" Why would you sacrifice your child for anyone, let alone because GOD told you to do so?" People who are as conflicted as Abraham we describe today as "mentally ill." We don't laud them as pillars of our society or spiritual vessels of The Lord who personify our most cherished values.

Whether the voice that tells Abraham to stop what he's doing comes from within or around him doesn't matter. What matters is that it arrives in the nick of time. Torah is telling us that God works within us and GOD/GOD/G O D works around us with a timing that's often incredible. HIS participation in our life comes from both directions in ways we can't fathom or predict.

In the AKEDA {THE BINDING OF ISAAC}, it's an archangel who intercedes on GOD's behalf to let Abraham know that HE has rejected his sacrifice, before Abraham has a chance to give it. Angelic choices sometimes come *to* us and sometimes *from* us. When our head or heart makes an overly zealous choice, we need to know how our conscience can *stop* us or *start* us in order to avoid regrets.

We can't blame GOD for not stopping us in time from making a horrible mistake. Nor can we blame HIM for not motivating us when we need it. In Jewish law, after the age of 13, a boy is man enough to take responsibility for his own thoughts. But it can take a lifetime for him to learn how to take responsibility for his own feelings.

In psychological terminology, we'd say that it was Abraham's intuition that stopped him from acting out his violent intentions against Isaac. We'd say the voice of the messenger who interceded on Isaac's behalf came from within Abraham. We'd say he overcame his reckless impulsivity, a compulsion that drove him to act against his own better judgment.

We can't count on GOD sending angels to stop us from behaving insanely. That may have been the case 3,400 years ago according to Torah, but we're older and wiser today. Today we have to take responsibility for how we act on our thoughts, feelings, beliefs and desires. Today we have to discover how to bring *ourselves* angelic messages.

You can count on GOD/GOD/G O D, and you can count on the God within. But you can't count on them all alerting you to your best intentions. You have to learn that there's a difference between the world around you and the world within, and that the difference lies in your moral behavior toward yourself. The more you learn to count on yourself, the more you discover you can count on HIM/HIM/H I M.

The Victim's Point Of View

From his sons' points of view, Abraham sacrificed his children for the sake of 'GOD and that women that HE left him here with.' Ishmael was driven out of his father's house to appease Sarah, and Isaac was terrorized with an attempt on his life to appease GOD.

What difference would it have made to Ishmael and Isaac why their father mistreated them had neither of them lived to pass their experience on to their progeny? It's only GOD's intervention that makes this story interesting. Until you question how and when GOD intervenes on behalf of each of Abraham's sons, it's just another story about a deeply disturbed dad.

But, when we internalize the character of GOD as our conscience, we can look at Ishmael and Isaac as the head and heart of man personified. Abraham concludes that his inner child is illegitimate, and then takes out his anger on Ishmael. All reasoning has to first be driven out and perceived in projection.

The second time Abraham projects his heart out, it's for his legitimate son, Isaac. But then he thinks his conscience wants him to sacrifice his heart. In projection, this appears to Abraham as GOD having requested him to kill Isaac to appease HIM.

Outside observers reading Torah should compare Abraham to the modern-day zealots whose conscience struggles with wild thoughts and heartfelt feelings for self-discovery that they've projected onto others. Abraham can't set reasonable and compassionate limits on his behavior because his conscience isn't yet mature enough to weigh his thoughts against his feelings while including his desire to become a better person. In other words, he doesn't yet know how to use "S.O.S." the Spiritual Operating System.

An Abraham is a maturing man at the initial psychological stage in his life who witnesses himself as having a guilty conscience that neither his head nor heart can control. He's in search of redemption. He just doesn't know enough about himself to achieve redemption without causing more problems in the process.

The Temptation To Sacrifice Someone

The three-day trip that Abraham takes Isaac on from their home to Moriah can take some men a lifetime to complete. It's a journey within oneself in which a man has to choose to *embrace* guilt or *reject* it in favor of obedience to his conscience.

Using your conscience to do what you're told or to tell others what to do is a waste of a good conscience. Use your conscience primarily on yourself in GOD's presence. Develop your conscience before GOD while questioning your intentions at all times for moral clarity on how you're operating yourself.

GOD stopped Abraham from sacrificing Isaac. HE ended the Temple practices after Jesus willingly sacrificed Himself for the sake of the world. HE doesn't need you to turn your heart into a lamb for the slaughter. You don't have to kill yourself literally or figuratively on HIS/HIS behalf. Such behavior is a sign of guilt, not wisdom.

Those who have the greatest disdain for organized authority are the most prone to allowing other individuals' consciences to be their guide. And those who are deeply opposed to corruption and misconduct within themselves may, nevertheless, surrender their authority too easily to others. They simply do what they're told to do because their conscience isn't developed enough to guide them through thick and thin.

There's no one else inside you to tell you to behave any differently unless you look for evidence of God from within and are willing to answer to Him directly. And even then, He may choose to remain silent at times, forcing you to develop your conscience alone to thereby decide right from wrong for yourself.

Develop your conscience through everything you do so you won't ever need excuses and rationalizations to validate your behavior. Do what's right so that your enemies will

admire, not fear, you. If you can't come up with better reasons for doing what you're doing, you're probably doing something you shouldn't.

Modern man can no longer use the excuse that he's just following orders. He can't use Torah anymore to validate prejudice and hatred. He can't discriminate against others based on any sacred text. They were all written to elucidate the spiritual operating system within each of us. And that system is the same.

The covenant a man forms within himself between his head, heart and conscience, are precursors to a covenantal relationship he'll later celebrate with GOD. The Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, are all in the Covenantal Promise that mirrors positive relationships with ourselves that we could then be sharing with GOD.

It's man's desires, the delivery system of his power that causes him the most problems. It's his crotch that often leads him, not his head. When his serpent talks, his heart listens, and it's enchanted by "its" message. His heart then screws with his head, and causes his beliefs to contradict common sense.

When Abraham suddenly hears a ram caught in a nearby thicket, he realizes he can sacrifice an animal to GOD instead of his son. This doesn't break the projection of his heart onto his son. It reduces it. It stretches it. It makes it possible for a man to identify as an animal and then offer GOD an animal in place of a human being.

Abraham offers a ram to GOD. Christians pray to the lamb of GOD.

For not sacrificing his son, GOD blesses Abraham by promising to multiply his seed like the stars in the sky and the sand on the shore. And GOD will reiterate this vow to Isaac, promising him the same Land, and to multiply his seed.

In essence, GOD is leading man on a journey of self-discovery beginning with fruits that have moral importance to animals that have moral importance. Over time, man made his way through history to today; a time when we're expected to value the moral importance of everything around us, beginning with people, not ending with them.

The Unbinding Of Isaac

The unbinding of Isaac is the psychological inquiry we each have to make within ourselves as the result of the wrongs we've perpetrated against ourselves. Unbinding ourselves is a private matter that signifies a process of rebuilding the trust we've lost with ourselves that's mirrored in our broken relationships with others and GOD. Everything bad that ever happened to us from the moment we were born had GOD's hand in it. We're all here because we're all not all There. If you could have protected yourself better from you, you would have.

You're not innocent. Innocence is an insistence that you have nothing from which to heal. You're ignorant. There's no cure for innocence other than experience. But there *is* a cure for ignorance. It's education. With experience and an education, there's hope.

We have the ability to tie ourselves up in knots once our head and penis have conspired together like Abraham did with Isaac. But that's an improvement over what Abraham chose to do. This envy of ourselves is what causes us to reach out to sacrifice ourselves for what we believe will be for GOD' greater good.

Therefore we have to learn how to unbind ourselves spiritually from what we do to ourselves emotionally. Just rationalizing your way out of your issues won't help. You have to realize that there's an Isaac within you that needs spiritual intervention. And getting him off your altar is, in many ways, much harder than it was getting him on.

The Dome of the Rock where the Aqsa Mosque is built in Jerusalem commemorates three events: (1) the place where Abraham bound Isaac; (2) where Jesus prayed; and (3) where the P R O P H E T Mohammed rose to heaven where he convened with Moses and Jesus. There is just such a rock within you. If you don't take that spot in your heart to heart, you're not going to be able to personalize your place in the Abrahamic faiths.

Self-love is the key to this unbinding process. But Torah doesn't describe how Abraham untied Isaac. The knots that bound Isaac were surely, literally, easily cut, but the consequences of the experience must have lived on for a lifetime in both of them. The knots signify not only that Abraham had to be stopped from the binding process, but that he wasn't bound lovingly enough to Isaac from the start.

If Jesus hadn't turned over the tables of the moneychangers at the Temple that were still being used to buy sacrifices when He lived, that rock wouldn't be so deeply tied to Christianity. If it were only an inside job, GOD wouldn't have brought the P R O P H E T Mohammed to heaven from the exact same spot 700 years later. All of the Abrahamic faiths are tied to Jerusalem. Let's see if they're willing to admit the moral cause for that coincidence.

GOD/GOD/G O D could have made it much easier on everyone, but HE wanted HIS mystery to unfold in three ways that intersect from the one spot. That's not a coincidence except to an atheist, agnostic or someone from outside the Abrahamic faiths. Those of us who believe in GOD/GOD/G O D don't believe in coincidence, good luck or bad. We believe in uncovering HIS/HIS/H I S design so we can better be a part of it.

Self-knowledge and wisdom have to become a personal and intimate mission in life because we each have to unbind ourselves in order to receive appreciation from ourselves before we can appreciate others.

But this unbinding process has to happen one cord at a time. Cutting yourself free from yourself is the Abraham/Isaac experience each of us is secretly absorbed doing all day, every day.

We see reflections of the unbinding of Isaac in the stories of Isaac and Jacob, Jacob and Joseph, and Moses and Aaron.. This unbinding process will be echoed in the stories of the 12 tribes of Israel's descendants down through the ages. They're echoing this moment in you.

The guilt your father feels for the knots he tied you up with will resound in him with embarrassment, shame and humiliation on the day he meets his Maker (if not sooner). And the same will be true for you whether or not you have children, patients, pupils, pets or houseplants you care for.

You earn modesty as the result of untying your knot; you earn humility in cutting through your cord; and you earn loyalty by working your way out of the ties that bind. There's no guarantee in this that you'll ever be happy externally. But you will achieve tranquility within.

Your mind habitually ties your feelings back up in knots. Your heart habitually ropes you into doing things you wouldn't otherwise do. And people are forever lassoing you into doing something you don't really want to do. So you have to listen and follow your conscience to unlearn the bad habits passed down and instilled into you.

You can only achieve faith in yourself by listening patiently to the voice of guilt that calls out to you. Your belief in yourself is a Rubik's cube puzzle that isn't easy to solve. But think of all the ways in which you believe differently today from how you believed

earlier in your life. Your mind is changing; your heart is being transformed; and your soul is making it possible for you to transcend yourself and who you once were.

Don't let religion bind you with faith in GOD/GOD/G O D. Don't let your philosophy do so with principles. Meditation and contemplation are techniques that will help you observe the way you behave toward yourself. You can *ponder* to discover why you are the way you are. And then you can decide if you like the way you are, or whether you want to change, transform and transcend yourself to recreate yourself morally different.

You author yourself. You prepare, paint and polish yourself. You sculpt yourself. You design yourself. You fashion yourself. You partner yourself. You recreate yourself day-by-day. You are a work in progress. And Torah is your pen, brush, sandpaper, ruler, cutting board and dance partner.

Ishmael And Isaac

The Silently Bittersweet

When Abraham dies, Ishmael and Isaac meet at his grave and bury him. [Genesis 25] Half-brothers who have to share the absence and then the death of their {deeply disturbed} dad may feel an emptiness inside. There was something missing in Ishmael and Isaac's relationship with one another right from the start that neither addresses in this story. They may have an aching feeling inside, but neither has a way to address it.

Their disinterest in one another is a sign of the bitter fruit they were forced to consume. When a man has been damaged by someone who claims to love him, he tends to reproach or fear, rather than praise, the strangers he meets. Many of the descendants of Ishmael and Isaac see themselves today as more than just victims of circumstances, but martyrs to a cause.

The Muslim strikes out, and the Jew strikes in. And this spiritual dilemma ripples throughout the Middle East into each one of us. These Abrahamic brothers are both tied up in knots like Ishmael and Isaac.

It's all very educational and interesting when you see life as a school, GOD as our teacher, and you as a classmate to everyone in the world. Suddenly this world becomes a one-room schoolhouse. At times, we all feel ourselves sent to a corner of the room where we're in a "time-out" watching others as they learn. From there, we can see that when the lessons become too personal, we strike out, and when they're not personal enough, we strike in.

Through Ishmael and Isaac's brief union at the grave of their father, they momentarily stand together through their shared loss. But loss isn't emotional glue. You can't use your losses to bind forbidden fruit back onto twigs. You can't use your losses to prove your innocence before GOD. Loss of loved ones, loss of dignity and loss of your righteous name before The Lord will only bind you to those who are even more deeply disturbed than you.

A man will act more righteously when he can respect similarities of opinions rather than feelings of revenge. When you discover that people feel for you because they've felt the same way you do, you suddenly find that you respect them. And that can be a great surprise, one that GOD is banking on. The Muslim effort to get the Christians to feel for them has paid off. And as the losses of the Muslims and Christians increase, their mutual appreciation of the Jews will, too.

Ishmael and Isaac have both amassed a good deal of anger, fear and sorrow from their father's insensitivity toward them. But they avoid the guilt of standing up to him at his grave. They harbor their anger secretly and silently inside. They don't even speak to each other. They acquiesce to Abraham's outrageous behavior toward them by never even questioning it out loud so far as we know from the text. And in not questioning their father's behavior toward them, they inadvertently choose the historical path of obedience to tyrants and tycoons over loyalty to themselves and our Teacher. Like their father, Ishmael and Isaac choose selflessness and obedience to The Lord, because, like him, that's all they really know.

The characters of Genesis are cardboard. They're flat. The only thing that gives these stories depth is our distance from each of the characters. It's only in morally measuring this distance that we discover the importance of the reoccurring metaphor of Moses. He created a stage in seven days at the beginning of Genesis and then parades cardboard

characters upon it at various moral distances from one another and levels of denial that correspond to aspects of ourselves.

Moses is the greatest storyteller the world has ever known {in my opinion}. Christ's message is told for Him. And T H E P R O P H E T Muhammed will recite a story told by an angel about G O D.

Because Torah is an autobiography. Each story is a retelling of the previous story with a slightly more complicated, moral twist. And the playwright upstages himself by introducing his protagonist who has the same name. The character of Moses dies just before the end of the book. The demise of the playwright is anyone's guess.

Neither son in the story of Abraham can acknowledge he has good reason to be angry about the father GOD chose for him. Neither dares question GOD's intention. The little bit of guilt needed to question HIS authority suddenly becomes too precious for either of them to surrender. Both Ishmael and Isaac become cardboard characters; heads and hearts that don't have the desire to question what they believe to be true about the father GOD gave them.

GOD might have loved Abraham, Sarah and Hagar each in HIS own special way, but Ishmael and Isaac had good reason to hold resentments against all three of them, as well as to question GOD for the lot they were dealt with in life. Why would GOD give each son such imperfect parents? What could HE have been thinking?

Of course, we'll never know what GOD is ever thinking. What we do know is that HIS choice in parents is always loving and wise, whether or not we can fathom HIS intentions for us.

It's up to us to honor our parents by not repeating their mistakes and by repeating their virtues. And that's harder than it looks. Even Jesus had a mother who helped shape His personality in a way that was human enough for us to relate to, even if His Father's motives in seeing Him crucified on the cross is beyond description. If we don't question our parents' imperfections as mysteries that teach us to see GOD's loving plan for us in the time we're given here on Earth, we're not going to grow much while we're here.

Older men who terrorize younger men with their penis power recreate Abraham's relationships with his sons. Such young men often find themselves clawing at one another because of the limited love these older men have to offer. It's likely each will blame his own old man for the way he turned out. It's not likely he'll blame himself for much of anything.

A mother who feels forlorn and abandoned {Hagar} may provoke her little man of G O D {Ishmael} to worry needlessly. And a mother who's a quarrelsome princess {Sarai/Sarah} may provoke her little ball of laughter {Isaac} to becoming spoiled fruit that's virtually inedible, although it dangles precariously from a low branch of a Tree.

We can't change our parents, but we can change ourselves. We can embrace GOD/GOD/G O D, but only if we first wrap our arms around ourselves. There's no way to get There without first going through here-and-now.

Coming to GOD with your arms figuratively wrapped around your torso as though you were hugging a tree is the first position of prayer, not standing {Jewish}, kneeling {Christian} or crouching {Muslim} before HIM/HIM/H I M. First show HIM/HIM/H I M who you love the most, and *then* pray in the style of your tradition.

If you're only going to claim you love yourself without demonstrating it to GOD in your imagination, why bother? And if you don't give yourself a little friendly pat or a loving squeeze from time to time you're a rascal without much of a sense of humor.

Ishmael and Isaac are bittersweet half-brothers who can't speak candidly to one another about their feelings in the same way that you may have difficulty talking to yourself about yours. They model two halves of you that struggle within you. And the Middle East is the psychological laboratory where we can see the effects of this sibling rivalry in every man.

Abraham struggled to be faithful to three wives, eight sons, three strangers and a whole host of kings. But it was obviously too much for him to show faith *in* himself *to* himself as he performed for others. He left his inheritance to Isaac. He was told only to be faithful to GOD. Faith in GOD is every man's failure in life if he doesn't first strive to be faithful to himself.

