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
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Book 2

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PIERCING THE CLOUDS – THE BOOK OF EXODUS

The Great Journey Of Life

After Joseph

The Book of Exodus is the second book of Torah. It takes place 400 years after the death of Joseph. Although Joseph had been a great benefactor to the Egyptians, they soon forgot about his good deeds. The descendants of those earlier Egyptians slowly began to enslave the 600,000 Israelites who lived in their land. [Exodus 1]

Exodus tells the story of Moses, an Israelite, turned Egyptian prince, who murders a slave driver and then runs away to become a fugitive and nomadic shepherd. As an ex-patriot living outside the land of his birth, Moses languishes over the course of his lifetime without anything meaningful to do with his life. At the age of 80, he has an encounter with GOD, who tells him to return to the scene of his crime and take the Children of Israel on a journey from Egypt back to The Land of their fathers in Canaan. [Exodus 1-40]

The Book of Leviticus, the third book of Torah, describes the obligations of this first holy nation created by GOD, the only people the world has ever known who were a nation before they even lived on The Land they called home. The fourth book, The Book of Numbers, takes place in the 39th of their 40-year journey to Israel. The fifth and last book, The Book of Deuteronomy, takes place on the eastern bank of the Jordan River as the Israelites overlook their Promised Land.

A Rose By Any Other Name

The second book of Torah is better known by its Greek name "Exodus," which means "Departure." But in Hebrew it's called "SHEMOT" which means "NAMES." Until this point in the Torah, it's only been individuals who've had names bestowed upon them. In Genesis, GOD named the first man: Adam. Then Adam copied GOD by naming the first woman: Eve. Later in Genesis, GOD renamed Abram: Abraham. And HE renamed Sarai: Sarah. GOD changed Jacob's name to Israel. Then the name of Jacob's son, Joseph, went from obscurity to a household word in Egypt. Meanwhile Judah figuratively made a name for himself by becoming the namesake of the Jewish people through his ability to express his guilt and thankfulness before GOD for being his Guide. But the spiritual importance of names comes to a climax in Exodus when GOD reveals HIS name to Moses.

In terms of making a name for themselves as a united people, at the opening of Exodus, the Israelites are no longer a random collection of individuals coexisting in Egypt. Over the course of 400 hundred years, they've been shaped through misery and hardship into a group with a common bond. And they're on the precipice of becoming the first nation under GOD's rule.

They call themselves "B'NAI ISRAEL," literally "THE SONS OF ISRAEL," although it would be more figuratively accurate to translate that as, "THE NATION OF ISRAEL." They're about to go on a physical, emotional and spiritual journey that will keep them united for all time, teaching them to try to live together with GOD as their King of kings.

It's rare for a Jew to kill another Jew. We did have a civil war about 2,500 years ago, but it didn't go particularly well for us. We lost ten of our Twelve Tribes; the lesson being obvious. Argue if you must, but don't kill each other. {Would that our younger religious brothers could someday say the same about murder rates within their tribes and between tribes.}

Our Jewish unity emanates out from an inner collective harmony that's a model to the world of how everyone, as individuals and members of groups, can learn to extend the principles of SCRIPTURE/SCRIPTURE/S C R I P T U R E through psychology and sociology. Self-defense of our Jewish homeland today only makes us stronger and more united. The only way to destroy Israel once and for all would be with everlasting peace on Earth... And we can't wait for that day to come.

As an author, I find Exodus especially special to me in that it's in this book that the author bestows his name upon himself. Moses, the author, and Moses, the main character become two voices emanating from the same mouth. Like upper and lower teeth, author and main character reveal their tale. What makes this self-naming by Moses so important is that it's the psychological precursor to self-approval that's so challenging to us all. We all have two voices within us, and we all need to use our conscience to live amicably with them both. Our inner authority is the result of how we author our tale.

Although few of us literally give ourselves a name, we all create a name for ourselves through our deeds. And we should look back day-by-day to see if we've lived up to our expectations for ourselves night after night.

We author ourselves with our thoughts and feelings, but we sign our name to each page day-by-day with our actions. Approving of yourself is your "name in the making." And rereading your life in your memories is an editing process that requires conviction, dedication and devotion to remember all that you've done.

Moses, the author, begins his personal story in Exodus through his main character. And we read "their" story today with special thanks to both of them. Moses made a name for himself in this autobiographic way, and we should consider that our name is the essence of intimacy with ourselves, an intimacy we're always in the making.

The process of creating a name for yourself, or having GOD bestow a name upon you, is a metaphor Torah employs to reveal the personal process by which the mystery of life unfolds. The metaphor is 'self-awareness as your name.' Your name thereby becomes a spiritual code for you to unravel over your lifetime.

Every man who can read and write is a man of the "Book" because his life unfolds like chapters and verses. His life is a symbolic process in which he first learns to read reality from within, and then he writes out his responses on the blackboard of life around him.

In that sense, reading and writing are both personal and public, spiritual exercises. A man is his own pen pal, and each day is a portion of his diary he's privileged to get to peruse. In making a name for himself, everyone helps decide what attributes he wants his own name to hold.

A man *writes* himself by day through his actions and *rights* himself by night through his prayers and dreams. He's the author and editor of his life. And GOD publishes his work for as long as HE wishes to make it a living, public record. The Book of Life that the Jews ask GOD to rewrite their name in each year on YOM KIPPUR, {THE DAY OF ATONEMENT}, is reality, the third dimensional, moral scroll that GOD unwinds using a mysterious force called: time.

The Metaphor Of Water For The Maturing Man

At the beginning of Exodus, the Pharaoh decrees that every male, Israelite baby born must be killed. Moses is an Israelite newborn destined to die. But his mother puts him in a

basket and sets it afloat on the Nile in the hopes that he'll miraculously escape death. [Exodus 2]

The name "Moses" is an early Egyptian word that means, "to draw out" because he's drawn out of the Nile and adopted by a princess who happens to be the pharaoh's daughter. Moses is drawn out of his Israelite roots and assimilated {transplanted} in with the Egyptians. And he's drawn out of the dangers of the waters of the Nile onto the relative security of dry land.

Moses has been drawn out of the Nile that is the lifeline of Egypt. He's not just born on that land. He's been borne by the river of his homeland. It's not just his language and culture that are Egyptian. His emotional makeup is Egyptian as well. Moses is an Egyptian-Israelite. He holds the first hyphenated name in written history.

The key to the mystery of all the personality types in this world begins with the nature of water. Water can be divided without appearing to have been cut, and can be reunited without leaving a scar. Moses is every man who's experienced this fluidity of feelings that separates and unites him in a universal way with all of mankind.

The "basket" that Moses is put in by his mother is literally called an "ark." It the same word in Hebrew that described the boat in the story of Noah. It was the body of the adolescent in Genesis that was metaphorically described as his "ark." It was made from The Trees of knowledge of those who came before him, and it protected him from the tears caused by adolescence that pour down in an attempt to deluge young people's world from within.

From a psychological perspective, the "baby in the basket" echoes the evolution of every adolescent, personality type throughout the ages. Noah, Lot, Abram, Ishmael, Esau and the ten half-brothers of Joseph were previous biblical characters that personified previous adolescents in our own development; psychological levels of awareness that we've learned to recognize in ourselves and others. But they all personify the bridge between childhood and adulthood that we have to cross many times in life to understand our journey. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph are protagonists who contrast the juvenile personality types of their antagonists: Abram, Ishmael, Esau and Jacob's ten sons who are jealous of Joseph.

Noah personified the adolescent personality prototype in formation. Lot exemplified the adolescent through the autonomy of self-expression, and Abram typified the adolescent who should have known better from the bad examples set by those around him. Ishmael was the juvenile hothead who needed GOD's help to extricate him from his problems with strangers. Esau was the teenage hothead who got himself out of his own problem, albeit crudely with threats of violence. And the ten half-brothers of Joseph were the first gang that conspired to get their own way.

In infancy, Moses floats alone across the Nile in an ark without any more control than Noah had on the ocean. Noah was the man of *comfort* in Genesis. Noah is the *privileged* young man of a new era. And in floating, terrified, without his mother, baby Moses experiences his own spiritual, struggle with lack of any authority of his own. And Moses feels this way long before his adolescence will come upon him physically.

Moses is the most righteous man in his time, a new time literally and psychologically in the formation of the ancient Jew. It'll take Moses a lifetime to realize he'd always been struggling to get a handle on authority. But with GOD's help, he'll make substantial self-improvements, especially in overcoming his anger issues.

Moses is, by today's standards, a basket case. Anyone whose mother has to abandon her baby will come out of the trauma an emotional mess. Like many infants, he's a rage-aholic, But for Moses something inside simply snaps when he sees injustice occurring around him.

Although he's born an Israelite, unfortunate circumstances in society at that time make it mandatory that he immediately assimilates into Egyptian society. He finds himself living out the role of an Egyptian prince, one of the "beautiful people" of that time. But he has no personal perspective on the hardship his people have had to go through for the past few hundred years.

The woman who raises him in the palace isn't a *Jewish*-princess; she's a *real* princess: the daughter of Pharaoh. So Moses has no reason to identify with the hardships of the slave, labor class he came from, and yet he does. Moses is softhearted, but only at unexpected moments that not even he can predict.

The GOD of Noah descended from the heavens as rain to drown all of humanity. The GOD of Abraham descended upon Sodom and Gomorrah as fire and brimstone to rid the world of evil behavior. But the "new and improved" GOD of Exodus will send down The Ten Plagues as warnings. The Israelites will perceive that HE carefully selects who HE wants to live and who HE wants to see die prematurely.

In this story, it isn't GOD who exacts rage, but Moses who gets so angry at an Egyptian who was beating an Israelite slave that he kills the slave driver. It was unpremeditated murder. The moment becomes timeless in Torah. Death is finally inflicted upon someone we feel really deserves it.

But wishing people dead is a far cry from killing them. When the desire to kill conspires with good reasons to do so, it's very hard for some men's conscience not to comply with the thoughts and feelings that overwhelm them. And if their heart has been sufficiently bruised by previous traumas, it's not likely that their love of life will be a strong enough force to combat their own evil inclination.

When a spiritual man's feelings come crashing through his thoughts, the clouds within him break, and he's deluged with a raging torrent of emotion that he swears is powerful and plentiful enough to flood the whole Earth with his wrath. Only then can he understand the GOD of Noah through the lens of man's inner world.

When a basically good guy acts out his adolescent feelings, he can look down on his own destructive nature from a morally safe distance above the clouds in his inner sky. Once he sees how he played god, he's shamed himself, and will be more careful before blaming others, and GOD, in the future.

Running Away From The Scene Of The Crime

Moses doesn't feel humbled or hopeful after he's killed an enemy of his people. He feels frightened. He decides he has no choice but to turn his back on his life as a prince of leisure, surely as much with fear of punishment from the Egyptians as with guilt at what he's done. At the age of 40 and after a lifetime as a member of the leisure class, he runs away from Egypt and goes to a village in Midian where he marries and lives the life of a simple shepherd for 40 more years.

Those without hope have to wait {patiently or impatiently} for things to change. It's not until the age of 80 that GOD is ready to make HIMSELF known to Moses. It's at this advanced age that Moses has his "Burning Bush" experience. GOD comes to him in the

form of a Bush on fire to convince him to return to Egypt to the scene of his crime, with the special task of getting Pharaoh to set the Israelites free. [Exodus 1-3]

Adam and Eve ran away from GOD out of shame to hide in a garden full of trees when they heard HIM approaching. Jacob ran away from home when he got in trouble, and he, too, was unaware {or in denial} of his shame. But Moses runs away from his country, consciously choosing to hide his shame from the eyes of his countrymen. He knows he's guilty, but he has no sense of GOD in his life or the importance of his journey.

It's as if Moses has finally made it into the forest that he's going to use to conceal himself from GOD. But he still can't see The Trees. It's a metaphoric Bush that will be needed to reveal GOD to him.

When GOD chooses to draw Moses out of his shame at The Burning Bush, Moses has to face GOD in a manner distinctly different from the way Adam was confronted by HIM. GOD doesn't question Moses about what he's done; HE doesn't punish him; call his name out loud to shame him; or curse the ground he walks on. GOD simply tells Moses what he wants him to do. HE knows Moses knows he feels guilty. HE knows Moses knows why he spent 40 years running away from his past. None of the backstory needs to be discussed between Them.

Although Adam admitted he ran away from GOD because he was afraid {presumably of HIM}, Moses demonstrates no fear of GOD. {Moses ran away out of fear from Egyptian authority, not GOD's authority.} He knew what he did was morally justifiable.

But GOD has to tell Moses to take his sandals off, telling him that the ground beneath his feet is holy. We've come a long way from the GOD who has to tell Adam and Cain that the ground will be cursed because of what they did.

No fruit can ever be returned to the tree. No mistake can ever be taken back. And yet GOD is willing to negotiate deals with kidnappers {Judah} and murderers {Moses} who are ready to atone. Is this an angry GOD? Hardly! HE's *vengeful*, but he's not *vindictive*.

Those easily embarrassed, who struggle to achieve modesty, often end up becoming bitter and *sarcastic* about matters of the flesh. Those easily ashamed of themselves, who struggle for humility, often become *cynical* about the efforts of man to improve himself. And those easily humiliated, who struggle with loyalty to themselves, mirror other people's *scorn* within themselves without realizing how cruel it is to treat themselves that way.

Those who are sarcastic, cynical and scornful can't see their own inner light. They're blind within, but they have the chutzpah to claim that the darkness is all around them. It takes a Burning Bush experience to perceive your inner light, not to ignite it. This is the filament within that's always been lit. People simple can't see it. Where else would they expect all their previous illumination, warmth and ability to burn those around them to have come from?

No one can start his journey into consciousness until he's given up cynicism for skepticism. He has to believe that something hopeful and encouraging might just happen to him if he just keeps going. But, by the age of 80, most people have given up on their dreams in favor of stark reality.

Moses personifies the skeptic at this point in his own story. He's a disbeliever; he doubts himself. He's a victim of darkness visible. For the skeptic, familiarity with himself breeds contempt of himself. And from that, he generalizes that GOD can't change him.

Moses, the author, describes the path of redemption for his main character in Torah: Moses, the killer. Nobody's heart could be more twisted than a murderer's. No one could

have a harder time believing in GOD's love for every member of humanity than a killer. Nor could anyone have greater need for GOD's help in learning to believe in himself than the author and the main character of an autobiography of a murderer.

If someone like Moses can learn to believe that GOD has a plan through which he could be so changed and transformed that he'd be able to transcend himself, surely anyone could repeat a variation on this tale in his own way.

It's all an inside job. You have to see the light in yourself to perceive the light of The Lord who ignited you. But the problem is a spiritual Catch-22. If you can't believe in HIM because you can't believe in yourself, you can't believe in yourself because people keep criticizing you for what you do.

How could GOD have a plan so big and encompassing that it could have included you 3,400 years ago? How could HE know what you'll do tomorrow when you don't even know what could happen to you later today? How could GOD be any different from all the idols men carved out of stones or words and prayed to in the past?

Exodus is the story of a murderer who turns around and goes back to the scene of the crime, despite the guilt he still feels 40 years later. SHEMOT is the second book of Torah in which our Creator presents Moses with HIS name because HE has a plan so great that HE doesn't need to know what anyone's going to do next to include everyone in it. HE can present the next moment in time with an event that can take any of us in a whole new direction.

If Moses could wait 80 years to become a part of GOD's design, it would seem plausible that there might be a ray of hope for patience for someone like you and me.

Of course, if, in the process of studying Exodus from a personal point of view, you come to believe in yourself, not just in GOD, that would be even better. And if you were convinced that GOD believes in you even if you don't believe as deeply as you ought to in HIM, you might even be able to squeeze through HIS rigorous educational institution here on Earth with passable grades despite your frequent "I hate this school" attitude about life.

The Uniqueness Of The Journey Of Life

The Exodus for the Israelites from Egypt is a physical departure from bondage that they require a leader to help them undertake. But Moses isn't on the same journey as them. His is a parallel, spiritual, path that will need to release him from an emotional bondage from the burden of guilt {as well as from all the crap he put up with from all those around him that made him so irritable all the time}. And since he never apologizes for the crime he committed or atones for his anger to those who were directly affected by it, his journey will prove to be as long and arduous as yours probably feels to you.

For Moses to agree to go back to Egypt to help the Israelites, he's agreeing to return to the palace where he killed a man and face the family of the Pharaoh who had been so kindhearted to him. He's even agreeing to face his internalized shame. And by doing all this before GOD, he's also agreeing to face humiliation: the ultimate test of guilt.

Suddenly, we can see how Moses, the author, wants us to perceive Moses, his main character. At The Burning Bush, Moses, the main character, becomes figuratively bound before our Father, while Isaac was only physically bound by his father. Moses has to wrestle with more strangers than Jacob could ever have imagined. And, like Joseph, Moses will be outnumbered by his Egypt "half-brothers," and the odds will be infinitely greater.

Genesis was just a prologue to the story of Moses. Moses, the author, set us up in Genesis to identify with Moses, his main character. He's railroaded us into taking his protagonist to heart. And, like any good writer, he must have wondered at the time whether his work would sell…

Many claim that Torah was written by a committee. I've heard tell that the "camel" was also created by a committee… They say no god would ever have come up with an animal that has a neck that long, a hump that big, legs so thin and a disposition as off putting as the camel. But, it doesn't matter. So what if there is no Elephant in the room; it's a Camel. It's still going to be up to you to decide if GOD exists because if GOD doesn't exist, GOD doesn't exist and G O D doesn't exist. There can only be one GOD/GOD/G O D. So it doesn't matter if you call HIM/HIM/H I M Y.H.V.H or Jesus or A L L A H. You could just as well call HIM/HIM/H I M "Numero Uno" or the Elephant in the room.

We can only determine what Moses knew about life from the book attributed to him. And, as the author of Torah, he could only do his best to show us how he felt about life through every action he talks about as narrator of his own story.

What we know is that Moses said that GOD gave him a chance to change other people's lives, and that opportunity produced a profound change in the way *he* behaved. We have to assume he came to like himself a little more from the process of working *with* GOD, not in *spite* of HIM. And we have to conclude that he died tranquilly, even though his dream of stepping foot in The Holy Land never literally came true.

Miracles don't just occur if you're lucky. They come true as you're making an effort. A great miracle in your life is occurring at this very moment on your journey. You just may be looking in my direction and therefore not seeing the miracle occurring elsewhere around you. A cynic is someone who's so focused on what he's focused on that he doesn't see the vast miracle of life in the moment. A skeptic does.

Miracles are harder to observe when you're not the kind of person who can easily admit you're guilty because you can't see what the hell you did that was so wrong in figuratively stealing forbidden fruit. Why would you have had to go through all that you've been through in life if the entire Creation Story is just a metaphor, and you didn't *literally* do anything to offend GOD?

At the end of Genesis, when Judah felt guilty, he asked Joseph to spare Benjamin's life and offered up his own life instead. Judah personified his own name, "thankful," because he found reason to sacrifice his life thanks to his guilty conscience. It was expression of Judah's guilty conscience that gave Joseph the desire to forgive him for his sins. And Judah should have been doubly thankful because, not only did Joseph forgive him. Tamara had previously forgiven him, as well.

Moses isn't yet like Judah. Moses spent too many of his formative years among the ancient Egyptians. Moses has to have his feelings of thankfulness drawn out of him. This protracted process takes his entire life, but it also allows him to atone before 600,000 strangers for the crime he committed against one individual, without ever offering a word of regret to anyone in that man's family.

The Moses In You

From the most personal of perspectives, the Israelites personify the hundreds of thousands of thoughts in your head, and Moses, the voice of awareness that makes it possible for you to take them from one place in inner space to the next. In this way you can

get out of your head, wander for 40 years in your wilderness of your heart where you may be wallowing in your feelings, and then make your way from there into your conscience to do something useful with however much time you have left.

Your exodus is your story in moving out of cynicism through skepticism toward your own Promised Land. When your head, heart and conscience entertain the idea of collaborating with GOD, miracles occur. But this mystery only occurs as you're working to free your brother from bondage. Unlike in the case of Judah, this process can't be done within your family alone. You have to take your mission out into the world. You have to become a part of something bigger than yourself or the stand of Trees where you were originally planted.

Moses and modern man share a conscience that's been developed and honed to a similar degree. We, too, begin like an Adam, reacting angrily when accused of a crime. And we, too, have achieved the awareness of a Judah who grounds us in understanding the importance of guilt in becoming thankful.

Like Moses we, too, go on a journey through a wilderness that gives us a tremendous thirst for love. And like him, we, too, end our journey at the edge of a river before a Promised Land.

But Moses never atoned to the family for the crime he committed. He did something else instead. And if you don't atone for the crimes you've committed, you're going to find yourself standing outside your soul at the end of your life, wishing to be let in.

Guilt is the delivery system of wisdom, and although Judeo-Christians may cringe at the worry every man of G O D {Ishmael} has to endure today, we know everyone is challenged differently in facing our Creator's challenge in coming to know HIM/HIM/H I M intimately, deeply and personally.

Although no one is special, each of us is *praised* and *appraised* uniquely. Modern Judeo-Christian man is a Moses whose conscience has been carved through his forefathers' fates. For any of us to appreciate the sacrifice of Jesus in bringing His love into the world, we must come to it through an appreciation for the guilt that brought wisdom into this world. We must take every man's life personally rather than literally.

The marbled effect of the morality of reality lies in your head, but the tools you need to sculpt your thinking wisely must include the knowledge you possess about your heart and soul. Michelangelo, the gay-Christian genius of the 16th Century claimed have cut away everything in the marble that wasn't part of his statue of David. You must do the same. You have an understanding of the task at hand in your soul; the tools in your heart; and all the marble in your mind to get the job done.

Don't worry about being pure. Purity is for puritans. Just be genuine and you'll end up learning to appreciate the insight of a Jew like Moses and the frank words of a gay-Jew like Jesus. If you can do this, T H E WO R D S of T H E P R O P H E T Mohammed will spread through you with hindsight, insight and foresight that will make your time here precious, not incidental.

To The Scene Of The Crime

After GOD convinces Moses at The Burning Bush to make his way back to Egypt, Moses begins the psychological unbinding process that Isaac must have experienced when Abraham released him from his bonds, and father and son walked from Mt. Moriah home.

The mind of man is complex. Fortunately, GOD is a mind reader even if we aren't. Either we blame HIM for what we thought he {Abraham} should have done. We blame some victim {Isaac} for what he should have done. Or we rationalize our transgressions as necessary for our survival as he {Jacob} did.

GOD forgives us for we know not what we do. But HE does so by teaching future generations to do slightly better. HE divides HIS lessons into chapters, with each generation given a portion of HIS text to personalize.

Moses, the author, doesn't tell us what Moses, his protagonist, is thinking as he walks from The Burning Bush back to the scene of his crime in Egypt. But he doesn't have to. He's already prepared us for that by giving us cardboard characters in Genesis who can come to life in the background to remind us of what Moses might have been thinking about what's right and wrong.

The followers of the three Abrahamic faiths have each been given a portion of Torah. Each Jew must figuratively find his Egypt; petition for the release of his brothers in bondage; and help them find their way *to* Jerusalem. Each Christian partakes in the Passover ritual through Jesus, accepting the bread as His body and the wine as His blood, thereby bringing the revelation of spiritual flight *from* Jerusalem to heaven. The P R O P H E T Mohammed's revelatory flight one night from Mecca through the Rock under the dome in Jerusalem to heaven and back *through* Jerusalem to Mecca is an ongoing awakening of the spiritual journey every Muslim adds to healing of this world.

These three spiritual journeys – *to* Jerusalem {Jewish}, *from* Jerusalem {Christian} and *through* Jerusalem {Muslim} are metaphoric encounters with GOD/GOD/G O D that all spiritual seekers can vicariously experience if they have enough faith in themselves.

The spiritual destiny for all humanity is revealed first as a journey from an inner space to a place out in the world where we're given the job of helping others accomplish their goals. This is personified by Abraham, the Jewish father type. He is the *actor*.

Then there is the journey from a place out in the world back in to an inner space where we have the spiritual task of reacting to what we experienced in outer place. This is personified by Isaac, the Jewish sacrificial lamb. He is the *reactor*.

And lastly there is the journey back out into the world as the result of our action and reaction. This is personified by Jacob, the Jewish, ladder manufacturer. He is the *activator*.

Being an *actor*, a *reactor* and an *activator* teaches us how to develop our conscience.

You are an angel of The Lord disguised only by denial of the functions you play in life. This is your daily journey to and from heaven as though on a ladder for the sake of serving Y.H.V.H. {the name of GOD given to Moses}; Jesus {the aspect of GOD Almighty HE gave to the whole world to personify HIS love}; and A L L A H {the aspect of G O D who teaches us how to redeem ourselves of our errors of judgment}.

GOD/GOD/G O D has divided this spiritual process into a trinity of steps: three faiths. GOD/GOD/G O D hopes we'll learn to recognize HIS/HIS/H I S sanctified process in ourselves for ourselves, and work with one another to achieve this sense of unity of purpose throughout.

The true believer in GOD/GOD/G O D is an ambassador on Earth from heaven. He's a peacemaker regardless of his faith, race or sexual persuasion. He's an angel without disguises. He's the man who's willing to give up living in denial of his importance to himself.

Nation Building

The stories in Genesis are linked together as a psychological preview to a sociological account for the creation of humanity as portrayed in the formation of the Jewish nation, the first nation under GOD. Moses is the *revolutionary* who ignites the world's first peaceful revolution against oppression. In advocating to Pharaoh to "LET MY PEOPLE GO," [Exodus 9] he sets off an uprising against injustice that the world is still reeling from today.

But Moses is also a spiritual *evolutionary* who discovers he must do great deeds for others to evolve within himself. His guilt never goes away. The man he killed is a shadow of the man he's atoning to inside in order to make his life worthwhile.

There's one and only one Jewish nation on Earth, and this world needs no more. But there are many Christian and Muslim nations, all created on the same principle of nation building under GOD/GOD/G O D Almighty. Regardless of our nationality, we're all on a journey to the Israel we believe is ours to have and to hold forever. That destination is abstract, internal and personal.

But, when men worship their leaders instead of themselves, they end up turning their body into a mausoleum they'll be buried in. They turn themselves into mummies all wrapped up inside with their arms crossed about their chest, unable to move. They can't literally hug the hero they want to be. They can't enjoy a sigh of relief. They lie and wait for someone to break in and discover them in the esophagus they've fashioned for themselves deep down inside. They wait impatiently for a time when pharaohs who think they're gods will finally be replaced with presidents for limited terms to save them. But, they'll never truly come to life until they see themselves as they truly are.

Such nation builders live out the life of an Egypt of acrimony. Autonomy will substitute for freedom. They'll never personalize the importance of the people of the scroll.

Incident Or Miracle

The acts of GOD in Genesis are events best understood as having been initiated in the conscience of man to reveal his inner dynamics to him. They describe psychic consequences of relationships within the self that bring inner peace and spiritual unity as we evolve from one state of being to the next.

These aspects of ourselves coalesce into consciousness in our formative years. They add up to what we call 'the journey from a boy to a man.' They produce unexpected inner transformations that make every man's life an inner mystery in the making. Although these transformations feel miraculous, they aren't miracles in the same sense as the miracles described in these next four books of Torah.

The miracles you *perceive* are different from the miracles you *observe*. The miracles in Genesis are precursors to miracles we all come to see in our life as we become more astute in perceiving correlations between inner and outer space.

The miracles of these four books of Moses should not be regarded as coincidental encounters with GOD. They're incidents that describe sociological encounters between peoples in outer reality that are even greater than the previous psychological encounters within individuals we saw in Genesis. And that puts these new encounters on a level of awareness and importance that bring about a sense of GOD working in everyone's life in both outer place and inner space.

The miracles of these four books of Moses make it possible for us to ask, "Why us?" and "Why not us?" They shape the national characteristics of a people brought together for

a spiritual purpose. Jews aren't just a chosen *people*. Each is a chosen *person* who's an integral part of a national and spiritual identity that has cultural, as well as religious, roots.

The miracles that Jesus is purported to have performed are GOD's work on Earth between peoples in an effort to bring them to conscious awareness of their special task of continuing this spiritual process toward individuation. That doesn't make His miracles any less impressive. It simply describes a way of perceiving spirituality through symbolic logic, not just metaphoric inquiry. It makes it possible for Christians to ask, "Why you?" And "Why not you?"

The miraculous encounter between the ancient Egyptians and Israelites sparked a separation and unification process in the conscience of both peoples that led to GOD-consciousness for the Israelites and the eventual rejection of idol worship more than 2,000 years later by the Egyptians.

The first nation formed in this way was B'nai Israel: the Nation of Israel, the one and only Jewish state whose people still struggle for their foothold in this world. But the ancient Egyptians were being prepared for the coming of T H E P R O P H E T Mohammed and the unification of many future Muslim lands in another mysterious way. This will bring modern Muslims to the questions "Why them?" and "Why not them?"

All religions, faiths, denominations, sects and even cults are the consequences of consciences united with common interests. Torah is the model for this spiritual separation/unification process. This separation/unification process is going on between all peoples and persons.

The word "holy" in Hebrew is "KADOSH," and it means "TO SEPARATE," not "to make whole." That which becomes holy in Hebrew is first drawn out from the rest. Psychology separates. Sociology unifies as it separates. Jewish holiness separates each of us inside from ourselves and outside from one another before GOD; Christian holiness both separates and unifies them with GOD. Muslim holiness both separates and unified them with G O D.

Jews are the first example of the longevity and fragility of this spiritual evolution. We've survived every civilization in the Western world for the last 3,400 years because our spiritual purpose continues to be relevant to GOD's design. The wisdom of the Jews is a great contribution to humanity, but a gift that isn't nearly great enough to bring HIS/HIS/H I S designs to fruition. The world would be a sorry place if there weren't equally good examples of the gifts of love {Christianity}; generosity {Islam}; diversity {Hinduism}; paradox {Buddhism}; and mystery {Taoism}.

Einstein proved the relativity of time and space. But he explained their relationship in terms of outer space. He proved to us mathematically how "GOD doesn't play dice with the universe." He demonstrated that there's an intelligence to the way time and space interface around us.

But every man can come to the same conclusion in terms of inner space and time. The objective time we share becomes subjective in inner space. The subjectivity of time personalizes reality. But the attributes of inner space and time are personal, not universal. We share our inner world with partners, family, friends, community, nation, language, race and religion.

Opening to your personal perception of time and space will eventually make it self-evident that GOD is intimately involved in the unfolding of your life, whether or not you believe in GOD/G O D. When the space and time around you become emotionally and personally meaningful, you'll still be subject to all the *incidents* you go through, but they'll

no longer feel like *coincidences*. You'll be able to see how GOD has a hand in your spiritual upbringing at all times.

When the space and time around you converges with the space and time within you, you find yourself on the moral journey of life. You begin to see signs of GOD's presence without losing your mind or allowing your feelings to plunge you into grandeur or despair. Your fantasies and illusions no longer run you. You can see the good in the bad, and embrace them both for helping you become more of who you are becoming. You see that GOD doesn't play dice with *your* universe.

Moses personifies the luckiest man at that time. Although he made a big mistake, his introduction to GOD at The Burning Bush gives him a new reason for living. Distrust and disappointment won't matter quite so much to him after that. Guilt has given him bigger fish to fry. He's been given a mission.

Why Not Me?

When you're truly awestruck at the depth of Torah, the most natural question to ask is "Why not me?" Why did Moses get chosen for a journey like this, and I didn't? After all, he was a spoiled, rich kid who killed a man in a fit of rage. And he got away with it. GOD sanctified him by giving him a mission. I'm a much better person than that, and I've had to trudge through life without so much as a nod of approval from GOD. What's with that?

Jews ask:	Why me?	Why not me?	{ANI}
	Why us?	Why not us?	{ANACHNU}
Christians ask:	Why you?	Why not you?	{ATA, AT}
	Why you?	Why not you?	{ATEM, ATEN}
Muslims ask:	Why them?	Why not them?	{HEM, HEN}

NOMINATIVE CASE PRONOUNS IN HEBREW

ANI	I	FIRST PERSON SINGULAR
ANACHNU	WE	FIRST PERSON PLURAL
ATA	YOU	SECOND PERSON SINGULAR MASCULINE
AT	YOU	SECOND PERSON SINGULAR FEMININE
ATEM	YOU	SECOND PERSON PLURAL MASCULINE
ATEN	YOU	SECOND PERSON PLURAL FEMININE
HEM	THEM	THIRD PERSON PLURAL MASCULINE
HEN	THEN	THIRD PERSON PLURAL FEMININE

The questions brought up by Jews, Christians and Muslims with regard to one's personal place in Torah are very real and deserve a wise answer. Unfortunately, the question is so good that it brings up an answer that's not easy to give.

Torah was always meant to be provocative. You can't discuss the development of a conscience without provoking people. You can't take someone on a journey out of his head, through his heart, to the edge of his conscience without intimating through the process that he hasn't got a soul.

The development of a soul is a struggle that Jacob wrestled over with a stranger. The stranger wasn't described as the personification of Jacob's soul, but it was. And the limp Jacob walked away with the next morning was a sign to Esau that Jacob was struggling in life to accomplish something neither of those brothers could put into words.

That said, the question "Why not me?" brings up the provocative question of how a man is supposed to learn to become soulful from reading Torah. And the simple answer is, "He's not."

Torah won't make you a soulful person. The Hebrew Testament won't make you a soulful person. The Gospels won't make you a soulful person. Not even The Quran will make you soulful.

They're all steps in a process of making an animal into a man, and a man into something a little lower than the angels. SCRIPTURE/SCRIPTURE/S C R I P T U R E is more like a recipe than a series of stories. You've got to follow all three STEPS/STEPS/S T E P S if you want to achieve the right results.

And in that spirit, the question, "Why not me?" will bring up jealousy and envy in not been created a Jew, a Christian or a Muslim. You've got to want what all three of them have to receive what all three of them offer. And this is why I say that GOD/GOD/G O D created gay people and allowed us to be shunned by all three of the Abrahamic faiths so that we would yearn for what all of those in the Abrahamic faiths have knowledge of.

Milk And Honey

Milk is the symbol of mother's love. Milk is the food that nourishes the infant completely, and so it's the symbol for unconditional love. The milk of human kindness represents the emotional nourishment we receive through all human forms of connection. And loving this world brings us the desire to survive for the sake of this world. At heart, we probably all believe that the world needs *us* more than we need *it*.

But the heart is riddled with guilt, doubts and insecurities. Feelings may be powerful, but they aren't consistent. Besides, feelings only transform us slowly. When we feel like we're unimportant to the world, the role we play out in the world is diminished from within. We become small. Our world becomes less meaningful because our interest in ourselves isn't greater. We question the importance of external forms of love when love from within isn't being renewed with abundance.

When we look for the sweetness of life, we should look beyond the *milk* that comes of loving and being loved by others. We should look for the *honey* in our life. Torah's symbol of honey is meant to convey our desire for wisdom. Wisdom brings with it a moral transcendence of situations we can rely on for insight into what we must endure.

Wisdom is awareness of the eternal nature of truth. Wisdom grows as personal truth is made manifest. Expressing your wisdom is your way of expressing your truth in a way that glorifies GOD's/GOD's/G O D's designs without hurting anyone or anything.

Forcing the rich to pay their fair share of income tax isn't going to hurt them even if their heart isn't in it. Forcing elected officials to get elected without contributions from lobbies and outside interests isn't going to hurt anyone's chances of sharing power. Tough love isn't cruel even though small children will never understand that. Such children will always cry out that our love for them is too tough.

Our feelings may be true in the moment, but wisdom is based on truth that's valid everywhere and at all times. Love is collective; wisdom is universal. Wisdom is the hard-

won consequence of pain and suffering from having made mistakes and corrected them. Love is the result of glorifying the good.

Wisdom is the juice in the forbidden fruits of guilt: modesty, humility and grace. Getting permission to pick these fruits will lead you toward your Israel: your blesséd destination. When the juice of your forbidden fruits {wisdom} overflow from skin to meat to core, your cup runneth over. And you come to know GOD/GOD/G O D.

Wisdom is the best reason to love life if you're looking for good reasons. The wisdom of your ways should also express the manifestation of your love for yourself. This goes well beyond your conditional love for others. It brings you to unconditional love through your love of learning from all your experiences.

And yet, paradoxically, wisdom has to be earned with love and generosity of spirit for *others*. It's not a question of how many people you love or how much generosity you lavish upon them. It's all paradoxically related to the depth of your desire to express your love and generosity for yourself.

An example of this is in going to the supermarket and listening to all the complaints you make to yourself in the privacy of your mind about the people around you. You ought to stop yourself from doing that. You ought to tell yourself that you're ruining your day. You ought to remind yourself that life is a school and you happen to find yourself in a classroom situation with nursery school children, juveniles and adults who are doing nothing to make things better externally. If you can't stop yourself from complaining about your classmates, you're neither loving nor generous of spirit. And you'll in bad company long after you get your groceries home.

Most people have been so shamed by others in life that they don't fear more shame externally. They're inured to shame. They don't care what anyone thinks of them. What they do care about, though, is the shame that's become internalized. They worry about what the voices in their mind are going to say and do if they don't stop themselves from constantly complaining about people, not the real people they engage with.

These inner voices are cardboard characters you produce yourself. They're your inner Genesis unexamined and unexplored. The more you develop the strength to question these cardboard characters as they come on stage, the more you'll come to love yourself for your effort in becoming wise. Strength of character, optimism and insight will be yours. Hope and faith will miraculously appear. And your belief in life as a school with our one GOD/GOD/G O D as your Teacher will become self-evident.

Pain and suffering are bearable, but only when they're meaningful. A man can go through any *how* if he has a good *why*. Jesus is the best example of that. Jesus is the most inspiring spiritual leader the world has ever known because He epitomizes the qualities summed up in GOD/GOD/G O D having created gay-Jews. He could express why He was willing to bear not only His own pain and suffering, but how His personal pain and suffering could inspire others.

The Land of milk and honey is not just a euphemistic name for Israel. It's a spiritual place within that inspires us to commit ourselves to our daily journey as it moves us in the direction of Israel: The Land of mythic, moral proportions.

It doesn't matter what direction you're coming from or where you go from there. Israel can become your state of mind. It was a state of mind 3,400 hundred years ago when Moses led the descendants of Israel {Jacob's twelve sons} to Israel. It was a state of mind 2,000

years ago when Jesus left Israel for heaven. And it was a state of mind 1,400 hundred years ago when T H E P R O P H E T Mohammed flew through Israel to get to heaven and back.

But, there's just too much milk and honey in this world. Today's Israelis need the help of all three Abrahamic religions working together to bring our collective message of milk and honey to the world. Israelis are laden with more wisdom, love and generosity of spirit than they know what to do with. They need the world's help in dispensing it. B'nai Israel {The Jewish Nation} needs the help of all other nations to share the exquisite weight of the beneficence GOD/GOD/G O D has put in our hands.

Doing Your Share

The only Israelite in Torah who both leaves Egypt and crosses over from the banks of the Jordan River to Israel is Joshua. The name "JOSHUA" means "SALVATION." Although a whole generation gets to experience the beginning of this journey, only Joshua gets to be a part of the beginning and the end. Not even Moses is allowed by GOD to go the whole way from start to finish.

You can't expect to finish everything you start. And you can't expect to have already started everything you're going to need to finish. Sometimes you have to be an Israelite who left Egypt. Other times you have to be an Israelite entering Israel. You have to learn to appreciate the generations that came before and will come after you. You have to see yourself moving through epochs of evolutions from within. You have to transcend the time and place in which you live.

The Book of Exodus may be a metaphor for the departure on a spiritual adventure, and Moses, the personification of that PROPHET in you who will lead the next generation in you toward that end. But salvation is the key to your journey. Look for your savior. Look for the Joshua in you. You'll find him in your head. You'll find him in your heart. And you'll find him in your conscience.

If you can see yourself as a metaphoric Tree of knowledge, you can see yourself as a savior nailed to that Tree. Whether you use these Jewish stories and give credit to the Jews who wrote them isn't as important as being able to apply these messages to your life. Learning to love the Jews is a very slow process. We know. Believe me, we know! We're challenged to do so, too.

Leaders And Followers

The interaction between GOD and the Israelites brings about a physical change of location that leads them to physical freedom from bondage. They become loyal to GOD because HE gives them what they most need and want: freedom *from* slave masters. {What they don't realize is, that, at the same time HE's bringing them autonomy from servitude, he's challenging them with the idea of freedom from the slave master they've internalized. And that's called: liberation.

The *spiritual* journey of Moses to freedom runs parallel to the Israelites' *political* journey to freedom. Moses is already physically free. His is a journey to spiritual freedom through GOD-consciousness, not physical freedom from cruel overlords or liberation from a slave mentality. His is an emancipation of the highest order from his former self. Therefore Moses is the Jewish PROPHET who prefigures the coming of T H E P R O P H E T Mohammed. And this is something that isn't spoken about in The Gospels. But it is alluded to in The Quran.

This is how the author and main character converge in a way that no one then could understand. This is the passage from birth to death that no one can describe about another, since we're all actors in our Playwright's play. Life is so collective, general and universal in some ways, but so utterly personal and intimate in others. No one will ever discover the burial place of Moses because neither the beginning nor the end of any man can really be perceived.

For a man to become a Moses unto himself, he needs to go on a journey to prove his faith in himself. He has to liberate himself *with* himself and then emancipate himself *from* himself. Only a Modern-day Moses will seek freedom to inspire himself to serve GOD and others justly. Only liberty will give him the tools he needs to serve GOD and others mercifully. But only emancipation will give him the deliverance he needs to meet G O D as he would an honored guest in his house.

Those today who best model the journey of spiritual freedom, liberation and emancipation Moses went on are women. Women often demonstrate the emotional strength of character and spiritual conviction that most men lack. Most women have a sense of collective right and wrong that emanates out from their heart and soul. They rarely embody emotional ambivalence or cowardice, only grave caution. Women have the kind of conscience that men strive for: a soulful one.

A man can't become a man until he can learn to love one person. But the one he must learn to love isn't his father, his son or his brother. A man can't become a man until he can love himself like a woman can love a man.

A man must recognize that he's half woman. He has an 'x' factor in him that's been doubled, magnified and made flesh by every woman on Earth. The man who still scorns gays, transgendered and transsexuals is a man who scorns half of himself.

We need women in the highest places of power, so that men will be able to observe them as carriers of righteous inclination. Women should hold equal power in running religions, nations and the worlds of commerce and industry. Who else could better model for men how to become a man in a "man's world" than a woman?

The Land Of Love

In Hebrew, the name for the country of "Egypt" is "MITZRAYIM." But THE WORD "MITZARIM" comes from the same Hebrew root, and means, "NARROW PLACES" or "LIMITATIONS." Egypt is the surrogate mother of the Israelites. She's the womb that the Nation of Israel emerged from, the narrow-minded pagan environment of idol worship out of which GOD-consciousness was born.

Egypt isn't The Land where the Patriarchs were conceived. Israel was conceived in Canaan {Israel}. {Jacob whose name was later changed by GOD to "Israel" was born in The Land given to him and his progeny by GOD. Even his father, Isaac, was Israeli. Only *his* father, Abraham, was a stranger from another land who was promised that Land by GOD.}

Ancient Egypt was the surrogate mother of the first biblical nation. She carried Judaism before the nation was born, even though she didn't conceive it. B'nai Israel was born from her loins. We are the nation that came out of ancient Egypt's limitations, conceived by our Creator with justice; pushed out of her loins toward freedom, thanks to The Lord, with liberty and the opportunity for emancipation.

The issue today is whether Christians and Muslims are truly prepared for the challenge of accepting Israel literally, figuratively and symbolically. As history unfolds, each man and woman must begin to appreciate his or her spiritual challenge in that regard.

The ancient Israelites equated Egypt with the physical limitations that arose out slavery, a feeling of second-class status that Ishmael had received in the house of Abraham and Sarah. The Israelites were later eager to leave the home in Egypt that wouldn't accept them, just as Ishmael was previously eager to leave Abraham's household once he realized he'd never be treated like Abraham's "legitimate" son: Isaac.

The Passage To Puberty

The ancient Israelites' relationship to their adopted Mother, Egypt, ended abruptly with their miraculous crossing at the Red Sea. When that sea parted, it took the Israelites out of one state of being into a whole new place in inner space.

That crossing corresponds to the passage of the Jewish nation from childhood into puberty. It was the birth of our nation before we'd even set eyes on our Land. That was the passage from childhood to adulthood as a people. That was the spiritual incident that marked the beginning of "AAM ISRAEL," {THE JEWISH SOUL}.

Future nations in Europe and the Middle East would later come together under GOD/G O D in subsequent religious rites that confirmed their relationships to HIM/H I M in other ways. But the crossing of the Israelites at the Red Sea was the bridge between our gestation in Egypt and our adulthood in our own home.

Those who've experienced MITZARIM personally {an inner sense of a narrow, emotional place that they've struggled to get out from} have built a miraculous bridge out of their former life as well. Perhaps they embarked on a personal exodus out of their parents' house where they'd been conceived and miraculously saw a sea of adversity part for them to let them through. Perhaps they, too, wandered on the other side of puberty toward adulthood, leading themselves through a desert of endless, daily affaires before they found a sense of return to their true home, within. Such people know what a journey it is just to grow up.

Israel was the first holy place GOD set aside on Earth. Israel became more than a geographic destiny for the Israelites. It would later reveal the mystery of life "after" death as promoted by the Christians {heaven}, and death "after" life {hell} as forewarned by the Muslims.

Israel is a symbol for anyone in the Abrahamic religions who's on the spiritual journey of life. Israel is also a sign of the spiritual maturation process of every individual. Israel is a symbol for every nation and individual on this planet that his hopes may be realized in his lifetime. The translation of "HATIKVA," the Israeli National Anthem, is "HOPE." If you listen to it now, you may even hear your own ascent and descent as from a mountain or a ladder, and in its haunting melody, your own hope and resolve to keep going.

There's no limit to the boundaries of the State of Israel when viewed from within. When Israel is more like a verb than a noun it becomes a moral imperative, an inner destination that can have any name and grow to any size. Israel is an attitude of gratitude toward life, something easy to agree to, but difficult to achieve. The state of your Israel is mirrored in the state of your mind.

It isn't easy to worry about survival. And it isn't easy to laugh at yourself as you struggle to make your life worth living. Israel is therefore an emotional destination for

everyone who's not frozen inside with feelings of self-loathing. Israel is every rainbow realized in the name of Jews, Christians and Muslims; a promise in which GOD declares that *hope*, not *hatred*, is real.

The Burning Bush

The Birth Of A Leader

Decades after Moses murders the slave master, he sees a Bush burning with a fire that doesn't consume the Bush. And out from it, he hears the voice of GOD telling him to return to Egypt to free HIS people from their bondage. [Exodus 3]

Every man who wants to redeem himself from himself must look for his "Burning Bush" experience. He must listen for a voice within to call to him. A Burning Bush experience is an emotional epiphany, a sudden realization of GOD's presence within him. It's the You in you that you've walked past a million times in your mind without a second thought to what it indicates about the fire GOD ignited eternally within you.

"WHEN GOD SAW THAT MOSES TURNED ASIDE TO LOOK AT THE BURNING BUSH, HE CALLED TO HIM FROM THE MIDST OF THE BUSH AND SAID, 'MOSES, MOSES!' AND HE SAID, 'HERE I AM.' THEN GOD SAID, 'DO NOT DRAW NEAR THIS PLACE. TAKE YOUR SANDALS OFF YOUR FEET, FOR THE PLACE WHERE YOU STAND IS HOLY GROUND.' MOREOVER HE SAID, 'I AM THE GOD OF YOUR FATHER, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, THE GOD OF ISAAC AND THE GOD OF JACOB. AND MOSES HID HIS FACE, FOR HE WAS AFRAID TO LOOK UPON GOD." [Exodus 3:6]

GOD's call to Moses corresponds to the intuitive voice that comes from your conscience that whispered within you when you were a child, that voice that now calls out fearlessly to you sometimes, almost as though you can hear it *in* loud. And when you respond, in a sense, saying to yourself, "Here I am" you suddenly realize that although little or nothing has changed on the outside, you find yourself in a new space within.

Moses hid his face, just as Adam and Eve hid their genitals from one another, and they hid their body from GOD. Guilt moves you from place to place, but it also moves you from space to space. When guilt finally makes its way onto your face, and you can feel it there, know that you're a better man than you once were, despite the embarrassment that makes you blush or the shame that makes you turn away.

GOD is a mind reader. HE listens carefully to everything you say to yourself. HE even listens to the cries your heart whispers to your soul. You're like a homeless person to HIM, ranting and raving under the canapé of HIS sky in the emptiness of your own universe. HE hears you and cringes, as we cringe when we hear a homeless person who shouts out loud, talking to no one and everyone simultaneously.

We're all like the homeless before GOD. The depth of our poverty is impossible to hide. We must find elegant and graceful ways of concealing it modestly, humbly and loyally. We should never make HIM cringe.

GOD tells Moses to go back to Egypt to petition for the freedom of the Israelites, but he replies, "WHO AM I THAT I SHOULD GO TO PHARAOH, AND THAT I SHOULD BRING THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL OUT OF EGYPT?" [Exodus 3:11]

Low self-esteem and arrogance are lovers lips entwined in an eternal kiss. It's very hard to separate them. They can't stand to be apart from one another. When we read aloud the way Moses replies to GOD, we should hear our own indignation internally. Cain asked rhetorically if he was his brother's keeper. Moses asks rhetorically, "WHO AM I?" as though to say, "Go away!" Neither expects GOD to respond with an answer.

Low self-esteem and arrogance aren't only the bane of modern man. Good men from the beginning of time have questioned their ability and desire to fight for truth and justice. The question, "WHO AM I?" is the biblical question that separates the soulful from the sinner.

The spiritual seeker will want to see inner evidence of his need to do the right thing. Low self-esteem and arrogance will make him forget in WHOSE image he was made. He'll defend himself with silly questions rather than embrace the call to serve. But, as with Cain, GOD is too courteous to answer the question Moses poses.

GOD goes right to the greater question, who HE is. HE makes HIMSELF known to Moses with HIS name: Y.H.V.H. HE's more than a universal conscience. HE's the Guide who guides your inner guide. HE's personal. HE has a name. HE wants Moses to go back to the scene of his crime, although ostensibly for a totally unrelated reason. HE doesn't embarrass Moses by telling him he should do it for *his* sake. HE tells him to do it for *theirs*. HE allows him to save face.

There's much to be said about the name Y.H.V.H. that differentiates it from ELOHIM. ELOHIM is a description of the GOD of Genesis that appeared in psychological disguise to create and spur the initial growth of man's mind. ELOHIM literally means "gods" in Hebrew. I'll describe the difference between Y.H.V.H. and ELOHIM in a separate section further on in this chapter.

In this new 21st Century, the challenge for a modern man in understanding a Burning Bush experience is to manage his emotional discomfort with himself before he attempts to overcome his emotional discomfort with GOD. Modern man's well-developed conscience requires him to first face his own face.

Man has come too far on the path of spiritual maturity to allow himself to act like a teenager by blaming "Our Father;" "our father;" or "our founding fathers" – for not having done Their part in our past. Only after he's felt abandoned by GOD, betrayed by his father, and conspired against by mortal man can he admit to himself that it's the father to everyone's adult, inner child where man's problems began.

Nobody wants to be parentalized. Nobody wants to be treated like a child and told what to do. This is the wild side of the "man of G O D" that Ishmael personified. He refuses to be beholding to fathers or sons.

GOD says to Moses, "THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL HAS COME TO ME, AND I HAVE ALSO SEEN THE OPPRESSION WHICH THE EGYPTIANS OPPRESS THEM. COME NOW, AND I WILL SEND YOU TO PHARAOH THAT YOU MAY BRING MY PEOPLE, THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, OUT OF EGYPT." [Exodus 3:9]

A Burning Bush experience is the challenge of brotherly love Moses has unsuccessfully been struggling to feel for others that emanates out from his feelings for himself. We can say this with certainty because Moses, the author, has already prepared us with a whole book of cardboard characters to reveal how he really feels. We can say this with certainty because no murderer can be defended as a loving brother to his brothers. Such a man is always in a state of atonement.

Moses doesn't verbally share his own spiritual quest with the Israelites. He has to trust that GOD will guide him, not only back to Egypt to release the Israelites from bondage, but also on their communal journey from Egypt to Israel. And he knows enough about Egyptian geography to know that they're going to have to find a way across the Red Sea long before they get there. As with us all, we can't cross that bridge until we come to it.

From the moment his mother's basket hits the waters of the Nile with him alone inside it, Moses is angry. And it takes GOD 80 years until HE answers the call of the infant crying in that basket as he's helplessly carried downstream by time and the circumstances of life.

At The Burning Bush, GOD figuratively wipes away the angry tears of the infant Moses 80 years after the fact with an opportunity to be of service to others. GOD lets him know that HE has a task for him. GOD works neither inordinately slowly nor mysteriously. HE works as fast as HIS creations can go, and no faster.

The Metaphor Of The Burning Bush

The Bush Moses sees burning without being consumed is an external manifestation of his own modesty, humility and grace. It signifies what happens to guilt when it's defeated. These three virtues stand for the illumination, warmth and purification found in the attributes of fire.

The metaphor 'emotional knowledge as coming from a Bush' is a variation on the metaphor 'intellectual knowledge as coming from a Tree.' This Bush of passionate knowledge of the self is the root system of The Tree of knowledge of external good and evil. This emotional root system looks like the bush {roots} that grows beneath the ground of everyday trees. The Burning Bush mirrors our Tree of knowledge even though it can't literally be seen. Imagine that this Bush looks something like the circulatory system of man that branches out from his chest throughout his body. Think of it as something you feel below the ground of your being.

The imagination is such a necessary part of faith that, although it's stated at the beginning of Genesis that GOD created man in HIS *image*, we still don't typically use our *imag*-ination to plummet the reason for everything GOD does. But a good imagination is precisely what we need to fathom GOD's design. Torah made that evident with its first WORD, "BERASHEET" {IN THE BEGINNING/AT THE ROOT OF IT ALL}.

The emotional world of passionate regard for learning about yourself is a mirror image of the external world of intellectual knowledge. The spiritual seeker who feels figuratively upside down from the onset of his journey tries to right himself by understanding a world in which he's always felt the wrong way round. The spiritualist spends most of his life fighting to go through the ground of his being deeper and deeper, not realizing that he personifies a Burning Bush, paradoxically growing in the opposite direction of the illumination of the day.

A Bush that burns without being extinguished is a metaphor for man's passion for love. The fire emitted by his heart blazes in his chest where it can't be consumed. It emits the heat of love of learning that circulates throughout his system.

The psychological tension created between The Tree of knowledge and The Burning Bush wasn't well understood by the cool hearted, ancient Greeks who read Torah and tried to describe the meaning of brotherhood through the myth of Narcissus. Narcissus was a lad who looked in a lake and fell in love with his own reflection. But when he moved toward the boy he was peering at, to kiss him, Narcissus fell in the lake and drowned. Narcissus didn't realize it was himself he was attracted to because he'd never looked so intimately and deeply at a reflection of himself before.

Waves break gently upon the shore from the seven seas in every man's inner landscape, and water pours down from the clouds in spring showers from his heavens above. The emotions of brotherhood with Earth and man are everywhere within you. We soak them up with our thoughts at night and they form the dew on every word we utter in the morning. The man who can look at himself deeply as he gazes at his own reflection is a Narcissus

who's able to see himself as adorable. But that's got nothing to do with a Burning Bush experience.

Today we have so much greater awareness of ourselves than the ancient Greeks that we can discern "agape" {Greek: love for everyone} from "Eros" {Greek: sexual passion} while still appreciating love as something that emanates out from within that we express in subtly different ways.

Knowledge of good and evil comes from man's mind, his Tree of knowledge. But feelings of modesty, humility and grace are dispensed from his Burning Bush, the unseen root system beneath his Tree.

Narcissus was so unaware of his spiritual operating system as revealed through Torah that he couldn't recognize the one he truly loved. The ancient Greeks could only use this myth to tell themselves to be wary of self-adoration. They weren't worried about drowning in brotherly love or burning up with sexual love between men. And they certainly had no interest in a Burning Bush experience with GOD.

Some men are more afraid of diving in to brotherly love, doing the backstroke and a few kicks; and then deciding the water is so pleasant and warm that they never want to come out. Others are more afraid of brush fires between men that may release sparks of emotional energy that could burn down everything they've accomplished.