Mom's Sour Milk

While standing at the grave of their father, Ishmael and Isaac have good reason to reflect on the other mother's ill will. Hager was far more willing to cry out to GOD for help than she was to scream at Abraham for mistreating her. And Sarah was far more willing to be rid of Hagar than to find a way to deal with the mess she, herself, had made.

The old boy's network will end when young men will feel guilty about the ways their father treated their mother that weren't kind, and are willing to create a world where that won't happen again. Men who teach their sons to stand up for the rights of women and children create family dynamics that are more successful and loving than we see in this story. And men like Abraham who acquiesce their love only to strangers oppress the next generation with examples dripping with hypocrisy in what not to do.

The worries of Ishmael have gone from cradle to grave, generation after generation, without teaching Muslim sons to stand up against their fathers. GOD heard Hagar's plea to help Ishmael. Now it's time for every Ishmael to help every Hagar.

The bond of brothers is the greatest force for peace in the world. Brothers are classmates in the school life who must learn to dedicate themselves to making sure everybody has a chance to get good grades. Brothers have a duty to help one another over and above their duty to the previous generation. The world doesn't progress when our conscience puts our allegiance to our parents above our allegiance to our siblings. Brotherhood is the essence of the Abrahamic faiths, even though each approaches brotherhood from a different direction.

Muslims should use Torah as their spiritual text just as the Christians do. T H E P R O P H E T Muhammed has made that possible by using your own experiences to reinterpret the stories of Torah that appear in The Quran. And if they compare and contrast those experiences to what I've written, they should find new moral meaning in their efforts.

The Muslim path to inner peace {and peace between the nations} ought to be followed with actions that oppose their fathers' for the sake of their brothers. Their societies must be modernized with a more modern world view. Letting cranky, old, "religious" leaders tell you what to do to make G O D happy isn't going to prepare your sons for a future in this world, or the next. And circumcising your sisters and daughters to stop them from wanting a full education in this school or killing medical personnel who are trying to heal them with vaccinations – isn't helping in the least. Old Islam is bad Islam. New Islam is good Islam.

For Jews and Christians, Ishmaels and Isaacs, model both halves of the psychological personifications of our broken hearts. The Christians claim that the Jews have never understood their Sacred Heart. And the Jews claim that the Christians have rarely demonstrated it. For those of us who luxuriate in the Judeo-Christian New World culture, this struggle must be approached through spiritual psychology, for we all suffer individually with a broken heart that needs mending.

Jesus is the personification for Judeo-Christians of the broken heart made whole. Jesus is the Jewish bridge that every Christian must cross. And every Jew is the personification of that bridge when his arms are outspread with loyalty and love for all of GOD's/GOD's/G O D's designs.

Today's Judeo-Christian takes one bite out of guilt and then wants to throw the rest away. The Muslim insists he knows nothing of guilt, that he never touches the stuff. Imagine the scorn and derision of Hindus and Buddhists reading this text. Imagine GOD's next step in teaching men what they next need to know. If you don't take yourself *personally* you're never going to take anyone else *seriously*.

The sibling rivalry of Jews and Christians was revealed through 2,000 years of European history that ended with the Holocaust. The sibling rivalry of Jews and Muslims is unfolding in the Middle East today, and it's looking sad, as well. The spiritual solution to this spiritual, family crisis has to be worked out in the New World and transplanted to the Middle East. Here The Land holds a GOD-given promise of personal freedom that's unique to all other places on Earth. Here the Israel in everyman can be embraced individually. Here every man can become a Moses and Muhammed unto himself. Here no one can become Jesus because godliness is something we strive for but know we can't obtain.

The essence of the metaphors and symbols that make life real come to us from Israel. The similes come from Saudi Arabia. If you want to escape the prison of materialism, you should embrace the metaphors, symbols and similes from GOD/GOD/G O D. You should look at life as a spiritual adventure.

Isaac

Isaac isn't just an abused child who has to suffer under his father's roof. He grows up to become a man who epitomizes the ongoing psychological development of every man who's open to opening himself to himself.

But Isaac's dealings with others will always include an unwillingness to fight. As an adult, he claims his wife, Rebecca, is his sister rather than have to defend her against the Philistines. {Abraham did the same with Sarah when they lived in Egypt.} When Isaac becomes rich and powerful, the Philistines ask him to leave, and he does so to appease them. [Genesis 26] Isaac is the original pacifist and mama's boy.

He was so terrified by his father as a child that every Isaac becomes a shadow image of Abraham. Underneath Isaac's passive demeanor lies a man who's seething at his core. How can a small child be threatened to death by his father and not come away with unresolved rage?

Adam was furious at GOD for the mother {Eve} that GOD gave him. Isaac is furious at GOD for the father that HE gave him, too. (The truth may not be pleasant, but it's refreshing if you've only been raised on canned answers to everything.) An Adam is upset with the

heart {Eve} he got. An Isaac is upset with the penis {desire} he got. Isaac's secret desire is for revenge against Abraham and every man that Abraham resembles.

This is the source of anti-Semitism. It begins in the Jews. And it must be fought by the Jews first from within. If the Christians and Muslims are ever going to stop mirroring our self-hatred, they're going to have to look at their own, not ours.

Isaac's serpent {penis} would love to say, "Read my lips," but no words are ever literally going to come out of its mouth. Isaac is pissed, but he can't get back at his father because of the tribal society he lives in. He has no choice but to unconsciously pass on his rage down to his children. An Isaac has no other legacy.

There are three psychological types that come out of Yiddish folklore, the *schlemiel*, the *schlimazel*, and the *nebbish*. The *schlemiel* spills the hot coffee. {Abraham is a *schlemiel*.} It lands on the *schlimazel* {Ishmael}. And the *nebbish* {Isaac} is obliged to clean it up. {Jacob, Isaac's second son, will demonstrate having internalized all three of these types. Jacob will spill his coffee, burns himself, and then have to clean up the mess that he made.}

But the rightwing Christians and fanatical Muslims are *schlemiels* like Abraham. The uneducated Christians and Muslims are *schlimazels* like Ishmael. And the righteous, modern man who wants to clean up their mess is the *nebbish* like Isaac.

Those of us like Isaac who turn our back on a fair fight, disdain ourselves deep down inside for being weak and without backbone. We aren't respected by those modern men who don't hesitate from this spiritual fight.

As Isaac grew up we first saw the *nebbish* in him when Abraham realized he had to find a wife for Isaac because Isaac was more the bookworm type who didn't exhibit the social skills to find one for himself. And when he met Rebecca for the first time he behaved awkwardly by figuratively bringing him home to meet "mom" after Sarah had died. "ISAAC BROUGHT HER INTO THE TENT OF HIS MOTHER SARAH, AND HE MARRIED REBECCA. SO SHE BECAME HIS WIFE, AND HE LOVED HER; AND ISAAC WAS COMFORTED AFTER HIS MOTHER'S DEATH." [Genesis 24:67]

The binding of Isaac in childhood by Abraham left scars and tender spots in Isaac. In modern psychological terminology we'd say that his father was domineering and overly strict with him. We'd say that Isaac is a "mama's boy" or "artistic type" who doesn't do as well in the world of assertive men. He isn't competitive. He wants to assuage people rather than confront them. He likes the company of women more than men. He brings his wife into his mother's house to continue playing house with his wife as he did with his mother (except for sex).

Torah honors this sort of youngster. GOD makes HIS Covenant with this son of Abraham, not Ishmael. There are plenty of men in the world who exhibit the characteristics of wild donkeys. There are far more *nebbishes* than *schlimazels*. But the *nebbish* who's sensitive and shy holds a special place in GOD's heart.

The unbinding of Isaac is a lifelong psychological process that no man should feel he has to do all alone. Abraham thoughtfully decides to send a servant out to find Isaac a wife, and the servant comes back with REBECCA, whose name, ironically, means, "TO BIND." He'll detach from the binding within him. She'll bind him to her, and he'll come to know and love the emotional cords that tie him to the world of women through the beloved wife his father found for him. But from his father, Isaac will struggle all his life to untie the ropes that bind him by discovering the *schlemiel* in himself that he didn't know was there.

Although there's never any mention of Isaac holding a resentment against Sarah for the way Abraham treated him, one has to question whether a son who's been abused by his father can avoid wondering why his mother didn't do more to protect him. What was she thinking? How could she continue to see her son as so special and so precious when the world saw otherwise?

This question will be the only bridge Ishmael and Isaac really have to cross. Ishmael will cross it from the side of powerlessness. Isaac will cross it from the side of powerfulness. This is the concern of half-brothers whose mothers couldn't or wouldn't stand up to their dad to protect them from him.

Esau And Jacob

Gambling On A Good Conscience

Esau and his brother Jacob are twin sons born to the Patriarch Isaac and his wife Rebecca. Rebecca claims that the boys are struggling with one another even in the womb. Esau is born first, and Jacob is born moments after, coming out clutching his brother's heel. [Genesis 25] The name "YAKOV" means "ON THE HEELS." It's as if Jacob doesn't struggle to come out of the womb. He lets his brother pull him through it as though Esau were a horse and Jacob rode in on a carriage.

Rebecca received word from a divine oracle telling her, "THE OLDER SHALL SERVE THE YOUNGER." [Genesis 25:3] Esau and Jacob's struggle for power mirrors the unstated struggle between their father, Isaac, and his older half-brother, Ishmael. The unspoken tension between the half-brothers {Ishmael and Isaac} has been brought into the womb of one woman with the fraternal twins: Esau and Jacob.

Ishmael and Isaac's alienation from one another was caused by a father {Abraham} who couldn't keep peace under his roof, and mothers {Hagar and Sarah} who didn't do more to protect their sons from their father. Esau and Jacob's relationships with their father, Isaac, is set in place by their spiritual legacy even before they were even born.

Esau will be the apple of Isaac's eye. Esau will represent everything worldly and masculine that Isaac doesn't personify. And Jacob will represent the third generation of the Patriarchs. Jacob will get all wrapped up in mischief and chicanery and then, like Houdini, will magically unshackle himself from it.

The struggle for power between biblical brothers began in the second story of Genesis with Cain and Abel, and it'll be resolved with the cooperative team spirit of Aaron and his younger brother, Moses, in Exodus. In *biblical* terms the older brothers in Torah learn the importance of serving the unstated needs of their younger brothers. In *psychological* terminology, a man's head learns to serve the needs of his heart. In *political* terminology, the majority learns to follow the sociological role model set by the minority. And in *spiritual* terminology, every man is given challenges that will hopefully teach him to serve his conscience humbly.

But in religious terminology I have to liken this story to the squirrels I feed that live in a tree in my garden. The squirrels come out when they're hungry and scamper about as I watch them while I write. Once one even jumped on my window screen and pranced about exposing his underbelly to me. I told my friends how I've trained them to take food from me. But my friends have brought up the excellent question of whether *they* haven't trained me!

The anti-Semitism in the religious world that we've been experiencing for millennia is always a call to the Jews that the Christians are hungry and the Muslims are thirsty. (There's a bird bath in my garden as well.) It's their way of training us to come out of our house into the garden and feed them or refresh the little oasis I've got for them.

Granted, they're adorable! But Christians aren't squirrels and Muslims aren't birds. And the garden isn't mine. It belongs to everyone in the building. If Christians are hungry for more wisdom and Muslims are thirsty for love, they should come to our table and eat with us. They're not aspects of nature. They're men just like us. And it's only when you eat with a man (or have sex with him) that you come to know him intimately.

The humility gleaned from such lessons in life will open some to GOD-consciousness. Others will go through this spiritual process without conscious understanding of its

spiritual or biblical essence. They're feel like they're in bondage to a hunger and thirst that they can't find words to describe. But THE WORDS/WORDS/W O R D S are all there for anyone to use. They just haven't bothered to study them with Godly intention.

Unlike Ishmael and Isaac who were born out of a love triangle of two mothers with the same father, the struggles of Esau and Jacob stem from the same parents. But the spiritual source of every man's struggle for self-understanding isn't just the result of the training he receives from his guardians in childhood. The source of his spiritual struggle is complicated by his unique relationship with GOD/GOD/G O D. Elucidating these complex psychological relationships is the primary purpose of Torah in this modern day and age.

As Jewish and Christian believers of The Hebrew Testament become more intimate with the psychological development of these seemingly cardboard characters that have been invisibly moving across our inner stage for thousands of years, Jews and Christians discover more intimacy within themselves that they can share with one another. They see other characters playing out their parts, and wonder how they can develop more than just length and width. But the depth of SCRIPTURE/SCRIPTURE/S C R I P T U R E can't be fathomed without proper protocols. Knee-jerk reactions will otherwise ensue.

As the reader of Torah sees his own character develop, The Hebrew Testament becomes hauntingly real and timely. And when he looks back at the various perspectives he once held in his past, they turn into markers of the mystery of his future. And he then becomes curious, not fearful, of GOD. He then becomes curious to read The Christian Bible and Quran for further extensions of THE WORD of GOD. And then others will, hopefully, become curious to read about THE WORD of GOD.

Esau and Jacob are the next, more intimate, generation of internalized voices we can all come to see in ourselves. Although they literally struggle for space in their mother's womb, they'll epitomize siblings figuratively struggling for psychological space for the rest of their lives.

Fighting for freedom is like fighting for space. Some get to take it for granted. Others struggle for every inch of freedom they get.

"THE BOYS GREW UP, AND ESAU BECAME A SKILLFUL HUNTER, A MAN OF THE OPEN COUNTRY, WHILE JACOB WAS CONTENT TO STAY AT HOME AMONG THE TENTS. ISAAC, WHO HAD A TASTE FOR WILD GAME, LOVED ESAU, BUT REBECCA LOVED JACOB." [Genesis 25:27]

Esau represents the man Isaac could never grow up to be. Esau is virile, powerful and manly. He holds the attributes Isaac might have used to conceal the scar left by his father if Isaac's abilities externally had been more powerful.

Jacob mirrors Isaac's temperament, the temperament that so attracted Rebecca to Isaac to begin with. Jacob is a mama's boy like his father. Jacob's mother {Rebecca} sees the vulnerable side of Isaac in this son. And so Jacob is her favorite.

Things just inexplicably seem to work out for Jacob. Because he's his mother's favorite, she not only takes Jacob's side, but even schemes against Esau on Jacob's behalf. In his mother's eyes, Jacob can do no wrong. And this blessing of love and affirmation turns Jacob into a gambler who foolhardily places his bets, and then miraculously comes away a winner.

Because Jacob has the luxury of being able to take matters of the heart for granted {because his mama loves him unconditionally}, he's free to invest his attentions on matters of his mind. He places importance on being shrewd and conniving. He used his wits to get out of the womb, and although he came into the world in second place, Jacob would never

have been concerned about the adage that “good guys finish last.” In his opinion, “goodness” has nothing to do with the way things will turn out. He’s smart, unconditionally beloved by his mother and blessed by GOD. He has what everyone is secretly envious of: good luck right from the start, regardless of what he looks like morally in other men’s eyes.

Jacob surely must have heard about his grandfather’s binding of his father, but it only seems to have encouraged him to take the attitude that he’d never let anyone do that to him. Jacob is deeply suspicious of manly men like his brother, Esau. Like his father, Isaac, Jacob isn’t a fighter. And although his older brother is just the opposite, impetuous, brawny and masculine, their mother, Rebecca, teaches Jacob how to get the better of Esau.

Rebecca demonstrates that the three faces of Eve {Sarai, Hagar, Sarah} can exist in one woman. She shows her quarrelsome side {Sarai} to her son Esau, her forlorn side {Hagar} to her other son Jacob, and her regal side {Sarah} to her husband Isaac. She’s the personification of three characters glued together to produce one with length, width and depth. She’s interesting, although morally beguiling for taking sides in the squabbles of her sons.

The secret to self-improvement lies in a man’s interest in growing (1) physically, (2) intellectually, (3) emotionally, (4) spiritually and (5) materially. *Physical* growth is only the first step in growing up. *Intellectual* accomplishments require a mind that can change with the times. *Emotional* intelligence requires a heart that can be transformed with adverse obstacles. And *spiritual* proximity to The Lord asks us to explore soul-searching for faith in ourselves that we can then bestow upon HIM.

But man requires *material* comfort as well. That is achieved through his desires. Success with all five forms of growth is contingent on many factors that boil down to “nature” {the world inside your skin} and “nurture” {the world around your skin}.

Getting Into First Place By Trying Harder

Esau is Isaac’s favorite. As a hunter, Esau has a rapport with the outer world that Isaac couldn’t attain because of poor eyesight {nature} and familial circumstances at home beyond his control {nurture}. Isaac could never have been a jock; he’s the sort of guy who avoids developing bodily strength. He’s like the skinny kid who can’t develop much in the way of muscle and doesn’t even want to try.

Isaac admires Esau for his skin-deep strength and virility. Esau is the man Isaac always wanted to be. But Isaac will later suffer when Esau’s spiteful attitude in choosing a mate becomes a source of grief to Isaac and Rebecca.

As adolescents, Jacob comes up with a plan to trick Esau into handing over his inheritance. {The firstborn was traditionally given the land and all the wealth that came with it.} Jacob waits for Esau to come home hungry, and then extracts his birthright from him for some bread and a bowl of soup. [Genesis 25]

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Esau has the eyesight of a hunter who can shoot a deer in the woods, but Jacob has a keener vision that can nab more subtle “game.” Jacob can see what will be best for him in the long run, and he doesn’t need a bow and arrow to get it: just bread and a bowl of soup will do.