The fire that was made apparent to Moses was ignited with anger and frustration when he cried in that basket on the Nile and nobody heard him. That anger was surely intended for his mother for not serving his needs as he needed them served in that moment. That fire was then fueled with injustice years later when he saw an Israelite being beaten by a slave driver. But those embers had to smolder in him for 40 more years before GOD would ignite his flame outside himself as a Bush that would burn forever.

Near the end of the journey, Moses will choose Joshua to lead the Israelites after he dies. But you must choose a Joshua from within to carry on after the Moses in you has completed his work. If you choose the Joshua GOD provides outside yourself {Jesus}, you'll call yourself Christian. If you choose to become the savior you need for yourself, you'll call yourself a Jew. If you choose neither, but insist on a savior, you'll call yourself Muslim. Whatever way you chose to personify your flame, you'll still be able to believe in one GOD/GOD/G O D who holds three spiritual faces: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

The truth about yourself will set you free, but, for most people, that truth, like a Burning Bush, is something they walk right past time and time again. They can't see the obvious because their inner world is shrouded in a dark mystery.

To solve for 'x' you need to love 'x,' not just know 'x.' To solve for 'y' you need to do the same. x + y = the 1 you will love eternally, or you'll be the one you'll loathe for a lifetime.

You have to yearn so deeply to see your Burning Bush {inner flame} that your own wonderment will ignite you to love yourself with a fiery passion for something you can't give yourself without GOD's/GOD's/G O D's help. If Moses can do it as he describes in his autobiography, there's no reason why you can't, too.

Pyromaniacs are mentally sick individuals who have a fascination for their own flame externalized. They wish to see their inner abilities igniting the world we share. But because they don't understand SCRIPTURE, they're lost in a projection of the meaning of The Burning Bush experience.

Your Burning Bush experience will be reflected in some mysterious and unique circumstance around you that you may now be taking for granted. As your awe of yourself unfolds, answers to questions you haven't even been seeking will come to you. And you'll feel guided to do what you were meant to do.

My Burning Bush experience was a very minor event in my life that occurred when I was in my 20's or 30's. I can't even remember when it happened exactly because it took me decades more to make sense of it. I was driving on a misty late afternoon and I wondered whether I should turn on my windshield wipers. So I looked around to see if anyone else had their wipers on.

And then it hit me. I realized that I felt afraid about turning my wipers on if others didn't have theirs on. I realized that, like Adam and Eve, I was hiding behind the other Trees. But I was, curiously, afraid of my father punishing me for doing so. I was worried about what would happen if I stood out as different from my siblings.

Although this event didn't even have anything to do with fire, it was my Burning Bush experience because it made me aware of myself as separate and unique from all others. It made me come to terms with my father as separate from my Father. it made me realize that I'd been running away from my family in fear. In that moment, I found myself alone in my vehicle, and all that would happen next was would have to happen from within me before it would be manifested around me.

I was the flame. My vehicle was my body. And I was facing a fork in the road that required me to make a decision about which direction I would take. As you can see, it was a very small decision about turning on my windshield wipers to improve my view or doing what I saw others doing to fit in. But it was then and there that I identified as one of GOD's chosen because I'd been put in a personal and very private position where I had to choose.

The illumination of my wisdom is the key to my kingdom. But I also have to thirst for the wonderment of being me. I have to move beyond the brotherhood the characters in Genesis had so much difficulty in expressing for one another. I'm so parched for self-love that every smile that breaks on my face leaves me in awe of what motivates me to feel. I yearn to discover how awesome I am.

Only then will my mission to be revealed to me. Only then will "what I'm going to be when I grow up" become real. I can't forget fame. I can't forget fortune. But I can see them as less meaningful carrots compared to this feast SCRIPTURE is offering. Once I can witness all that I do, and reward myself with self-love for all that I am, fame and fortune will find natural expression from within. I don't have to worry about money. I've learned how to save. I don't have to learn how to earn. I've done that, too. And I can easily go without.

The system is rigged. The guys who behave wisely finish first. Those who love passionately find themselves trying harder. And the rest fight for a place to get the best view they can to see something they can't yet imagine. So, yes, I recommend you do as I did and turn on your windshield wipers whenever you can't see well enough through them. It could make a world of difference.

Burning Bush As GOD-Consciousness

Moses must have hated himself because of what he'd done in a moment of passion that ruined his life of leisure. Because of his rash action, he had to go from a prince in a palace to a shepherd in a tent. And he must have loathed himself as a man because he had no choice but to run away.

And yet, his motive to protect himself from retaliation was understandable. He'd done something in opposition to the entire ancient Egyptian, social system. He was a wanted man.

Yet none of any of this is said out loud between Moses and GOD at The Burning Bush. Moses had wrestled with all that inside himself over the course of the previous 40 years.

Moses has no reason to love the Israelites, even though his parents and siblings were among them. He has no reason to go back to Egypt. And he has no reason to obey the GOD of his forefathers because he has no relationship to his forefathers.

It won't be guilt about what he'd done or love for his people that will motivate Moses to do GOD's will. GOD will have to entice him with something else. But what is it that GOD has that Moses wants?

The Burning Bush experience comes to Moses at the age of 80, 40 years after he committed the crime, and long after his guilt smoldered within until it would seem to everyone else to have been extinguished. But obviously GOD remembers. Only once Moses understands his Burning Bush experience as a moral opportunity he's being given does his conscience agree to take his head and heart on this mission with GOD.

The GOD of Genesis interacted with the characters in a way that made it difficult to see where HE ended and their conscience began. Only at the end of Genesis did we see Judah repent because he was thankful that he could make amends to Joseph and Tamara.

But Moses can't make amends to the slaver driver he's killed. There's nothing Moses can do to right his wrong. His conscience can't balance his thoughts and feelings as though it were a scale on which the two of them had been placed. He's out of balance, and he's going to remain that way for the rest of his life, whether he wakes up in the morning with his thoughts or his feelings weighing him down.

You can't understand Moses's motives unless you've at least *attempted* to kill someone. That, of course, is highly discouraged. You'd have to have lost your mind to even think of such a thing.

But as a suicide survivor who twice tried to kill a man {myself}, I know how Moses feels. There isn't a day that I don't think about the fact that I'm living with a murderer who's gotten away with his crime.

Now you may say that suicide and murder aren't at all the same thing. But I would disagree. Am I less of a human being than the next person? Do GOD's laws apply less to me if I'm them perpetrator and the victim than just the victim?

As Moses, the author, already told us in Genesis, a conscience first has to be formed. Then a man has to recognize it as leading him in the direction of himself, not in the direction of GOD/GOD/G O D. And lastly it has to be ignited into a very hot flame with an instinctual craving to multiply the fruits of his labors.

And yet, when GOD asks Moses to go back to Egypt, he gives HIM silly excuses why he can't fulfill HIS request. He reminds GOD that the Egyptians have gods too, and therefore concludes they won't listen to him. And he points out that he has a speech impediment. But he omits to mention that if he goes back, he's afraid he'll be caught and punished. He doesn't want to suffer incarceration or death for his crime. He doesn't believe what he did was bad enough to warrant punishment.

The truth is that Moses is shy, not frightened. He's embarrassed about expressing himself publicly with regard to a process he was taught only to perform in private. He associates public service with sex. And he's afraid he'll make a fool of himself if he

expresses his passions overtly before others. He knows he can't control his emotions. He imagines public speaking as like participating in an orgy in a pagan temple. He's repelled by the idea of exposing himself in such a way.

Moses is embarrassed by his body. He's not ashamed of his behavior. And he's not humiliated by what he put himself through to protect himself from harm.

It's his yearning for modesty that keeps him from turning around and going back to Egypt. It's not his shame at having killed a man. That man deserved to die. But when facing GOD at The Burning Bush, Moses finds himself feeling embarrassed. When GOD tells him to take his sandals off, it's because HE knows how to trigger his guilt. He's such a meek individual that he's simply too shy to do what GOD is asking of him.

Behind his excuses lies a secret passion that every man who feels embarrassment knows if he's never felt truly seen or heard. Moses's inhibition isn't about his mother having abandoned him at birth; it's not because he never met his father; it's not because he had to teach himself how to get along in a world of strangers from a young age; it's not because GOD not only didn't stop him from killing a man – HE never consoled him while he was suffering over it.

Moses has waited 40 years for an answer to the question why he won't go back to the scene of his crime. And now that the answer comes – he's shy – that doesn't make sense to him. But Moses doubts himself because any man would doubt someone he doesn't know well.

Those who are eager to make a name for themselves are like Cain, Noah, Lot and even Jacob. Even Joseph was driven to succeed once he was forced to do something in his own behalf. This is why Moses, the author, needed The Book of Genesis to separate his protagonist from those who had come before him. He had to have a way to explain why *he'd* been chosen by GOD to be our first PROPHET, and not them.

GOD understood that about Moses, and so it's not a surprise to the experienced reader that HE reminds Moses that he has an older brother in Egypt {Aaron} who he can rely on for help. Moses can do what's asked of him with the help of his older brother who'll support him in the process. Today, we all have spiritual classmates who'll come to our aide if we're shy and our mission is just. GOD provides for us in just this sort of way.

The questions the cynical will ask is where GOD was when Moses was floating down the Nile, crying? Where was HE when Moses got so angry that he killed a man? Where was HE for the previous 40 years while he wandered in strangers' lands doing the menial work of shepherding sheep all day?

Why would GOD suddenly appear in the form of a Burning Bush before Moses to tell him HE hears the cry of the Israelites, and wants Moses to answer their call? Isn't that request a little insulting after all the anguish in Moses HE ignored?

What kind of GOD is this? HE seems to stress justice for others too *soon* and mercy for Moses too *late*. Why doesn't HE work on HIS timing, instead? These are the moral questions that surface when you observe your world from the inside *out*, and not the inside *in*.

Ironically, the man who doesn't feel he can see or hear himself adequately is the mostly likely candidate for a spiritual mission with GOD. The most cynical and distrusting of GOD make good disciples, for, although their hunger for self-knowledge is no greater than others', their thirst for emotional sustenance from themselves goes beyond the bounds of mortal men.

Such men don't look for love or wisdom. They just want their conscience to be a better guide. They don't want to have to think about all they distain in others. They don't want to think about how scheming and conniving people can be. And yet, their conscience won't shut up about "them." It's constantly concerned about others' wellbeing, rather than their own.

For Moses, the author, to have explained that directly to his readers at that moment in the story would have left us disappointed with what will happen next. We're motivated by events as they *occur*, not by events as they're *explained*.

It takes another murderer to explain the motivation of Moses in Exodus. And therefore it will have to be someone who's abominable in the eyes of some rabbis who'll have to explain the meaning of The Book of Leviticus after we've made our way through this second of The Five Books of Moses. As a gay-Jewish murderer, I fit that bill.

After all the tears Moses cried for his mother in the ark as he drifted helpless on the Nile, he's finally found a reason to stop crying and start pointing fingers. He's finally got a direction to go in. As we would say, he's finally reached the starting line at the tender age of 80…

When you know that the roots of your Tree of knowledge are a mirror of a Burning Bush inside you, you can dig down to get to this fire without literally burning yourself, or others. This is the fire that ultimately illuminates you to the mystery of GOD as the Rock beneath all that you are. The roots of this Bush branch out below the ground of everyday reality in your heart and wrap themselves around something utterly amazing, the way fire wraps itself around thin air.

In essence, our mind is moving our thoughts through a rock {flesh} that leaves us thinking that inner space is as thin as air. And our heart is moving feelings through something so thick {blood} that we perceive it as like water. And from this we can conclude that our beliefs are moving through something so mysterious in our chest that it's like fire.

The world is mysteriously different from what it appears to look like. Thoughts are like rocks. Feelings are like water. And beliefs are like fire. And they're all surrounded by air. This book on Torah will teach you how to think. My next book on THE WORDS of Jesus will teach you how to feel. And my book after that on The Quran will teach you how to believe in yourself as though you were a flame surrounded by flesh and blood.

This kind of knowledge comes most frequently at night in the dream state. As you close your eyes, they turn up, and you figuratively *fall* asleep. It's as though you sink backwards head first into unconsciousness. And from there you plummet all the way backwards until your feet are high up in heaven and your head is deep down in the ground of your being, like a bat hanging from a cavern wall. In this spiritually inverted position, you're unconsciously able to explore your own Burning Bush experience with GOD. In this inverted state, you become like a Moses, Jesus, Mohammed, Krishna, Buddha and Lao Tzi unto yourself.

Suddenly you're no longer a modern individual in the skyscraper of humanity looking out a glass window down onto the world below. You're no longer looking at stories built one upon the next that have taken you up this high.

Suddenly you're down in the basement, the foundation that was carved into rock. You're more like a pagan snooping into something you can't understand. You're stripped of all that you believe about nature, nurture and the GOD/GOD/G O D of your fathers. You're natural and real. You're raw. Suddenly you see the magic of everything hidden in

the basement of that skyscraper: the elevator motor, the water pump, the electrical power source. Suddenly you're given access to whatever The Landlord decides HE/HE/H E wants you to see, including corridors, locked doors and light fixtures that make no sense at all while you're dreaming.

But when you wake up, you realize you know a little more than you knew about yourself before. You still know very little, but your love of learning about yourself has become a little greater.

You know, for instance, that the corridors in your dreams are leading you somewhere. The locked doors could open you to secrets you've been keeping from yourself. And the light from those fixtures is revealing a mystery you couldn't otherwise explore.

You become a man who seeks to feel things most modern men can't even imagine. You bend objective time and change outer space only as the result of your pursuit of wisdom, love and redemption from within. You seek spiritual orientation from within rather than simply lean on people around you. And you can secure what you've learned.

The desire for knowledge of subjective time and space to discover how to be at peace with yourself is really the essence of righteousness. The world around us exists only moments after The Tower of Babel fell. People are scrambling to figure out how to learn to communicate with one another in ways that make more sense.

You just closed Book 1 of The Forbidden Fruits Perspective: Torah For Straight People, in which you learned about Abraham, Isaac and Jacob from the author. And now you find yourself being led by the hand of a man who calls himself "Moses." This author and main character are going to take you on journey with them to a Promised Land. And you've already decided to go along for the ride.

This was your Burning Bush experience. You chose the way that interests you despite what others are doing. You want to know what Moses is going to reveal about himself as the result of going on a journey with GOD. And so you shall.

Torah is going to take you to places within yourself that you'll want to tell others about, just as Jesus did. But you may not realize you have to do so by using modern signposts in the outer world others will be able to relate to and understand. You may not yet realize the personal power of Jewish metaphors, Christian symbols and Islamic similes.

You may be a living symbol of something in search of a metaphor to explain yourself. You may be *like* a Jew who's nailed to something you have your back to, and you may not know what that something is. You may be writhing in pain. You may not be able to use your arms or legs to help yourself, and you may not be able to turn around to see what it is that's holding you fixed in place.

From an emotionally reasonable point of view, GOD should have chosen a far more cooperative candidate for a PROPHET and leader for the Israelites than Moses. A shy murderer with low self-esteem who doesn't even want the job shouldn't even have been offered THE WORK, let alone have accepted it. And waiting until Moses is 80 years old to ask him for help seems simply *nonchalant* on GOD's part, if not emotionally *indifferent*. Anyone who'd follow in the footsteps of Moses would be making a fool of himself if he weren't motivated by something greater than what others can literally see.

Moses says to GOD, "INDEED, WHEN I COME TO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL AND SAY TO THEM, 'THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS HAS SENT ME TO YOU,' AND THEY SAY TO ME, 'WHAT IS HIS NAME? WHAT SHALL I SAY TO THEM?" [Exodus 3:13]

Moses is astute and motivated enough to look ahead to try to anticipate the problems in GOD's design. We see the intimacy between Moses, the author, and his main character; how the author has helped us resonate with his protagonist by giving us the stories that preceded his arrival on the world stage to be able to understand his own hesitations.

So many men just want to do their time for their crime and get their sorry ass out of here. How many would jump at the chance to make amends to themselves? Only a murderer can be tempted by the opportunity to do something great with his life if you give him the right reason. He's the only one who has nothing to lose.

Before moving any further forward, maybe we ought to stop and ask ourselves what motivated Adam to be tempted by Eve. She was a murderer who killed fruit by plucking it off a tree. But why did Adam involve himself with her crime? What motivated you to move forward with that story? Maybe Adam was just as naïve as Eve. Maybe he didn't know what he was getting himself into. Maybe every Adam discovers over time that there's a part he could play in helping us all if he were motivated to do so.

Maybe GOD isn't quite as stupid as we would believe... Maybe choosing Moses wasn't a mistake. Maybe HE knows how HE made him.

The Name Of GOD

Torah went to such lengths in Genesis to place importance on names that as we study The Book of Names {SHEMOT/Exodus}we can only speculate on the importance of GOD's name to HIMSELF. Every *thing* on Earth has been named. But there's nothing of importance about anything, or even about GOD's name, unless it helps unlock the great, spiritual mystery of life: your own name.

The answer to the question, "What's the importance of my name?" is so simple, and yet so profound, that it can't be satisfactorily answered in Torah alone. It takes the help of The Christian Bible, Quran and all the other sacred texts of the world to plummet the depth and importance of your name. Unless you make a name for yourself, you'll never have a clue.

Your name began like the foundation of a great New York skyscraper. There are now many levels of your being that are supported by the name you were first given. There are subways underneath your spiritual edifice, with trains of thought running to you and through you, that only you can access with your name.

The space between your two names is like a hallway in a house. If you have a third name, it's like a story above the ranch house most others live in, in the suburbia of their life. And if you have French doors, Dutch doors, sliding glass doors and doggie doors in your house, the mystery in going from room to room within you hold promise of an ever greater hope.

Your written name is a depiction of The Burning Bush that keeps your Tree of knowledge erect. It grounds you. Without your name in your own handwriting, it's questionable whether even gravity would have a way of addressing you. You'd be like a leaf in the wind.

A name is like a label on a can. The more you label the ingredients and the nutritional value of the contents, the more you know about what's inside, even if you have no way to open the can. Getting inside yourself by cutting open your scrotum to bite into your testicles is, obviously, not the right way of discovering the power you were given to bring life into the world. Being fruitful in the biblical sense has less to do with making babies and more

to do with understanding how GOD made you the way you are as a living metaphor. And your name is an important clue to knowing what you're made of without cracking up or breaking down in order to get a different view of you.

The Abrahamic faiths have each been given a portion of the totality of GOD's/GOD's/G O D's three names, "Y.H.V.H. Jesus A L L A H" Even the Hindus and Buddhists, who don't know the oneness of GOD/GOD/G O D in terms of HIS/HIS/H I S names have been gifted with subterranean tunnels they can walk and trains of thought they can ride that reveal the greatness of HIS/HIS/H I S majestic plan.

Judaism is the first floor of a skyscraper from Earth to heaven, and Torah holds many of GOD's secrets like an architectural rendering before the construction of a great edifice. Jews are in the incredibly rich, spiritual place where we should be able to both perceive what's below us and all that's above.

It may still be emotionally stressful for some hyper "religious" Jews to accept GOD's decision in having created the other Abrahamic faiths. It may be a challenge for them to accept themselves as part of the first stage in a multi-stage, spiritual construction process. Before HE built our Jewish house above ground, HE prepared our foundation by digging down to create a space called: paganism. But after us came all the other stories built upon ours.

No one gets enough insight from his faith or philosophy to inform him of all he needs to know about his own name. A man needs some strangers in his midst to discover *who* he is, *how* he was made and *why* he must contribute to GOD's design for the sake of the whole planet.

It may be hard for some Christians to consider themselves in the middle of this three-level Abrahamic process. And it's obviously difficult for many Muslims to consider themselves at the end, with a penthouse view that leads them to conclude they did it all themselves, unless they look straight down. It may be equally challenging for those who come from a philosophy that originated on the other side of the world to look for their own name through the three names for GOD/GOD/G O D that came basically out of one small place on Earth called: Israel.

GOD will illuminate the world with knowledge of HIS presence in stages. But you hold a key to HIS name in a way that nobody else does. Don't ruin your good name with accusations that gays and/or Jews have to change anything about themselves to suit you.

The secret to the name of GOD lies in you. It doesn't matter how you spell HIS name or how you pronounce yours. It's the "YOU/YOU/Y O U" you'd like to be more like that makes your name unique. It's the YOU/YOU/Y O U, you hope every gay and Jew will help you grow that could make your name a shining star in your night sky.

The name of GOD/GOD/G O D should be important to you. With an understanding of HIS/HIS first and middle name, it'll become easier for you to overcome your fear of the last name for G O D, or anyone's insistence that HE/HE/H E has only one name. If you could have been given three names, GOD could have given HIMSELF/HIMSELF/H I M S E L F three, too.

The Jewish Gift From GOD

There are many WORDS used in Torah that refer to GOD. But keep in mind that all these WORDS were created before Jesus and A L L A H became household names for HIM/H I M. Here are HIS main Jewish names:

1.	ELOHIM	GOD, CREATOR, ULTIMATE AUTHORITY
2.	EL	MIGHTY ONE
3.	SHADDAI	ALMIGHTY BREASTS
4.	ADONAI	MY LORD
5.	ELYON	MOST HIGH
6.	AVINU	OUR FATHER
7.	HASHEM	THE NAME

These aren't "names" exactly, but titles that highlight the various roles that GOD holds in the founding of religion.

The "name" GOD uses when introducing HIMSELF to Moses is the unpronounceable acronym "Y.H.V.H." It's usually translated as:

I AM WHO I AM
I AM WHAT I AM
I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE
I AM BECOMING

Y.H.V.H. is the "name" for GOD that HE reveals to Moses at The Burning Bush when Moses provocatively tells GOD that the Egyptians have gods, too. Y.H.V.H. isn't a description of HIMSELF. It's the first proper noun HE uses which speaks *to* HIMSELF, not *about* HIMSELF.

Therefore, Y.H.V.H. is GOD's first name. But GOD will reveal that HE has a middle and last name as well. HIS middle name will be "Joshua" {Jesus the "Christ" in Greek}, the name of HIS Son. And H I S last name will be "A L L A H," the last name H E gives humanity. Only once we all learn to speak to our Creator using HIS/HIS/H I S complete name can we hope for further revelation of HIS/HIS/H I S designs.

Y.H.V.H. is commonly pronounced, "Yahweh" by some Christians, but HIS first name is unpronounceable in the sense that it's an acronym. Y.H.V.H. isn't pronounced "Yahweh" any more than the U.S. tax department {I.R.S.} is pronounced "Iris."

GOD's name is decoded in Hebrew as "EHEYEH ASHER EHEYEH," which literally means, "{WILL BE} {RICHES} {WILL BE}." Interpreting that with poet license in English might also be decoded as "I WAS, AM AND WILL BE ANY WAY I SO CHOOSE."

GOD's first name reveals HIS spiritual process, which is something that's only revealed over time. Therefore, to many Jews, HE's considered more like a verb than a noun. HE can't be contained like contents in a can. But this is the first message we can glean from what's written on HIS label.

The depth of meanings and paradoxes of your own name are no less mysterious and profound than HIS. You have to unlock the mystery of what it means to be you to discover what it means to be HIM. HE is all that you strive to be like.

GOD hides HIMSELF in The Burning Bush at the same time that HE reveals HIMSELF to Moses from its flames. HE gives Moses a container {Burning Bush} by which to associate HIM with HIS contents. Moses may have been standing some distance from The Burning Bush, but he comes to realize that The Burning Bush is a symbol for something within him even though there's no reason given for there to be a Bush burning beside him.

Although we can literally see the name GOD gave HIMSELF in our imagination when we read HIS name {Y.H.V.H.}, it is and always will be unpronounceable because GOD doesn't literally talk to us. HIS name can't literally be uttered aloud any more than The Hebrew Testament can be understood without decoding the main metaphor of Moses, 'man as a Tree of knowledge.' In that sense, WORDS/WORDS/W O R D S are just indicators that point us in the direction of meanings.

This holy name by which GOD makes HIMSELF known to Moses is best understood using your own name as a reference. Only you can say your name to yourself and know the depth of what your name means to you. Only you can make a name for yourself that you find meaningful. Only you can sign your name to everything you think, feel, believe, desire and do without literally using your hand and a pen to do so.

When Y.H.V.H. is read out loud in Hebrew Scripture, the tradition is to pronounce it "ADONAI," which translates as "MY LORD." When referring to Y.H.V.H. in conversation, Jews with a conservative or orthodox religious background utter THE WORD "HASHEM" which literally means "THE NAME" in Hebrew. But "ADONAI" and "HASHEM" are still titles that only imply what HIS name means to them personally.

Y.H.V.H has led rabbis in the past to imagine GOD as something like *time*, something we can literally perceive around us, but that we can attempt to hold in our mind. Time can't be contained or controlled, not even within us where time affects us subjectively. Time can only be perceived. It's an awareness of something without a container, an effect without evidence of its cause.

Although we are the source of all that we *do*, GOD is the source of all that we *are*. And who we are depends entirely on what we believe in, which is based on what we've learned from what we experienced. You can access GOD by learning about wisdom, love and generosity. But you can only come to believe in HIM/HIM/H I M with direct exposure to your own limitations.

If you believe in all of the Abrahamic GOD/GOD/G O D, then somewhere in your past you have to have had a Burning Bush experience, even if it happened so long ago that you can't remember it now. It might have seemed so insignificant at the time that you hardly paused to take it seriously. But it changed you no less than Moses was changed after his encounter at The Burning Bush. Your experience with your Creator had to have sent you in a whole other direction, in the same way that Moses is inspired to go back to Egypt and I was inspired to turn on my windshield wipers.

The best use of science is for humanity to learn to cooperate together to free us from the harsh bonds of the natural world; to work together to make everyone comfortable. Like Noah, we're all adolescent by nature. We enjoy our comforts. And the animals bobbing around in our hull are reminders of why comfort is so important to us.

The spirit is strong, but the flesh is weak. If you're going to convince people that there is a GOD/GOD/G O D, you'd better make them comfortable before doing so. Fill their belly or relieve their pain and suffering. Man will never rise above his spiritual adolescence until you make him comfy.

But the other use of religion is to use the names of GOD/GOD/G O D to open ourselves to the gift of believing. GOD/GOD/G O D bestows HIS/HIS/H I S grace upon people of every faith, but only you have the unique gift of grace bestowed upon you through your name.

If you can't believe in GOD/GOD/G O D, you might like to pray to HIM/HIM/H I M to give you evidence of HIS/HIS/H I S presence. And if you don't see that evidence, pray for

evidence of your own presence. The arrogance you may accuse HIM/HIM/H I M of in hiding some of HIMSELF/HIMSELF/H I M S E L F from you is surely only a reflection of your own.

"THE ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO MOSES IN FLAMES OF FIRE FROM WITHIN A BUSH. MOSES SAW THAT THOUGH THE BUSH WAS ON FIRE, IT DID NOT BURN UP. SO MOSES THOUGHT, 'I WILL GO OVER AND SEE THIS STRANGE SIGHT – WHY THE BUSH DOES NOT BURN UP.'" [Exodus 3:2-3]

Moses wants to know about things that don't appear to be as he expects them to be. Curiosity about things that look different is all it takes to open yourself up to new ideas.

"SO WHEN THE LORD SAW THAT HE TURNED ASIDE TO LOOK, GOD CALLED TO HIM FROM THE MIDST OF THE BUSH AND SAID, 'MOSES, MOSES!' AND HE SAID, 'HERE I AM.'"

"HERE I AM" is one word in Hebrew {HINENI}. This is the same word Abraham used when GOD approached him. It's not "here" in the sense of location. This word doesn't refer to proximity to something in the sense of "here" or "there." "HINENI" mean's "PRESENT."

Adam hid his genitals from Eve and his entire body from GOD amongst the trees. Abraham didn't hide any physical part of himself from GOD, but GOD asked him to have his foreskin removed so that his penis would be fully exposed to HIM, as if it were always saying "HINENI."

Now, GOD only asks Moses to remove his shoes even though he's uncircumcised, but Moses chooses to hide his face from GOD. The physical evidence of modesty in man lies in his desire to hide his face from GOD. That's a sign of his embarrassment, not shame or humiliation.

If a man doesn't learn modesty by first hiding his face from himself, how will he express his modesty before The Lord? Like a circumcised penis, your face is always exposed. Your face says to others: HINENI.

First, a grown man must realize he's been playing hide-and-go-seek with himself. He must admit that even with a mirror, he can't see his face as others see it. Only then can he come to GOD/GOD/G O D with the modesty needed to express the progress he's made in getting to HIM/HIM/H I M.

"BLESSED ARE THE MEEK, FOR THEY WILL INHERIT THE EARTH." [Matthew 5:5] I'm quoting Jesus from The New Testament to make a point about the need for you to prepare for the presence of GOD/GOD/G O D with the practice of modesty, humility and grace. You must have a conscience that knows all The Old Testament aspects of guilt intimately and thoroughly. It's not a question of what you've done, but what your expectations of yourself were in the past in comparison to what they are now. The man whose guilt decreases as his modesty, humility and grace increase should find faith in the optimism that comes in knowing that guilt leads to wisdom. Because that man knows about his guilt from a personal perspective, he's well positioned to learn about GOD's love and G O D's generosity of spirit.

Aaron: Older Brother As Aspect Of The Self

Moses tells GOD he doesn't want to go back to Egypt, in part, because he has a speech impediment, and therefore thinks he won't be able to convince Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. GOD cuts through the crap by suggesting he brings his brother, Aaron, with him to speak on his behalf.

Aaron is Moses' older brother. Aaron was born three years before Moses, before the Pharaoh's edict demanding the death of male Hebrew children. The name "AARON" means, "GREAT MOUNTAIN." When people will later speak about the mountain coming to Muhammad, they'll be ignorantly referring to the priestly class bowing down before G O D's messenger, Muhammed. WISDOM leads to LOVE, and LOVE to G E N E R O S I TY of spirit. But none of these are reasons to play god.

The concept of GOD's abode being in the sky is intrinsic to all the Abrahamic faiths, and the name *Aaron* insinuates that man is a mountain, and GOD resides just above the summit. The figurative way to reach GOD at home is to make the effort to climb to the spiritual summit of a great prophet {yourself}. From there you'll not only be able to observe humanity from a greater height; you'll come as close to GOD as you possibly can. In this way, you'll demonstrate to HIM that you don't want HIM to have to go out of HIS way to come to you.

Aaron founds the priestly class of Judaism. His duty is to tend the fire at the altar in The Tabernacle where the flames transport the sacrificed animals out of this world and up to GOD in HIS abode above this one. Aaron stands at the summit of every great mountain where the gifts of man are handed from there up to GOD who reaches down from above the clouds to receive them.

The overriding familial metaphor in The Book of Genesis was 'brother as conflicting force within.' In Genesis, Torah used brothers {Cain and Abel} fraternal brothers {Esau and Jacob} and half-brothers {Joseph and his siblings} to express the subtleties of the challenges in developing brotherly love for a man with a conscience. When a younger brother received something the elder thought should belong to him, it invariably created jealousy and animosity.

Yet GOD assures Moses "WHEN AARON SEES YOU, HE WILL REJOICE.'" [Exodus 4:14] For the first time in Torah, there's no hint of sibling rivalry. The metaphor in The Book of Exodus is 'brother as complimentary aspect of the self.' Moses and Aaron will work as a team from the very beginning of their mission together. Although each has different gifts; is given a different role in Israelite society; and holds different opinions about how to get the Israelites to Israel – there's no hostility between the two of them for 44 whole days, from the first Passover to their first fight over the Golden Calf. {Even brothers as well teamed up as Moses and Aaron should expect to have major differences of opinion from time to time.} What's more important is that they will learn to work with one another peacefully for the next 39 years.

The Ten Plagues Personalized

Moses agrees to return to Egypt to petition the release of the Israelites as GOD requests of him so long as Aaron will join him. But when the two of them speak with Pharaoh about freeing the Israelites, Pharaoh is unmoved. So GOD brings forth The Ten Plagues to convince him to do so. Only the last plague, the death of the first-born son, touches Pharaoh personally. When his son dies Pharaoh's heart momentarily softens, and he agrees to let the Israelites leave. [Exodus 7-12]

The Ten Plagues are:

1. Nile turning blood red
2. Infestation of frogs

3. Lice
4. Flies
5. Disease of livestock
6. Boils
7. Hail
8. Locust
9. Darkness
10. Death of the firstborn

The 1st and 2nd Plagues {Nile turning blood-red and the infestation of frogs} are merely omens that awaken everyone with fear to a greater destruction to come. Even though the Nile is the lifeline of Egypt, the fact that it's been compromised doesn't much concern them. {Modern pollution problems, especially water pollution, are the equivalent of the first two plagues.}

The 3rd and 4th Plagues {lice and flies} are superficial skin discomforts that cause everyone to move away from where they are to other locations. {Medical ailments like asthma from the air quality and cancer from particulate pollution are the equivalent to these two plagues.} These plagues only make the Egyptians move through physical space, but they don't affect their moral direction. But, because the 3rd and 4th plagues only affect Egyptians, a separation and distinction between the two peoples begins to take place. They begin to notice that the Israelites are having an easier time managing than the rest of them.

The 5th Plague {disease of livestock} affects the lives of the animals and therefore everyone's livelihood. {Today's unclean fruits and vegetables that cause illness and cruel and unsanitary farming practices that cause disease are the modern equivalents of these plagues. Stock market crashes and recessions are other examples of these plagues hitting people in their pocketbook.} And still the Egyptians are unmoved to change the way they do business with the Israelites.

The 6th Plague {boils} is a serious skin illness that affects only the Egyptians. This coincides with a hint of suspicion that the Egyptians have been personally selected for punishment. But that only makes the Egyptians dig their heels in all the more. {During the Black Plague in Europe, Jews died in far fewer number than Christians because the Jews kept their homes so much cleaner than the Christians just by cleaning it once a year before Passover. Although there's no medical evidence as yet collected that compares Jewish health worldwide to the rest of humanity, those results would be interesting. The hurricanes of the South and Eastern Seaboard disproportionately affect the poor and working classes. And yet these calamities have been blamed on GOD's wrath against gays, most of whom don't even live in those parts of the country.}

The 7th and 8th Plagues {hail and locust} destroy the grain on which the cattle and livelihood depend. {The effects of climate change make lack of rainfall and overabundance of rain and snow a very distinct, new possibility of the effects of modern day plagues. Diseases like SARS and Ebola are creating changes in the ways peoples are interacting with one another locally because of health risks globally.} Although these plagues concretize the Egyptians' suspicion with fear that the punishment is intended for them, it only makes them *question* whether they have reason to feel guilty. They choose not to *answer* that question.

The 9th Plague {darkness} is symbolic of a spiritual darkness in the soul of the Egyptians, while the Israelites literally have light in their homes. The Egyptians therefore become envious of their own slaves. {Today's moral darkness is distinctly visible to all eyes. People simply choose to point fingers at others in blame rather than blame themselves for the darkness emanating out from within them. This is particularly evident in the hyper "religious" who blame gays and Jews, in particular, for their misfortune.}

The light the Israelites live under in their neighborhood {today's Israel and San Francisco, the world capital of gay life} doesn't lead the Egyptians to hope that GOD's light will illuminate their own hearts. They prefer to remain in darkness rather than be illuminated in the same way as their slaves.

The 10th Plague is the death of the first, male child of all Egyptians, the child who'll inherit his father's material, emotional and spiritual legacy, a loss that even Pharaoh has to endure. {As more Arab refugees flood the Middle East and Europe, the suffering of the Muslim world is finally beginning to break their own hearts.}

Today's plagues aren't as simple as they were in bygone days. Today we have to ask ourselves who the Egyptians are verses who are the Israelites. We need to ask ourselves how GOD/GOD/G O D decides who are the slaves and who are the slave drivers. If you want to know good from evil, right from wrong and better from worse, you're going to have to know yourself, and stop telling other people who your GOD/GOD/G O D loves and who HE/HE/H E despises. This world is filled to the brim with hypocrites!

This first Passover of The Lord, when HE came and saved the Israelites who obeyed HIM by sacrificing a lamb for HIM, is an event that's still repeating itself today. The story of the second Passover of The Lord, when HE came and took only one sacrificial Lamb, Jesus, could also be argued to be an ongoing part of HIS/GOD plan. These conclusions aren't open for discussion. They're only open for observation and questioning. It's every man's prerogative to determine for himself if this is metaphorically true, or simply mythology writ large.

From the ancient Egyptian point of view, nobody must have liked being blamed or threatened in those days for defying the system. That wasn't a good way to get those people to improve themselves or change their ways then, and plagues aren't going to be embraced today.

But Y.H.V.H., the GOD of the Exodus, is no longer dealing with the Israelite formation of their conscience. It took 430 years of bondage to the ancient Egyptians, but the task had finally been completed. Their conscience is finally formed. Whether they use it will be another story.

We all experienced the formation of our conscience in childhood, and felt The Ten Plagues metaphorically from about the age of three, as Isaac did when Hagar and Ishmael began tormenting him. We felt selected, singled out, made to feel guilty and then punished for offenses we might even have thought we'd committed. We experienced disappointments and misfortunes that may now seem small, but they felt very painful, personal and without just cause at the time. We felt attacked without warning by people we looked up to, and sometimes even without just cause. Our conscience had to face moral lessons with a head in conflict with our heart, and very little in the way of experience to draw on to make sense of what was going on. Rarely did we admit we deserved the punishments of life we were subjected to. Rarely do we still.

The problem for good people isn't that we're dirty inside or that we're obsessed with moral cleanliness. The problem today is that we're not doing our best to learn spiritual cleaning techniques that will truly make us feel better inside and out. The difficulty we have today around the defensiveness of the hygiene of our soul comes from questioning who we're cleaning up for: us or them. If anyone approaches us with a spiritual, white glove test we often freak out with memories of our family of origin, upbringing, schooling or religious training. We don't want others judging us anymore. So instead of teaching one another how to clean, we enjoy our inner world just as it is.

A day will come when GOD/GOD/G O D will pull back everyone's rug to reveal all that we've swept under it. And although for each of us that will be different, the outcome will be death for those who are the least prepared; unemployment for those who are less prepared; and homelessness and hunger for those who are ill prepared.

Although we know that our conscience is like a scale, we pile up our feelings on one side and our reasons for acting the way we do on the other. But we tip the scale in one direction or another with the same thumbs we used to suck when we were infants.

Most of the time we tip the scale in the direction of unrealistic, optimistic feelings, and don't give our thoughts proper regard. We deny feelings of discouragement, disappointment or disillusion. We resist having to think of ourselves as emotionally infantile, childish or adolescent. Our inner scale is piled high with reasons not to feel the obvious. And it all boils down to wanting to treat ourselves more responsibly than others did in the past.

Moses had plenty of reasons to be mad. For 40 years he wandered around in the equivalent of Texas, literally leading only sheep. And then GOD came along and told him HE wants him to go to New York to take the Israelites to Florida.

"Why me?" he must have asked himself. "Why should I? After leaving New York for Texas and then living in the Southwest for a lifetime, why should he pick himself up and go back to New York? And then, from there, go on a trip to Florida? "Are you kidding me," he must have asked himself? "What's in it for me?"

The Plagues Of Modern Man

We've all experienced The Ten Plagues personally. We all knew victimization growing up. We've all learned about some of the myriad forms of misfortune. We all know the pain of punishment when it hits us personally. And we all feel that fate is affecting us alone.

The feeling of really needing our spiritual brother to help us get the job done begins in Exodus when GOD tells Moses that when Aaron sees Moses, Aaron will rejoice. Would that we could look at our neighbors, coworkers and friends as rejoicing brothers. Would that we could recognize that that goal begins in the mirror, by seeing ourselves, and rejoicing. Would that we had an older brother in us who we could count on. If only we were a Moses with an Aaron to help us, we could do what GOD wants us to do, too.

That which plagues humanity the most, leaving us all suspecting we have reason to feel guilty, is the spiritual darkness of the age in which we live. We can't see the forest *and* The Trees. In the past, that spiritual darkness was attributed to "Satan," the personification of evil. But today, the darkness in man is still there at high noon. Man sees he has only himself to *blame*. And he should see that he has only himself to *acclaim*.

The 9th Plague the Egyptians suffered from was a shared darkness they couldn't account for individually. So they collectively pointed fingers at the Israelites who were silhouetted in GOD's light.

This is the first example of anti-Semitism on a mass scale, but it's a finger-pointing process that's been evident in the world ever since Ishmael and Hagar ridiculed Isaac. Even today, in Europe, after the grandparents of today's Christians tried to eliminate all evidence of Jewry on their shores, anti-Semitism is again reoccurring. Those who are in the dark are pointing fingers at those who are standing in their own light. The 9th Plague raises its head every generation like clockwork.

Education is the great spiritual light of GOD that will forever illuminate us to HIS presence. And the Jews are historically the most educated and longest educated people on Earth. You can never be overeducated. You can never get an education that can't in some way be useful to you personally. But you *can* be so spiritually lazy or ignorant of metaphor, symbolism and similes that you don't use your education on yourself.

Although *goodwill* is the source of all thankfulness to others for the kindness of strangers, *curiosity* will eventually teach man to appreciate himself. Only then will he shine the illumination of his humanity with gratitude in the direction of GOD/GOD/G O D.

The quest for signs of the living GOD/GOD/G O D through the Moses, Jesus or Mohammed in your life shouldn't produce the kind of "religious" fanatic who tells others what GOD/GOD/G O D wants others to do to appease HIM/HIM/H I M. The inner, living sign of GOD/GOD/G O D in one's life comes to those who are willing to listen and obey themselves.

If life is a school (and it is), then GOD/GOD/G O D is our Teacher. And my grades aren't going on your report card. There comes a point in life when you're going to feel the need to convert from orthodox to conservative to liberal. You're going to want to give people credit for having some answers that are beyond yours, providing they use science and facts to determine their opinions.

Those who rely on dogma will force you to compromise the facts to satisfy their opinions. They'll erode all that humanity has achieved through civilization to accommodate their faith in their GOD/GOD/G O D. They'll insist you choose one G O D/GOD/GOD over another. Or they'll insist you choose no god. This is not how GOD/GOD/G O D WORKS/WORKS/W O R K S.

When your inner Burning Bush tells you to go back and face your guilt to save yourself, you become a Moses who can graduate from leading himself like a sheep, to leading himself like a shepherd. When your inner Burning Bush tells you what to do, you should question it. You should even go so far as to admit your fear of going back to face the guilt you ran away from. You shouldn't ignore the evidence before you.

Orthodox rabbis have always claimed that Torah lives. They carry it in synagogue like a child in their arms. They parade it around as though it were a precious, honored person, not a parchment scroll. But that doesn't mean that Torah portends the future or repeats the past. Torah lives because it describes a process of inner illumination that's universal, timeless and childlike. As the world becomes more {chronologically} Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Taoist and Muslim, the world will obviously have to become more Jewish, too. This isn't a "Zionist conspiracy" to take over the world. This is a Zionist reality that's hardwired into GOD's/GOD's/G O D's designs. You can never get rid of your Jewish, spiritual classmate because he's a part of YOU/YOU/Y O U.

To the semanticist, Torah is just another stick, like all the other sacred texts of the world, meant to beat down those who are physically dirty, monetarily poor or in some way appear to look different and threatening. But to those who can perceive the mysterious metaphor of Moses, Torah is a song, a dance, a lump of clay, a canvas or a drawing board. For the calligrapher who wants to become his own medium and masterpiece, and for whom guilt is nothing more than black ink, Torah is a pen and his life is a blank sheet of paper.

But for the poet, Torah is GOD's WORD made manifest. It re-rights his world from the inside out, editing him more beautifully WORD after WORD after W O R D.

Ambivalence

After the death of Pharaoh's son, Pharaoh releases the Israelites, but soon regrets his decision and sends his army to bring them back. When the Israelites reach the Red Sea, they can't go any further. GOD intervenes with supernatural force by parting the Red Sea to allow the Israelites to pass through, and then collapses the two walls of water when the Egyptian army in pursuit is in the middle, coming across. [Exodus 13]

Because every man endures many hardships in his lifetime, each may appear to descend on him like a plague. And his heart may harden over time. He may even doubt his ability to release himself from self-bondage. He may accuse himself of playing the part of Pharaoh to his inner Israelite. He may perceive his inner darkness and become afraid of himself; and then confusion will set in. When the world around a man comes in conflict with his world within, he may even try to hold on at all cost when he should simply "let himself go."

A man may figuratively release his hardhearted hold on himself, and later regret his decision. He may confuse releasing himself from inner bondage with self-indulgence. And he may even have to repeat this inner process countless times before he realizes what he's doing to himself.

The pharaoh within you may allow your inner Israelite to get to your Red Sea, realize what he's done, pursue and capture you, and drag you back to an ancient Cairo of your own stinking thinking. Your mind {Cain} may think it has to kill your heart {Abel} many times and in many ways while still insisting you're not your brother's keeper – until you realize this torturous process is emanating out from within.

Self-doubts are a struggle between your head and heart, between reason and regard. Self-doubts require that you choose between one of two aspects of your inner world. There'll always be an inner, moral dilemma in which you have to set yourself free or imprison yourself inside further to discover how much you yearn to be your own inner brother's keeper.

Autonomy or freedom is the question. Freedom is the answer. Man won't give up his stubborn hold on what he thinks until he loves himself more wisely and generously.

How can GOD be real? How can HE come from two directions at once, from around us and from within? If GOD is everywhere, and HE can act simultaneously at all moments in time, we must become transparent to ourselves to see it happening. We must learn to see what we're thinking and feeling, and just how unjustly and unmercifully we often misjudge our intentions.

The Red Sea: Out From The Africa Of Infancy

Parting Is Such Sweet Sorrow

The parting of the Red Sea is a miracle to the Israelites because it's an unexpected, fortuitous, physical change in their circumstances that occurs at that exact moment in time when they need it the most. But for Moses it's a miracle of a different magnitude. It's the miracle of a personal and emotional transformation. It coincides with his transformation out the Egypt of his childhood. It coincides with his arrival at the edge of his spiritual puberty as he described it in Genesis in the story of Noah.

I suspect Moses secretly asked himself "What's in it for me?" long before he got the Israelites to the Red Sea because I think he realized there had to be a personal reason for GOD to have revealed that submerged bridge out of Egypt. For the Israelites it was a way out. For Moses, it was a way in.

I say that because Moses, the author, has so cleverly set us up for a personal understanding of his protagonist. I say that because I'm a Moses, and I know I needed that personal a relationship with myself to follow GOD out of childhood and into myself.

The parting of the Red Sea in Exodus is a sign of the spiritual passage across an anticipated, physical barrier that Moses had no prior knowledge of how to traverse. He'd been miraculously drawn out of the Nile. Now GOD is responding to that miracle with a second one, the parting of the waters to accommodate all Twelve Tribes of Israel.

In just this sort of way, each of us is Moses unto others. That which parts for us for one reason parts for others, too. We instigate change for ourselves that benefits others. This isn't the trickledown economics promoted by the greedy. This is the trickle up economics of spiritual attraction.

Moses had been like a child all his life, running away from his anger. The parting of the Red Sea represents the first few steps that take him on a bridge over troubled waters in the direction of emotional adulthood and spiritual maturation. His personal journey for the next 40 years will be a time for great reflection and change. Moses, the man who leaves Egypt by traversing the Red Sea, isn't the same man who arrives at the shores of the Jordan River 40 years later.

Leadership of the Israelites is only his job description. The real work he's doing is happening simultaneously within himself. GOD gives Moses this mission to help him mature. Moses, therefore, becomes the prototype of every man who wants to turn his life around and go another way. You don't have to end up taking 600,000 people with you to make your point (although you might0. You can have just as many *inner* witnesses to your journey if that's what you desire to do.

Grownups often look back on the passage from childhood to adulthood while taking the hardships of adolescence for granted. They forget just how enormous and miraculous the transfiguration of adolescence really was. It wasn't a cruise. People forget that the doubts and dilemmas of that time in their life weren't explained to them then as signifying a transition out of childish autonomy toward true, spiritual freedom.

The problem in late childhood is that adolescence looms before the child like forbidden fruit. Adolescence is tempting and frightening, and yet totally unavoidable. A boy can't be tricked into either picking growing up physically or staying eternally young. Puberty is an inevitable sullying of his childlike nature that every grown up remembers having lived through, even if not consciously experienced as such at the time.

We all cross this Red Sea with some nostalgia at where we came from {Egypt} and where we're going to end up in the end {just outside our Land of milk and honey}. Aging is its own *reward* and, seemingly, *punishment*. That's not a Jewish conclusion about life. That's not a gay deduction about growing up. Aging is *bittersweet* for everyone. It leaves you disappointed {bitter} in some ways and loving {sweet} in others.

We should try to grow up with a sense of awe and majesty at the opportunity of discovering the fruits of self-knowledge over time; new twigs, leaves, buds, flowers, fruits, roots and all. The more we know about ourselves, the better. And life gives us many ages and stages to do so.

Leaving the dark African continent of infantile inexperience and the Egypt of childhood bondage to move toward that special, spiritual light that emanates out of your Jerusalem, is a progression in maturation that doesn't require that you literally go anywhere at all, in the geographic sense. Torah can come alive anywhere you are and anywhere you're going.

The Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt is as alive and real each year when the Jews celebrate it at Passover as it was 3,400 years ago when it first occurred. And this miracle was augmented with GOD's passing over Jerusalem 2,000 years ago to receive another sacrificial Lamb, as mysterious as the first.

A sacred text isn't sacred because it tells a story that happened once. It's sacred because it happened once and is figuratively repeated for people to bring them to spiritual consciousness in their own way. A sacred text is a Mandela of memories in the moment, a stone thrown into a placid pond that reverberates forever.

Planning A Head

The crossing of the Red Sea couldn't have been unforeseen to Moses or the Israelites. Nobody is that uninformed or plans that poorly. The Israelites had to have known they'd have to get across the body of water at the eastern edge of Egypt.

But just as the child can't do anything about puberty until puberty finally arrives, the Israelites could do nothing about the Red Sea before they got to it. There are some things in life you can only plan ahead for with good intentions. There are some bridges you can't cross until you get to them.

The parting of the Red Sea was a miracle, but miracles don't require faith. They require hard work. You have to earn your free lunches in life. They don't come to you without good reason. Nobody is lucky. {If GOD serves you dessert first, you can be sure the spinach is coming.}

The paradox in the passage of the Children of Israel from Africa to the Middle East is that the bridge across the Red Sea was there all along. The sea only had to part to reveal it. There are many bridges in life that'll only magically appear if you arrive at them from the right, spiritual direction at the right time in your life. You don't have to plan how to part your next Red Sea now. If you're over the age of 13, you already passed one. You already have experience in how life works in mysterious ways.

The child approaches puberty with a combination of unabashed dread and anticipation. Death is another of these bridges that we'll all have to cross one day. And we never know when GOD decides it's our time to cross over from this world to our next destination. We can see it coming, but we can only plan ahead by coming to it at the right time, with the best attitude possible and from a good, spiritual direction.

Anyone who got through puberty with a bad attitude may think anger and resentment is the best way to approach death, too. But this was the attitude of the men at the time of Noah who missed the boat, and this was the attitude of the charioteers of the Pharaoh who pursued the Israelites across the Red Sea. Life isn't meant to be more comfortable than you anticipated. It's meant to be more meaningful than you imagined.

GOD parted the heavens above for Noah with HIS first miraculous bridge, a rainbow of promises for humanity to give us hope. GOD gave Jacob a ladder to bridge heaven and Earth to give him strength. Jacob gave Joseph a coat of many colors as a sign of the bridge of love between one generation and the next. The parting of the Red Sea is just one more in a series of miracles brought down from heaven to Earth to open us to the miraculousness of life.

On The Other Side

Although a leisurely walk from Cairo to Jerusalem would take about four weeks, the journey of Moses and the Israelites ends up taking 40 years. The rabbis say that that was because GOD wanted the class of slaves to die out, that HE wanted the children of the Israelite slaves to inherit The Land with a new, found feeling for freedom.

But, we, in America know that a slave mentality doesn't magically disappear in one generation. In fact, we often see it replaced with a sense of entitlement, resentment or laziness rather than men becoming responsible masters over themselves. Anyone who works hard for a living often experiences that when the workweek ends, and the first thing he wants to do with his free time is nothing at all. Freedom often first leads to the luxury of inactivity, something that GOD allows for a time in each of us.

The journey from birth to childhood's end figuratively feels as though it lasts more than 400 years because so much of the time we feel detoured by the endless need to do what we're told. We're constantly interrupted by other people's agendas as we struggle relentlessly to fulfill our own. And then, the ensuing trip from adolescence to maturity can feel like it's taking 40 years to realize.

So it's hard to describe that awesome "threat" of emancipation every productive man experiences just before he reaches the age of retirement. But that "threat" is the result of spending a lifetime learning the freedom and liberation needed to approach his inner struggle for emancipation. Even a merciful death in your sleep in old age is no less of a "threat."

The miraculous departure from spiritual childhood across the bridge into spiritual adolescence doesn't occur for many men until they reach late middle age. Some don't get this experience until old age. Some don't get it at all. Very few make the physical, emotional and spiritual passage simultaneously. So when you meet the next person you meet, just assume they're lagging behind themselves.

Not learning from others; not teaching them; not contributing to society; not doing kind, little things for strangers; and not feeling guilty about all the classes you're playing hooky from in life – become late lessons in life for those who measure themselves from the outside out. Coming to the starting line late is par for the course. Not even Moses arrived on the scene in Torah until Book 2.

Teaching yourself; learning from yourself; contributing to yourself; doing kind things for yourself; and feeling guilty about yourself – is much, much harder. In this, the Ph.D.

program in wisdom in the school of life, others will notice what you're doing, or not. But the one who should probably be looking more carefully at you is certainly you.

In The Book of Exodus, GOD leads the Israelites on a circuitous path out of Egypt. They crossed the Reed Sea {Red Sea} at the northern end of the Nile River valley and travelled East through the Sinai Peninsula. They arrived in Canaan, The Land promised them by GOD 40 years later. GOD appeared to them as a cloud by day and a fire by night.

But the Israelites complain all the way, reminiscing nostalgically about all they had to leave behind. Some even talk about going back, as you or I might complain about the burdens of aging after 40, wishing we were young again.

The Israelites may look like adults on the outside, but they're motivated by juvenile forces within. They're immature at heart. They don't feel like going on the spiritual journey of life with GOD always by their side. They were eager to enjoy the experience of autonomy on the way out of Egypt. But anticipating the responsibility of freedom they're going to need when they arrive in Israel is less than exciting.

Although they allow Moses and Aaron to take responsibility for where they are and where they're headed, they don't really trust them any more than they trusted GOD the previous 400 years. Deep down inside they blame 'these men that GOD gave them.' They'd really rather party hearty than WORK.

Having an inner Aaron, a sense of sibling to your inner Moses, won't end the power struggle between your head and heart. Nor will it mask the myriad voices of desire that will assault you with their pleas. But having this sense of brotherhood within will end loneliness from the inside in.

This inner sense of self-friendship won't make it easier to work cooperatively with others. But it'll make your head and heart more eager to collaborate with your conscience to keep that pesky serpent from beguiling you with its constant cries of "gimme!"

When Moses comes down from Mt. Sinai, it'll be Joshua who hears the noise of the people shouting and who'll be the first to speak to Moses, saying: "THERE IS A THE SOUND OF WAR IN THE CAMP. 'MOSES REPLIED, 'IT IS NOT THE SOUND OF VICTORY. IT IS NOT THE SOUND OF DEFEAT. IT IS THE SOUND OF SINGING THAT I HEAR." [Exodus 32:17-18]

Well, it turns out to be the sound of debauchery and idol worship that Moses is listening to {naïve shepherd of sheep that he is}. It's Joshua whose ear is attuned to the consequences of the bad judgment Aaron used in helping Israelites worship an idol while Moses was away.

When Moses finally used his eyes and not just his ears to perceive what happened, he "SAW THAT THE PEOPLE WERE RUNNING WILD AND THAT AARON HAD LET THEM GET OUT OF CONTROL, AND SO BECOME A LAUGHINGSTOCK TO THEIR ENEMIES. SO HE STOOD AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE CAMP AND SAID, 'WHOEVER IS FOR THE LORD, COME TO ME.' AND ALL THE LEVITES RALLIED TO HIM. THEN HE SAID TO THEM, 'THIS IS WHAT THE LORD, THE GOD OF ISRAEL, SAYS, 'EACH MAN STRAP A SWORD TO HIS SIDE. GO BACK AND FORTH THROUGH THE CAMP FROM ONE END TO THE OTHER, EACH KILLING HIS BROTHER AND FRIEND AND NEIGHBOR.' THE LEVITES DID AS MOSES COMMANDED, AND THAT DAY ABOUT THREE THOUSAND OF THE PEOPLE DIED. THEN MOSES SAID, 'YOU HAVE BEEN SET APART TO THE LORD TODAY, FOR YOU WERE AGAINST YOUR OWN SONS AND BROTHERS, AND HE HAS BLESSED YOU THIS DAY." [Exodus 32:25-29]

It's hard to reconcile the slaughter of 3,000 people for idol worship with today's moral standards. But, if you internalize this story, there are many inner voices you've probably

quelled over a lifetime, and perhaps brutally on occasion, too. If you know brotherhood from within, you know you're on the quest for the name of GOD made personal. You knows there are going to be differences of opinion within you that will distress you from time to time, and that that angst will then overflow and affect others if it isn't dealt with swiftly.