Esau may be emotionally reckless in giving up his inheritance to assuage his hunger, but Jacob is spiritually reckless in not seeing the moral ramifications of this theft. Jacob mops Esau up financially in a way that's not dissimilar to how Cain physically dispensed with Abel. And like Cain, Jacob doesn't bother to ponder whether he is, or is not, his brother's keeper. Cain may have been the older brother, but in this story, the younger brother, Jacob, finds a way to get his way.

GOD told Cain that he'd be a fugitive and a vagabond for murdering his brother, but Jacob thinks he has only to answer to his father, Isaac, for his actions, not to GOD. And so Jacob figures out a way to finagle Isaac's blessings as well as Esau's inheritance.

The character of GOD in this story takes HIS usual backseat role, allowing the characters to demonstrate what their conscience believes despite their moral weaknesses and immaturity. In Adam and Eve the serpent works directly with the two of them to get what they want. In Cain and Abel, the serpent works his way through the desires of both brothers to seek GOD's blessings, even though we're allowed to see through both their motives. Then GOD drowns all of mankind, demolishes the tower to power, and wipes out major cities on Earth.

But now HE seems to want to give Jacob more rope. HE wants to see if he'll weave a basket or hang himself.

Of course, by this point in Torah, the actions of the main characters are much more complex {and therefore, so are GOD's reactions}. Jacob makes it morally more difficult for us to judge him as all good or bad. And that becomes a good exercise for *our* conscience.

Jacob will show little interest in GOD or his conscience until late in life. Like his father, Isaac, he, too, will suffer from poor eyesight. Isaac was blind to justice; he walked away from every fight he should have fought. But Jacob is blind to mercy. Jacob's moral blindness to kindness will rob him of emotional wellbeing. He won't wrestle with his conscience, but he'll wrestle in his conscience with his desires instead. He'll fight the serpent that wants him to steal. But he'll lose.

Esau becomes so enraged by Jacob's deception that Esau wants to kill him. This is an ironic twist on the story of Cain and Abel where Abel can do nothing but call out to GOD to balance the scale. Here Esau is depicted as the older brother who's strong, determined and not only quite capable of handling the matter himself, he's even determined to get even by taking Jacob's life. The tables have figuratively turned. We're given a chance to see that even cardboard characters have another side to them.

Because of Esau's vindictive nature, Jacob is forced to flee for his life from his parents' home. And because Rebecca has always looked out for Jacob's best interest, she arranges for him to move in with her brother: Leban. But that means that Jacob will have to leave home and become what will later be described as "A STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND." [Exodus 2:22]

The mark of Cain is figuratively upon Jacob. He becomes a stranger to his own family as well as a stranger out in the world. He's every young man who has to run out into the world a little sooner than he expected because of circumstances at home.

Jacob is unabashed by what he's done to cause such a ruckus. He's stolen his brother's birthright, impersonated Esau, thereby tricking his father into giving him his blessings – and all with his mother's help. Jacob is every young man who's born with a silver spoon in his mouth. He's forbidden fruit that's spoiled rotten from the start.

You wouldn't want to be like Jacob, and yet you know he's really always been forbidden fruit unto himself. He's not the sort of fellow who's ever going to be able to honestly say he loves himself. He has no conscience so far as we can tell.

The fact that Jacob has had to flee his parent's home and go out into the world a little sooner than he planned doesn't much matter to him because he knows he's bright, industrious and lucky. The fact that he's alienated himself from his brother; deceived their father; and used his mother, all for selfish motives – doesn't concern him in the least. Jacob doesn't think he needs a conscience, and you can see he doesn't want one. He's only looking for ways to beat the system.

Jacob might have a conscience. He might be fighting the serpent of desire within. But he's losing the fight inside himself because he's only interested in winning the fight outside himself. But he's willing to sacrifice morality for the sake of the "game."

Like his father {Isaac} and his father {Abraham} before him, Jacob doesn't have the luxury of giving thought to the importance of liking or loving himself. The world that's important to him is the external world. He has very little in the way of an inner world to speak of.

Esau: A Father's Favorite

Esau is emotionally jumpy, as though he's afraid of his feelings having to be caught, pinned down or restrained. Esau can't be reasonable about the binding of Isaac by Abraham. He identifies emotionally with his father's childhood trauma of having almost been killed by Abraham. Esau fears that something similar may happen to him. (And it does.)

Esau isn't just hungry when Jacob offers him the soup; he's ravenous. Esau must get his stomach filled at all cost. He feels emotionally as he does physically: starved. And Jacob was shrewd enough to see that and tempt him at the right moment with food.

The shrewd, like Jacob, seem blessed with money and good fortune. They find a way to survive in every generation. They've got the Midas touch. They develop their head more than their heart, and therefore they just don't deal with their feelings of guilt.

At this early stage of Genesis, it looks as though GOD isn't going to leave the external world to make his way into the characters as their conscience. It looks as though HE's just going to wait, watch and see.

The Recreation Of The Trauma Of The Father

Esau and Jacob unconsciously recreate the AKEDA {THE BINDING OF ISAAC} by living it out vicariously on one another. Their father's binding becomes a spiritual legacy Esau and Jacob don't realize they've inherited. They epitomize brothers who psychologically bind one another. The former {Jacob} intellectually binds the latter {Esau}, and the latter {Esau} emotionally binds the former {Jacob}.

To modern man, the intellectual and emotional successes in life are just as important as material success. We want it all. Nature is just as important as nurture. Modern man would like to fuse Esau and Jacob into one, to make our head and heart instant best friends. But that can't be done with artificial exclamations of self-intimacy or insincere promises of self-love.

There's no way to utter a vow of loyalty to yourself that you can believe without a struggle in the external world. You have to prove to yourself that you're there for you. GOD has to challenge you in some way that you didn't anticipate.

Your thoughts are logical and your feelings, rational. They don't speak the same language. They need a universal translator. They need a conscience as their middleman. You can only vow to do right by you. You can't promise to think only good thoughts or not feel spiteful from time to time. That's just not normal.

The solder that fuses your head and heart together has to come with great heat and illumination. Your head and heart have to be bonded together with experiences that will ignite your curiosity with questions about what happens around you in terms of what happening within.

But that usually includes a burn. The solder that unifies thoughts {illumination} and feelings {warmth} is going to burn. That's just a reality of life. Solder are beliefs that, when hardened, hold thoughts to feelings in more subtle, sophisticated ways.

You need two worlds to develop a conscience. One is not enough. And that's something GOD seems to have thought of even as HE was constructing the world as a moral stage and all the men and women as moral players in it.

Learning about the spiritual vehicle you've been poured into has to be done in both your worlds. That's why life is harder than it first looks. That's why older people sometimes can claim to know more than younger people about the subtleties of life. That's why a struggle with GOD {ISRAEL} is imperative. That's why you have to go through the motherboard struggle of assembling the crucial components of your inner computer, including the central processing unit, memory and connectors for input and output devices. And that is going to burn.

Esau is bound to Isaac's legacy with emotional strings, and Jacob is tied to Esau with intellectual cords. And when the ties cut too deep, Esau threatens to kill his brother. Jacob, on the other hand, thinks he's tied only to Esau's money, property and the prestige that comes of being the firstborn. And so Jacob resolves to escape Esau's desire for revenge.

Both sons have been psychologically tied to their father with ropes that bind them with no less constraint than those Abraham literally used on Isaac. Yet neither son sees the spiritual legacy he's inherited. Such is the truth about family dynamics in Genesis. Such is the poetic truth about your psychological relationship to yourself at the early stage of evolving a conscience.

Imagine that the rope Abraham used to tie up Isaac, Isaac passed down the Esau and Jacob. And now the two of them {Esau and Jacob} are in a tug-of-war using that very same rope. And none of them {including Abraham and Isaac} see that rope as like an umbilical cord that ties them to GOD.

Jacob doesn't have the foresight to see that stealing his brother's inheritance may cost him in many other ways. And Esau is equally myopic by having scorned his inheritance in the first place. In the end they'll drop the rope by coming to a spiritual stalemate, and will end up going their separate ways. They'll never come to love one another. They typify brotherhood in many families and many men's attitude about to halves of themselves. Esau and Jacob represent two aspects of a broken heart that coexist broken. Their relationship can't be mended. Their struggle in the womb will remain a struggle for life.

Discarding Rotten Fruit

It's one thing to steal forbidden fruit, suffer with the consequences of your mistake, apologize, make amends and promise never to do it again. It's quite another to take a bite, discover it's rotten, discard the rest, and take your chances that the evidence won't be seen and traced back to you.

Modern man prides himself on becoming an expert in extricating himself from guilt whatever the cost. He's a Houdini of the head and heart. He's in a spiritual, criminal class that steals his own spiritual inheritance out from under himself for the sheer sport of evading his conscience. And by doing it unconsciously it becomes all the more insidious.

Jacob isn't clever; he's *too* clever. Esau isn't heartfelt; he's *overly* emotional. Modesty, humility and grace may sound good to both of them on paper, but inside they're filling themselves with sarcasm, cynicism and scorn for one another.

The appearance of virtue will do just fine when you don't want to look too closely at your own spiritual development. But, behind the scenes, i.e. in the back of Jacob's mind and Esau's heart, each will do whatever he has to, to avoid making internal improvements.

Self-love is hardest for those who scorn others because they don't realize they're scorning themselves as well. They can't fill themselves with peace because they're already filled to the brim with derision. They're dark inside. They're empty of light. They ought to empty themselves of darkness in order to fill themselves with light. But they won't. They can't. They should, but they refuse to see the evidence for needing to.

The only way to acknowledge the vast darkness within man and the points of light piercing through it is to compare them to the night sky. The only way to make your way through self-righteous indignation at the way the world treats you is with the laughter Sarah modeled: the laughter that comes with relief. There is no other way.

No man is the personification of relief – with, perhaps, the exception of Jesus. Certainly no Jew I've ever met has personified only laughter. Jews may be known for making good comedians, but laughter only leads to tears when there's no relief.

Everyone is an Esau and a Jacob. Everyone is in a sibling rivalry with himself if not with others and himself. If you don't look at the evidence within you and around you in both your worlds, GOD is simply going to cut the pie for you, and you're going to have to live with the slice that you're given without understanding why you got what you got.

The Value Of Insincerity

The name "ESAU" means "HAIRY." Esau is emotionally unkempt, unruly, wild and hard to manage. Hair is that part of the human body that can be messy without us being aware of how bad it makes us look to others. Our hair can be unruly without us even realizing it's out of place. Unkempt hair corresponds to feelings that are wild and seemingly impossible to manage. Messy hair corresponds to manners that are undignified despite your most polite intentions.

Esau represents the heart of the uncivilized Jew, the Ishmael of the Islam dynasty. Both are emotional. They're reactive. The difference is that Ishmael is reactive because of his father, while Esau is reactive because of his brother.

When you see people touch the hair on their head; worry about their hair being cut; or move their hair out of their eyes or behind their ears – you're looking at people who are using body language to describe the emotional side of themselves. Ishmael may have been

described as a “WILD DONKEY OF A MAN,” but we understand that that means he’s hairy everywhere.

Rebecca suggests Jacob wear an animal pelt on his arm to impersonate Esau when Jacob comes before Isaac, whose vision is so poor he can’t tell one son from another without touching them. Isaac confuses Jacob with Esau because Jacob is wearing a pelt. That’s why Isaac bestows upon Jacob the blessings of the first-born. [Genesis 27]

“Wearing an animal pelt” is the biblical way of describing insincerity. Today we’d say that Jacob “pulled the wool over” his father’s eyes. Jacob buttered him up. He went through the motions to elicit the emotions he wished to trigger.

Confusing one son with another because one is hairy and the other is smooth is Torah’s way of implying that Isaac looks at his sons superficially. He sees only the obvious, not the deeper aspects of their individual personalities. Today Isaac would be described as a parent who’s blind to the faults of his precious, little darlings.

But, at an even deeper level, you have to ask yourself how any father could confuse his son’s hairy arm with sheepskin. It seems so unbelievable that you have to question whether Isaac was not only treated like a sacrificial lamb by Abraham; but whether he ended up thinking like one. If he couldn’t tell the difference between sheepskin and his own son’s arm, the victim role must have been deeply ingrained in him.

Psychological Inheritance As A Gift From GOD

The new metaphor presented in this story is ‘spiritual legacy as psychological burden.’ Isaac’s childhood trauma with Abraham becomes a spiritual legacy Isaac unknowingly bestows upon his sons. But Esau and Jacob are obsessed with their father’s money, property and prestige, not the trauma he’d been through as a child. {Esau unconsciously wants to avoid the feelings of victimization Isaac went through. Jacob wants to consciously use the money Isaac bequeathed to Esau to avoid the material consequences of victimization: lack of freedom and power.}

Jacob can sense his hunger for material success, but he can only move across the stage like a cardboard character doing a choreographed dance. He can’t reflect on himself as can a modern character in a play. Why GOD continues HIS Covenant with Abraham and Isaac through him, Jacob doesn’t bother to ask himself.

To see yourself as bound on the inside, you have to see the evidence for that around you to appreciate it within. You have to see the victim in you as a legacy bestowed upon you by your father. And you have to see your conscience fill with the GOD/GOD/G O D consciousness that will turn your conscience into a unique soul.

Carrying your father’s spiritual inheritance consciously is a luxury you can learn to appreciate. If you don’t, you’ll only feel used and abused by others throughout your life. You’ll hold resentments against your father that will never blossom into self-knowledge you’ll be proud of having earned because you’ve advanced your father’s admirable ends.

Don’t let the fraternal twins within you get you down. You may literally be a man, but you’re also a Rebecca with two figurative boys inside you punching and kicking you when you least expect it. If you remember Torah’s description of the psychological burden going back to The Creation Story, you’ll be able to understand brotherhood from the perspective of the outsider: the character of GOD in these stories.

When Jacob runs away from home to get away from Esau, he finds himself alone at night in the desert. There, he dreams of a ladder to heaven on which angels are ascending

and descending. In this dream GOD states HIS Covenant with him. “I WILL GIVE YOU AND YOUR DESCENDANTS THE LAND ON WHICH YOU ARE LYING. YOUR DESCENDANTS WILL BE LIKE THE DUST OF THE EARTH, AND YOU WILL SPREAD OUT TO THE WEST AND TO THE EAST, TO THE NORTH AND TO THE SOUTH. ALL PEOPLES ON EARTH WILL BE BLESSED THROUGH YOU AND YOUR OFFSPRING. I AM WITH YOU AND YOUR OFFSPRING. I AM WITH YOU AND WILL WATCH OVER YOU WHEREVER YOU GO, AND I WILL BRING YOU BACK TO THIS LAND. I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU UNTIL I HAVE DONE WHAT I HAVE PROMISED YOU.” [Genesis 28:15]

What began as a broad promise of loyalty to Abraham in GOD’s Covenant with him was narrowed into a promise of Land for Isaac. But the Covenant is made even more specific for Jacob through GOD’s vow of personal protection while Jacob is lying alone at night on The Land that is now his.

And yet, we still have to ask ourselves, “Why him?” What does Jacob have in the way of moral potential that matters so much to GOD? And how can I get some of that, too?

Another question might be “What is Esau morally missing?” And Torah gives us that answer next. When Esau discovers that Jacob is actually going to obey Isaac by going to Rebecca’s brother as his father commands, Esau is beside himself with rage. He decides to be DAFKA {SPITEFUL}, to express the contrary side of his nature. He marries a daughter of Ishmael, precisely the sort of woman Isaac would disapprove of, and leads a reckless life just to hurt his parents.

Although Jacob doesn’t have a conscience developed enough to see life as a moral challenge, he doesn’t go out of his way to be contrary and vindictive to his parents either. His head might be disconnected from his conscience, but he isn’t spiteful by nature. He wanted his father’s money and his blessing; and he did succeed in getting the *blessing*. Isaac admits, “I BLESSED HIM—AND INDEED HE WILL BE BLESSED” [Genesis 27]

Abraham was a perpetrator who was chosen by GOD because he cared for strangers. Isaac was a victim who was chosen by GOD because he chose to avoid fights whenever possible. And of Isaac’s twins, Esau and Jacob, Jacob is chosen by GOD because he’s got brains and isn’t spiteful by nature. GOD’s design is mysterious, but it isn’t impossible to fathom.

Once forbidden fruit is spoiled with spite, it becomes inedible. It’s soured. It’s bitter. But those, like Jacob, who are morally foolish are just green. Such men can still ripen. What to do with rotten fruit is the spiritual problem the world has been struggling with for millennia. How to cut out the bad parts of one’s self to salvage what’s edible is everyone’s struggle with GOD/GOD/G O D.

The Ladder To GOD

On his way to live with his uncle Leban, Jacob falls asleep at night in the wilderness. Using a rock as a pillow, he slumbers in the sand, where he dreams of a ladder stretching up from the Earth to heaven upon which angels are ascending and descending. [Genesis 28]

Jacob is alone in the desert that night, probably his first time away from his family. He’s every lone, young traveler who leaves home with good reason but without having thought about where he’s really going or how he’d like things to work out for him in the end.

But suddenly in this dream, Jacob's soul reveals a shift in perspective. He finds a way to get to heaven from within. He finds a way to connect with the God within. But he doesn't realize it. He thinks he's connected with the GOD of his father and forefather.