Aaron, the High Priest, is far from perfect. He's the personification of the spiritual mountain, not the mountain Moses literally climbed to reach the summit where GOD bestowed HIS laws upon him.

These two parts of yourself will never see eye to eye, but they'll both have influence on your decisions. And they'll affect thousands of other voices in you that you'll be responsible for.

You're always going to have to clean up after yourself when you come down from some event only to discover that another part of you went crazy while you gone. A part of you will be high at the summit of one mountain while, out of sight, mischief brews.

You're the personification of a great mountain range of figurative climbs you're going to take throughout your life like a Sherpa. The powerful pangs of loneliness that separate the many parts of you may never feel like a Switzerland laced with the luxury trains that unite their nation. You may have to modernize yourself from within, regardless of the progress you've made in the world we share.

Unexpected Destinations

The Israelites are on a trek to a geographic location promised to them by GOD. But Moses is on a parallel journey to a spiritual Land of milk and honey. GOD has brought them all together because they're all headed in a similar direction. But their actual destinations are really spiritually distinct and quite different.

The same could be said of us all. We find ourselves with leaders we don't fully understand or identify with. And our leaders find themselves with followers who are equally inscrutable to them. It's no coincidence that our destinies are linked together. But we don't always know what we're supposed to be learning from one another until our public relationship is over.

Anyone who thinks he's the only Moses or Aaron in communication with GOD in this world we live in today is sadly mistaken. We're all in this together. We all identify with the characters of Torah, just in our own ways.

One of the great paradoxes in the story of the Exodus is that the Israelites leave Egypt going east and arrive 40 years later at the banks of the Jordan River overlooking Israel, facing west. They wander through the Sinai desert through present-day Jordan, turn, and move back in the direction they came from before they're ready to enter The Holy Land. They end their journey literally going in the opposite direction they started it.

It seems apparent that it was necessary for the Israelites to literally look back in the direction they'd come from before GOD was ready for them to enter Israel. They were then facing the direction of Egypt and, perhaps, recalled the bondage their parents had suffered through. The children of the Children of Israel were so situated just before they received the gift envisaged for them by GOD and delivered by Moses with the help of Joshua. The same might someday be said about you.

GOD's Covenant was bestowed on Abram, bequeathed to Isaac and imparted to Jacob. But HIS Covenant today has to be individually earned by every modern "Israel-*lite*" whether

he realizes his roles in Torah, or not. Even a man of G O D {Ishmael} must use his ears to hear that T H E W O R D "G O D" always sounds the same even if it looks different.

In this modern world we live in, less than half the world's Jews live in Israel. These Israelis speak Hebrew, which is a modernized rendition of the language of The Old Testament. But there are a large number of Jews worldwide who care about our SCRIPTURE as a living message in their life.

All Christians read Torah for insight into Jesus and how that one Jew made His way into their heart. If you're among them, you can never be an *Israeli*, but you should always consider yourself an Israel-*lite*.

Sometimes it takes a *homo* to teach people about the spiritual importance of *homonyms*. If you're a simple man of G O D, you should ask yourself why GOD/GOD/G O D would have given us WORDS/WORDS/W O R D S that look similar, sound the same, but have different meanings. Could it be to teach us not to take words too literally, since any word can have more than one meaning?

GOD doesn't reward us without reason, but with HIS rewards always come greater responsibilities. If we get lax about the rewards we've been given, losses occur that are meant to teach us to appreciate ourselves more than we could before. It'll seem pointless to have to suffer in life, and eventually die, unless you can come to believe that there'll be a great day after death that you're now earning by learning to using your head, heart and conscience to their fullest.

The trials you've been through and are going to go through in the future all include promises GOD/GOD/G O D will fulfill if you use your head, heart and conscience better today than you did yesterday, and better tomorrow than you're doing today. If you make sure you keep your commitments to yourself in advance of your rewards, GOD will keep HIS commitments to you in a wise, loving, generous and timely manner.

But don't put the cart before the horse. Don't put your luxuries before your bodily needs. Save for a rainy day! Save as you would ask a savior to save. Save with a passion.

It takes a little faith to accept your rewards with pride, but it takes a lot of faith to accept your losses with dignity. Loss may be one of GOD's ways to remind you to search yourself {the forces within you} for promises you made to yourself that you didn't fulfill. Loss is always a blessing in disguise. But it can be a painful lesson in the moment.

At one time, Christians claimed that Israel would be *their* inheritance because the Jews forfeited GOD's gift when some of the ancient Jews allowed Jesus, one of their own brothers, to be crucified. Today's Muslims make the claim that The Land GOD gave the Jews through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob should be given to the descendants of the older son of Abraham {*Ishmael*}. And they've got reasons of their own.

These are all fallacious arguments concocted by the greedy for nefarious reasons. When GOD/GOD/G O D makes a promise HE/HE/H E keeps it. Nowhere in any sacred text is it written that GOD/GOD/G O D would take Israel away from the Jews and give it to anyone else.

The promise of eternal life for Christians through the suffering of Jesus is guaranteed by their faith in HIM. The promise of eternal life for Muslims through the rewards given to T H E P R O P H E T Mohammed is guaranteed by their faith in H I M. But it may require some a good deal of additional faith in our Creator to engage their suffering in such a way that they can think more wisely, feel more lovingly and act more generously in the moment.

In an effort to live up to our own promises, we not only have to believe in a reward everlasting; we have to embellish our beliefs with the very highest of personal intentions for our own wellbeing in the "world to come."

But not even that is enough. In an effort to live up to our own promises, we not only wish to believe in a reward everlasting, we wish to believe in a loss everlasting as well. When you want to kick yourself because of something you wish you would have done, you're experiencing a taste of hell on Earth. Remember that feeling. You don't want to repeat it at the age of 80 when you're looking around for a Burning Bush and don't find one.

Jews still have a lot to learn about how to *give* spiritually. Christians still have a lot to learn about how to *receive* spiritually. And Muslims still have a lot to learn about how to *share* spiritually. And once we all become individually capable of all three, then we'll see greater results among the nations.

It's so easy to live on faith alone and leave the hard work to others to make this world a better place for the next generation. But, the harder you WORK/WORK/W O RK, the luckier you'll get. You have to give to yourself, receive from yourself and share with yourself to see how lucky you're becoming. It's got to be an inside job before you'll see hope in the way things are unfolding around you.

Torah commands the Jew to retell the miraculous escape of our ancestors from ancient Egypt to our children, generation after generation, in perpetuity. But the Israelites' literal escape from bondage is the preface to the particular story of everyman. With the increasing wisdom that comes with age comes the equally increasing responsibility to believe in the importance of fulfilling your promises to yourself, not to your parents whose mistakes you wouldn't want to recreate anyway.

The Jews were given Israel three times by GOD in the course of history: first as told in Torah; secondly after the Babylonian exile of 70 years in 597 B.C.E; and for a third time in the last century after 2,000 years in The Diaspora.

We've learned a lot about loss, the importance of keeping our promises to ourselves, and the wisdom that comes of striving for peace with everyone through the process of self-understanding. The wiser the Jews become, the more lovingly the Christians behave and the more generously the Muslims express their faith.

It doesn't matter how far away from yourself you wander on your trek. What matters is how close you come to your idea of an ideal, inner Israel, Rome and Mecca. Nostalgia for the-way-it-was is a fool's paradise. Every step you take on your journey brings you closer to the joy of a promise of peace in the making from within.

You can't literally return to the past. Your fate lies in living today; using the past as a moral guide toward tomorrow's destiny. Keeping your eyes peeled on the past might be your way of moving into the future, but you'll be taking each step backwards. You won't be able to watch where you're going. And rest assured that there will always be wise guys like me you'll come along to trip you up if you say or do anything in opposition to gays and Jews.

The Ten Commandments

The Way Up

Three months after leaving Egypt the Israelites arrive at Mt. Horeb in the Sinai Desert where GOD tells them not to even touch the mountain because it's holy. But HE does allow Moses to bring Aaron up the mountain with him. And this is amusing because the man whose name means "GREAT MOUNTAIN" {AARON} ascends the "Great Mountain" where GOD descends from heaven to meet these two brothers at the summit. This is where two great mountains {the mountain and the man} are visited by GOD with Moses looking on.

This meeting is a metaphor for the complexity of the personal experience of man's relationship to himself before GOD. The metaphor is 'spiritual brothers standing before GOD on high.' The man who approaches GOD with an attitude of brotherhood will experience GOD coming down a great distance on his behalf. He'll feel like he's climbed a great mountain to meet HIM at the place as close as he can come to HIM. He'll feel grounded and as well as soaring up above the clouds.

The more you ground yourself, the more you'll feel like a great mountain. The more you befriend yourself as did Moses and Aaron, the more you'll exude brotherhood effortlessly from your overflowing cup. It isn't that hard to be kind and caring to all men if you can be kind and caring to one.

What's more, this kind of a man will feel like one of those postcards that shimmers with two pictures in one. In printing, this is created with a "lenticular lens" that produces a 3-D effect. In spirituality, it's a process of personal development that produces an image of GOD/GOD/G O D that shimmers with a sense of movement or dimensionality.

Pictures created using a lenticular lens are commonly called "flicker pictures" or "wiggle pictures." {Coincidentally, "flicker" is a derogatory term for "gay" in Dutch.}

When The Ten Commandments are viewed as emanating out from within, they produce as a flicker picture. They create a depth to these laws that wouldn't otherwise be appreciated.

When you've been prepared by life with a sense of depth from within, the ability to change or move as you view images from different angles, you can change your message depending on the image you wish to present to others.

Here are The Ten Commandments {in 2-D} loosely translated into English in the order they were given to Moses by GOD at Mt. Sinai:

1. I AM THE LORD, YOUR GOD, WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT OF EGYPT.
2. DON'T HAVE ANY OTHER GODS BEFORE ME.
3. DON'T USE THE LORD'S NAME IN VAIN.
4. KEEP THE SABBATH HOLY
5. HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER
6. DON'T MURDER
7. DON'T COMMIT ADULTERY
8. DON'T STEAL
9. DON'T LIE
10. DON'T COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S WIFE, HIS ASS OR ANYTHING ELSE OF YOUR NEIGHBOR'S

The Way It Is

The Ten Commandments are the foundation of Jewish law, attributed to having been given to Moses by GOD at Mt. Sinai. The Ten Commandments are an abbreviation of the 613 MITZVOTH {LAWS OF GOOD DEEDS} on how Jews are commanded to live their lives.

{There's a mystical inference in this number if you happen to like numbers. By adding up the digits: 6, 1 and 3, you come to 10. If you add up all your own MITZVOTH you should come to a spiritual understand of the mysterious gift The Ten Commandments are in your own life.}

For modern man who doesn't have the time or inclination to study each of the 613 MITZVOTH individually, he should remember that he performs scores of MITZVOTH each day just by being considerate and compassionate of the strangers he passes on the street while cruising along on his journey of life.

The 1st Commandment, "I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT OF EGYPT" isn't a commandment in the true sense of the word, but a declaration from GOD announcing who HE is and what HE's already done. It's GOD's introduction of HIMSELF directly to the Israelites declaring the good deed HE already did for them. HE isn't too proud to imply that they've hurt HIS feelings by dancing around a Golden Calf. And HE isn't too proud to remind them that they owe HIM because of what HE's already done for them.

GOD causes guilt by design. By telling Adam not to eat from The Tree of knowledge, HE set man up for failure. HE knew he wouldn't be able to obey HIM. HE knew HE was leaving a space for guilt inside him, which was even more important than what HE had commanded. After all, how important could one little fruit be in the grand scheme of things?

By denying that there is a GOD, some people think they're cleverly outwitting guilt. Others think that because they believe in GOD or G O D, but not in GOD, they're avoiding guilt. And others simply don't care whether they feel guilty or not. None of them have done anything worth being proud of.

We should all do the same as GOD by reminding others of our achievements on their behalf if they act otherwise. Some people are more like Israel-lites who have a tendency to forget our contributions to their lives a short time after having done them a good turn.

Granted, this will cause resentments. People don't want to be told that they've hurt your feelings. They don't want to be reminded that you did something good for them. And they certainly don't want to be reminded that they're indebted to you.

In that sense, the 1st Commandment will inadvertently produce anti-Semitism if you try to recreate it. But you don't have to be Jewish to be treated like a Jew. There are some non-Jews who are very sensitive to this sort of anti-Semitism. And they are righteous because they intuitively understand the spirit of the 1st Commandment.

Two of the remaining nine Commandments are positive actions to take:

4. KEEP THE SABBATH HOLY
5. HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER

And although the other seven Commandments are behaviors to avoid:

2. DON'T HAVE ANY GODS BEFORE ME
3. DON'T UTTER GOD'S NAME IN VAIN

6. DON'T KILL
7. DON'T COMMIT ADULTERY
8. DON'T STEAL
9. DON'T LIE

… only the 10th Commandment is the prohibition of feelings. {DO NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S WIFE, HIS ASS OR ANYTHING ELSE OF YOUR NEIGHBOR'S} This Commandment prohibits feeling jealous and envious.

Jealousy and envy should never motivate your actions. Jealousy and envy cause the spite that is the underlying cause of all negative, aggressive and retaliatory interactions exacted on others – especially anti-Semitism, racism, homophobia and misogyny. Jealousy and envy are also the spiritual causes of all negative, aggressive and retaliatory interactions we exact on ourselves. The effects of these feelings can be observed in the physical, mental, emotional and social problems we all suffer from.

People covet the good deeds of the Jews because we're generally wise. People covet the good deeds of those of other races because diversity and tolerance are imperative in achieving righteousness. People covet the good deeds of gays because we're a mirror image of straight people. And people covet the good deeds of women because their actions are generally loyal to life.

Although you were surely taught to control your behavior, your parents may not have talked to you about controlling your thoughts and feelings. You may have been left on your own to figure out how to use your conscience to weigh your head against your heart to come to the most righteous actions you should take before you open your mouth or do something you'll come to regret.

Most of us begin adulthood with little experience in how to approve or disapprove of ourselves because nobody taught us how to shape ourselves when we were children. They only shaped our behavior. And so we learned not to say out loud what we were secretly thinking and feeling {especially about our parents}.

And then, later in life, we may have wondered why our childhood relationship with our parents was so abrasive or idealized. We may have wondered why we were so lonely, felt so alienated or looked out at the world from what seemed like a great distance. If you didn't get wise instructions given in a loving manner on how to shape your thoughts and feelings, you may still be suffering in understanding where others are coming from or why you may dread feeling embarrassed, ashamed or humiliated.

Moses addressed this problem in its simplest form in The Creation Story. He personified thoughts as Adam, feelings as Eve and the conscience of man as GOD. He turned guilt into a living substance {guilt} that grew on Trees. And he even created a way for a man to tempt himself to create guilt without external cause.

The outcome of the novice {Adam and Eve} in dealing with a guilty conscience creates self-rejection. We banish ourselves from the garden of infancy. In other words, we grow up. Guilt produces growth over time.

In that sense, the whole reason for the creation of the universe was to gift man with guilt. Time is meaningless without it. Just look at animals. Because they are devoid of guilt, time produces conditions for survival only. The ants collect a storage of food for the winter. The birds go south. The bears hibernate. But giving the actions of the natural world any

meaning other than that of survival excludes the meaning of winter as the season of death and rebirth. To appreciate time, you must be human.

When they say that life is messy, what they're really saying is that people don't understand the meaning of The Creation Story. They don't understand how we create our own story out of the forces at play within and around us. Every story in Torah after the first builds upon the premise that organizing our understanding of guilt over time so we can express it spiritually is the great art of being a human being.

Jesus was an unusual (and probably gay) Jew who deciphered the mosaic brainteaser {cracked the code} of The Creation Story His own way in order to build a second story upon the ground floor the Jews had constructed over the course of the previous 1,400 years. Mohammed was a straight, non-Jew who was able to build yet a third story on top of the second. This makes the story of GOD/GOD/G O D shimmer with a flicker effect that's difficult to talk about, but easy to perceive.

Peace of mind and a gentle heart aren't produced magically out of nothing. But avoiding unpleasant thoughts and feelings won't bring tranquility into your life, either. Avoiding these two prominent inner forces will only make it impossible for you to face your conscience, the God within that doeth THE WORK/WORK/W OR K. In the end, sticking your head in the sand or wearing your heart on your sleeve will only produce more guilt than you ever could have imagined.

The patience needed to judge yourself gently, but thoroughly, comes with an intimate regard for all that you think about and feel. Don't shut yourself up inside in an effort to make your parents happy about how they wanted you to behave decades ago. You're too spiritually advanced for that. You don't have to behave any differently than you do now, but you can look at your behavior more closely to determine what you think about how you behave and how your behavior makes you feel.

You can't be merciful {Christian} until you've learned to be just {Jewish}. And you can't be fair {Muslim} until you've learned to be just and merciful. We need one another as classmates, not as brothers, to learn these lessons. Treating each other like wayward sons from the same Father simply won't work anymore. No man wants to be parentalized by his brother. Having been parentalized by one or two parents and a host of other relatives dumped more than enough shame upon us all.

The secret to understanding guilt is by going through it, not around it. How will you create modesty out of embarrassment if you deny that you're ever embarrassed? How will you create humility out of shame if you deny that you're ever ashamed of yourself? How will you create loyalty out of humiliation if you deny that anyone, including GOD, has the ability to humiliate you?

If you feel hurt, you deserve it. You spent so much time pretending that you can't be hurt that any little sign of hurt is a blessing in disguise. You're not nearly as hurt as you would be if you faced hurt straight on and got through it applying the modesty, humility and grace you've got to each and every hurt GOD brings you.

Jealousy and envy destroy the delicate inner lining of your heart where you should esteem yourself. Jealousy and envy create an inner imbalance, which allows spite to motivate your actions. And jealousy and envy are exacted upon ourselves before we perpetrate them on others, even though it may take you a lifetime to realize that truth.

Spite is the result of the jealousy of your own body {vanity} and envy of your own virtues {conceit} that you deny knowing about yourself. Spite creates a spiritual Catch-22

in which your head, heart and soul desire others' gifts because you won't allow yourself the pleasure of your own.

This ungodly dynamic then emanates out from within creating anti-Semitism, racism, homophobia and misogyny. But it also produces the shimmering effect of movement and change over time that make life so spiritually enticing and mysterious.

You don't have to be Jewish to hate anti-Semitism. You don't have to be black to hate racism. You don't have to be gay to hate homophobia. And you don't have to be female to hate misogyny. In fact, these social diseases are often oddly magnified in black-Jews, gays and lesbians in ways that you could learn to avoid without discriminating against any of my people.

This is a new and provocative idea derived from personalizing The Hebrew Testament, not swallowing it predigested as it was served to those in our past. Basically, the more you come to know about what gays and Jews are thinking and feeling, the more you're going to break the habitual thoughts and feelings you don't even realize you're perpetrating on everyone.

What Is A Commandment?

The Ten Commandments are written on two tablets "LUCHOT HA-BRITH" {TABLETS OF THE COVENANT}, inscribed on both sides, front and back. They were given to Moses readymade, inscribed by the finger of GOD. "MOSES CAME DOWN THE MOUNTAIN WITH TABLETS IN HIS HAND. THEY WERE WRITTEN ON BOTH SIDES, WITH THE WRITING VISIBLE FROM EITHER SIDE." [Exodus 32:15]

Of course, the reason why they were inscribed on both sides is so that Moses could read what GOD had written at the same time that everyone else could read it, too. What's the good of giving people instruction if you can't simultaneously receive that instruction for yourself?

Once Moses descends from the mountain, he discovers that the Israelites are worshipping a Golden Calf and, in anger, smashes the two tablets of stone on which the Commandments are written. He later climbs Mt. Sinai again to receive a second set from GOD. [Exodus 34]

The Hebrew "HA'ASARAT HADVARIM" {THE TEN COMMANDMENTS} is actually poorly translated as "COMMANDMENTS." The Hebrew WORD "DAVAR" would be better translated as "WORD" or "UTTERANCE." The Commandments are figuratively ten utterances from GOD that have such vast connotations that they require an enormous, personal desire for wisdom, love and desire for redemption to plumb their depth. Their meaning must echo through your mind to your heart, and then reverberates from there through your conscience to bring you greater awareness of yourself before you can fathom your relationship with GOD/GOD/G O D. Only in this way do you develop your own soul using WORDS/WORDS/W O R D S.

For those who are sensitive to their need for autonomy, a Supreme Authority Figure who commands them to do what HE/HE/H E wants is an unattractive thought that only brings up negative feelings about all religions. Therefore The Ten Commandments might be better described simply as a description of the way it *is*. They're *descriptors*, not *demands*.

Most people don't mind quite so much being told how it *is* so long as they have the freedom to find out for themselves whether that's true for them, or not. Intelligent people

refuse to follow authority blindly or mindlessly agree with those who do. They prefer to use trial and error to see what works and what doesn't. They like to guess when they don't know. They like to extrapolate from their experiences the way they believe it might be, given the evidence at hand.

Those who have a well-developed head and heart want to find the truth out for themselves. They believe autonomy is an important psychological stage on the path to freedom. They love autonomy. It gives them a mental flexibility, creativity and individuality that they find, not only delightful about themselves, but absolutely necessary in feeling that they have free will.

Atheism is, therefore, an important stage in building GOD/GOD/G O D-consciousness. Without the freedom to reject GOD/GOD/G O D, there'd be no way to make room inside to receive HIM/HIM/H I M.

From this it follows that without the room inside to create guilt, there'd be no way to receive good or evil. In the same way that GOD anticipated that Adam and Eve would eat the forbidden fruit by giving them a digestive track to consume it, GOD anticipated that man would seek freedom, liberty and emancipation by giving him the autonomy to reject HIM.

The Ten Commandments are ten moral forces GOD figuratively uttered into existence at the time HE created the physical universe in anticipation of the creation of man. If they'd been physical forces GOD might have said something like:

1. Gravity
2. Inertia
3 Electromagnetism, etc.

These ten moral forces are as real as Newton's discovery of gravity. They're just a little more difficult to perceive and measure from within because they don't always follow the expectations we've developed from our awareness of the world around us.

Here are the four laws that had to have been set in place before these ten moral forces were uttered:

1. Physical forces will act on *objects*, but moral forces will act on *subjects*.
2. Physical forces will be measured with manmade tools because they act on all objects equally. Moral forces will have to be measured with self-made, internal tools in order to be assessed.
3. Physical forces will act *equally* on all things, while moral forces will act *uniquely* on them.
4. Physical forces can be discussed *specifically* because they will emanate in from outside, but moral forces will have to be discussed in *generalities* because they will emanate from the inside out.

The effects of The Ten Commandments on us become our moral fingerprints that we then leave upon this world. They exemplify how and where we touched others. But these fingerprints don't tell us anything about why we touch people the way we do. To know why we do what we do, we have to touch ourselves. We have to figuratively observe these forces as they carve us like clay from within with our own hand.

The Christian tradition of praying with the fingertips and palms of both hands touching is a fascinating ritual with great spiritual significance, but the contemplation of each fingerprint individually is a form of prayer in and of itself. Putting your hands together in prayer is like folding the two tablets of Commandments so that the first five Commandments to GOD and the second five, to people, are touching, creating ten moral energy forces that can figuratively circulate through your whole, operating system.

What Is A Moral Force?

An infant learns about the force of gravity through the process of learning to walk. And he'll respect gravity for the rest of his life based on his experience of how his personal knowledge of gravity affected him, then. Because our experiences of gravity are so similar to one another's, no one would propose that if you don't believe in gravity, and jump off a building, you wouldn't fall. Everyone knows you don't have to believe in gravity; figuratively speaking, gravity believes in you…

Gravity acts on all objects equally. And your body is an object that reacts no differently from any other. Therefore you have to learn how to coordinate your actions so that your body isn't subjected too severely to the force of gravity, and you die.

But when we fall morally, we perceive that descent as intellectually and emotionally beguiling because it doesn't leave scars that can be visibly seen or literally measured. The moral forces of life leave their scars in our head, heart and soul. The memories of mistakes, the heartache of disappointments and the self-doubts that lead to disbelief have real effects on us, even if they can't be seen or measured.

You've fallen morally many times, and there's no reason why you should always get up. Sometimes, it might make more sense to stay there and writhe around in your own humiliation. Why pretend you haven't fallen when you have? Why pretend to always be *up* if you're *down*.

We may try to look as though we never lose our moral balance in an attempt to impress others, but we know the truth inside. We're all in a moral, spiritual process of moving forward that emulates walking. And walking is a process of falling and catching yourself just-in-time.

That's why life is described as like a journey. The state of this moral flux leads to the art of dance where poise leads us toward perfection and gracefulness to graciousness. Life is a journey in which you're always falling morally forward and catching yourself before you fall. And even when you're not literally or figuratively going anywhere in particular, life can be described as a dance because movement mirrors morality.

Although they say that *pride* cometh before the fall, pride is actually a good thing. You have to be able to stand a little too tall, with your chest bursting your buttons to take your next step forward. So, it's not *pride* that comes immediately before the fall; it's *arrogance*.

Arrogance is the cause of the accidents everyone's been through in life. It's arrogance that makes people twist in some way as they propel themselves forward that causes them to lose their balance and fall. Arrogance even causes people to be unaware of the importance of their pride.

Arrogance is caused by self-ignorance, while pride is based on factual, measurable achievements. Arrogance will knock you off balance, but pride will help you catch yourself. Together, they'll drive you forward on the journey of life, so that you don't just dance around in circles forever going nowhere, learning nothing about yourself.

Arrogance may be the cause of the *accidents* we have with others, but naïveté is the cause of the *incidents* we have to go through within ourselves. Nobody would trip himself up {or others} if he knew better. Nobody would intentionally fall over himself (or knock down others) if he could walk in a more coordinated fashion. A moral slip is the result of being spiritually uncoordinated from within.

Moral strength has to be gleaned out of moral naïveté. You have to practice walking tall in a positive direction to perceive the dignity of your life. And when you happen to trip and fall, you have to learn how to pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and figure out how to avoid such incidents the next time.

But if you're physically disabled in a way that makes it difficult for you to walk; if you're emotionally disabled in a way that makes it difficult for you to connect with others; and if you're spiritually disabled in a way that makes it difficult for you to believe in yourself – you're going to fall down a lot in life.

Anyone who's mentally disabled isn't going to be able to read this book. They're going to need an interpreter who can translate my message into physical, emotional and spiritual expressions of these truths. Dance is one such medium. (I tried to be a ballet dancer, but I didn't have the imagination to use my body to express my thoughts. I could only use my body to express my feelings. But, alas, that wasn't enough to become a great dancer.)

The Jews were given wisdom of the mind. The Christians were given wisdom of the heart. And the Muslims were given wisdom of the soul. Would that we could all share what we know with our classmates through wisdom of the body. There are answers that lie right under everyone's nose, and so we don't have to cause anyone to get his nose bent out of shape.

Moses receives this first set of The Ten Commandments readymade by GOD. And he holds them proudly. But when he sees the Israelites dancing around a Golden Calf, he trips himself up with arrogance and smashes them out of anger.

But his moral fingerprints are on the chunks of rock that lie on the ground. He wouldn't have done what he did if not for self-ignorance. He couldn't deliver The Ten Commandments to the Israelites because he couldn't hold them dearly himself. He broke them even before he proposed them. But, he broke The Ten Commandments because they were too *emotionally* heavy for him to carry himself under those circumstances, not because of the weight of the stones. The weight in his heavy heart tipped them over. That's how they slipped through his fingers.