Jacob is every vagabond who unconsciously concludes that in addition to having run away from home, he's a fugitive who has to run away from GOD. Jacob sees himself spiritually from the outside in, but he can't make intellectual sense of what he's looking at. He's the dreamer who can't interpret his own dreams.

The ladder he perceives, in psychological terminology, connects his head and heart to the God within him in his conscience. The angels going up are his thoughts, and the angels coming down are his feelings. His inner eye can see what's happening in his dream, but it can't make sense of what it means. He's never viewed himself from his conscience before. He doesn't know where he's looking from. He only has a faint clue to what he's looking at.

What were in the story of The Tower of Babel literal steps humanity constructed to get to heaven to dethrone GOD, have been transformed in this dream into a spiritual steps {ladder} Jacob is given to get where all of us want to go to from within.

In his dream, Jacob finds his way up to GOD in the heavens of his inner world. Think of it as a rope ladder that has been sanctified by The Lord. It's a way used by angels, those inner dynamics in us we're responsible for learning to recognize and respect. It's the path to and from every man's soul that the God within is ready to reveal to modern man.

Unbeknownst to Jacob, this is the moral ladder that he's going to go up and down all his life without conscious awareness of his own process. It turns out he isn't going to use the ties that bound Isaac either to weave a basket or hang himself. He's going to use them to construct a ladder. But Jacob doesn't see himself or his handiwork in his own dream. He doesn't realize that this ladder to heaven is internal and self-made.

GOD invested himself in Adam and Eve, and they were thieves. HE invested in Cain who became a murderer. HE instructed Noah who had no intention of helping anyone else in the whole world. Then HE told the world to spread out, but they chose to scheme together to try to get to heaven by building The Tower of Babel, instead. HE warned Lot through angels, and HE even made a Covenant with Abraham, a deeply disturbed dad. To call HIM the "wrathful" GOD of The Old Testament is really unfair. It disparages Jews and exposes your ignorance of the foundation of all faith.

Torah takes concepts in one story and imbues them with new meaning in subsequent stories. New, higher, moral purposes emerge for subsequent characters that inform us of new ways of appreciating the development of our conscience with GOD's help. But instead of taking these stories *personally*, people take them *seriously*. That's not wise.

GOD is the Puppeteer, and HE parades us on stage like the cardboard characters of Torah for all to see. Sometimes HE turns us around for us to see our other side. But if you think you're 3D just because you look that way on the outside, don't believe your eyes. You're morally flat {short, narrow and shallow} until your conscience does the hard work of making you morally spherical {long, wide and deep}.

Of course, any sane, morally sound, human being would have to ask himself why GOD would make promises to a man like Jacob who steals from family members. Why give someone like Jacob psychological insight if he doesn't have the hindsight or foresight to use it for the good? What could GOD be thinking? Jacob has done nothing to deserve

knowledge of this ladder, and still it's been bestowed upon him, even if only in a dream. It begs the question what GOD knows about our potential that we don't.

What's happening in heaven is way out of man's league of understanding. Jacob's conscience isn't morally awakened sufficiently to personalize the experience he's going through. It never occurs to him that the ladder he sees in his dream is internal. It never occurs to him that the ladder signifies something both personal and universal.

Jacob has had this dream on the hard, cold ground in the desert rather than in his comfortable bed in one of his father's tents, but he wakes up nonetheless excited, concluding that it was the ground he slept on that was holy. The ground he slept on was holy because GOD had given it to him and his progeny, but Jacob doesn't see that he should endeavor to strive for inner grounding because that's as holy as the ground beneath his feet.

Jacob's struggle will always be around him rather than within. He'll remain locked into the material world and locked out of his inner world. His knowledge of the forbidden fruit has seduced him into thinking this world is finite, not representative of a moral experience GOD has bestowed upon him to improve himself. Jacob personifies the thief who steals from himself that we don't want to emulate. And yet, the God within has given him a dream, a place to go and a way to get there.

The irony in the behavior of some of the most "religious" people on Earth is that what they claim to be a "calling" from their GOD/GOD/G O D that's thunderous and loud would just be considered a whisper to the rest of us. Their conscience is completely disconnected from their head and heart, as was Jacob's. Their thoughts and feelings collude with their desires, making them take actions that aren't connected to their conscience. And yet they have the audacity to tell everyone what their GOD/GOD/G O D thinks of us.

Jacob is cursed with a perception of himself that comes only through projection. He gains little personal insight during his waking hours. He's a spiritual sleepwalker; a thief who literally steals from his brother, but who thinks he can get away with it, maybe because he believes GOD is only awake when he's asleep.

Jacob doesn't think about how little he can feel, and he doesn't feel one way or the other about what he thinks. He's ambivalent to the unification of himself. He turns his conscience on and off as though it were on a switch. And for this many Jews have always admired Jacob as the quintessential, clever Jew. That's not admirable.

Abraham lived a life of blind faith in GOD. Isaac was spiritually myopic because he didn't question his role as a spiritual legacy between his father {Abraham} and his own sons {Esau and Jacob}. And Jacob is far sighted. He can see far into the future. He can see the need for financial security in old age. But he can't see what's happening to him in the moment.

Jacob is a powerful reminder to us that we're all spiritual beings in a human bodysuit that requires enormous physical care, emotional regard and spiritual attention. He reminds us that there's nothing unimportant about money, power and prestige. They're necessities of the bodysuit.

But the blessings of money, power and prestige are also physical means that a man will be judged for in how he gets and uses them toward moral ends. Although we all know that you can't take "it" {the container} with you, we still have to remember that we can't ignore "it" while we're here, either. We have to make the best of "it."

Jacob's Conscience

To a Jacob who's consumed with gambling on the importance of materialism – who takes moral risks to achieve material ends – angels will only appear in dreams. Therefore miracles in life will appear to be few and far between. For Jacob, life is a sport he plays to win; it's not a school he's enrolled in to learn from. He dies half-blind, oblivious to his own spiritual wealth in having the promise of a Covenant with GOD in his hand, while sullyng his own name in the process. (Well, at least he doesn't sully GOD's name. Perhaps that's why he's a Patriarch and not a total putz {Yiddish: penis/stooge})

Jacob clearly doesn't respect his father {Isaac}, and for Jacob to cheat his brother {Esau} out of his inheritance, Jacob must certainly distain him, too. No one who loves his father and brother would ever treat them so disrespectfully. The journey to manhood in Jacob is arrested by his desire to get ahead in only the material sense of progressing. He's tied up in knots inside as evidenced by his behavior on the outside. We can feel the cords that constrain him from serving his family and GOD through principled deeds. We can see that the physical cords Abraham used on Isaac have tied Jacob up in knots. Somewhat like father, somewhat like son...

When his uncle will later trick him into working seven years for the hand of Rachel in marriage, and then delivers his other daughter, Leah, instead, Jacob will good-naturedly works an additional seven years to get the girl he was after. [Genesis 29] But it'll never consciously occur to Jacob that what comes around goes around, and that tricking his nuclear family may have affected his rapport and reputation with his other relations. To his credit, he just blindly puts shoulder to the grindstone and works a little harder to get what he really wants.

The name "LEAH" means "DELICATE." And the name "RACHEL" means "EWE, FEMALE SHEEP." Jacob's wives are delicate possessions he's worked hard for. They figuratively turn him into The Old Testament's first shepherd who's there for the protection of women. Women are like delicacies to him. Jacob may be blind to himself, but we see that he's a good husband to his two wives and a good father to a dozen children. GOD seems to have a weak spot in HIS heart for a man who cares for women and children even if he couldn't get along very well with his father and brother.

The Moral Gambler

Jacob knows how to persevere to get what he wants materially, and therefore he does, in part, succeed by our standards of hard work leading to success. He has no difficulty accepting his loss with good-natured resignation for the first seven years of servitude to Leban. He simply places a second bet on success to get the girl of his dreams. And then he cares for everyone under his roof as a responsible provider and head of household.

As a teenager, Jacob wagered an unscrupulous bet on his inheritance and got what he wanted: his father's blessing even though he was the second son. As a young man he bet on love, and finally won the wager by getting the girl he loved. And in later life, when his favorite son, Joseph, is reportedly killed, but is discovered years later alive and well and viceroy of Egypt, Jacob will beat the odds yet a third time.

Jacob is bigger than life, although he's hardly heroic. He's the third of the Patriarchs. He's less morally flawed than Abraham, the perpetrator, and Isaac, the victim. Jacob "only" tries to take advantage of his father {Isaac} and brother {Esau} monetarily. Emotionally,

he's a good guy overall, especially to women and children. He's everyman who knows better than to steal, but who tries to get away with as much as he can anyway.

Jacob is called "EESH TAM" in Hebrew, which figuratively translates as "a plain, straightforward guy." But "TAM" literally means "TASTE." Jacob is the man who has a taste for the good life. He eats up life without giving thought to his table manners. He's the man who takes big bites out of his life because he likes what he likes. The possibility of life being sweet tempts Jacob to eat up experiences other men might control themselves more while enjoying. Jacob's appetite makes him hungry and greedy. His greed leaves him morally wanting. And his moral lack of appetite leaves us disrespecting him because of what it does to his reputation.

Life can go from sweet to bitterly disappointing when you scarf down your experiences without regard to what you look like to others as you're feasting on your encounters. There are billions of Jacobs in the world. But they don't have the self-reflection to help themselves.

GOD seems to take HIS time before HE decides to teach Jacob a lesson. HE waits until late in Jacob's life before HE lets loose with what the Buddhists call: karma. What comes around goes around, but it seems to take an inordinately long time getting around in the life of men like Jacob.

The Wrestling Match

Jacob returns to Canaan 20 years later, only to discover that Esau is pursuing him with 400 of his men. The night before they're scheduled to meet, ostensibly to fight it out to the death, Jacob wrestles with a stranger {often interpreted as an angel of The Lord}. His struggle with the stranger leaves Jacob with a limp for the rest of his life. [Genesis 31]

Jacob is only concerned with his own family matters until his brother decides to corner him with the threat of killing him. Jacob doesn't think about what he'd done to his family of origin, including indirectly pushing Esau into a loveless marriage to spite their parents. Jacob doesn't worry whether the scales of justice will ever swing back in Esau's favor.

Why would anyone without a developed conscience worry about karma? Such a person would never concern himself GOD's vengeance to teach him a lesson. The fact that Esau might kill Jacob the next day makes Jacob's conflict with a stranger the night before psychologically telling and spiritually intriguing.

"Wrestling with a stranger" in today's terminology is more commonly called "wrestling with one's demons." From a psychological perspective, this part of Jacob's story is a description of his conscience figuratively wrestling with guilt anthropomorphized.

Guilt, unaddressed by the conscience, turns into a stranger who mysteriously appears to drag a man through his own, private hell. Guilt will later be anthropomorphized as the "devil" in the Christian and Muslim tradition.

The stranger Jacob is fighting in this segment of the story is the personification of the evil in himself; a dark angel with a message delivered with a timing and force that seems to echo the voice of self-revenge. This "stranger" pins Jacob down. He wrestles him to the ground. He overwhelms him. But Jacob's will is too strong. This biblical winner will never allow himself to lose, especially not if his opponent is really an aspect of himself.

Jacob triumphs over his own guilt. In medieval terminology they'd have said he "made a pact with the 'devil.'" And although it cost him the normal use of one leg, he does manage

to limp over to Esau the next day to miraculously make peace with the brother he maligned. {Even one's own angel of darkness works for The Lord in a mysterious way.}

Although Jacob has emotionally turned his back on his past and family of origin in order to embrace financial gain and independence, the past he ran away from has finally caught up with him with this new threat from Esau. And, although I don't doubt that there really was a stranger Jacob struggled with the night before his meeting with Esau, the real fight that this story describes is between Jacob's head and heart before a conscience that's still in denial of the reason for him being alive and a part of GOD's story.

The wrestling match between Jacob and the stranger ends the age, old struggle Jacob had with Esau even when the two of them were still in the womb. Jacob is the two-dimensional, cardboard character of Torah who externalizes his moral work. And as the result of doing so, he can no longer run away from his persona. He's literally crippled because of it.

Everyone today is a Jacob who wrestles with strangers, whether he consciously realizes they're anthropomorphic representations of his struggle with guilt, or not. And everyone today wins, so long as he gets through the experience alive, even if he find himself limping in some way when it's over.

The "angels" we have to wrestle with in life are very real people who hold honorific titles such as "brother," "boss" or "boyfriend." But we rarely realize that they're brought into our life by GOD to help us discover more about ourselves.

The "devil" does GOD's dirty work. The God within, man's conscience, will find a way to exact justice and mercy from his head and heart. Abel's blood will never stop crying from the ground of a man's heart. But the mark of Cain will never leave man, either.

It's easy for us to see what Jacob did in life to deserve having to wrestle a stranger before the next day's possible fight with Esau. Every time we wrestle with ourselves before a fight with our "brother," there's a moral conundrum we have to pass through to receive a finer understanding of the God within who doeth the WORK/WORK/W O R K.

Jacob never showed any embarrassment for impersonating Esau with an animal pelt. Nor was he ashamed of himself for getting away with Esau's blessing as firstborn. We know so because he never tried to right these wrongs. So, it must have been humiliating to meet his brother 20 years later walking toward him with a limp. Jacob's limp must have spoken volumes to Esau.

GOD really doesn't work in mysterious ways. In fact, HE couldn't be more obvious if we care to look more closely at the way we turn out. Our struggle with authority figures is always a projection of our own, abrogated authority over ourselves. If you don't like *authority*, maybe it's because you don't *author* yourself as you'd like to.

Man will do anything to avoid the journey to his soul because he thinks he knows what he's going to find there, and he doesn't want to face the dark empty truth of a morally unfulfilled life. He doesn't dare look into his empty soul until he's filled it with a few apologies and amends. Loneliness in your soul without the self-love that comes from good deeds to yourself in the form of humble words will leave you in company you'll find unbearable. It will leave you feeling like a victim just because you have to spend a lifetime with yourself.

Nobody can get inside of you, but you, and Torah is less about the world around you than it is about the world within. You've got to stop stopping yourself every time you hit an unpleasant thought or feeling. You've got to wrestle with your actions until you can

apologize to yourself for only that which you've done that has ruined your reputation in your own eyes. And the main metaphor of Moses is here to help in that regard. You ought to leave a little wiggle room for self-interpretation in your life, or someone will use your ignorance of you to your disadvantage.

Every Jacob today wrenches himself out of alignment in a struggle to set himself free from guilt. We're all left with limps from fights with others we could have avoided if we'd known then what we know now. Nobody is that "hip." By looking at the world in this metaphoric way, you won't find a man on the planet who isn't lame. We're all hobbled by the journey of life.

Limping On

The limp Jacob suffers from symbolizes the failed power of every man's head and heart to subsume moral authority by themselves to themselves. With every step he'll ever take thereafter, Jacob's body will motivate him to struggle to achieve greater moral stability as he chooses how and where to put his foot down.

Some men are *physically* crippled in life, and then they have to struggle with the brutality of this world to survive. They have to literally balance themselves on two feet as best they can. Some have to lose the fight *mentally* before they can shut down the power in their head to allow the voice of their heart to surface and be heard. Then they have to learn how to emotionally balance themselves as would a tightrope walker on a very thin line. Others have to feel the pain in their pocketbook before they can humble their head and heart to the "demons" their fighting around them. They have to gamble or endure the economic feasts and famines of Wall Street before they're willing to internalize their fortune. And some just have to wreak havoc on the rest of us because of the pain and disorientation they're going through inside. They must find a war or start a war to turn their struggle with a stranger inside out.

There are many kinds of strangers who cross our path in life and many ways to wrestle with them. And every Jacob knows he can win this struggle if he's willing to swallow a morsel of pride with the guilt he's picking from the fruits of his Tree of self-knowledge.

Jacob's 12 sons will see their father's limp after he returns from this confrontation, and they'll surely ask themselves what they inherited from their father's legacy, a question neither Jacob nor Esau could ask of Isaac.

Whether Jacob knows why GOD let him win the fight with Esau or whether he sees himself as a lame loser is open to interpretation. That Torah doesn't tell us. Besides, that conclusion says more about you than it does about either of them.

When you look at yourself as fruit from a Tree of knowledge, it's easy to play the silent victim, to blame others for what's happened to you. Before you're so foolishly charitable as to give up self-blame, you ought to ask yourself in all sincerity "Why me?" and "Why not me?" If you don't first feel victimized by being included or excluded from GOD's design, how are you going to learn to accept guilt as a fact of life? If you never identify as forbidden fruit, what seeds will you have in hand to sow in this world? How will you contribute to GOD's garden?

Some religious Jews say that every Jew is a Jacob. They see the tendency to steal and to rationalize one's theft as a tendency we Jews have to work against all our life. But it's too easy for Christians and Muslims to chime in with these orthodox Jews to blame only Jews with money. This is a human tendency, not a Jewish tendency.

Jacob is the personification of the thief whose serpent conspires with his feelings and convinces his head that he deserves what's not rightfully his. Jacob personifies the first cardboard character on the Jewish stage of life that any reasonable man can identify with. After all, Jacob took Isaac's blessing, when, in a truly just world, Esau would have offered half of it to Jacob to begin with. Why should the first son get it all anyway? That doesn't seem fair.

Jacob is the first metaphoric Tree before Jesus is literally nailed to a tree. Jacob is missing someone inside who can explain humiliation to him. Jacob cares more about his own wellbeing than his brother's even though Jacob could clearly see that the deck had been originally stacked unfairly against him.

Jacob can't care about his own wellbeing and the wellbeing of his brother equally. Jacob is the personification of a forbidden fruit in search of someone who identifies as The Tree it came from. And this is a disconnect that won't be unraveled until we come to The Quran.

Looking ahead a couple of thousand years after the story of Jacob, we learn about a Jewish man named "Joshua" {Jesus} who's ready to identify as someone who cares equally for everyone. We see Him nailed to the tree that Jacob couldn't quite see. Jesus is ready to give His life so every man can literally see the metaphor of Moses come to life. But this is a tragic melding of metaphor and symbolism that cannot be endured by those who take guilt to heart. This is why The Quran adds simile. This is why every man today is *like* a rabbi nailed to a tree.

The consequences of the gambles the characters in The Hebrew Testament make are described in the most gentlemanly and courteous language so as not to offend its reader's. Torah presents its messages with clever signs and secret symbols that we must interpret with the conscience we have today at our disposal now. Literal interpretations of The Hebrew Testament don't come close to understanding the moral lessons from GOD in these stories. You can't truly believe in The Hebrew Testament as the living WORD of GOD unless you take The Hebrew Testament personally and *not* literally.

Torah isn't a cookbook with moral recipes that tell you how to serve man. Torah describes a spiritual process by which the characters interface with GOD more and more deeply as they mature. It's up to you to decode the wisdom, love and generosity GOD brings you through your own maturation process, and apply this spiritual process to your life.

There's little point in helping others if it isn't for practice in learning how to help yourself. If your relationship with yourself is particularly hardhearted, you're going to have to do a great deal of good out in the world before you'll be able to impress yourself with your own goodness. You're going to have to love many people in many ways before you'll concede that self-love is the love you're aiming for.

The Abrahamic religions together represent the three aspects of the moralizing man, the spiritual seeker in a puzzle who transcends his belief in GOD yesterday by believing in himself with greater faith day-by-day. But this spiritual process begins with a metaphor from Torah, traverses two symbols from The Gospels and ends with the myriad similes in The Quran. This is why you have the potential to be better than anyone ever did in the past. This is why it's so important to study all of GOD's/GOD's/G O D's WORDS/WORDS/W O R D S.

Truce Verses Peace

Jacob succeeds in negotiating a truce with Esau the following day, but that's not hard for someone like Jacob to do. Jacob is the kind of guy who could negotiate a deal with the "devil." Jacob just can't create peace with his brother because he doesn't know what that word even means.

SHALOM {the experience of being filled or full, from the verb LISHALEM which means TO FILL} is something that has to happen within you. It's best done consciously. Adam and Eve didn't know that they were filling themselves with guilt {fruit} in an effort to discover self-knowledge. Noah didn't know that he was filling himself {the ark} with inner animals {instincts}. But you know that the cheesecake you can't stop eating is a creamy rendition of mother's love that you've using as a substitute for self-love.

No doubt the fresh injury to Jacob's leg must be painful and embarrassing when he confronts Esau the following day. It's not a disability he was physical born with that Esau would have been familiar with. The infant that came out from the womb hanging on to his brother for a free ride now has to figuratively lean on him for support. Life is paradoxical in its richness and ironic in its paucity. And that's all Esau needs to see to awaken his compassion.

Despite the fact that Jacob's limp is the result of wrestling with a stranger, for the rest of his life he'll probably equate his limp with the confrontation he had the following day with Esau. With every step Jacob takes, he'll be reminded to avoid fights with all his "brothers" in the future, something his father {Isaac} could have told him from the start, having avoided a fight with his own father {Abraham}.

Humiliation is tough love from GOD that comes in a timely manner to teach, not punish. Humiliation is a reminder to us that GOD's loving lessons are always intended to help us develop our conscience with heartfelt intentions, even if that may be hard for our head to wrap itself around.

GOD's Covenant with Jacob to protect him is fulfilled over the course of his lifetime; it's just not as *generously* fulfilled as Jacob might have hoped. Jacob's blessings are *mixed* blessings. The blessing Jacob manipulated out of Isaac and stole out from under Esau is the reason for Jacob's mixed blessings. Jacob will always look back on his life with evidence to conclude that although GOD may have loved him, HE may not always have liked the way he behaved. But GOD's commentary on Jacob's struggle with HIM isn't over. The development of Jacob's conscience won't end with a limp and a whimper.

The GOD Of Jacob

GOD declares HIS Covenant will be with Abraham, not Abram; Isaac, not Ishmael; and Jacob, not Esau. Where's the sense in that? Abram prayed to GOD to be merciful to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah? Ishmael allowed himself to be circumcised like his father despite his father's abusive nature. And Esau eventually calmed down and walked away from a fair fight he was entitled to win with Jacob. Why would GOD bet on moral gamblers like Jacob when there are so many outwardly respectable people in the world to choose from?

The best that can be said of Jacob is that some students of life get bad grades and still come back to class to try again, even though they didn't fully understand the assignments. GOD doesn't expect straight A's from anyone. The moral lesson for us in characters like

Abram, Ishmael and Esau is that they don't demonstrate any interest in learning from their mistakes. They're interested in *other* people learning from their mistakes.

Jacob may set a bad example, but he doesn't go crying to GOD about his fate, either. Every Adam {man} who has the ability to accept his fate with a modicum of humility is ready to receive a small taste of his destiny.

Another Name Change; Another Inner Transformation

After the wrestling match with the stranger, the stranger bestows a new name upon Jacob: "Israel." "ISRAEL" means "TO STRUGGLE WITH GOD." Jacob struggled with GOD through outcomes that were frightening, and GOD let him win despite bruising him in places. [Genesis 31] Israel is:

1. The name of the third Patriarch, a name change given to Jacob indirectly from GOD
2. The name of the Jewish homeland
3. A struggle with GOD
4. A psychological struggle with the God within
5. A spiritual state of mind in the creation of a man who strives for GOD/GOD/G O D consciousness.

Israel is real for the Jews whether or not we live in The Holy Land because Israel signifies more than a place; Israel is a verb as well as a noun, a way of fulfilling ourselves from within. Israel is our goal, not our destination. Its frontiers can't be contained by national boundaries. Israel protects the Jews, and the Jews protect Israel because Israel is a spiritual aspiration. There's no point in having a homeland if it doesn't psychologically bring you a sense of coming home. ISRAEL is the WORD that implies that every good Jew has a homecoming awaiting him after the journey of life. Israel is a tiny slice of heaven brought down to Earth. Therefore, the more you can help Israel, the more you'll be in a position to help everyone. {Those who only help Israel to help themselves to money, power and prestige, aren't helping Israel. They're hurting Israel. And you had better be able to tell the difference.}

The psychological struggle for Israel and understanding of the function of the Patriarchs is a struggle that begins in the womb. The Jew who feels he began struggling with his brother even before he was born figuratively has someone inside with him, a psychological mirror of himself he has to encounter from time to time. Jacob and Esau represent the man who comes out of the womb with laughter {Isaac} clutching the heel of worry {Ishmael}.

The legacy of the Israelis and Arabs is to wrestle with brotherly love. Any Jew can become an Israeli, not only because the Law of Return makes it his legal right to take residence in Israel, but because he has a spiritual right that comes from his personal participation in the story of the psychological and spiritual formation of the man GOD named "Israel." And any Arab can become a man of G O D by letting his half-brother live in peace as Esau did with Jacob despite Esau's lifelong grievance with his brother. Their grandfather {Abraham} caused their problems. Let's choose to let GOD settle the score any way HE/HE/H E likes.

Christians in America today have no difficulty in identifying with our Jewish heritage. They can't literally partake in the Law of Return, but they have every right to make Israel

their psychological and spiritual homeland: their proof that there is a reward “after life” for a life lived with GOD/GOD/G O D. All they have to do is see themselves as a conscious combination of Hebrew and Christian Testaments: like a tree with a Jew nailed to it.

By doing so, Christians are given the holy symbols of bread {container} and wine {contents} by Jesus. They’re given a reason to fill themselves with GOD consciousness; the mercy and forgiveness that makes GOD’s design greater and grander than only the pursuit of Jewish justice or Islamic fairness.

The greater difficulty in making peace with the Jews today lies with the Arabs and Persians, the descendants of Abraham through Ishmael. GOD’s mysterious gift to Muslims worldwide begins with their ability to walk away from metaphor and symbolism with the similes T H E P R O P H E T Muhammed introduced them to as 114 surah {chapters} in The Quran. But the more Muslims struggle in their own societies to achieve freedom, the more they’ll earn the right to feel compassion for their half-brother Isaac and his descendants. Their own struggle with liberty will open their hearts to their Christian brothers. And emancipation within themselves will open their soul to G O D.

The family of man requires that we all live under the same roof: the sky. But the sky above Israel isn’t ever going to stay there for very long. Our Land we’ll never share. Our water we’ll divide judiciously. But the sky overhead will move wherever GOD/GOD/G O D takes it. There’s no way we can outguess HIS/HIS/H I S design for a spiritual man.

The greater question is why it’s been so difficult for Christians to see the wisdom in GOD having created the Jewish people. Using us only as a shell for the Christian seed out of which came Jesus would be demeaning and humiliating to us. A loving GOD wouldn’t have a plan that was cruel to any of HIS followers. The difficulty those in the modern world are having today is how HE/HE/H E plans to integrate HIS/HIS/H I S generosity of spirit in with people who are cruel to themselves. This is a question that involves everyone.

It doesn’t take wisdom to be generous. It doesn’t even require love to be generous. Generosity is an attribute of G O D that blooms directly out of the soul of man, like a mushroom from every dark corner. Generosity is like a fungus that doesn’t compare to any other organisms in the plant world. Don’t get me wrong. Generosity is delicious. I know Muslims that are like Portobello mushrooms: meaty, tasty and refined.

But G O D’s generosity can also be compared to Arches National Park in Utah. The time and attention H E put into eroding the Earth with wind is a mirror of the force H E uses to shape our mind like rock. Wind is a sign of G O D’s generosity of spirit when used judiciously. This is why GOD/GOD/G O D gave awareness of H I S generosity to man only after HE/HE had created the paths to wisdom and love.

The Jew tells the world how to think like a sage. The Christian models to his brothers how to feel compassionate and forgiving like a shepherd. But a Muslim is here to repay humanity with his generous spirit for H I S generosity in remembering him right from the start. The Muslim is here to spread T H E W O R D of G O D. As each Muslim makes room for Israel in the Middle East, he’ll make room in his soul to spread T H E W O R D as well.

The mind branches out like a tree. The heart also branches out with love and compassion, but more like the roots of a tree that can’t literally be seen. But the soul of man reflects the ubiquitous nature of G O D. The soul of man is made of thin air: spirit. And, it’s this spirit inside, in addition to the wood of self-knowledge, that every man’s flame must consume.

The sibling rivalry between Cain and Abel is all about their relationship to GOD. And that ends in murder. The rivalry of father and son is sketched out, but unresolved, in the stories of Abram and Ishmael, and Abraham and Isaac. But, by the story of Jacob and Esau, sibling rivalry is reduced to matters of blessings. The older brother {Esau} has to learn that he can't claim to love his birthright while giving it away for every bowl of soup that tempts him if he's hungry. And Jacob can't scheme with righteous indignation if he wants to see justice brought down from heaven to Earth.

All the characters in Genesis make mistakes, but they also unconsciously learn from the mistakes of their forefathers to correct them. They squabble, wrestle and threaten to kill one another, but the last major character in Genesis to be murdered is the first: Abel. All the rest get through life alive, if somewhat bruised from their experiences. The A.B.C.'s of life {abandonment, betrayal and conspiracy} lead everyone to forget from time to time that GOD is always watching to see how and where HE's/HE's/H E's teaching us about generosity to others for the sake of earning the right to work on generosity toward ourselves for the sake of the right to work on generosity with GOD/GOD/G O D as a partner in life.

Earlier, I've said several times that the protagonists in Genesis are like cardboard characters, and I maintain that. In ancient Egyptian paintings on pyramid walls, the size of the individual and his placement in the foreground or background spoke volumes about his importance in the scene depicted. These images lacked visual depth because ancient man lacked spiritual depth. He wasn't yet able to express his three-dimensional view of the world on two-dimensional surfaces because his inner world was still flat.

Today we see the reverse happening. We see three-dimensional thinkers projecting their lack of spiritual depth onto cardboard biblical characters, fleshing them out in prescribed ways that have been approved by their religious institution. They don't fill in the stories with personal importance, so their interpretations of these biblical characters always seem to lack personality and depth. For this reason, people aren't going to houses of worship to pray as much as they did in the past. The relevance of Scripture has diminished.

Reading Torah today should tell us more about *us* than our forefathers, whose inner world was constrained by their own horizons. Comparing and contrasting modern interpretations of Torah to The Gospels and The Quran is the only way in which we're going to discover our individual, spiritual progress and our collective spiritual goals.

Israel had to be recreated after the Second World War to give the Jews a place to go to protect them from the horrors of what had happened to European Christianity. Israel must continue to exist to protect the Jews from today's horrors created by Middle Eastern Islam and many other Muslims worldwide.

The emptying of Jews from the Muslim nations in 1948 was a blessing in disguise. The Muslims surely would have killed their Jewish neighbors had there not been an Israel to welcome the Jews in. Israel didn't create anti-Semitism in the Muslim world. Anti-Semitism had been there all along. The recreation of the State of Israel only legitimized acting on it.

Being a gay-Jew is a fascinating experience because it's heightened my ability to see hatred coming from many directions. There are plenty of Jews who've asked me not to pray with them or study Torah with them simply because I'm gay. So, I don't accuse hyper "religious" Christians and Muslims of being my only enemies. Many Muslims would kill me for being both gay and Jewish. Some Christians would discriminate against me for

being either gay or Jewish. And a segment of Jews have shunned me just for being gay. Fortunately, I've developed a sense of GOD/GOD/G O D-consciousness as the result of making my conscience my only guide. My grades in the school of life can continue despite the bozos in class who only want to disrupt the moral learning environment.

Although the spiritual rewards of righteousness are what we're all truly striving for, we have a tendency not to recognize or feel guilty about the thick skin that's a necessary part of our moral evolution. Guilt no longer seems to affect us quite the way it once did. We don't literally cover ourselves from quite as much embarrassment as we once did. We don't figuratively hide our shame by pretending to blend in with others, as was once the case. This gives each of us more of a private struggle with humiliation that will leave us loyal or disloyal to ourselves.

It won't be until the character of Judah in the story of Joseph that we come across a man with the maturity to feel bad about himself. THE WORD for "JEW" comes from the biblical character named "JUDAH," which means "THANKFUL." Feeling bad about yourself is, paradoxically, a good reason to feel thankful

Jews and Christians will learn to blossom and grow from the amends made by the character of Judah in The Hebrew Testament. And the "Judas" of The New Testament will personify greater need for man to feel bad about the decisions all men make in life.

Truth isn't what will set you free. The truth only creates microclimates of reality where everyone lives in his own truth. The inheritance of the Judeo-Christian tradition gives us the ability to scrutinize our behavior toward others and to be thankful that we don't behave as our ancestors once did because our conscience today is so much more developed. In *truth*, only a *truce* will set you free. Your enemies will never give up their truth until you can reveal a wisdom, love and generosity that they envy.

Would that we could simply remove all the emotional cords within that bind us and replace them with bands of wisdom, love and generosity. It would be nice to be able to skip the stages of Genesis from Adam to Jacob altogether. Nobody likes to think about himself as a thief or be reminded that he's a descendant of thieves. Jacob, like Adam before him, is embarrassingly human and small. But these stages in the development of man's conscience have been written down and sanctified with good reason. There are no shortcuts to the ripening of forbidden fruit. If you don't take a nibble when you're green, you'll never be able to appreciate yourself when you ripen.

Joseph And His Brothers

The Interpreter Of Dreams

Jacob has 12 sons, six with his wife, Leah, two with his concubine Zilpah, two with his other concubine Bilhah, and two with his wife, Rachel. Joseph is the 11th of these sons, and Jacob's favorite. He's the first child born to Jacob's second wife and true love, Rachel. {Rachel later has a second child, Benjamin, who becomes Jacob's favorite after Joseph is presumed dead.} [Genesis 37]

Jacob had to learn the hard way {with the *pain* of a physical wound to his hip} to avoid fights with his brethren. But he also had to go through *suffering* for playing favorites with his children, just as his father {Isaac} had experienced before him when Isaac loved Esau more than Jacob.

When there isn't enough love to go around in a family because one child gets more of it than the others, sibling rivalry ensues. The children begin by fighting over material possessions, but it soon becomes more personal. Children simply don't realize that their parents are human. Children are going to be favored by their parents in different ways, and issues of emotional fairness are inevitably going to arise.

That's why GOD isn't anything like our father. And that's why HIS Son {Jesus} isn't anything like our brother. When you create a sacred metaphor using GOD's relationship to HIMSELF as a Father/Son relationship, there will be misunderstandings. Suddenly every one of HIS sons wants to be treated like the one Son HE created through Immaculate Conception.

The paucity of linguistic terminology to express GOD's relationship to Jesus, the Jew chosen from among all those chosen, is the message at the core of the forbidden fruit. A man must eat through the peel and the meat of his life to get to the inedible essence of meaning that words cannot easily describe. Even describing Judeo-Christians as trees with a Jew nailed to them does a disservice to G O D's reason for creating Islam. A picture that paints 1,000 words misses the meaning of life. Man's relationship to GOD is, in some mysterious ways, abstract and inscrutable.