Moses didn't just go up Mt. Sinai twice. He'd been up the mountain several times previous. On his first visit GOD says to him, "IF YOU OBEY ME FULLY AND KEEP MY COVENANT, THEN OUT OF ALL NATIONS YOU WILL BE MY TREASURED POSSESSION." [Exodus 19:5] And when he descends the mountain and tells this to the Israelite leaders, they agree, saying "NA'ASE VE NISHMA." {WE WILL DO AND WE WILL LISTEN.} [Exodus 19:8]

Of course, it would have been better if the Israelites had agreed first to *listen* and then *do*. But that's not how people tend to behave. First they try things their way, and when they fail, then they go back humbly and follow the instructions.

It may have been better for Moses to smash the first set of Commandments if he hadn't broken Israelite heads when they made the mistake of creating and dancing around an idol. But he did both. More than 3,000 Israelites were killed for participating in The Golden Calf incident.

These were just two error of judgment on the part of Moses in a series of actions motivated by anger that will cause GOD to decide not to allow him to enter The Promised Land. His anger had caused him to kill a man when he was 40, and his anger caused him to shatter The Ten Commandments at the age of 80, as well as to order the death of thousands. You'd think he would have developed more understanding of his anger issues by that advanced an age. But his anger issues aren't over. And Moses, the author, isn't ashamed to describe in detail the character defects of his protagonist.

Learning to walk gracefully on the journey of life without breaking heads or breaking Commandments can be slow going for anyone, even a PROPHET. Moses, the author, is implying that we must all forgive our own protagonist in our story for his unschooled ways.

The Second Set

The first set of Commandments GOD carved for Moses. After he smashed them in anger, perhaps because he didn't think the Israelites deserved them, GOD commands him to carve two tablets and come back up the mountain.

The first set of tablets Moses had to bring down from the mountain. The second set, he had to take up *and* bring down the mountain. The weight of the second set therefore must have felt twice as heavy for Moses.

The Israelites save the broken rocks from the first set and later place them in The Tabernacle. [Exodus 34]

Physical exercise is the lowest, most basic level of learning, but hard work can create miracles if you pay attention to what your body is telling you as you make a physical effort to learn from life. That's why everyone was given his own body.

We're all figuratively given our first set of commandments readymade as a child from our parents. But we break our parents' set of rules when we see others flagrantly disobeying their parents' rules, too. We rhetorically ask ourselves, "If they can get away with it, why can't I?"

GOD gives Moses a second chance. HE seems to know that it's about progress, not perfection. "I AM MAKING A COVENANT WITH YOU. BEFORE ALL YOUR PEOPLE I WILL DO WONDERS NEVER BEFORE DONE IN ANY NATION IN ALL THE WORLD. THE PEOPLE YOU LIVE AMONG WILL SEE HOW AWESOME IS THE WORK THAT I, THE LORD, WILL DO FOR YOU." [Exodus 34:10]

Later in life, we come to realize we've been given a second chance, a chance to rewrite our parents' rules our own way. But the second set we have to write with life experience that goes right to the bone. The second set can really hurt because then we're disappointed in ourselves, not our parents.

When we look back on the first set of commandments our parents gave us, we can see how uniquely we shattered them. And, if we were wise enough to save our parents' broken shards of wisdom in our heart as reminders of their efforts to make our life easier and more morally meaningful {as the Israelites literally did with the first set of Commandments broken and then foolishly discarded by Moses}, we can look back and honor our parents for their effort to try to make us understand the importance of all that we think, feel and believe in. And if we're really wise and loving, we can forgive ourselves today for how little their words meant to us then. For, although we can't change what we did, we can always learn from our mistakes.

Beg GOD/GOD/G O D to forgive those who've hurt you, but remind HIM/HIM/H I M never to excuse them for what they've done wrong. In this way you can have your cake and eat it, too. You can wish that your enemies get their just desserts: lessons that will teach them not to hurt anyone in the future.

It's only by making mistakes, and then atoning and forgiving ourselves for them that we can be reminded that GOD/GOD/G O D always remembers what we did wrong and has a plan already in mind to teach us to correct for it. If you are a willing student, GOD will become a willing Teacher. If you're not, you won't even know that there's a Teacher and that this is a school.

The anti-Semitism taught by the church in the past has humbled Christianity to the importance of all GOD's/GOD's/G O D's children. The anti-Israel sentiments today are teaching Muslims the importance of all GOD's/GOD's/G O D's neighbors. You can't "LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF" unless you can love yourself as though you were a stranger you're getting to know.

The shards of moral rock described in The Book of Exodus are figuratively all around us. They remind us of the edifice in the story of The Tower of Babel that GOD destroyed with HIS own hand.

But now we're older, and wise enough to stop others from entering GOD's domain from the wrong direction {i.e. with the wrong intentions}. We're smart enough to build our influence around us rather than reach for influence above us. We're able to build our tower using principles held together with the mortar of good intentions. And we're capable and devoted enough to our moral edifice not to use spite or retribution to get our way.

In adulthood, we each have the chance to formulate a coherent set of values for ourselves in order to give personal meaning to our experiences. Frustration, irritation and distress with our high expectations of others will take a toll over time.

You may enter the marketplace with critical thoughts and feelings of disgust. You don't have to forgive those around you for what they don't know. You don't have to excuse them for their poor, moral posture. The marketplace is also a marketplace of ideas. Seek what you need to know, and leave the rest for others to buy into.

You can commend yourself for all that you know without boasting about it. You'll be in a far better position to make more meaning out of everything you experience if you apply the modesty, humility and grace you learned from guilt to model what you know. More you may not be in a position to do.

A Command Performance

When addressed subjectively, rather than objectively, The Ten Commandments were given to the heart and soul of everyone, rather than simply as societal duties to be performed absentmindedly from the head for the sake of making others comply.

There's no point in doing what you're told if you don't do so out of self-love rather than a duty to society. You can see how fed up people are from being told to behave like everyone's brother or sister. You can see how frustrated they are with self-sacrifice.

If you don't find a way to bless yourself, you're going to come to the conclusion that your GOD/GOD/G O D isn't blessing you nearly enough. Don't indulge yourself as a reward for self-sacrifice. That will lead to obsessive/compulsive behaviors that will only torment you.

Do what you've been asked to do because you want to learn more about yourself from all your experience, or don't do it at all. They can always find someone with a better attitude who'll do your job better than you.

You're not essential here on Earth. Your presence is only requested. Your comportment in class is far more important than your attendance. And, if you claim to have a bad attitude about what you've been asked to do because of someone else's bad attitude, you're going to have to become a lot smarter if you want to demonstrate to GOD/GOD/G O D that you're a wise, loving and generous person.

Sometimes you're just going to have to go on the next leg of your journey without others liking you. Sometimes you're not even going to like yourself. Popularity was never a Jewish virtue or a gay asset.

GOD Is GOD. You Are Not

1. I AM THE LORD, YOUR GOD, WHO TOOK YOU OUT OF EGYPT

A simple summing up of the 1st Commandment is the declaration that "GOD is GOD." On the surface this statement may seem a bit formal and unnecessary since the Israelites could hardly have forgotten that they'd been enslaved just three months prior to receiving the Commandments, and that it had taken Ten Plagues as well as a miracle at the Red Sea to get them out of the trouble they'd gotten themselves into.

From an emotional point of view, the 1st Commandment implies that GOD had a plan for the Israelites from the start. And HE seemed to be well prepared for the Israelites not having taken HIM seriously at Mt. Sinai. Right from the start, they behaved as though they were holier than THOU. And apparently GOD didn't care for that kind of attitude any more then than the rest of us do.

But HE also seemed to realize that slaves don't embrace freedom easily. They only want autonomy so they can do as they please. GOD began this journey by choosing a leader who was a prince and a murderer, and then HE assigned him the least agreeable followers HE could find. HE seems to have a preference for freedom, liberty and the emancipation of man that goes beyond the needs of the poor or the privileged.

If we look only for the majesty of the 1st Commandment, we miss its underlying emotional subtext. Beneath THE WORDS "…GOD WHO RELEASED YOU FROM BONDAGE IN EGYPT" lies a tone of seething anger that some of the Children of Israel may not have been able to catch at that moment when HIS WORDS were first uttered. The implication is "I am The Lord {not you}. I am your GOD. {you're not MINE.} {And in case you forgot, I took *you* out of Egypt. {You didn't take ME along for the ride…}

You can imagine GOD as an angry, old man pulling HIS gray hair out by the roots, or you can imagine HIM as a GOD of such magnitude and poise that HE has a perfect understanding of human nature. HE isn't at a loss for WORDS when HE has to deal with disappointment in HIS creation. HE doesn't seem to get flustered by our low self-esteem. HE always seems to have a plan on how to raise it.

Separation Of GOD From State

It doesn't behoove anyone to blame Israel for not having achieved peace with her neighbors since her neighbors haven't yet acknowledged her right to exist or achieved peace amongst themselves. When Muslims will learn the meaning of justice and mercy, they'll come to the bargaining table with fairness. But that will require a "we" in each one

of them that'll reach out to fill themselves with SHALOM, not empty themselves of the blessings GOD/GOD/G O D has bestowed upon them.

In this century, each and every individual is refashioning the concept of brotherhood in new ways. "LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF" [Mark 12:3, Matthew 22:39, Leviticus 19:181] has reached new proportions through the modern idea of knowing yourself in order to love yourself and then passing on that wisdom and love on to others.

You can't quote Jesus without understanding the foundation given to Him by Moses. In fact, Moses never told anybody to love his neighbor. The idea was laughable in those days, and would have been disastrous. What he said was to love your *companion*. "LAHAVTA LIVARECHA KAMOCHA" {LOVE YOUR COMPANION AS YOURSELF}

When you love someone you're already close to as much as you love yourself, you learn a great deal about the meaning of love. When you try to do the same thing with your neighbor you discover that tact and diplomacy usually works a lot better than love in getting your neighbor to improve his standards of conduct. In that sense, neighbors are no different than family. They'll take you for granted if you let them. Good fences make good neighbors, but good feelings make good companions. Therefore love your companion as yourself.

Companionship is a human lesson, not a Jewish/Christian/Muslim lesson. Blaming religious groups never did the world a bit of good in the past. Religions don't kill people; people with misguided "religious" beliefs kill people. All wars in the West are religious wars because they all bring up conflicts in beliefs that are held with dogmatic insistence on one particular way of expressing faith.

It's no coincidence Moses was given The Ten Commandments at the summit of Mt. Sinai at the very instant the Israelites were worshipping a manmade idol at the base of the mountain. Moses's separation from Aaron {who was helping the Israelites in their worship of an idol} while Moses was on Mt. Sinai reflects the separation of church and state that we hold so precariously in this country. The wellbeing of the state {Moses} and the wellbeing of the faith {Aaron} is expressed as a separation of these biblical brothers in Torah that we're still learning how to maintain fairly today.

Moses is given the theory. He holds THE LAW in his hands. But he's human, and his impatience often makes him a poor leader. Aaron holds the practice. He holds the spiritual, belief system and an ability to talk to people. But his apathy toward GOD has already surfaced in helping the Israelites worship the Golden Calf.

Religion is a Golden Calf experience that requires rites and rituals to achieve rewards. Spirituality is a mindful experience of GOD/GOD/G O D that includes those who aren't members of your faith, but who are deserving of equal treatment under the law. The Founding Fathers of the United States provided freedom *of* religion. It's up to us today to provide freedom *from* religion by offering spirituality instead.

Moses isn't easily influenced by the negativity of others, while Aaron is too easily influenced by their negativity. Moses' blood is always boiling and Aaron has ice in his veins.

We need a better understanding of church and state today that begins in the head {Moses} and heart {Aaron} of everyone. Only in this way will we be able to separate humanity's laws from GOD's/GOD's/G O D's. Only in this way will we see who the hypocrites are who are only praying for the GOLD/GOLD/G O L D needed to make more Calves.

The incident of the Golden Calf at Mt. Sinai will be the first lesson in shame for everyone on the Exodus. To become a nation that will be a nation of priests and a light unto other nations, the Israelites will have to endure the world's first lesson in the responsibilities of freedom. They're going to have to deal with Commandments and Golden Calves. And GOD has a plan that will give them all of the above, as well as lessons along the way in learning to love themselves like their own companion.

Rejecting GOD

Moses smashes the first set of tablets when he sees the Israelites worshipping the Golden Calf. He realizes they've broken the 1st and 2nd Commandments even before they've received them. They reject GOD and HIS blessings on them in favor of a god they put before HIM. They fail before they've begun.

The impatience Moses exhibits with the Israelites is more indicative of the impulsive, knee-jerk, judgmental behavior that was fueled by the emotional demeanor of his inner child who grew up without an inner parent to shape his moral development. When it comes to recognizing the needs of his team, Moses has issues. His relationship to GOD is different because of the privileged upbringing he had growing up as a prince in a palace. He knew no shame. He could do no wrong until he killed a man. He was practically born with a silver spoon in his mouth.

The Israelites, on the other hand, knew only shame. They had no use for humility. Anyone who'd agree to *do* and *then* listen doesn't know humility. They're going to have to learn things the hard way.

I grew up in a broken home. I was raised by a mother who fed three people on a secretary's salary. And I was deeply embarrassed and ashamed growing up. My mother bawled us in public; hit us out in public; even abandoned us once to make us feel guilty; and spoke negatively about us to others in our presence.

She taught me the meaning of embarrassment. She taught me the meaning of shame. But humiliation, I taught myself in having to be involuntarily committed to mental institutions as an adult, once for going crazy and the second time for trying to kill myself.

Parents can't teach their toddler to walk by explaining the law of gravity to him because they intuitively know he needs to experience gravity and then learn about it himself. It's only long after the toddler's mastered his body down to the bone that the curiosity arises in him to question how the invisible, silent and odorless force of gravity holds such a profound effect on every step he takes.

Natural forces spiritually mirror supernatural, moral forces that weigh upon us all. The natural world poetically, not literally, reflects our human nature. There are no lions lying down with lambs on the Serengeti plain, nor will there ever be.

As yet it is written that, "THE WOLF WILL LIVE WITH THE LAMB. THE LEOPARD WILL LIE DOWN WITH THE GOAT. THE CALF AND THE LION AND THE YEARLING TOGETHER. AND A LITTLE CHILD WILL LEAD THEM." [Isaiah 11:6]

To take The Bible literally forces us to question the importance of GOD's WORD. What we should do instead is question our guilt. Clearly, there's message from GOD/GOD/G O D that's greater than the literal WORDS/WORDS/W O R D S that carry the message.

Blaming gays for natural catastrophes, accidents, incidents and illnesses is a sign of arrogance, not enlightenment. Christians did that in the past with Jews. Spiteful people of

all types do something similar today when they proclaim that gays, Jews and Israel ought to be ashamed of themselves.

GOD only works in wise, mysterious, loving ways to teach us. The pain and suffering you see others going through are lessons that they're going to have to get through using modesty, humility and grace, or their dilemmas will not end. Feeling sorry for the unfortunate is virtuous. Helping them is admirable. But blaming *us* for *their* problems is absurd.

It's a misuse of your intelligence, heartfelt intentions and conscience to point fingers at Jews and gays for acts of your GOD/G O D. There are no peoples more humble and willing to live in peace with the world than we are.

The lessons we need to learn in life are given to each of us in stages, without any explanations from anyone's GOD/GOD/G O D. It's customary for teachers nowadays to tell students in advance what they're going to learn and the order in which the lessons will come. But we still don't tell our students *why* we're teaching them what we're teaching them. And that's a huge mistake!

GOD doesn't tell us in advance what HE's teaching us. HE doesn't explain the order of HIS lessons. And HE doesn't explain why the lesson is important to completing HIS curriculum with good grades. It's up to each of us to make a personal connection between the stumbling blocks before us and how our experiences can help us understand GOD's guidance as we strive to move further forward. And yet, we need to live without some reasons for why things are the way they are in the time allotted us. For we never know which day will be our last. There will always be a mystery to your tale.

The Israelites were unable to morally move very far forward while in Egypt. Slavery eradicates your ability to choose. And without choice, men in bondage can't grow with the same speed as free men. The Israelites needed a spiritual leader to get them out of there. But you might say they were morally stumbling and reeling the whole while they inched forward on their journey to Israel.

Learning how to right yourself as you're falling isn't easy to do. Learning how to take righteous, moral steps forward is an art no less difficult to master than the physical skill of walking. Everyone slips and falls from time to time without knowing what made him trip up.

The GOD of Exodus is portrayed as a moral force relentlessly determined to get the Israelites to HIS chosen destination a lot more poised and graceful than they were before. The casting of the Golden Calf by the Israelites and the smashing of The Ten Commandments by Moses are only the first two examples of the need of my people then to learn to express their moral authority for themselves over themselves, and stop having the world tell us how to live our lives.

Without first suffering with gods before GOD, there would have been no way for the Israelites to appreciate the one and only GOD/GOD/G O D who has presented us with so many challenges since then. But nobody said it would be easy.

I Don't Think You Really Heard ME The First Time

2. DON'T HAVE ANY OTHER GODS BEFORE ME.

The 2nd Commandment reiterates the message of the first, while figuratively modulating the message to a higher key. It comes across in a shrill pitch. GOD knows HE's been *heard*, but HE knows that most of the Israelites weren't able to *listen* to HIM the first time.

The 2nd Commandment reiterates the first, although, this time, GOD addresses them in the second person plural {you} instead of the first person singular {I}. By saying it a second time in the second person, GOD brings the message closer to home.

It takes more than faith in GOD to believe HE's teaching you to operate the body you inhabit; it takes faith in yourself. Ultimately it'll take a merciful regard for your inner frenemies: your head and heart. When you hear them arguing inside you, like a black man and a cop, you know that the problems in society start at home.

GOD loves each of us equally. What's very hard is for us to love ourselves. It's much easier to come to the school of life on a Friday, Saturday or Sunday for an hour or two than to sit in GOD's spiritual classroom all day, every day without any time off until you graduate.

Unfortunately, the 2nd Commandment isn't going to make this point. We have to have gods before GOD to learn what's really important in life. We need gods before HIM to teach us to prioritize. And, because we don't really think about life as a school in which we're being given assignments, lessons, tests and grades in coming to know and love ourselves, we don't usually weigh our priorities as often as we should.

When you make cheesecake your god of choice, you're creating priorities that break the 2nd Commandment. When you obsess over something, anything at all, you're doing so, too. Compulsions are reactions to obsessions that are intended to teach you this Commandment. But people don't look at bad habits in this way.

So GOD conveniently came up with a curious, and somewhat unexpected solution: the 3rd Commandment.

Spiritual Parts Of Speech

3. DON'T USE THE LORD'S NAME IN VAIN

To my mind, what makes the first three Commandments fascinating is the way they're written, more than what they say. The 1st Commandment is in the first person singular. {I AM THE LORD…} The 2nd Commandment is in the second person singular, or plural, depending on how you wish to read it. {YOU SHALL NOT..} And in the 3rd Commandment, GOD says not to take 'THE LORD'S NAME IN VAIN. It doesn't say, "DON'T TAKE MY NAME IN VAIN." GOD refers to HIMSELF in the third person singular {HE}.

After Adam ate the forbidden fruit in The Creation Story, GOD referred to HIMSELF in the first person plural {We}, saying, "MAN HAS BECOME LIKE ONE OF US!" HE not only spoke about HIMSELF. HE spoke to HIMSELF about HIMSELF. Either that, or there were others there with HIM, and HE spoke about Themselves.

The only way I can speak about myself in the first person plural {we} is figuratively, not literally. By thinking of myself as a combination of rational thoughts and irrational feelings learning to work cooperatively with one another through a conscious relationship with the seat of judgment called my "conscience," I can imagine myself as a group of forces at internal play, forces that have no choice but to deal with my desires.

In this way, I figuratively move from a conglomeration of little "i's" into the one big "I" called "the first person singular." But, figuratively, I'm a team of inner forces and voices, many of whom are often in conflict with one another. "I" am a "we" that mirrors the "We" GOD spoke of in Genesis.

The Essence Of The Abrahamic "We"

A pictorial way to describe the sociological religious consequence of this psychological inner "we" is by imagining teams standing at different points at the base of a mountain. As each TEAM/TEAM/T E A M {religion} begins its climb to the top, it initially feels separate and distant from the other teams. None wants to acknowledge the legitimate presence of the others, and they certainly don't want acknowledge that the others are climbing the same mountain they are. Each TEAM/TEAM/T E A M is rewarded with a different panoramic view on the way up, and each has its own perspective of the overall experience of the climb. Each team only gets a vague sense that there are other teams like them also climbing on high as their paths cross from time to time. Only as they all get closer to the top do a few members of each TEAM/TEAM/T E A M become aware of the fact that they've all been climbing the same mountain, albeit from different directions.

This is the Abrahamic {Jewish, Christian and Islamic perspectives} on our previously separate movement toward the base camp we all share today high up in the clouds. As we move forward on the final ascent to the summit, where we'll encounter our Creator coming down to meet us, we must be respectful of each other's historical paths thus far.

Although we were once all in TEAMS/TEAMS/T E A M S moving up from different sides of the mountain, now some members have gone so far ahead on their way to the summit that they're able to discuss their religious views of GOD/GOD/G O D from more united perspectives, and have discovered respect and esteem for all encompassing points of view. They share a panorama of GOD's/GOD's/G O D's designs that leave some of the team leaders wondering what they've done wrong.

Families, organizations, nations, religions and the philosophies of the world are like teams of climbers. Each team you're on is making its way to the top of the same Great Mountain. Each group experienced a great distance from the others in the past, and therefore developed dogmas to hold its constituency together to keep them on the path, so they wouldn't get separated and or lost and would have to make the climb all on their own.

In terms of the Abrahamic faiths, each of these religious teams was first motivated to seek out our Creator a very long time ago when fear and superstition were so much more prevalent. But, today, we should begin to question how each of these paths have given us opportunities to work together to chart a map of the whole mountain.

Sadly, some individuals are still more intent on their team getting to the top first than they are in solving this puzzle together. They believe there's only one path to GOD/GOD/G O D, and it's theirs alone. They think they're in dire competition with the other teams for GOD's/GOD's/G O D's grace. They think they're on GOD's/GOD's/G O D's right hand side. They forget that all sides of GOD/GOD/G O D are paradoxically on HIS/HIS/H I S right. And most of them are wrong.

This sociological perspective on theology as TEAMS/TEAMS/T E A M S comes out of the psychological blueprint {HEAD, HEART and S O U L} that lies in each one of us. But the plan is the same for us all. It's all an inside job that we mirror and magnify around us to see what we look like within. Once you've gotten a sense of your inner landscape, whether you feel you're going up or down the mountain doesn't matter in the least. What matters is the awesome view.

Brotherhood Is The "he" In "me"

In the 3rd Commandment, GOD refers to HIMSELF in the third person {The Lord} implying that we should do the same about ourselves. We can already perceive the need for the "we" in "me." Now, we're ready to become aware of the importance of being able to look at ourselves through the third person {he}.

Brotherhood shouldn't begin with your relationship to others; it should begin with your relationship to the brother in yourself. Man won't suffer from a personality *disorder* if he explores his relationship to himself in the third person. He'll bring *order* to his personality if he does.

And as he discovers this stranger within and makes peace with him, man will be so grateful for the experience that he'll then appreciate the "HE" in GOD. You can't understand the "HE" in HIM until you've discovered the "he" in yourself. HE obviously gave Christians the opportunity to explore the "He" in Jesus in themselves. But Jesus derived this skill from thinking about the 3rd Commandment and other clues from Torah that gave Him a closer sense of GOD in His life than people around him had at that time.

Religious people who dogmatically claim that their religion is the only path to GOD/GOD/G O D suffer from sociological symptoms that reflect their own disordered personality. They're mentally, emotionally or morally unsettled because they haven't sufficiently explored the forces within themselves.

And that usually comes out with sexually dysfunctional attitudes. They hate the "he" in "me" because they're secretly terrified of their own penis. This terror comes out in an exaggerated need to own guns, smoke cigars, and drive red vehicles that magnify the necessity for speed, endurance and the ability to accelerate in a hurry.

There are truly many paths to GOD/GOD/G O D. The Hindu god Vishnu is a path different from the Hebrew GOD, Y.H.V.H., which is different from the Christian Trinity of GOD and the Muslim concept of G O D: A L L A H. The Buddha reaches for Nirvana without the expectation of meeting a Supreme Being because there's no T{here} there.

These belief systems are paths that take their followers up the same Great Mountain to the same destination at the top. But on the way up today, we all find ourselves at a base camp near the summit where we have the privilege of piecing this puzzle together.

They say, "East is east and West is west, and never the twain shall meet." {Rudyard Kipling} But, in this century, many are already able to see the religions of the West and philosophies of the East coming up from various sides of the hill to meet for the final climb to the top, and they're eager to do so together. We can already unify these disparate religious and philosophic voices sociologically in the same way that we can individually combine the pronouns "I" "you" "he" and "she" into a "we" within ourselves with a psychological perspective. The way from here to the summit will be arm-in-arm, but that will require that each of us begins his first, few steps with the intention of creating integration from within. Interfaith comes with "intrafaith."

You're far too nice a guy to take your own name in vain, and surely GOD knows that you wouldn't take HIS name in vain if you were more capable of embracing the brother in yourself. It makes no sense to take the 3rd Commandment literally by treating GOD with care and consideration if you're not going to be at least as courteous to yourself.

But courtesy and propriety have their limits. If you don't question the conversations you're having in your head, you're not going to become aware of how many disparate

voices there are within you. You're not going to see for yourself how irrational and illogical you can be at times.

There's no way to use the teachings of Jesus to become your brother's keeper if there's no sense of "him" in "you." Without "him" in you, you can know nothing of "Him" in you. The God within that doeth THE WORK is not vastly different from the GOD within that doeth the WORK. The Holy Spirit working in you is the H E who knows HIM/Him well.

Even our homophobic, racist and anti-Semitic "brothers" aren't as awful to us as we often are to our own inner brother. Embrace your brother within with questions on what "he" believes, and you'll be able to embrace the world with greater creative expression and love for all. Love "him" and you'll be able to find meaning in your enemies having been assigned a seat next to you in the school of life.

Love the one you're with, but question *his* intentions for their moral standing. You may find out that not all the voices in your head are devoid of spite, and the jealousy and envy of yourself that causes it. If you don't want what's best for you, how can you claim you want what's best for others?

You'll find you'll be able to better love Jesus, worship Him and follow His teachings if you're a Christian who loves the teacher within you who's trying to wake up the ancient Jew in you who insists on doing things the way they've always been done.

If you want to esteem, respect, honor or love the messages of Moses or T H E P R O P H E T Mohammed, the principle is the same. You can't get to GOD/GOD/G O D without going through yourself.

Us And Them

I had to acknowledge the "we" and "he" in "me" before I could dare say I knew anything of value in being by myself. I could only connect to the world around me to the extent that I'd made those connections of self-identity from within.

It was then that I realized how deeply tied I was to my father and mother, and the world I knew as a kid. I couldn't let go of the sense of "we" I experienced as a child until I could internalize it. Becoming a person in your own right means transferring your needs from the outside in. Becoming self-sufficient will never literally happen, but it can happen figuratively.

And the process in achieving this sense of "we" within doesn't have to be scary. It only required me to let go little by little in order to hold on another way. There is no such thing as spiritual free fall. You'll always land safely within. Your inner landscape doesn't have to terrify you. Just find the courage to explore it. Master the inner world you've always dreamed of calling your own. Home is a state of mind, not an address.

The warning with regard to vanity in using The Lord's name as presented in the 3rd Commandment is the key to the Golden Rule to love your neighbor {companion} as yourself. It isn't possible to love anyone if you don't know what the poor slob is going through to try to love himself. It's vain not to consider the struggles other people are going through. Just because they don't talk about it, doesn't mean to it isn't real to them.

It may seem even more vain of me to make peace with others for my sake, but GOD isn't the only one who works in mysterious ways. I'm made to work that way, too. I benefit others in order to learn how doing so will benefit myself. Charity may not begin at home, but if it doesn't ever come home for a visit from time to time, we'd run out of reasons to be charitable.

Nobody really wants to love himself if doing so involves having to get closer to his enemies. But it's a task worth picking, tasting and not discarding even if the idea doesn't taste ripe or naturally sweet on your first nibble. Don't throw anyone away like unripened or rotten fruit. It's vain to think you were the only one created in GOD's image. The fruit ripening on the branch next to yours doesn't look nearly as different from you as you might imagine from your view so close to his. Even if you swear he's surrounded by branches and leaves that block his view, you don't know what may be blocking yours. Even if you can tell that your neighbor isn't nearly as sweet or sun-ripened as you, there's reason for him growing right where he is. Teach as you help people. Help as you teach people.

Moses, the author, created GOD as his main character in Genesis. By giving his protagonist his own name, he separates himself from the true Protagonist in Exodus {GOD}. As the characters in Genesis slowly develop the characteristics of GOD, we come to see every man's perception of himself increase and improve over time.

By The Book of Exodus, the main character, Moses, has matured in our eyes to the point that we can understand the author's reasoning for the way things turn out at the end of Torah for everyone.

We're all Israel-lites dancing around Golden Calves, just days away from childhood. We can only look at the steps we take on our journey with moral regard if each of us investigates the Golden Calves he's dancing around inside. The abstract nature of GOD and HIS plan has to be approached slowly if we're going to see ourselves as a part of it.

GOD says to Moses in the second person, "DO NOT WORSHIP ANY OTHER GOD." And then HE says in the third person, "FOR THE LORD WHOSE NAME IS JEALOUS, IS A JEALOUS GOD." [Exodus 34:14]

We can see in nature how the animal kingdom must kill and eat one another to stay alive. But we can also see in the plant kingdom how the botanical world can blossom and bloom with HIS pride in HIMSELF. We must endeavor to explore and endeavor to understand our nature if we're going to appreciate HIS.

Time Is Of The Essence

4. KEEP THE SABBATH HOLY

The 4th Commandment builds elegantly upon the previous three. The 1st Commandment {GOD is GOD} demonstrates that there's a sacred relationship with GOD that I can't make until I've created a conscious separation between HIM and me. The second {no other GOD/G O D before HIM} declares that to accomplish the 1st Commandment, I have to look at the boundaries I've unconsciously set within myself between my head {thoughts}, heart {feelings}, soul {beliefs} and penis {desires}, for these are the forces that create jealousy and envy.

If you put the Christian GOD before the Jewish GOD, you create jealousy of our position as first in HIS creation. If you put the Muslim G O D before the Christian GOD, you create envy between HIS second and third creations.

The 3rd Commandment {vanity} states that to achieve the second Commandment, I need to grow closer to, and more respectful of, myself. Only when you're true to you will you be true to GOD, GOD and G O D. The order of HIS/HIS/H I S presence historically matters to HIM/HIM/H I M. Therefore it should matter to you.

The 4th Commandment {keeping the Sabbath holy} states that the way to achieve the first three Commandments is by living in the now. Most people are approaching the speed

of now. They aren't yet moving in it. They languish in their past and then accelerate past now into dreams of their future. They can't be here, now, because they aren't morally secure enough in themselves to appreciate the present. It can take time to learn to love yourself. It can even take a lifetime. Time is of the essence. Therefore strive for now. You'll get here sooner or later.

GOD gave Moses HIS first name {Y.H.V.H.} so that Moses would have the capacity to think about HIM as a power that goes beyond any *thing*. Everything can be contained in this world except time. Time is the only *thing* that can be perceived, but not contained. You can even contain a fire. But you can't contain time.

The concept of time isn't some *thing* that literally goes around in circles like the hands of clocks or even figuratively flows downstream like a river. Time affects us physically, emotionally and spiritually because we're contained in time. If time were a can, we're sealed inside it. Time has an unseen effect on us at every moment of the day. Time ripens us in the biblical sense. The purpose in keeping the Sabbath holy is for us to learn to explore our personal relationship to time.

GOD contains us in a way that resembles the way we're contained by time. We don't even realize how deeply time affects us until we see the effects of time over time. Aging is a spiritual experience; it's not just a physical change if appearance. You don't go from a young plum to an old prune without asking yourself some of the big questions.

Time affects *objects* on the outside. But it affects *subjects* on the inside. And the spiritual effects of time on you are just as real as the effects you've experienced physically.

GOD wishes Moses to know that HIS relationship with him is personal and intimate right from the start. HE wishes Christians to feel that their relationship with Him is personal as well, albeit in a different way. But HE/HE wants to hold a distant and awesome relationship with Muslims, one that acknowledges Ishmael's sense of separateness from his family. This is why H E gave the Islamic world H I S last name, a name they're learning to respect more in the modern era as their jealousy of Jews and envy of Christians dissipates.

Father Time

Keeping the Sabbath holy isn't about acknowledging GOD/GOD/G O D one day a week. It's about acknowledging GOD/GOD/G O D all day, every day. But that requires you to interface with yourself in new ways. You have to realize that you outgrew the GOD/GOD/G O D you were introduced to in childhood, like a child outgrows a pair of shoes. Each of us has feet of clay that need to be protected, each pair in its own way.

Keeping the Sabbath holy requires a subjective, not objective, relationship to time. Just because your Sabbath day might be on Friday, Saturday or Sunday, doesn't mean the other days of the week aren't holy. They're just more holy to people of other faiths. You can remind yourself of the holiness of each day of the week GOD created. You can recreate your Sabbath day every day if you can live in the now.

Emptiness and loneliness are the consequence of an unfulfilled relationship within yourself, not just bad luck engaging with others. Your attachment to your family of origin is a sign of your attachment to the past. GOD/GOD/G O D isn't there. HE'S/HE'S/H E'S here, now. If you're there and then, you're not facing the modern era GOD/GOD/G O D brought you into.

The consequences others bring that causes feelings of neglect, betrayal or abandonment may cut deep, but they're intended to teach you how to be here with your "self." They're

intended to teach you to learn to rely on yourself in a deeper way: whether that's physically, intellectually, emotionally or spiritually.

While, in an effort to do connect your two worlds, you'll discover the great gifts others bring indirectly into your life that you could never have bestowed upon yourself. But with this discovery will sometimes come self-disappointment. You aren't able to give yourself some of the things you need in life. Others in society are indirect messengers from GOD/GOD/G O D bringing you gifts you've earned from HIM/HIM/H I M. Therefore, treat them THANKFULLY, APPRECIATIVELY and G R A T E F U L L Y.

You're not only a disappointment to yourself. You're a disappointment to other, too. Even your parents might secretly wish you were different. As you complain out loud about last year's Thanksgiving you spent with family, you have relations who may be complaining about your presence at the family table, too.

Sometimes you may be so embarrassed by your genitals that you hide them from yourself. Sometimes you may be so ashamed of your character that you hide behind it like a tree in a forest. And, sometimes you may be so humiliated by your relationship to yourself that you're spiteful to yourself without even letting you know it. But others can see these aspects of you that you can't see in yourself.

Sensitivity to self-rejection may cause you to choose avoidance of the self {denial}, neglect of yourself {conflicting beliefs} or even self-abandonment {insanity}. But these are core curriculum, spiritual subjects in the school of life that everyone has to pass to move on to higher levels of learning about life. You can only manage injustices justly and disappointments mercifully if you become practiced in treating yourself in more honorable ways.

But you're going to need time to come to this awareness. You can't take time for granted and expect to see change instantly occur. And you can't waste time by not comparing yourself favorably today to who you were yesterday. Your conscious progress day-by-day is essential to your lifelong overview of your spiritual education.

Time is like a river of GOD's intentions. It carries you down the journey of life, whether you choose to swim with the current, against it, float, sink or drown. It's your job to create the emotional basket, the inner ark, described in detail in Genesis in the story of Noah and repeated in Exodus with the life preserver given to Moses as an infant. These stories will help you use time to your spiritual advantage if you take Torah personally.

Time doesn't have to descend upon you like a deluge in middle age or feel like a whitewater nightmare in which you're destined to capsize and drown at the end of your life when you rush into the sea.

Time is the river upon which your ark floats. For the Jews and Christians, time is a Jordan River that begins high in the Galilee of infancy where we begin by swimming about as though we're in an ocean, not a sea. We think we're living in a Land of milk and honey, but we're really submerged in our feelings. We're locked in a sea of emotions we know nothing about.

By middle age, every Judeo-Christian knows he's in a Jordan River of time plummeting downhill on a journey headed for death. Some of us use Joshua #1 to get out of our Jordan River with sharp wit and a piercing tongue, like the Israelites used swords to conquer Canaan. Others use Joshua #2 {Jesus} to cross over the river of time with eternal love.

Thanks to Moses, we've been drawn out of our Nile. Thanks to him, we've crossed our Red Sea. We're entering our inner Israel just as the Israelites did so long ago, from the east

moving west. Thanks to Moses, we know that even he couldn't cross the Jordan River because GOD said so.

They say time is money, but what they mean is that time flows like water, and money flows like water. Time is precious, but you can't easily control it. You can't live without time on your side. And, the more you know about time, the more you'll understand how to live deeply in the moment.

You won't have to drown over time if you stick your toe in the water every Sabbath to discover a little more about the art of spiritual swimming. Science uses the river of universal time to provide us with an accurate account of time in the world around us. Spirituality uses the river of personal time to provide us with an account of the effects of time on our world within.

Keeping the Sabbath holy transforms everyday time into an extension of sacred time; it melds the two. Once universal time and personal time have been separated and understood uniquely, they can then be brought together to create an appreciation of the effects of both simultaneously. This process of separation and unification of objective and subjective time is what makes your time on Earth uniquely sacred to you and those you love. That's one of the many things that make your life so important and valuable to the rest of us.

The Israelites needed a Sabbath because they couldn't have come up with the idea of resting on their own. They held the slave driver mentality of their oppressors so intensely that they couldn't appreciate how personal time and universal time elegantly interfaced together, even then.

But the son of a slave will get into mischief if time hangs heavy on his hands. Idle hands are the "devil's" workshop. In other words, if you don't have loving intentions for yourself, you'll act out in ways that will embarrass you in public. Self-love can be even more humiliating than other-love if not sought appropriately.

We're told at the beginning of Torah that GOD created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. HE sanctified the seventh day as a day of rest. But GOD doesn't need rest, and we don't need spiritual rest either. We're constantly and effortlessly moving through time with moral intention. We're constantly going down the river of time without having to use any effort. This, alone, is a reason to thank GOD/GOD/G O D for the Sabbath.

The question is only whether you're floating face down observing the bottom; swimming as fast as you can to get ahead; diving for pearls of wisdom; or doing the backstroke and enjoying the sun and sky with nowhere in particular to go.

When we sleep, we move into another experience of time, one that mirrors the essence of the Sabbath in some ways. The world we experience when we're asleep and dreaming engages us in another experience of time and space. The spiritual concept of going from sleeping to awakening; blind to seeing; from a living death to feeling alive – these aren't only figurative expressions that come with faith. They mirror the duality of the struggle between daylight and nightlight. I'll say more about that soon. Suffice it for the moment that I wanted to draw your awareness to the mystery of your experience of space and time when you're sleeping.

Time Verses Space

GOD contains us spatially. GOD isn't located in one place more than another. HIS presence isn't more concentrated in a mosque, church or temple. Mecca is no more holy

than Rome or Jerusalem. GOD is everywhere. HE loves every place as HE loves every person, equally.

A more peaceful and spiritually subtle test of the depth of GOD's influence in your life will come to you in this century through your greater exploration of inner time and inner space. Fighting one another for holy places in the world will become passé as you realize that fighting over inner space and sacred time is useless and futile. Life is sacred because time and space are sacred. When your relationship to time and space becomes more personal and meaningful, your relationships with others become wiser, more loving and more generous of spirit.

The 4th Commandment moves the issues of self-awareness and self-improvement into a whole other realm. It moves you into dream space and dreamtime. If you perceive yourself as a spiritual being moving through space and time as though in a waking dream, you'll understand the purpose of Israel in a different light.

Reality is an experience that's physical, intellectual, emotional and sensual. Reality is a three-dimensional experience that will set you spiritually free if you learn how to accurately operate the space suit {body} you're in.

It was the mind of medieval man that was flat, not the Earth. He thought he could fall off the Earth because he didn't have a 3-D imagination to use science to prove that this world is round. As his imagination learned how to use perspective more adroitly, we can see in his artwork his ability to perceive improve. We can see how much more he could celebrate the world as it truly is: with depth perception. But, he needed scientific inquiry to develop his mind because religion couldn't solve his dilemma with the dogmatic conclusions the church had about the nature of reality at that time.

Man's head, heart and soul have evolved over the past 10,000 years of civilization. We're now able to look at modern man's struggle for greater depth from within himself. It's obvious he's going to have to strive for greater, moral length and breadth outwardly to achieve that depth internally. It's obvious that his emotional regard for life on Earth will never surpass his emotional regard for himself.

Once you remove cynicism and scorn of yourself from the equation, you're left with (1) skepticism of your potential and (2) spite. You can get through both by questioning yourself. Don't worry about answers. Answers will come.

Theft is still a sign of the times. But nowadays, modern man has to catch the thief of self-theft in addition to all the thieves around him. Modern man is trying to rationalize the theft of forbidden fruit by making the claim that if he steals it from his country, corporations or the Jews, it's not really a crime.

An adversarial relationship with time is the consequence of an adversarial relationship with guilt. Once you can live with the usefulness of guilt; and can see those areas of your life that are guilt-free thanks to apologies and amends to yourself – time becomes your friend, not your enemy.

It's only when you think you've got better things to do with your time than learn to love yourself that you remain caught up with time as a temporal experience occurring only around you. When self-love becomes your goal, time becomes your bosom buddy.

The 4th Commandment presents time as a tool for moral and ethical self-transformation. The Sabbath strips you of your fantasies and immerses you in a dream. When you see yourself as an instrument of wisdom, love and generosity, your timing at every moment becomes a way for you to practice the sacredness of the Sabbath. You then realize that

nobody gets lucky or unlucky in life. Every experience is an opportunity for self-improvement based on your love of self-development.

Taking the time to be grateful for time is probably the very best use of time. The next time you go to your place of worship on your Sabbath, think about what would make GOD happy for a change. And you'll realize that nothing would make HIM happier than you loving yourself right now, just the way you're developing. HE doesn't need your love; HE never did; HE never will. You do.

Honor Yourself By…

5. HONOR (ING) YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER

The early rabbis concluded that the first five Commandments focus exclusively on man's relationship to GOD, and so they thought it strange at first that our relationship to our parents would be the last of the Commandments on the first tablet, since our parents are human beings, not gods. But the rabbis concluded that our parents are gifts from GOD, and that we should therefore honor the Giver of the gifts. The rabbis concluded we honor GOD by honoring our parents.

But from the perspective of a student in the school of life, our parents were our first tutors. We thought they were gods when we were very little, but they were merely mortals like ourselves. They were never intended to teach us everything we needed to know. They're just students who were enrolled in class before we were. That means you have to question the lessons given to you by GOD through them. You don't have to do everything they say.

The question of honoring your parents will always be linked to guilt and resentment. You may feel guilty if you don't honor your parents in some ways, and you may feel resentful if you do. This will become a way of exercising your conscience to make it more powerful.

Your parents may not have earned honor in your eyes. They may still be making mistakes they were making when you were a child. They may be making mistakes they're never going to see or correct. So why would you ever think of believing everything they believe in?

Your parents helped you achieve your primary and secondary spiritual education, so in some ways you owe them some of the wisdom, love and generosity you've gleaned in life. But, you'll also be blamed for their ignorance if you repeat their mistakes.

Nobody's grades are going on your report card in the school of life. But, copying other students' answers is never a smart move, even if they're your parents. You want to know why you've chosen the answers you choose. Just doing what they did for sentimental reasons isn't good enough.

Each of us is graded individually, but if there's something you see in yourself you're doing wrong, be sure to apologize to everyone you know when you correct that error of judgment. You don't want them to compound your mistakes either. Do so out of self-love. Do so because it'll make you feel so much better about yourself.

Of course, that means that your parents may have actually hindered you from getting further ahead in life in some ways. This will make your leg of the journey to your inner Israel separate from theirs. This will be your experience of something you never literally witnessed, and why the transference of power from the slave mentality that came out of Egypt to you is so important in entering your Israel your own way.

GOD allows things to work out the way they do because HE wants us to learn to give and receive, not just take from HIM. As the world comes to see how deeply the Jewish people have earned our Israel, the rest of the world will use us as a model in earning their inner Israel.

For 2,000 years, Christians said they were punishing all the Jews for some of our ancestors having contributed to the killing of Christ. In truth, those Christians were just struggling with the 5th Commandment. When you know better than to act spitefully toward your parents you no longer want to kick the "dog" when you come home from work. You no longer want others to suffer for the struggle for freedom you're having with your boss.

As Muslims learn to care more about their parents' influence in their life, they'll give up their spiteful intentions of getting back at the Jews. They'll see the importance of making peace with their parents, leaders and other tribes.

GOD isn't just our Teacher. HE's also the spiritual school Administrator in charge of admission, tuition and financial aid at every level of our education. In that capacity, HE chose your parents for you. It was the first of many matches in your life that were made in heaven, whether you approve of HIS choice today, or not.

The spiritual challenge in admiring HIS choice in parents for you isn't unique, but it's telling. Not even your siblings share your relationship to your parents with you. You're a Joseph, born with a very special role that will increase awareness of the importance of your family in your life over time. But you're also a Judah, someone who has to learn to be thankful for the outcome of situations in which you made some big mistakes.

Honor Begins Within

Honor is one of many levels of self-love. You first have to learn to honor yourself to successfully honor your father and mother. The infant honors himself when he eats candy. The child honors his parents when he makes good use of the educational toys they give him. The juvenile honors his peers by learning about his body through sex. The young man honors society by becoming independent and earning a living. The mature man honors the history of his people by giving to others through family and career. And the old man honors GOD by reconciling his life before he leaves.

You can't honor yourself throughout your journey in life if you don't honor those who were your *trainers* when you were a baby; your *instructors* when you were a child; your *teachers* when you were an adolescent; your *educators* when you were a young man; and your *professors* when you were a mature individual.

Learning to honor is paramount to living. Commit to honoring yourself, and I guarantee you that you'll be given lessons that will teach you to love yourself. Jesus never asked to be loved. He asked to be honored. "THAT ALL MEN SHOULD HONOUR THE SON, EVEN AS THEY HONOUR THE FATHER." [John 5:23]

Unfortunately, many parents are so invested in teaching their children to honor *them* that they never teach them to honor *themselves*. All the sacred texts of the world have only been interpreted to honor others for GOD's sake. Nowhere is it written in Torah or any sacred text in the East to honor your parents for *your* sake. Perhaps it's assumed that the payoff will be that what goes around will come around. But that's not a clear enough answer for the 21st Century. People don't want to honor their parents for GOD's sake anymore. They want to honor them for their own sake because they want to reap the rewards of self-love.

Honor means to respect, esteem and admire. It was probably a very long time ago when you last admired yourself for having learned how to tie your shoes. And if you can now respect yourself for having taught that skill to others, you've honored yourself yet again, even more deeply.

I once offered to tie the shoelaces of a homeless man because, when I mentioned to him that his shoes were untied, he told me he didn't know how to tie them. It was only after getting down on my knees to tie his shoes for him that I realize that that act was an acknowledgement of the modesty and humility I had for myself that my mother had indirectly taught me when she'd gotten down on her knees to tie my shoes so many years ago. I was suddenly transported to that moment in childhood when I didn't look down on her with a blank stare as she tied my shoes. I look up at us both. In honoring us both, I honored myself all the more.

It takes enormous faith in yourself to have enough left over to put a little of that faith in GOD. The more you acknowledge all you do for yourself, the more deserving you'll be by becoming even more that you think you could be.

It would be nice to make one of the goals of the 21st Century to begin a discussion on how parents might teach their children to honor them by teaching them how to first honor themselves. And, of course, we should include the children in on that discussion! As you teach your children to esteem themselves, you'll discover new reasons to respect your own parents. Teaching love gets easier as you approach the topic from the inside out.

Honor isn't a relationship to things or a relationship that treats others like things. Honor is an acknowledgment of yourself that respects the "I/thou" relationship from within. Once you can see the "you" in you and talk to yourself to receive comfort and offer support, you'll be able to see your parents in a more loving light. Once you can see yourself as the driver of a physical vehicle on a spiritual journey, honor replaces loneliness with solitude. Honor is the little light that illuminates the lighthouse that then illuminates all the ships at sea.

Everybody tells us to *think* outside the box, but we really have to *feel* outside the box to fulfill the 5th Commandment. You can't get old feelings out of your heart if you're locked in your head. You have to see a reason to love what you're thinking to get out of your head. You have to love what you're thinking to feel good about yourself.

If you're thinking something critical of yourself, honor it, don't deny it. If you're thinking something critical of others, honor that, too. But take immediate action on your critique of yourself while putting your critique of others on the back burner.

You don't have to only use tough love to change your mind. You should use tough love to question whether your thinking is serving your needs to the best of your ability. Once you can see your motives for thinking as you do, and can appreciate your intentions as righteous, then you'll find it's easy to engage or change your mind. But your mind isn't going to give up what it does best just because you have a soured attitude about what you have to listen to inside day after day.

Watch more inner TV. Watch the programs that come on when you least expect them in your imagination. Watch what the characters you know and love say to one another. Watch how they make you feel. You'll be amazed at what your inner broadcast system has on the air most of the time. They may be private, service announcements for others that are going unheeded by you because you aren't paying close enough attention. Watch the

sitcoms, dramas and soap operas you produce just. You're a Hollywood and Bollywood unto yourself.

If your father was an Abraham who was very hospitable to strangers, but wasn't there for you; if your mother was a Sarai/Sarah, quarrelsome with those in her home, but a princess out in the world; or if your mother liked to pull the forlorn, sorrowful look of the victim/martyr, like Hagar – you have the right to feel like an abandoned Ishmael and/or an Isaac tied up in knots.

But you should also remember that *Sarah* is the first title GOD bestowed upon the world. Your mother was someone you addressed with a title, not a name. You changed that title from *Mommy* to *Mom* as you grew older, but you never called her by name.

Your parents will always be those two people you addressed by their title, not their name. And when they pass away, you'll mourn the death of two words you'll never again use on any other human being.

Honor GOD's design for you in having put you in these circumstances to begin with. Honor HIM by honoring your parents as much as you honor yourself. Nobody's perfect. If you succeed in doing this, you'll feel like a prince in HIS kingdom.

I'm again overwhelmed with the glory of GOD's wisdom becoming available to me through The Hebrew Testament and HIS love for me through The Gospels, THE WORDS of HIS Son. GOD/GOD shimmers in my imagination like a flicker picture on a silver screen.

When Jews and Christians in America overcome their fear of each other's Scripture, they'll be in a much better position to communicate honorably with Muslims about The Quran. So far, that's not happening because Jews and Christians aren't doing any better a job of talking to Muslims than they are, talking themselves.

Nobody speaks anyone else's language. It's as though we've all committed ourselves to building a towers of Babel to ourselves. And GOD/GOD/G O D keeps knocking each of them down to teach us to rebuild them with better intentions.

Build your tower to self-power, and you'll see that it won't come easily down. You won't find yourself unable to talk to strangers if you can speak to yourself.

Watching politicians and religious leaders converse with those outside their language, culture and faith is painful to watch. If you don't listen to what they're saying, and just look at how they behave on the outside, you can see just how uncomfortable they are. They look almost clownish. They don't have the spiritual foundation needed to express themselves to themselves, and yet they think they know how to make peace with the world.

Introverts see this sort of thing. Many extroverts miss these signs. If you're an introvert like me, I recommend you go further within. I spent my youth trying to conquer the external world, when that wasn't where my expertise or interest lay.

Peace isn't something you make. And pressure on Jews in Europe and Israel to *make* peace with the Palestinians isn't helping in the least. Neither the Jews nor the Muslims understand how to internalize their Scripture. And the results externally are obvious. Frustration with communication between people of faith isn't a Jewish problem. It's everyone's problem with himself.

Honor personalizes the path to self-love, giving you your own special route on the journey of life. It makes some special people meaningful tutors you'll be able to thank along the way. It makes others classmates who help in mysterious tiny ways that you wouldn't have otherwise witnessed.

If you choose not to honor yourself, you'll have to wrestle with your demons like Jacob. And you'll be doomed to limp through life like him, turning your back on your classmates and wondering how our Teacher is going to grade you over time.

GOD isn't a Jewish accountant. It's not HIS job to cook your books so that life will be less taxing. It's your job to learn to become a bookkeeper unto yourself. Therefore you should learn how to be fruitful and multiply without making babies. With the most rudimentary of bookkeeping skills, you can see for yourself that the planet is severely overcrowded. Soon nature will have to take matters out of our hands by creating diseases on a mass scale to balance the books.

GOD isn't a Jewish Father. It's not HIS job to force peace in the family of man so that life will be more tranquil. It your job to learn how to father yourself. You should learn how to be fruitful and multiply without believing that everyone is your "brother" or "sister."

The divisions I see in the world around us are mirrors of the nursery school students who are still learning how to add: 1 + 1 + 1 = 1. Our Father, His Son and The Holy Spirit are all One. Judaism, Christianity and Islam are faith-based representations of one GOD/GOD/G O D. Your head, heart and soul all add up to one person who has to learn how to live in peace in two worlds.

"MOSES TOOK THE BONES OF JOSEPH WITH HIM, FOR JOSEPH HAD MADE THE SONS OF ISRAEL SOLEMNLY SWEAR, SAYING, "I WILL SURELY TAKE CARE OF YOU, AND YOU SHALL CARRY MY BONES FROM HERE WITH YOU.'" [Exodus 13:19]

The introvert who becomes a Moses unto himself will want to figuratively dig up his forefather's psychological bones and bring them along on his own journey. The man who once humiliated himself with unwise choices, but has since learned to find faith in himself, knows that the underpinnings of his own psychological makeup rest in the secrets left in his father's bones.

Joseph and Judah become the cardboard characters of Genesis that the spiritual seeker realizes he can't leave behind in Book One. Today's spiritual seeker's relationship to his father continues to grow long after his father has passed. But you {Judah} are going to want to apologize to yourself {Joseph} if you want to honor the biblical process.

The Parents And Past Of Moses And Aaron

Moses and Aaron have vastly different experiences of their parents because of circumstances that were beyond their control. Aaron was brought up in the family home before the edict to kill the Israelite infants. But Moses knew their mother only as a nursemaid to the Pharaoh's daughter, and as far as we know, he never met their father.

It might not be far-fetched to assume Moses felt emotionally neglected and abandoned by his family of origin. The normal family life the other Israelites shared wasn't within his grasp. He was certainly emotionally indulged living the life of a prince in a palace, but, without his biological family by his side, he might very well have felt emotionally more like a pauper. Murderers are never people who are rich at heart. (I say that as a murderer myself.)

None of us are emotionally identical. Even identical twins are emotionally unique. And, although Moses and Aaron are ideal examples of brothers who work well together over time, they're temperamentally quite different.

There's a part of you that will lead you through the world around you {Moses}. And there's a part that will lead you through your world within {Aaron}. But if you don't

reproach yourself from time to time as Moses does with Aaron after the Golden Calf incident for being morally bankrupt and disappointing as a brother, you're not going to be able to guide yourself very well.

Before Turning To The Second Tablet

GOD gave Moses The Ten Commandments on two tablets, and the great rabbis of the past concluded that the first five Commandments refer to actions we need to take to love GOD, and the second five are actions we need to take to treat people properly. The first tablet teaches us about our moral responsibility to HIM, and the second set, our ethical responsibility to our own humanity.

Another way of describing the difference between these two tablets is that the first tablet is for introverts and the second, for extroverts. The first deals with matters of your conscience with regard to you, and the second, with matters of your conscience in regard to others.

Although both answers were perfectly plausible in the past, from a more personal and psychological perspective, the separation between the first five Commandments and the second is emotional and spiritual as much as it is moral and ethical.

All ten of the Commandments are paths to self-love, but the first five will help you become a priest {Aaron} unto yourself, while the second five will teach you to become a leader {Moses} out in the world.

It's easy to learn the spiritual lessons of life by rote, like learning the alphabet or your multiplication tables. It's easy to do your duty to try to "LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." But it's a lot harder to actually *like* him. Some of the greatest spiritual lessons of life come from mercy, not justice. Some of the greatest tutors teach us how to win by giving up the fight on one level of reality and bringing it to the next more intimate level in ourselves.

Extroverts are people who strive to like people. Introverts are people who strive to like themselves. Once you know which you are, you can focus more on liking the one {yourself} or the ones {others} you're with.

Life is supposed to be a gift from GOD, and therefore we're supposed to love life. The problem with liking your life is that life can be burdensome, angering, anxiety provoking and disappointing. Life can even be painful. How are you supposed to maintain a good disposition under such circumstances if not by being merciful?

While you may think you yearn for someone who'll love you just the way you are, you'd probably be quite content if you could just like yourself while you're waiting for that to happen. Love has its place, but love is far from enough in life.