Life is a school, but men don't always want to learn. People are teachers, but the student is often busy doing other things. The way it is, is the way GOD wants it to be, but people have their own ideas on how to improve the world around them without having to improve their world within. And then they wonder why changing human nature is so hard.

The "Children of Israel" that will later be described in The Book of Exodus that Moses will release from bondage with GOD's help will consist of 12 tribes that will loosely represent the descendants of Jacob's 12 sons. The legacy from father to son begun with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will reach national proportions in the next book of Torah.

But, near the end of Genesis, in the story of Joseph, the next level of moral inquiry into the self, we're introduced to the youngest of Jacob's 11 children, a particularly good-looking boy who's especially beloved by his father. His ten half-brothers are jealous of Joseph not only because their father has spoiled him; but because they can see that Joseph is unusually gifted.

Although Jacob had had a dream of a ladder to heaven when he was a young man without a conscious understanding of its personal importance to him, his son Joseph has the uncanny ability of interpreting dreams with great accuracy. And Joseph can even do so with his own dreams. Jacob is every man who has great dreams that impress and inspire him to do great things, but Joseph is the unusually gifted guy who can tell you what they mean.

And yet Joseph has so little common sense that he has no compunctions about telling the world that his own dreams foretell of his own greatness. He can dream big, but he's oblivious to the fact that his dreams bring up envy in others. The special attention he gets from his father, combined with his handsome appearance and mystical ways, enrages his siblings. And he's too young and naïve to see the signs of trouble brewing.

Joseph, like all of us, is gifted uniquely. But because he knows his gift and most people don't, those around him are determined to prove him wrong, bad, average, ordinary or peculiar. They want to kill off the best part of him out of spite.

Anyone who's achieved his mysterious, inner sense of purpose must learn to use his gift humbly, so as not to hurt those who haven't yet discovered theirs. But, by the same token, you can't hide a gift GOD has given you. You have to learn to be yourself without offending others. Being gifted is harder than it looks.

Only after Joseph suffers to understand the lesson of jealousy and envy visited upon him through sibling rivalry, is he able to share his gifts abundantly and wisely with others. But, when the story begins, Joseph is a young man who has a lot to learn about human nature and the pitfalls in his own sweet nature, in particular. The lesson in the story of Joseph will take us beyond family matters to personal matters writ large. It'll not only entwine one man and his family with the creation of a nation. It'll show us how our own actions take on universal importance as they become more and more personal.

The drama of the gifted child is your drama. But first you have to believe that you've been gifted. Then you have to discover how you're gifted. And lastly, you have to learn when and where to talk about it, and when to shut up about all that GOD/GOD/G O D gave you.

Appreciating other people's gifts is the greatest stumbling block for the gifted child. He's usually envious of others' gifts until he breaks the projection of them being mirrors of his own. In that sense, Joseph has figuratively inherited Jacob's poor vision and Isaac's blindness. Joseph can look; he has the insight and foresight to perceive. But he can't see some of the simplest things before his eyes.

Increasing What You Have

The name "JOSEPH" comes from the verb "L'OSEEF," which means "TO INCREASE" or "TO ADD TO." We all have to learn to move forward through life while adding to what we've already attained. And the most intelligent way of doing so is by first observing how you operate within and then look for the wisdom in the way you already love generously and wisely just the way you are.

In most instances, you'll be able to add to the way you are without having to subtract from your personality as you now express it. You can increase your presence out in the world by adding to your awareness from within. You don't necessarily having to change what you believe about yourself if you can perceive your negative opinions of others as aspects of yourself that you've projected out to learn from. This will turn your enemies, figuratively speaking, into friends.

It's infinitely harder to improve yourself with self-scorn and derision than it is with cautiously earned self-esteem. It's easier to use your conscience as your guide when you know that your goal is a righteous soul, not a moral device lodged in your breastbone that sends you automatic alerts on what your parents taught you to do about right and wrong.

Self-awareness should increase your awareness and sensitivity to guilt through the complexities of your relationships with others.

Joseph has to deal with ten half-brothers who hate him, but he can't ask himself "Why?" Esau and Jacob lived together in the same womb, and they couldn't figure out why they had such animosity all their life for one another beginning even before they were born. And although Isaac never had to deal with his half-brother {Ishmael} because they never lived under the same roof, millions of Muslims today hate the Jews. And, still, the people in the Middle East aren't looking for answers from Scripture to the question "Why?."

Joseph will become the personification of the man who has enough CHESED {LOVING KINDNESS, LOYALTY} despite his character defects and the odds against him making peace with the family members who hated him. He increases his odds of success over his lifetime with GOD's help. This makes him a very important character in Genesis and the unfolding of hope for us all.

Assuaging Guilt With Gelt {Yiddish: Money}

Joseph's brothers decide they've had enough of Joseph's gift and his boastful self-adoration. They decide to kill him to get him out of their hair. {Remember Esau was hairy, and Jacob wanted to get Esau out of his hair, too. Now Jacob's ten sons want to do the same with Joseph.}

Judah, Jacob's fourth son, has second thoughts about killing Joseph. Granted Joseph is smug, but Judah is concerned that that isn't reason enough to kill him. So Judah convinces his brothers to sell Joseph into slavery to ease his own conscience and make a couple of bucks at the same time. The temptation of money becomes Judah's motivation to do less *wrong*, even though there's no amount of money that would tempt these brothers to do what's *right*.

While Esau may have wanted to kill his fraternal brother Jacob because Jacob was so greedy, Judah's greed, paradoxically, prevents him from killing his half-brother. Both father {Jacob} and son {Judah} knew at the time of their misdeed that what they were doing was wrong. And yet, curiously, greed motivated Jacob to steal, and greed motivates Judah not to kill.

The nation of Israel was born to carry out a mission of moral instruction to humanity, frail and imperfect as its citizenry may be. The middleclass Jews have taught the world to use greed to avoid killing. And, over time, the Jews will teach the world not to use greed except in internal matters in coming to know yourself. Greed was created by GOD for man to know no bounds in coming to love himself.

Teachers of morality must also model the morality they profess. They can't just talk about doing the right thing in the abstract. But teachers who blame *their* teachers are still the most common excuse for the ongoing imperfections in every student of life. Internalize all character defects you see around you, and you'll become like every star that pierces the night sky.

Planning For A Rainy Day

In the same way that Isaac boasted that his son Esau was a great hunter who brought him meat, Jacob boasts that *his* son Joseph is a great interpreter of dreams who feeds his father another way. Jacob gives Joseph a coat of many colors to express his special feelings for this one special son out of his many sons. But when Joseph's half-brothers realize they

can't nourish their father in the same way, they feel similarly to how their father, Jacob, felt when Isaac chose their uncle, Esau, over him. And this resentment goes all the way back to Cain's resentment of Abel when GOD chose Abel's sacrifice over Cain's. Leah's ten sons are *jealous* of Rachel's one and only son: Joseph. And they're also *envious* of his contents.

Jacob was jealous of his brother Esau but that was because Esau was born first, and therefore became the benefactor of Isaac's estate based solely on birth order. And like Cain who killed Abel because he couldn't get back at GOD when he saw that there was a miscarriage of justice, Jacob's other ten sons decide to kill Rachel's son, Joseph, because they can't get back at GOD, either.

After selling Joseph, into slavery the ten sons realize they need to convince their father, Jacob, that Joseph is dead. So they splash pig's blood on Joseph's coat and give it to their father. In modern psychological parlance, we'd say that people will punish your excellence out of envy. They'll rain down on your parade because they don't want to rain on their own parade. Disappointment with what they've been given by GOD is too painful to bear.

A coat envelops a man, providing him with physical warmth as well as enhancing his physical beauty. But the coat of many colors Jacob gives Joseph signifies the special warmth of this father for this one son. It's a material symbol of the blessing of hope and promise Jacob has bestowed upon Joseph.

Jacob was jealous of the blessing of the firstborn son that he wasn't privileged to receive having been born second in line. But Jacob doesn't see that by bestowing his blessing on his 11th son, the first ten will react with the same vengeance that he portrayed when he was a young man. Granted, Joseph may be the firstborn son of Rachel, but he's the 11th born son of Jacob.

This coat of many colors is the next iteration of the rainbow GOD gave Noah. GOD watched as Noah's progeny conspired to reach HIS abode in heaven in the story of The Tower of Babel because they didn't believe in HIS promise of the rainbow. These ten sons conspire against their half-brother, Joseph, rather than with GOD, because of their father's greater love for him. The first ten sons of Jacob don't want their father's promise of hope to be realized on his 11th son. And so GOD's sorrow for all mankind has come down to Earth portrayed as a father's sorrow for his one dead son. {This will foreshadow the death of Jesus, GOD's one dead Son.}

Jacob's expression of love in giving Joseph the coat of many colors wasn't a blessing wangled out of him, as was the case with Isaac's blessing of Jacob when Jacob pretended to be Esau. Here Jacob willingly imparts his gift to Joseph, and then Joseph's half-brothers spitefully return the coat to their father full of blood.

Because the coat was bestowed only on the 11th son, it may have led the other ten to infer that their father was rejecting them. The gifts from a father to his sons must be given with great conscious awareness of how they may be received, as well as how they may not be received. And children, by contrast, have to be taught to accept what they've been given humbly or discuss their feelings of exclusion calmly. {This will foreshadow the problems between Jews and Christians, GOD's first and second born sons.}

The coat of many colors a man figuratively wears on the outside is his personality. These are the colorful feelings he exhibits for others. But his personality cloaks his persona {the unique, interactive forces of his nature represented by his head, heart, penis and conscience}. His personality is the outer, superficial, yet colorful, impression he leaves

with others that can always be stitched together differently or tailored as needed over time. A man's personality warms others, but his persona warms himself.

When Joseph's coat is ripped off him, splashed with blood and presented to Jacob as evidence of Joseph's death, the coat becomes a twisted symbol of dashed hopes and perverted dreams. It signals to GOD that Jacob's ten sons have cast a decisive veto on their half-brother's right to legitimacy.

Despite ten physically strong sons to help him endure his loss, Jacob must conclude that his luck has finally run out; and that's just what his boys want him to think. The spitefulness that Jacob wished to exact on Esau for being more beloved by Isaac has taken a generation to come round. But now Jacob feels its effects tenfold. {For some people karma takes its time to go fully around before it makes its way back where it belongs.}

Allowing Jacob to think Joseph is dead might be deemed by us as cruel of GOD. But GOD is often more interested in teaching us to think more deeply than HE is helping us avoid suffering. Therefore never allow yourself to act out of spite. Spite is always caused by jealousy or envy. And GOD reserves the right to use any means necessary to teach you what HE wants you to learn from your immoral actions.

You have every right to hope and dream. You have a right to work for greater rewards. But if you act out of spite, you'll abandon yourself, betray yourself and conspire against yourself in ways that may come back to haunt you so much later in life that you may not even remember then what triggered that lesson to begin with.

I still maintain that GOD isn't wrathful. There's method to HIS madness. You're not here only to watch HIM teach others. You're also here to watch HIM teach you. You're a test tube. You're the test going on inside the tube. But the experiments going on in you will have an effect on us all. Therefore you should see yourself as part of a psychological and sociological experiment.

The character of GOD in this story now looks more like a laboratory scientist. You might see the characters in this story as rats in HIS maze. You might focus only on watching Leah's sons scramble for the cheese or Rachel's son trying to find his way out of a circuitous labyrinth his brothers got him into.

You might look at how Jacob set up the experiment to begin with by giving Joseph a coat without giving his brothers anything at all. Or you might look at the arrogance in Joseph in accepting the gift without concern for how he's perceived by his brothers.

But this story isn't about looking at life as a rat race in a maze. GOD isn't conducting experiments. All outcomes are in HIS hands. The way through your maze requires moral introspection about everything going on around you. So, the more you learn about yourself, the more you'll succeed in loving your life as a school term you were given by our Teacher, and the better your chances of graduating with honors.

The Good Luck In Bad Luck

Joseph is sold into slavery and sent on a caravan to Egypt. In Egypt, he's sold to an Egyptian master. But when his master's wife tries to seduce him, Joseph does the right thing by retreating from her advances. But, because she's been scorned, she lies to her husband about what happened, and Joseph's master has him arrested and taken to jail on trumped up charges. [Genesis 39]

Joseph is like the handsome, talented, innocent and naïve, young man in every generation who finds himself painted into a corner through little fault of his own. He's a

victim of circumstances, rudely awakened to how lovingly he was treated by his parents compared to the way he was ill-treated by other family members who didn't like him at all and strangers, like his master's wife, who liked him too much.

But in the end, Joseph is just one more cardboard character brought on the stage of Torah for you to identify with. He's the victim of envy who doesn't even realize he has something special that others want. And he's the victim of envy who has to learn to stop flaunting his gifts before others.

The story of Joseph in The Book of Genesis is paramount to understanding The Book of Exodus. You'll go on the journey with Moses to the extent that you've completed the journey of the heart through the lessons of jealousy and envy within yourself. If you don't come to know yourself by increasing your appreciation of you, you'll become a victim, and you won't understand why. All this will happen in an attempt to get you to unlock the secret in you that you're withholding from yourself that you refuse to let out. All this is happening to prove to you that you're forbidden fruit unto yourself that you refuse to reach for within in a misplaced attempt at behaving righteously throughout.

Joseph experiences the A.B.C.'s of life first at home and then out in the world. He has reason to give up dreaming big. He has reason to be bitter and depressed at how life has treated him. But now he's a slave who's been jailed for a crime he didn't commit. The story of Joseph at this point reminds us of the adage, "Good guys finish last."

But at least now Joseph can commiserate with others who feel victimized by circumstances beyond their control. He can learn to feel a part of this world of alienated actors, and not a spectator to what's happening on the grand stage where the privileged strut forth.

The fruits of embarrassment will always ripen into modesty. But if they're not consciously consumed, but left on the vine instead, they'll sour into sarcasm at how others get ahead with deviousness and deceit. You'll only see how beautiful people get ahead at a cost to you.

The fruits of shame will always ripen into humility. But if you don't know what you know, you'll become bitter with age, and exude cynicism at the lack of character you see in others. Your low self-esteem of *others* will keep *you* arrested in place.

The fruits of humiliation always ripen into self-loyalty. But if you don't pick yourself in time, you'll see yourself wrinkle and wither with scorn at GOD and this meaningless life that HE gave you. Your disappointment with what you've been able to accomplish with your gifts will leave you feeling wanting and bitter at the end.

It's easy not to appreciate yourself so as not to let yourself become embittered by your circumstances. People age physically, and that you can see. But they also age emotionally and spiritually, and that you can't observe with your eyes. You have to use your ears to discover what's going on inside them. They're often more wrinkled and withered within than they appear on the outside. Not every plum is sweet. And not every prune is either.

Looking young and youthful on the outside is a goal that should be the starting point for another, deeper goal. Vanity should be the precursor to conceit. And conceit should be the precursor to spiritual curiosity and exploration. You've got to work life out on the outside to appreciate the goal of getting inside yourself. And then you've got to work from the inside to appreciate the goal of getting out of your container on the last day of your life with grace and aplomb.

Life is not all about fame and fortune. But you can say that half of life is. To the extent that you've achieve fame and fortune, you ought to seek a spiritual goal. And to the extent that you've achieved your spiritual goal, you ought to pursue fame and fortune.

When literally in jail, or when a man feels locked up inside by circumstance beyond his control, he may react with a desire for greater separation and autonomy from everyone. Seeking autonomy from myself is the champagne problem I suffer from! And I manage that by tolerating everything I have to go through as a GOD-given part of my spiritual path. When I do what's right before me, I leave space for something new to appear. Who knows what might happen next?

Real freedom is anything but free. In fact, it's quite costly. You pay a high price for becoming free. And people only become as spiritually free as they're willing to make a personal investment in freedom. If you learn to read between the lines of the Constitution, you'll find that the United States of America is founded on the promise of the pursuit of happiness – not more. But external happiness together with tranquility within is what will lead to peace on Earth.

“WHILE JOSEPH WAS THERE IN THE PRISON, THE LORD WAS WITH HIM; HE SHOWED HIM KINDNESS AND GRANTED HIM FAVOR IN THE EYES OF THE PRISON WARDEN. SO THE WARDEN PUT JOSEPH IN CHARGE OF ALL THOSE HELD IN PRISON, AND HE WAS MADE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THAT WAS DONE THERE. THE WARDEN PAID NO ATTENTION TO ANYTHING UNDER JOSEPH'S CARE BECAUSE THE LORD WAS WITH JOSEPH AND GAVE HIM SUCCESS IN WHATEVER HE DID.” [Genesis 39:21-23]

The only way we allow ourselves to resign ourselves to the fact that we feel locked up inside is when we impress ourselves. The Warden within us has to have good reason to let us do our thing. Otherwise, we feel miserable indeed.

Joseph does his best to make the best of a bad situation in prison by helping out two of his cellmates. One, in turn, finds himself in a position to help Joseph receive an audience with the Pharaoh. And by using his ability to interpret dreams, Joseph not only miraculously rises out of slavery to freedom; he becomes viceroy to Pharaoh, and saves Egypt from famine. Because the famine has hit Joseph's family back home too, his brothers come to Egypt in search of food, and the family is miraculously reunited. It's then that Joseph meets his younger brother, Benjamin, who's born to the same mother: Rachel. [Genesis 40-48]

Torah is telling us that opportunities to help others is the foundation upon which self-love must be built. But you'll never be able to admire yourself if you don't have exceptional stories of self-sacrifice to tell. Torah implies that you can't lay the groundwork of optimism until you've first dug yourself out of a deep hole.

Some men feel that their inner life partner is their cellmate. But that cellmate was chosen for you by the Warden. Make the best of things. If you feel imprisoned in your relationship with yourself, remember that all marriages are made in heaven, including your relationship with yourself. You wouldn't choose yourself to spend a lifetime with if you had a choice in the matter. You may only want to escape from the jail within to get as far away from you as you can. That ain't gonna happen...

The world is full of people just like you. They give themselves a promise of fidelity like a coat of many colors. Then they become envious of something they have that they don't understand {self-love} and won't share with themselves. They conspire against

themselves without even knowing it. And when they end up in situations that are intolerable, they don't know what to do next.

Who wouldn't insist that Joseph deserves a reward from GOD? Unlike all previous biblical characters, we now have a character who's admirable. He may not be perfect, but his conscience is good enough to make him enviable in others' eyes.

The good guy who's outnumbered ten to one is precisely the sort of guy we want to see rewarded for his kindness to family and generosity of spirit to strangers. We yearn for everyone to identify as a Joseph in life. We want this underdog to succeed, even if he's the descendant of moral wolves who took hundreds of years to finally become domesticated.

If we don't look too deeply at the conceit that got Joseph into the predicament with his family in the first place, we like him. We find ourselves invested in his fate because we, too, were once a seed of knowledge that had to grow up to become a mighty Tree. And, as a sapling, we, too, weren't yet all that fruitful.

The Taker And The Joy Of Giving

The Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob personify levels of consciousness that couldn't love themselves sufficiently to reap the full rewards of self-respect through the role of father in their family. They're renowned for their relationships with GOD and their communities, but not for their familial ties. Family values have to be developed from the inside out. Family values require a conscience you know how to guide.

The problem in sacrificing yourself for GOD's sake, rather than for raising your opinion of yourself in your eyes, begins with Abraham, but the effects are seen in Torah in the family dynamics of the next two generations.

Joseph is the first character in Torah who wins our respect despite his naïveté and boastful nature. He may be a bit overbearing in praising himself. {"JOSEPH HAD A DREAM, AND WHEN HE TOLD IT TO HIS BROTHERS, THEY HATED HIM ALL THE MORE. HE SAID TO THEM, 'LISTEN TO THIS DREAM I HAD: WE WERE BINDING SHEAVES OF GRAIN OUT IN THE FIELD WHEN SUDDENLY MY SHEAF ROSE AND STOOD UPRIGHT, WHILE YOUR SHEAVES GATHERED AROUND MINE AND BOWED DOWN TO IT.'" [Genesis: 37:5-7]

But the irritation brought on by the dreamer mentality is vastly less annoying than the malevolence of his biblical predecessors and peers. At last someone with a dream to make a better world has come on the scene, and he's got the strength of character to know that his gifts were given by GOD to help him do so!

Joseph helps strangers in prison because he can personally identify with their predicament. But his empathy for others will grow quickly, and he'll soon find himself in a position to help all of Egypt.

All Dreams Come True

Joseph receives an audience with the Pharaoh and unravels the Pharaoh's dream: "HE WAS STANDING BY THE NILE WHEN OUT OF THE RIVER THERE CAME UP SEVEN COWS, SLEEP AND FAT, AND THEY GRAZED AMONG THE REEDS. AFTER THEM, SEVEN OTHER COWS, UGLY AND GAUNT, CAME UP OUT OF THE NILE AND STOOD BESIDE THOSE ON THE RIVERBANK. AND THE COWS THAT WERE UGLY AND GAUNT ATE UP THE SEVEN SLEEK, FAT COWS. [Genesis 41:1-4]

This isn't at all a difficult dream for Joseph to fathom once you hold the overriding metaphor in Torah of 'knowledge as food.' *Famine* doesn't only refer to physical hunger;

it also implies a hunger for the wisdom needed to love yourself. Those who are emotionally famished can't feed their head self-love because they don't know how. Their thoughts are devoid of self-respect, confidence, a sense of worth, dignity and pride.

We see so many examples of UGLY AND GAUNT cows that eat up the SLEEK, FAT ones. Those who are emaciated of wisdom often prey on those who are emotionally rich in knowledge. This tendency is derived of course from a famine from within that people then try to satisfy through the world around them. They try to spite those with knowledge to lower the standards of knowledge universally, so that their own lack of knowledge won't appear different from others'.

Those who are spiritually starved because they refuse to pick the fruits from their own Tree of knowledge don't even realize how hungry they really are inside. They don't have the courage to feed themselves, for fear that others will then see how empty of self-knowledge and therefore spiritually famished they really are. The spiritually hungry who lack wisdom may be able to conceal their hunger for a time, but eventually their feelings rise up out of the waters of their heart to express themselves in ways they can then see.

The ravenous beasts within man figuratively came out of the Nile in the Pharaoh's dream, and threatened to consume the best in him, leaving even a man of his stature disoriented, pained and confused unless he could find someone to decipher his dreams.

Those who are starved for their own affection will devour anyone in their path. They'll find good reasons to hate, disparage and scorn others. And yet, when their feeding frenzy is over, they'll look and feel just as emaciated as they were before.

The seven cows in this dream correspond to the seven characteristics of fire:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. Illumination | Wisdom |
| 2. Warmth | Love |
| 3. Burn | Purification |
| 4. Beauty | Mystery |
| 5. Smoke | Prayer |
| 6. Sound | Calling |
| 7. Smell | Intuition |

The seven gaunt cows symbolize the hunger in every man for these seven attributes of the fire within them. Not every cow in you may be emaciated. There may be aspects of your personality that are fat and always well fed by your persona. You may not feel that Pharaoh's dream applies to you in every way.

Joseph was born into a family of hungry cows that figuratively wanted to eat him up alive because of what he knew about life that eluded them. His half-brothers wanted to devour his unique gift because their own gifts left them wanting. But the more envious they were of Joseph, the more emotionally emaciated they became. Unraveling Pharaoh's dream and applying it to the real world as an imminent famine that required planning was easy for Joseph. It was the story of his life.

There are millions of people in today's world who are literally starving to death, but there are billions figuratively starved for the self-love needed to pursue the wisdom that will satisfy their appetite. These billions of emotionally emaciated "cows" {the masses: beasts of burden to the military/industrial complex} can't get enough love from within to

fill their own heart because they lack the knowhow. Billions of people on Earth have no idea how to appreciate the fire around them as a clue to what's emanating out from within.

There's a worldwide epidemic of ignorance of self-love that causes a ravenous appetite within each of us from time to time. Feeding you what you crave is your task! Nobody can interpret what your cravings mean to you, but you. And nobody can feed you for you. You have to become the Joseph in your life to augment who you are with the wisdom gleaned from your own misfortunes. You have to interpret your own dreams if you want to make them come true.

The Pharaoh has a second dream the same night. "SEVEN HEADS OF GRAIN, HEALTH AND GOOD, WERE GROWING ON A SINGLE STALK. AFTER THEM, SEVEN OTHER HEADS OF GRAIN SPROUTED – THIN AND SCORCHED BY THE EAST WIND. THE THIN HEADS OF GRAIN SWALLOWED UP THE SEVEN HEALTHY FULL HEADS. [Genesis 41:22-24]

There were often famines in ancient Egypt, but because this pharaoh really cares about his people and the future of his country, he acts on Joseph's recommendation of building grain silos to prepare for the next famine. Pharaoh ignores the personal aspect of the first dream, but he takes the second dream literally by saving grain to circumvent the next famine.

Pharaoh had two dreams, and although they paralleled one another, Joseph was too young to help him take the first dream personally. Joseph could only help him take the second dream to heart. Joseph urged Pharaoh to act on the future of the empire by taking the dream of the seven grains literally.

All that you learn in the material world will benefit you spiritually if you apply what you've learned from the material world to your head, through your heart, and then use your thoughts and feelings to pursue a deeper soul.

Pharaoh rewards Joseph with fame and fortune for saving the nation, and, in a twist of fate, Joseph's brothers then come to Egypt in search of food. They find themselves requesting grain from their long, lost brother, even though they don't recognize him. Joseph recognizes them and tests the loyalty of Judah. In discovering Judah's heart has changed for the better, Joseph reveals himself to the entire family, and Joseph is reunited with his father, receiving his blessings before Jacob dies. [Genesis 42-49]

Fame is typically understood as making a name for yourself out in the world. But real fame comes from esteeming yourself, from making a name for yourself in your inner world, rather than looking to others to admire you for being you.

Great attention is given to names and name changes in Genesis, but a real man in the process of developing his conscience knows he has to make a name for himself in both his worlds. GOD will reveal HIS name to Moses in the next book {Exodus}, but this will occur after Joseph has impressed his family with his loving and forgiving nature despite the implied "name calling" he had to suffer that led to such pain and suffering for everyone.

Fortune is typically understood as the reward society gives us for contributing to the wellbeing of everyone. But the only real and lasting fortune is derived through inner wealth. If you make a fortune in money without increasing your spiritual wealth, you're still poor. This was the message of the Old Testament 3,400 years ago, but it's still news today.

It's not the wealthiest, most talented, handsome or most famous members of society we should admire the most. Beggars and billionaires often personify bipolar relationships within the self that create extreme reactions out in the world. Most of us experience fame

and fortune through a well-centered relationship with ourselves. We don't need to be nearly as popular or financially successful as we may have thought in order to like ourselves. You might be amazed at how far a modicum of self-love and insight will go in achieving peace of mind.

Unforeseen circumstances in the world around them finally do reunite Joseph with his family. But when Jacob dies in Egypt his brothers are afraid that Joseph will enslave them out of spite and revenge. Joseph tells them, "DON'T BE AFRAID. AM I IN THE PLACE OF GOD? YOU INTENDED TO HARM ME, BUT GOD INTENDED IT FOR GOOD TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT IS NOW BEING DONE, THE SAVING OF MANY LIVES." [Genesis 50:19-20]

In the stories of Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel, it was GOD who asked the questions. In the Stories of Abraham, it was Abraham who responded to GOD. But, in this story, it's Joseph who poses a question of his brothers, "AM I THE PLACE OF GOD?"

Of course the question, "AM I IN THE PLACE OF GOD?" is a marvelous question. But even better than the question, is the timing of the question. This question comes at a time in Torah when the development of man's developing conscience is ready to pose it in consciousness. It comes at a time when Joseph's brothers are ready to hear it. And it comes at a time when the character of GOD seems more fleshed out and real than ever before.

The man who moves through the embarrassment of his ugly, feeble body achieves modesty. The man who moves through the shame of his inconstant, conniving character achieves humility. And the man who moves through the humiliation of being such a frail, fluctuating, moral fool in the way he treats himself finds the loyalty to embrace himself lovingly through thick and thin. But this process requires a lengthy spiritual context in which to occur.

"AM I IN THE PLACE OF GOD?" becomes the question every soulful man must ask himself today. If you aren't standing in a place GOD has acquiesced for you, then where is HE? Obviously, you're in a place GOD would occupy if you weren't alive here on Earth. And when you're no longer taking up space in this world, your effect on the world will be the result of how you used your time and space righteously.

Parents endeavor to be in the place of GOD in their children's life until they die. Then they hope that their memory will be a righteous light in the life of their children. But the difference between being GOD and being in a place of GOD is enormous. When you realize how flawed your parents were, the place of GOD they still hold after they're gone is precious indeed. There aren't many ways to perceive GOD's presence. The virtues of your parents is one of them.

Jesus understood this spiritual process more intimately than any other character in Torah. He was the greatest rabbi who ever studied Torah. The Hebrew Testament is the only book we know for a fact He read. The spiritual symbolism He described using His body and blood to take GOD's place here on Earth becomes the only answer possible to Joseph's rhetorical question. Yes, you are here in the place of GOD/GOD/G O D.

What's more, Joseph #1 in Torah will prefigure Joseph #2 in The New Testament who stands in the place of GOD as Jesus's father. His mother, Miriam #2, will stand in place of Moses's sister, Miriam #1. And Jesus {Joshua #2} will stand in the place of Joshua #1 who will be Moses's right hand man at various points in the Exodus.

When you have an understanding of these three characters in Torah {Miriam, Joseph and Joshua}, you're in a better place to understand GOD's design.

GOD/GOD/G O D uses man's desire for fortune and his unconscious desire for disgrace to motivate him to use HIS/HIS/H I S transformative efforts to learn to love himself as wisely as he can. It doesn't really matter if these are the best of times or the worst of times. It doesn't really matter if the world is improving or going to hell in a hand basket. The only thing that matters is that you have evidence for your opinion of yourself to keep rising.

You know you're only going to be judged by your intentions, since you can't control the outcomes of anyone other than yourself. Therefore your intentions must be self-scrutinized constantly for any evidence of foul play. Only you really know whether your goals are truly headed in the direction of self-love and the wisdom and generosity needed to achieve your goals. You have to use your head, heart and conscience to reassess your destination daily because your circumstances are always changing.

To become an instrument of the greater good, you have to know your way around this world from the inside out. Only you and GOD know what you think, feel and believe to be true. Only the two of You can fully see your prior actions in relationship to the forces within you. Only You can determine if your desires are congruent with the rest of your intentions {thoughts, feelings and beliefs}.

It always comes back to that talking serpent GOD gave you and that naïve little Eve inside you who's curious to know the difference between good and evil. If your head doesn't get on board with your heart and penis, you'll never discover who you are. You'll die without having accomplished the task of making a name for yourself in your own eyes.

Self-denial is very real. People assume they know and love themselves much more intimately than they really do. And then they wake up the following day, look back on what they ate and drank the day before in response to their hunger and thirst. They then resolve to do better, without consciously conversing with the desires and feelings that got them in trouble the day before.

The problem for every Joseph is that he once had good reason to feel that everyone was against him. But he had to change his assessment of others by transforming his relationship with himself. Don't do to *you* what *they* did to you. You don't deserve that kind of mistreatment from yourself.

Do blame the victim in you. But don't let anyone else do so. If you don't blame some part of yourself, you won't come to know the perpetrator in you, either. The Creation Story is the story of how you were created. And every story in Torah thereafter will tell you a little more about how to get to know yourself without hurting yourself more than absolutely necessary.

A Joseph isn't paranoid. His flaw is that he isn't afraid of what others might do to him. He finds himself being enslaved by society, but he isn't imprisoned from within. Joseph has good reason to feel terrified of what others have done to him. But the real coat of many colors is the rainbow of hope in his heart. Over time he feels relieved, as did Sarah when she laughed out loud in hearing that she will be with child. Joseph is the grandson of that miracle child. And he knows it!

A Joseph makes his way through vanity of his body and through conceit of his special skills to befriend himself in a meaningful way. He becomes someone who can believe in himself because he cares for himself. He becomes someone who has faith in GOD as the result of changes in his circumstances.

Joseph's father {Jacob} loved him, but Jacob couldn't protect him from the rest of the family. GOD loved Joseph, or he wouldn't have ended up helping so many people and

becoming a household name in Egypt. But whether Joseph could love himself, you'll have to decide for yourself. Surely he loved his two sons: Ephraim and Manasseh

“ISRAEL REACHED OUT HIS RIGHT HAND AND PUT IT ON EPHRAIM’S HEAD, THOUGH HE WAS THE YOUNGER, AND CROSSING HIS ARMS, HE PUT HIS LEFT HAND ON MANASSEH’S HEAD, EVEN THOUGH MANASSEH WAS THE FIRSTBORN.” [Genesis 47:14] Joseph said to him, “NO, MY FATHER, THIS ONE IS THE FIRSTBORN; PUT YOUR RIGHT HAND ON HIS HEAD.” [Genesis 47:18]

Joseph has become wise enough to contradict Jacob, who’s made the same mistake as his father, Isaac. And that’s how GOD, in HIS infinite wisdom, made the 12 sons of Israel {Jacob} into the 12 tribes of Israel {the place}, with Manasseh and Ephraim each becoming separate tribes. {Joseph and his half-brother Levi aren’t among them.}

Every Joseph in this world increases awareness of GOD’s love for humanity for others to see. His ability to open a dream like a door is a form of spiritual hospitality that brings fresh air into the world.

If you can identify with the biblical character of Joseph, you, too, can feed the world in a weird way that others can’t see. If you can identify with Joseph, you can drink in self-love and eat up the wisdom of forbidden fruit. You can ask GOD to allow you to pick yourself, and thank HIM for all that you glean from doing so.

Judah

All Betrayals Reflect Self-Betrayal

Before a man is ready to go on an exodus, a journey to a Promised Land of milk {unconditional self-love} and honey {wisdom}, he must first come to appreciate his inner Judah, the part of himself that betrayed him. Everyone has a Judah within who offers his duplicitous loyalty to his brothers instead of giving his loyalty to himself. We all comprise our moral hopes and dreams. We just don't all discover that fact.

When Judah comes to Egypt with some of his brothers, Joseph recognizes them, but they don't recognize him. Joseph asks about their family, and Judah tells Joseph that they lost a younger half-brother {Joseph}, but that their youngest half-brother {Benjamin} is at home with their father. This is news to Joseph of a younger, full brother who was born to Rachel, his mother.

Joseph tests Judah by accusing all of them of being spies. Joseph holds Simeon prisoner and sends the others home with orders to bring Benjamin as proof of their good intentions. Before Judah returns to Egypt with Benjamin to get Simeon released, Judah first forswears to their father Jacob that he'll take personal responsibility for Benjamin's safety. [Genesis 43]

When the brothers return to Egypt, Joseph has his men trick his family to make it look like Benjamin is a thief. Benjamin is caught and imprisoned. Judah begs Joseph to let Benjamin go and take him instead. [Genesis 44]

When Judah offers himself as a slave to Joseph to save Benjamin's life, Joseph realizes Judah has learned the lesson of loyalty to family, and Joseph reveals to them that he's his long, lost half-brother. [Genesis 45]

Judah was a half-brother to Joseph who could only half-heartedly give his loyalty to him. But Judah learned over time to give his whole heart to Benjamin out of duty to their father. This change of Judah's heart is what melts Joseph's heart.

Despite what people say, it's never about the money. Only the cynical assumes that money makes the world go round. Everyone wants something greater than material rewards, even if he doesn't know what. Loving what you have requires loving yourself for who you are. When you realize you really want what you have because you deserve what you've got, you've finally reached the spiritual starting point. You're ready to begin the journey of life, the exodus out of self-bondage to a new state of being in a relationship with yourself. You've achieved a modicum of wisdom.

Familiarity with yourself over a lifetime can breed self-contempt that you don't even notice. Your bad attitude toward your brother is more than merely a critique of his moral expression. It's also a window into your attitude on your own moral experience in being you. The more you see every experience as a gift from GOD to learn about yourself, the less you're going to inflict a bad attitude on anyone.

People crowd onto the platform of the stations where their trains of thought arrive and depart as they move from birth to their final destination. But they don't get on their trains with conscious understanding of where they're headed. They mill around, look out the window, talk to strangers, and plan where they're going to go next. But they don't see the big picture.

Judah personifies the man who consciously gets on board. He finds the only transportation offered out of self-loathing. He thinks about what he's done and how that

makes him feel about himself. He admits to himself that he feels guilty for what he's done to Joseph.

And that's when he experiences the train pull out of the station with himself as the engineer in the locomotive, and not a passenger who thinks himself entitled just because he has a ticket in hand.

Guilt is our only reprieve from self-hate. Guilt is the gift from GOD that keeps on giving. Once you feel guilty about what you've done to yourself, you'll be able to perceive GOD's participation in your life. It isn't HIS job to stop you from hurting yourself. It's HIS job to teach you to love yourself *despite* what you've done to yourself.

Only by becoming a Judah who can face yourself, can you take The Old Testament personally and universally. Only then can you see your spiritual growth through all the characters in Genesis. And then you can see how each generation in Torah represents a spiritual lesson you've learned in becoming fully human, yourself.

The Jewish people were named after "Judah." "JUDAH" means "THANKFUL." We are the "YIHUDIM," the Judahs of the world who are thankful for what we can see of GOD's design for us individually and collectively. GOD named us after this character in Torah because when we see our mistakes, and we correct them with gratitude for having made them, we learn consciously with the intention of not repeating them.

A Moral Obligation To Yourself

Shortly after Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt, Judah is caught up in a compromising, sexual liaison with his deceased son's wife, Tamara (who disguises her identity when she seduced Judah). She seduces her father-in-law to shame him for a hypocritical position he took regarding her wellbeing in the tribe after becoming a widow. She uses the only means at her disposal, her body. When Judah discovers her true identity, he responds appropriately with embarrassment and shame. And he fulfills his tribal duty to her. [Genesis 38]

Judah's treatment of his half-brother Joseph and widowed daughter-in-law Tamara gives him two reasons to cover his embarrassment with modesty; reveal his shame before others; and feel humiliated before The Lord. Judah has to travel down two moral dead ends {Joseph and Tamara} to be able to admit his guilt. But, in the end, he does so, thankful for having atoned for his sins.

It's not how GOD feels about a Judah, but how *he* feels about himself. The Judah of The Old Testament apologizes, atones and feels bad about what he's done, whereas the Judas of The New Testament hangs himself because his sin in having betrayed Jesus is too great for him to bear.

Judah becomes a wrestler of sorts like his father. But Judah wrestles within himself. He wrestles morally to find ways to improve himself, while Jacob literally wrestled with a stranger. {There's no mention of what the fight was about.} It's the sneaky, conniving and greedy stranger within Judah that he wrestles with. This stranger may even be similar to the stranger you've had to struggle with inside yourself.

A Judah is a modern man who knows his feet are made of clay. He walks with a limp like his father, but it's a limp that nobody can literally see. Everyone has to learn to perceive this limp in himself in order to perceive that his moral struggle is real. A Judah learns to love himself for doing this inner WORK/work/W O R K with GOD/GOD/G O D, even if he can't like himself as he's going through the process.

A Judah knows intellectually that loyalty to himself “as he is” is the first step on the journey to faith and hope. But nobody said it would be easy becoming self-aware. In fact, nobody promised it gets any easier when you become heartfelt. It takes a generous spirit to manage the combination of a strong head and a good heart. It takes a man who’s willing to look at all three of GOD’s/GOD’s/G O D’s Abrahamic faiths to find more and more of himself reveals in HIS/HIS/H I S WORD/WORD/W O R D.

What We Need, Not What We Want

People are only for practice. We have to treat people justly because they’re delivery systems to ourselves. The justice and mercy we show them, we’re only going to have to reuse on ourselves later on down the line. You’re the one who yearns for your love the most, but you won’t be able receive it until you’ve practiced justice and mercy on others.

When you open The Christian Bible it begins with The Old Testament with good reason. You should get through the feeling of guilt in order to learn about the feeling of love. You should go through The Ten Commandments before you try to adopt Christ’s other two. There are no shortcuts. Muslims today should know that without a deep understanding of their brothers’ gifts from GOD/GOD, they’re not going to understand G O D’s message to them.

You should act more considerately toward others today in the knowledge that you’ll treat yourself better tomorrow for having done so. I could try embarrassing you into treating your body better. I could try shaming you into treating others with greater consideration. Or I could humiliate you for not treating your GOD/GOD/G O D any better. But that wouldn’t set a good precedence on how I’ll then have to treat myself, without possibly behaving hypocritically.

It’s really all about “me.” Love has to begin with me, by me, and, in the end, be for me. I don’t get 10% of anything you achieve by improving your relationship with yourself. You paid me for my contribution to your life when you bought this book. How far you can stretch the value of that investment is entirely up to you.

Life really is a school, but I’m powerless over the grades you get. Your transcript will determine exactly what will become of you. I’m sure there’s something akin to “hell,” in the “afterlife,” perhaps a kind of video review of your life on Earth unencumbered by time for you to learn from it. I tend to think all the guilt you chose to avoid on Earth will catch up with you then. It would be a shame to get stuck in a loop of having to repeat one scene for what might seem like eternity just because you couldn’t see the big picture.

Jesus may have promised everyone a piece of the pie, but I don’t even think GOD, our Father, had to slice it for Him. I think you’re slicing away at your piece of the pie every day with the efforts of the God within. What you’ll be left with “after life” will surely rest in your hands.

Regardless of your religious beliefs, I recommend you make friends with your conscience. A clever head and an open heart aren’t going to be enough. You’re going to need your conscience over a lifetime, and probably a lot longer...

Giving Thanks For Being You

Because the name “JUDAH” comes from the Hebrew WORD for “THANKS” {TODA}, Judah becomes the personification of thankfulness. But he had to be disgraced into becoming thankful. The tough lessons in life that shape him so admirably also dishonor

him. For a Judah, “thank you” is ironically the hardest word to utter because he has to thank himself for having embarrassed, shamed and humiliated himself into changing his mind, transforming his heart and transcending his conscience.

The progression of a Judah through guilt to wisdom has to be realized with GOD’s help. Most people have such low self-worth that self-improvement for their own sake would seem like a self-defeating prophesy. They need to begin by at least sharing the joy of self-improvement with their Creator, who’s the only One who can see the difference they’re making from within.

Those who emulate Judah will, of course, have to use both tender and tough love on themselves. They’ll have to become practiced in the art of self-discipline for the sake of great self-knowledge. They know the body is weak and the mind, unwilling. So they’ll have to go to their conscience {GOD} to guide their heart {Eve} away from undesirable desires {serpent}.

And they’ll probably endeavor to act uniquely and individually rather than hold to comic strip standards of good and evil that others may profess, but which they may not want to apply to themselves. Heroism is really a very quiet expression of self-knowledge. It doesn’t require the juvenile fantasies of flight, strength and beauty that we’ve been taught to associate with being a do-gooder.

Judah has learned the hard way to pick the fruits of good and evil from the one Tree of knowledge he has permission to harvest: his own. He’s oily, but he’s also meaty. And, of course, he’s got a shell that’s hard to crack. He may be nuts, but at least he knows it.

Summary Of Genesis

It’s ironic that although Jews worldwide make it one of their highest, religious priorities each year to participate in the retelling of the Passover Story from the second book of Torah {Exodus}, most haven’t considered the personal importance of The Book of Genesis in their own life. Most shake their heads when thinking about the creation of the world as described in Genesis, a beginning misguided Christians are trying to support with bad science. Most Jews see Genesis as a bunch of children’s stories they don’t consider pertinent to the world we live in today.

Growing up, the retelling of the story of the Exodus each year left me only hungry for the food at the Passover table. I was anxious to get through the ritual and on to the meal because I didn’t understand the spiritual importance of food, especially forbidden fruit. And nobody explained it to me because they couldn’t. I had to ask and answer these questions for myself.

There were no connoisseurs of forbidden fruit at our Passover Table. My family was made up of simple folk just trying to make a living to get ahead. And they did get a head. A few of my distant family members even got a heart. But family is a topic I find much more difficult to talk about than religion or politics. My family took on biblical proportions of hypocrisy; hence my interest in Torah, The Gospels and The Quran.

Torah is really a five-course meal. You should whet your appetite on the appetizer {Genesis}; enjoy the soup {Exodus}; revel in the salad {Leviticus}; appreciate the meat and potatoes {Numbers}; and still have room left over for dessert {Deuteronomy}.

Torah won’t satisfy your spiritual appetite if you read it for ritual or to tell others how to live their lives. It should inspire you with an appetite for living. If it only inspires you to inspire others, you’re still trying to sell it on yourself. You’re not hungry enough.

In the Judeo-Christian culture I grew up in, in America, Bible stories as found in Genesis were the stuff of Sunday school lessons. They didn't pertain to the rest of the week. This was, of course, a big mistake. But as Holocaust survivors, my parents and half-siblings had enough on their plate. I can't blame them for not taking the time to become philosopher kings.

Christians and Muslims have done no better than the Jews in questioning the importance of Genesis as GOD's program for self-improvement. I hope that heathens, Hindus, Buddhists, Confucians, atheists and agnostics will read Torah with more psychological understanding than my generation did. Those who can move through their scorn of the Abrahamic belief in one GOD/GOD/G O D who created us all are usually perceptive enough to offer society new and refreshing perspectives on many other things, as well.

Our GOD is never wrathful. HE isn't overly emotional, temperamental, bipolar or depressed. HE doesn't get unhinged, hysterical or vindictive. These are personality traits used in the past to discredit the Jews and our sacred book. If you pass along these malicious opinions about our GOD, you're only contributing to the anti-Semitism that's already out there.

Our GOD is *your* GOD. Those who say they only believe in a loving GOD should ask themselves how they spell it. Jesus is only one aspect of GOD as we understand Him. If you make the claim that you only believe in a loving GOD, you really should ask yourself whether, out of the three names, "Y.H.V.H. Jesus A L L A H," you only call HIM/HIM/H I M by one of these three names.

You can call GOD anything you want, but it's not going to change a thing. It's not the word you use, but the *intention* you give to that word that gives it its power, not your *intonation*. Look at your intentions, and you'll see where your conscience is leading your head and heart. See if your "religious" beliefs are creating competition with the other two Abrahamic faiths. Such competition produces dogma that could cause hatred.

You should already be able to assume that the competition between the religions is a mirror of an inner competition between man's head {Judaism}, heart {Christianity} and soul {Islam}. Until men learn to use their thoughts, feelings and beliefs in unity, anti-Semitism and homophobia are going to flourish. And it's always the poor shmuck {penis/dupe}, regardless of his faith or lifestyle, who will pay the price.

LOOKING OUT THE WINDOW ON THE WAY UP

I Am A Pen...

As a writer, I see myself as a pen, and my life as a book of blank pages. I'm a diary in the making. But I had to teach myself the alphabet of life through pain and suffering to record my experiences on the page of each day in a meaningful way. I had to carve every word from the model in my mind into the lexicon in my heart, letter by letter. I had to teach myself to feel the precious meaning of every word I uttered before I could write about it.

GOD knows it couldn't be important to HIM that I believe in HIM. HE isn't in a popularity contest with humanity. GOD doesn't need my vote, and I can't imagine why it would be important for HIM to get it. Clearly, HE wants me to believe in myself for my sake. That's why HE's a loving GOD/GOD/G O D. And that's why HE sometimes uses harsh means to get me moving in different directions. To call HIM wrathful or angry misses the point of HIS intentions entirely. That's just vicious gossip.

Jews, such as my father, who were rounded up by the Nazis and sent to concentration camps couldn't understand GOD's message to them at the time. And most didn't survive to try to make sense of it thereafter. You can never know THE WORD GOD is giving you to analyze and repeat back to HIM by heart. HIS plan for man is too great for us to claim to know.

But, I do know that my father's spiritual vocabulary was infinitely enriched by his experiences. He left this world a much wiser man. Those Germans who couldn't kill him, made him {and his descendants} stronger.

The future might be in my hands, but my hands don't even have the power to turn to the next page after today to see what tomorrow will bring. I'm forced to write my diary day-by-day in the now, just like everyone else. But I do so with more than hope for a good ending to every chapter of my life. I do it with hope that GOD will like me. When it'll all be over I hope to be able to say that I was a "good book" in the making. I won't have to look at my life as though it were a diary that was so personal that others judged it as filled with scribbles and nonsense that had no reason or rhyme. I hope to be understood.

Some men not only have a need to be great; they have a need to be perceived as great. They want someone to read the story of their life and be inspired by what they've done with it. Those who don't want to perceive their own greatness can simply live with their conscience as the guiding force inside them. They won't need any more evidence of their goodness than that.

But those who want to take moral action in the outside world based on GOD's participation in their life will have to let HIM into their conscience despite the guilt that may bring up. You can't create a soul without a good conscience.

You purchased a ticket when you opened this book. You got to the airport when you started to read it. You got on board with Adam and Eve. But now this spiritual flight has taken off, and we're climbing high into the sky. The questions "Why me?" and "Why not me?" have been asked and answered. Now you're ready to pierce the clouds in your inner heavens. Once above the bank of clouds that are so good at hiding the sun from Earth, we can ask and answer the questions together, "Why us?" and "Why not us?"

The freedom to ask good questions is GOD's generosity made manifest. Freedom can't be found only in one's self through loving deeds and wise actions for others. Freedom is GOD's greatest act of generosity when you use it to question yourself. It takes wisdom to

conceive of freedom and love to birth the concept of freedom into liberty. But it takes generosity of spirit to emancipate you from the stranger you wrestle with within.

Freedom from yourself isn't freedom. That's autonomy. It's arrogant to be strive to be free from yourself. The last thing you should ever want is freedom *from* yourself. {Granted we'd all like a little vacation from ourselves from time to time. Even a long weekend being someone else might sometimes seem like something nice to do...}

Although the freedom to ask good questions isn't a difficult concept for Jews and Gentiles, it's posing quite a challenge to Muslims who are struggling with the fundamentals of freedom these days. And they certainly haven't got a clue to what liberty and emancipation have to do with our belief in GOD/GOD. For our young, Muslim brothers to embrace freedom nationally, they're going to have to embrace their two older brothers who've already done so much to try to help them to become free individually.

Today, sadly, most of the Middle East is fighting to *avoid* freedom. They want to return to various ideological forms of bondage they had in the past. They intuitively know that freedom is associated with Judaism and the Israelite march out of bondage in Egypt. Therefore, they want anything that reinforces their claim that they're not like the Jews. And the destruction of Israel is their only strategy in how to achieve "freedom."

The link between Judaism and Christianity is far too complex for them to see. They know nothing about the names in Torah that anticipate the arrival of Joshua #2 {Jesus} with GOD's message of love and forgiveness. They know nothing about Miriam #2 {Mary} and Joseph #2, or how Jewish family life is celebrated in The Gospels.

The idea that GOD works through each of us individually and collectively must be broached delicately. It can come across as offensive to lay claim to truths that can't be proved in conventional ways. The Exodus of the Israelites only marks the beginning of the journey to freedom. The life of Jesus only describes the birth of the beginning of the journey to liberty, without which the personal emancipation brought into the world by the P R O P H E T Mohammed will seem meaningless and useless.

Where the Jews go, everyone else must follow because GOD is leading us. GOD is leading the Christians after us. And G O D is leading the Muslims after them. GOD/GOD/G O D will enhance your journey in mysterious and wondrous ways as you learn to appreciate reality for what it really is: your opportunity to earn redemption.

Hatred of Jews only comes from people who envious us. Hatred against the Christians only comes from people who are jealous of them. But nobody covets what the Muslims have except other Muslims because they're trying to covet only themselves, and that can't be done. Their secret must be shared.