Once you try to like yourself, your heart will open like a floodgate to both guilt and wisdom. You'll discover so many things wrong with you and so many other things right. You'll finally appreciate the lengthy journey you took out of your head, past your Adam's apple, stiff neck, and down into your lonely heart. Solitude will envelop you like a warm blanket. You'll feel cozy inside.

The modern, manmade family made up of adults who choose to share their lives with one another is an experiment in learning to like strangers. Couples who live together rather than marry are enjoying a "like affair." The challenge to like your fellow man is more widespread than you might think. Many marry for love, and later suddenly discover they have a lot of work before them in having to learn to like their partner. It's a lot easier if you

find someone motivated about learning to like himself, and then share that challenge with one another.

The realization that you like yourself will lift the weight of the world from your shoulders. You'll suddenly feel really free in a whole new way. Once you can like yourself, you'll know the meaning of liberation. You'll suddenly feel liberated from the worst pharaoh the world has ever known. Once you like yourself, you'll even be more like GOD without feeling guilty that just liking HIM may not be enough. Liking GOD is actually refreshing to GOD. So many hypocrites profess to love HIM. Try going another way.

Although it was drilled into us through our religious tradition that we should love GOD with all our heart and with all our might, nobody ever taught us the importance of trying to begin the process by simply liking ourselves. Once you like yourself, the giddy pleasure in being with yourself for a lifetime will lead you to naturally want to share that feeling of gratitude with GOD.

Fame and fortune will become a lot less important to you when you discover you don't have to win any popularity contest or competition in growing a well-endowed portfolio or address book. It's not the size of your bank account, your rolodex or your penis that makes you likeable.

Yes, GOD loves you. But who doesn't already know that? What your religious tradition or parents omitted to tell you is that GOD could be tempted to like you more if you only knew how to make that happen. That may sound revelatory and revolutionary because it's so damned simple. But it's true.

When you find yourself in hot water, don't pray to your GOD/GOD/G O D to turn down the heat. That's utterly ridiculous. GOD/GOD/G O D turned up the heat. Why would you pray to HIM/HIM/H I M to turn it down? It would be better to pray for answers to why HE/HE/H E turned it up.

Freedom from oppression, whether it's political or personal, begins with liking yourself, despite the temperature of the water around you. Honoring the five Commandments on the second tablet will teach you to like yourself. They'll teach you the importance of mercy. Only when you can be just {Jewish} and merciful {Christian} can you hope to contribute to creating a world that's fair {Muslim}.

Don't Kill Yourself

6. DON'T MURDER

Once a man has personalized the 5th Commandment by establishing an honorable relationship of self-esteem and self-admiration, and shares those feelings with GOD and his parents from the inside out, he's ready to look at the way he interfaces with himself habitually and mindlessly.

Once a man has completed the instructions on the first tablet of The Ten Commandments by learning to *love* himself, he's ready to learn to *like* himself, pores and all.

The second tablet begins with the 6th Commandment, the prohibition of murder. But the root cause of murder is anger at having to be yourself. We use others as delivery systems to express our anger to GOD/GOD/G O D in having to be ourselves. We use people as canvases on which we take the primary colors [red {anger}; yellow {fear} and blue{sorrow}] and paint everything going on inside us.

Moses couldn't have killed the Egyptian, slave driver only because of how the slave driver treated an Israelite. Moses had been far too removed from the fate of the Israelites behind the palace walls to care about them in the past. If he waited until the age of 40 to get upset with the sociological problems in the society in which he lived, then the murder couldn't have only been motivated by externals. It was motivated by something happening inside him. He'd never before even thought about the fate of the slaves in the society in which he lived. So, he had damn little reason to get involved when one of them was being whipped.

Seeing the Egyptian whipping the Israelite surely touched Moses in a *personal* way he never anticipated. Surely the relationship between master and slave mirrored a relationship he'd internalized and habitualized in himself. His desire for justice in stopping the slave driver once and for all wasn't really intended to help only the Israelite. It was intended to help himself.

While anger with others causes resentments, malice, bullying, fighting, rape and murder – anger with yourself for not knowing how to handle yourself emotionally is the underlying cause of your frustration in being with yourself. Those who strike in at themselves with self-abuse and suicide suffer with the same problem as those who strike out at others with bullying, theft, violence and murder. Both have anger management issues. Neither likes himself.

The canvas might be different, but the painting is the same. The color used is the same {blood red}. And so the outcome will be very similar. If you think GOD created man to beat up on others, I think you've lost your mind. If you think GOD created man to beat himself up, I also think you've lost your mind. But if you think that the ultimate outcome of such abuse is going to be very different, then you're even crazier than *you* think. Why would hell be reserved only for those who are unjust to others? Why wouldn't people who treat themselves the same way end up in the same place?

We can't possibly convict people of their thoughts and feelings because there's no law against thinking and feeling whatever you wish. But we're all breaking the spirit of the 6th Commandment when we're angry. This is why red is the first color of the rainbow, the color closest to heaven that you must go through in becoming grounded. From red {anger} you can come down the rainbow through orange {anxiety} to yellow {fear} to green {jealousy and envy} to blue {sorrow} to indigo {mystery} to violet {joy}. But that's a long and arduous trip that we all are on.

Anger {red} is the root cause of all the little murders you enact in both your worlds. The question is really only how to handle your anger issues from the inside out. If you want to get through all the other colors of emotions, you're going to have to start at the top. Every newborn is telling you what the color red looks like.

Suicidal thoughts are a form of murder because you're a person, too. Just because the survivor of suicidal thinking is both the perpetrator and the victim of the crime doesn't mean he's acquitted from having to figuratively "serve time." He becomes spiritually incarcerated for crimes against his own humanity and has no right to think GOD is treating him unfairly for his depression and angst. The spiritual sentence for all the varying forms of self-abuse, including self-doubts and low self-esteem can drag a man down until he's ready to face his need for greater self-discipline.

But if you don't know what you're doing, you won't know why you're disciplining yourself. You've got to get a sense of the big picture. You've got to start with Hebrew

Testament, then read the Christian Testament and then study The Quran. Any other order will lead you astray.

Unexamined aspects of yourself, over time, produce a sense of vulnerability. Just as very old people *walk* carefully and slowly, be aware that they *think* more carefully and *feel* more cautiously, too. If you spend quality time with very old people, you'll notice that they have very little to teach you intellectually. But, from their demeanor, you can learn a great deal. Observe their movements and facial expressions. Don't even bother to listen too closely to the factual knowledge conveyed by their words. It's their bodily and emotional achievements that are a visual feast for the eyes. Most young people make fools of themselves pretending to hang on every word old people utter or discount them entirely. There are more interesting things to admire in very old people than what comes out of their mouth.

The more aware you are of every little thing that irritates you, the more conscious you'll become about how you really are inside. You're probably a lot more observant than you think. You probably observe many more of the little things than you give yourself credit for.

Discipline begins in your heart, not your head. Discipline begins by witnessing your feelings, not by feeding yourself good reasons to change your mind. If GOD allowed you to feel the way you do for this long, ask HIM what good there is in the way you're feeling right now. You can't transform the way you feel until you admire yourself just the way you are.

If you feel like killing someone, know that you surely have the best of reasons for feeling that way. But once you get past your desire to do others {or yourself} in, know that the 7th through 10th Commandments will reveal to you how to observe life in even *greater* detail.

You're a spiritual being in a human machine that automatically reacts with anger at yourself when you move through your guilt unconsciously in an effort to learn to like yourself without taking the proper steps. This vehicle you're driving is very sensitive to every thought and feeling you have. Think of yourself in adulthood as in a car with power steering, power brakes and an automatic transmission after having learned how to drive on an old, manual jalopy.

Your conscience was inundated with so many moral choices when you were growing up that it couldn't consciously consider all the decisions you presented it with then. It had to choose an emotional, habitual demeanor in order to present yourself to others. It had to choose a unique, but habitual, pattern of responses using the continuums of feelings from anger through fear to sorrow. That automated system of emotional actions and reactions for others is called: your personality.

The 6th Commandment, not to murder, begins the second tablet because you can't like your personality if you avoid questioning the anger, fear and sorrow that are so much a part of discovering your persona: the emotional causes for the way you feel. Granted, you never asked to be you. You may never have previously even seriously considered whether you really like getting to know yourself. Life certainly provides us with good reasons not to like or love ourselves. Familiarity with yourself over time may have bred contempt. And contempt surely led to boredom, shutting down and becoming utterly immersed in distractions.

Having to fix feelings that are broken by replace emotional tracks that need to be replaced are lifelong tasks in keeping your trains running on time. If you think about

Jacob's ladder as the way "angels" raised his mood or lowered his lofty expectations just by taking positions on his ladder, then, by today's standards, you go up and down, too, as though in an elevator, taking yourself from one story in the skyscraper you metaphorically call "home" to the next.

Granted there are trains running below your building and elevators to take you to the floor you live on. But there are many other views for you to explore as a New Yorker or any big city dweller. The more metaphors you can create, the more reasons you'll find to live and like being alive.

Your mind is actually more like a series of stories in a downtown, department store. And your focus is like a cherub who rides up and down the elevator in the building, exploring each and every level for products he wants to purchase, take home {to heart} and explore. Your mind is like a Macy's or a Harrod's. But until you come to understand how your imagination works, you're going to run around mindlessly touching and playing with anything inside that grabs your attention.

Finding a way to fix yourself when you're emotionally stuck and can't get out of yourself is easier than sounds. Language is the key. If you find the right words to say to yourself, you could come to like yourself, or at least to pity yourself for the way you've turned out. You could come to manage your emotions and organize your thoughts through verbal play if you knew more about WORD/WORD/W O R D play.

So, you've got to take the right train of thought to the right station and then find the elevator that will take you to the right floor that will have what you're looking for. The God within is always asking the same question GOD asked Adam in the first story of Genesis, "WHERE ARE YOU?" And a modern man has to look around and tell himself the appropriate, truthful answer. This isn't the time to use expletives that deal with excrement, bodies of water and paddles…

Ignorance is the result of *ignoring* yourself. Ignorance comes from not knowing how to use your anger with yourself productively. *Negligence* is the result of neglecting yourself. Negligence comes from not knowing how to turn your fear of yourself into self-discipline. And *carelessness* is the result of not caring for yourself. Carelessness comes from not knowing how to make your sorrow in having to be with yourself into something beautiful and intimate.

Start by accusing yourself of being ignorant, negligent and careless. Start by making yourself feel guilty for all that you don't, but should, already know. You're not nearly at the starting line. And it's your fault. Stop blaming others for not teaching you what they didn't know.

I wish I could get in and take you by the hand. I wish I could take you to the story where you can get exactly what you need. But I can't. The best I can do is convince you that you're a metaphor and two symbols stuck in countless similes of what can do to create dreams that will reveal to you how to operate yourself from the inside in, in an effort to perform well from the inside out. Such are the wishes of a fellow introvert.

The Man Without Arms

Moses, the author, is every man who blames himself for that head that GOD gave him. The modern Moses is a sorcerer's apprentice who misappropriates his own magic. And in an effort to learn about his own power, he floods his inner world with anger and sorrow as GOD did to the world of Noah. The frustration today's sorcerer's apprentice suffers in being

with himself exacerbates his dread of being a spiritual being in a human machine who has no idea how he operates.

Blaming the victim when you're also the perpetrator is normal, but hardly healthy. And it's certainly not healing. There's no point in having developed your conscience if you only use it *against* yourself. You might have good reason to judge yourself harshly; but it's not kind, merciful or peace loving to do so without a game plan that will get you the answers you need in how to think more clearly.

Most people need to develop their conscience; they're not acting righteously enough. But, some people need to apply their conscience to themselves and stop telling other people what to do. And then there are those who overly exercise their conscience on themselves; they need to learn how to forgive themselves and start closing an eye to issues they believe are all wrong.

We're all works in progress. We can like the internal skyscraper in our head, and we can still get stuck in the elevator from time to time, leaving ourselves with moods that are vile and feelings that are detestable. We can fluctuate from liking ourselves for getting what we need one moment to disliking ourselves the next without undo guilt in the way we go about it.

All it takes to clear your head is a good shopper mentality. If you know your way around a department store, you can get in and out of it without losing your way (or your shirt).

The 6th Commandment, when personalized, implies that if you use your conscience to heal your head, you'll receive a Burning Bush experience like Moses, and you'll learn to communicate with GOD in a healthier way. You'll stop feeling as though you're killing yourself; making yourself sick; or thinking you need to come up with a new and improved version of yourself to get away from who you are.

If you examine yourself from your conscience, not your head, you'll be able to look at the thoughts that may leave you ambivalent, uncertain or indecisive. If you express yourself to yourself using metaphor, symbolism and simile, you'll create an intimacy with yourself that you'll be more proud of.

You're probably too nice a person to others for you not to like yourself. You're probably too responsible not to see the importance of internalizing this spiritual task. You've come too far not to use all the anger, fear and sorrow you've experienced in life to enlighten yourself with all the colorful emotions at your disposal. You're a mystery in the making, and there can be nothing disappointing about knowing yourself that you won't be able to learn to like with good reason, even if you can't like all your traits all the time.

The rainbow given to Noah {the man of comfort} was a promise that meant little to him. Early man was too spiritually immature to understand the importance of promises in the abstract. The seeker of the self today is more transparent to himself than the characters in Genesis. He has an inner prism through which GOD shines HIS light. And the rainbow that he shines out onto the world is also more substantial. It can be felt in myriad sentiments, sometimes even in our enemies.

Don't Cheat Yourself Out Of Self-Esteem

7. DON'T COMMIT ADULTERY

The promise of fidelity to others is the model Torah offers upon which all relationships must be measured. But the deeper disappointment stemming from adultery comes from our lack of fidelity to ourselves. Every promise we make to another human being, whether

we're literally married to them, joined in business contracts or we signed up to through multi-national or societal agreements – is mirrored in the concept of fidelity from within.

To the extent that you know emotional intimacy and authenticity with yourself, you can make commitments to other human beings – and no further. All the promises you've kept to others have been for practice in learning to keep your promises to yourself.

Your promises to you are a fusing of your thoughts and feelings forever in your conscience, an inner oneness that commits you to keeping your word, which is a mirror of THE WORD of GOD. The man who understands fidelity to himself is ready to make commitments to others using GOD/GOD/G O D as his other inner WITNESS/WITNESS/W I T N E S S. It's at that point that his conscience turns into a soul in the making.

A personal regard for the 7th Commandment will focus your conscience on every word you say. Once each word you utter has been brushed with color {an emotional tint with its own hue and intensity} your attention to what you say will matter to you more.

The words you produce {thing}, as well as the tone of voice you use {paint}, has consequences that will come from all the products in your inner department store. Your ideas will be like products produced by your inner operating system that are available to you for a price. Your ideas will emerge from your mouth like appliances, technical devices and vehicles of transportation that other will be able to use. This is essence of charisma.

Trusting yourself is a marriage of you with yourself. But trust comes from liking yourself. Marrying someone of the opposite sex in the sight of GOD is only for practice, and will be no more successful than the marriage you're working on within. Same sex marriage begins within you, too. If you haven't first married yourself, you'll never be able to fully trust another living soul; male or female.

When you tell yourself one thing, but feel another, your conscience will judge you as being insincere. An adulterer is anyone who cheats on himself by ignoring his own insincerity. He cuts corners in his heart. He's an emotional storyteller who can't believe what he says because his words come out all gray. He's a thief who goes into his own department store to steal as much as he thinks he can get away with.

Cheating on your spouse starts with cheating on yourself. Dancing around idols in the shape of food, drugs, alcohol or other forms of material comforts make you an Israelite at the beginning of your journey from spiritual adolescence {Egypt} to adulthood {Israel}.

Deep down Moses must have known The Ten Commandments were entrusted to him for his own sake. That's why the tablets had The Ten Commandments written on both sides. They were the instructions to himself on how he was supposed to go on the mission GOD had given him to learn to like himself despite having killed another human being.

Moses figuratively got through the first tablet and as far as the 6th Commandment on the second tablet. he saw his shame in having committed murder, and may not have wanted to go the whole way to self-humiliation. He may not have wanted to use his anger with himself to discipline his behavior. He didn't want to kill himself because of what he'd done to someone else.

The confrontation Moses had with GOD at The Burning Bush is his description of humiliation before The Lord. It was the stop sign GOD gave him before suicide. As much as the *protagonist* Moses in Exodus is described as unwilling to turn around, go back to Egypt and become the greatest hero the Jewish people will ever celebrate, the *antagonist* Moses, the author, is really telling us that his main character was headed for murder at his

own hands and would have gone through with the deed had GOD not stopped him, given him a mission and turned his life around.

Most men misuse other-love as they would a recreational drug. They don't use romantic love as a healing opportunity within. They use the love of their partner as an emotional fix. When people become a delivery system for the love they're not giving themselves, they're likely to find themselves with conflicting thoughts and feelings. They become experts on creating misery all by themselves for themselves and within themselves.

You'd never expect a drug addict to be able to make a promise he can keep. His urges take precedence over everything he says. The War on Drugs is really a sociological struggle which mirrors a much greater psychological struggle each of us has to face. People yearn to get away from themselves, and they use substances to get away from that one person they're trying the most to avoid.

Drug addiction is no different from any other distraction. For some, golf is their drug of choice. For others it's cheesecake. But when you look carefully at the vehicle you're using to escape yourself, you're really praying for a Burning Bush experience. You're really wishing you had some reason to turn around and go back to the event that caused you to run away in the first place.

This is the essence of Torah. This is why you must make your way through Genesis slowly and thoroughly before you tackle the author/hero who presents his truth to you in metaphor in Exodus.

Without understanding that Moses sees himself as a suicidal maniac who's given an opportunity to help himself, you'll make no sense of THE WORDS of Jesus. Jesus creates a Buddhist burn: He lights Himself on fire. He becomes His own Burning Bush. And He does it at the end of His life as a beacon to others.

What happens to Moses at The Burning Bush happened at the age of 80! Do you really think you're going to want to receive your mission in life at that age? Do you really want to fart around for decades killing yourself just to figure out what you're doing and where you're going?

The 7th Commandment is the key to brotherly love. Loving everyone is contingent on liking yourself for the promises you keep. If you can develop two equally powerful relationships, one with your head {older brother}, and the other with your heart {younger brother} your conscience will create brotherhood under one roof. But don't expect them to always agree.

Don't Detract From Yourself

8. DON'T STEAL

Stealing is more than just a disrespect of another person's property. Stealing is an unethical reaction to personal loss.

You wouldn't have to go into that huge department store in your head if you already had everything you needed. You *use* your head when you're out of ideas. You *lose* your head when you get lost in row after row and story after story, of words laid out like things presented to you to choose from.

From a personal, spiritual perspective a real *loser* in life is someone who only learns how to give and receive through others, but who hasn't yet learned how to give and receive from himself. We're all losers in that regard. We've all experiencing outrageous thefts from

within, even if we haven't stolen a thing from anyone else. And so, like a department store owner, we fold our losses in with the price.

We all feel like a Tree of knowledge with at least one precious fruit unaccounted for. That was just the beginning as it was explained by one loser {Moses} who thought about his losses in a way he could convey to others without insulting them.

We all know a profound feeling of loss that can't be put into words. And therefore our mind may try to convince us that inflicting loss on others would be a realistic expression of our suffering. Some may even try to tell themselves that inflicting loss on themselves would not only express their sense of loss, but justify it. Both rationales are illogical, irrational and evil. It's a mistake to make anyone suffer for your losses, even you.

Today, much of the Muslim world is trying to deal with their psychological losses by blaming the Jews for taking Land in the Middle East away from them. This sociological answer to their psychological problem isn't working well for them, not to say that it was a morally sound response even in 1948 when Israel came back into existence. GOD/GOD/G O D is interfering with their plans to eradicate Israel by showing each new generation that their problems with the Jews stem from within themselves.

The introvert has no problem with letting other people live and let live. The introvert has problems allowing *himself* to live and let live. All introverts have a Muslim terrorist inside them that won't stop tormenting them for something inconsequential, illogical and irrational. But this is a psychological problem that can be fixed at its SOURCE/SOURCE/S O U R C E.

Life in the modern world is complicated. It's no longer about one lousy little fruit pinched from a tree. Now it's all about hundreds, perhaps thousands, of inner losses that have turned our persona into something we don't recognize anymore. If you could see through the gorgeous blond they hired to do the commercial on TV for a skin product, you might be horrified at what she looks like from within when she honestly peers in the mirror. Money makes hypocrites of us all.

Our soul is that aspect of us that experiences our losses the most, but our heart is next in line to suffer. Spiritual loss when experienced from the heart is called: disappointment. And although our heart usually suffers its losses in silence, it cries out for justice, nonetheless.

But only GOD/GOD/G O D can really hear its mournful call. What we get from HIM/HIM/H I M in exchange for our disappointment is the mark of Cain in our mind, which allows us to blend in with the world. But that doesn't address the depth of our disappointment, confusion and doubts.

Our head can concur with our conscience that stealing from others won't return that which we've stolen from ourselves. And still our heart cries out with discontent. No amount of logic or veracious conclusion will assuage our feelings. No amount of external happiness can drown our deep displeasure. The sense of loss resurfaces time and again.

The things you've surrounded yourself with around you are reflections of ideas, concepts and conclusions you've purchased from your inner department store {head} that you don't yet associate with who you're becoming. Granted, things came first and then man invented words to describe those things. But if you don't explore the depth of the ideas you built with words, you're going to make a mess of your life because you aren't going to learn how to think. Any parrot can repeat words.

Nobody really identifies with Adam and Eve anymore. Today, people secretly identify with the forbidden fruit: the victim in The Creation Story that couldn't speak. But it's not possible for anyone *not* to steal fruit from The Tree of knowledge of good and evil once a man realizes he was always The Tree and the fruit was something he participated in a conspiracy to take from himself.

More fruit is always there for the taking, tempting him. But no one can get back to his Eden anymore to verify these statements because no one knows how to go back that far into his past.

No one can go back to infancy to relive the moment he was born. He can't recreate the moment he opened his eyes and saw "HIS WOMAN" for the first time. He may be able to visualize the Eve who conversed with the serpent in his Tree, but he can't remember what he literally said when he was commanded to leave the Eden of infancy.

Loss began a long time ago. It started within, but it will end throughout. Loss was an unavoidable consequence of being you and yet not knowing yourself when you stole the first time. The disappointment that resulted as the consequence of that loss was unavoidable.

But the more you can't accept all your disappointments now, the more you'll be tempted to blame the Jews for them. And if not us, then the gays. We're always the scapegoats used by the right and the left to account for their disappointments in life.

The problem with Genesis as the foundation of all three of the Abrahamic faiths is that our collective knowledge of GOD/GOD/G O D rests in those stories in Genesis people so casually taught their children before they understood them themselves.

Your first theft occurred in the darkness of infancy where you couldn't see what you were taking from yourself. This is the one crime against humanity that nobody is able to avoid. Even those who are born developmentally challenged live with this same spiritual issue the rest of us have. Each of us has been given our own challenge to give back in our own way that which we stole from ourselves.

Although stealing from others is a terrible thing to do, living your life conspiring with an inner thief isn't a good idea either. First, protect yourself from you; next, resolve not to steal anymore from yourself through denial, self-neglect or self-abandonment. The less self-respect you lose from now on, the easier to will be to forgive yourself for all you had to endure in your past.

It takes a murderer to recognize an adulterer and thief. Don't think that I'm holier than THOU/THOU/T H O U. If I sound like a Chinese fortune cookie, it's only because what I'm saying applies to us all.

Fame in others' eyes is for practice. Making a fortune is just a way of preparing for all the inner wealth you're going to amass. The more ethically you rise in the world around you, the more easily your esteem of yourself will grow. You may think it's hard being you, but you may not realize how much harder it would be to be morally bankrupt.

Harvest what you know about yourself with gratitude for having learned so much in the process of searching. And then do your best to like yourself with all the losses you've incurred. All the ways you give to others will plant seeds in them that will make you feel better about what you had to sacrifice to get this far.

If you relive The Creation Story as a story about you, you'll become the apple of your eye, and you'll come to like some people you thought you had nothing in common with.

Every fairy tale will become an aphorism describing your journey. Every forest will correspond to a crowd, and every tree will typify of a human being nailed to it for a lifetime.

Admitting to being a spiritual victim of yourself won't turn back the hands of time. But it will increase your curiosity about yourself, so you can appreciate how your losses have made you wiser.

I recommend you guilt yourself into liking you. There are worse things in this world than being forced to do something like that. This is the one time where the end would justify the means.

If you don't use the story of Moses to advance you to the story of Jesus you'll never be able to personalize the story of T H E P R O P H E T Mohammed, and the world will continue its "religious" crusades, *ad nauseum*. Sarcasm, cynicism and scorn will emanate out of you from an unresolved relationship with your inner brother that you'll continue to postpone in forging.

The 8th Commandment can instill in you a higher opinion of yourself by not taking your opinion of yourself so lightly. Not stealing from yourself anymore will make you more important in your own eyes, something you may seek intuitively, but not yet fully feel. The name you're making for yourself will become more precious once you realize how you first cheated yourself out of it. Take the time you have left to use the opportunity to earn it back.

Believe In Yourself

9. DON'T LIE

It's not a coincidence that the 9th Commandment addresses the importance of honesty. You can't stop stealing your esteem out from under yourself if you don't stop lying to yourself about your self-worth. Your belief in yourself can only grow so long as your honesty, sincerity and authenticity aren't in question.

Lying to others isn't the worst you do. Lying to yourself is far worse. They say that honesty is the best policy, but unless you're sincere with yourself you can't pray authentically. Not being aware of what you're doing to yourself out of a sense of false sincerity is called: being in denial. Denial is the result of thoughts and feelings that conspire together without seeking consent from your conscience. When you don't weigh your thoughts and feelings in your conscience, you come up with wants that are unreasonable; needs that are irrational; and actions that are unethical. You find yourself dancing around Golden Calves insisting there could never really be a GOD/GOD/G O D. You think Scripture must be stories for naïve little children.

Being in denial keeps you from knowing the true you. Everyone deserves to learn his true worth, but only those who are curious and willing to earn honesty from within emerge from denial.

Turning food into a Golden Calf is probably one of your offenses. You probably put more importance on literal fruit than on figurative fruit. You seek Earthly sweets more than heavenly sweets.

When you can understand this problem at its source, you can fix it at its SOURCE/SOURCE/S O U R C E. You don't have to diet to become honest, sincere, authentic, genuine and frank with yourself. You just have to face the thoughts that are stopping you from enjoying self-discovery in consciousness.

Self-awareness is like a flame, and if you don't increase its size, it'll eventually get smaller until it goes out. The more guilt self-awareness consumes, the more loving light it can shine in all directions. Your body contains plenty of this inner fuel for your fire, but it's a spiritual, energy resource that emanates out from your soul, through your heart and then comes to mind.

You're lying to yourself if you think that how you feel about yourself doesn't matter. A conniving mind isn't your best friend when it goes against what you feel in your heart. A conniving mind will stab at your heart until your heart decides that justice just isn't worth fighting for. A conniving mind will force you to give up the fight within unless your conscience takes control of your thoughts and feelings.

The 9th Commandment, not to bear false witness, gets easier once you realize that you're your own witness. Life isn't just a school with a Teacher, tutors and texts. It's also a courtroom. And you are the judge, jury and attorneys for the prosecution and defense. If you bear false witness against yourself, you'll perjure yourself before our Judge. And then you'll be in contempt of court. And if you think you can get away with doing so without getting yourself locked up inside, you haven't been very observant about the way you feel sometimes.

Integrity has to be established from the start in your heart. You can't believe in yourself if you can't be sincere with yourself. And you won't be authentic until you weigh your feelings against your thoughts to see whether you're genuine. If you don't believe GOD is watching over your shoulder as you do this, you may think you're trustworthy. But we know better.

Cherish Yourself

10. DON'T COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S WIFE, HIS ASS OR ANYTHING ELSE OF YOUR NEIGHBOR'S

The 10th Commandment is the only one that prohibits a feeling rather than a behavior. *Coveting* refers to the feelings of jealousy and envy.

Jealousy should be understood as the desire to *be* another person; and *envy* as the desire to *have* another person's possessions. Being someone else with a different persona and personality would be the ultimate escape from yourself. And having someone else's possessions would be the lazy man's way to material gains. Jealousy and envy of others are vacations from having to be you and living your life with yourself day-in-and-day-out.

Most of us are jealous of Jesus. He got the body we wanted. Most of us are envious of Him, too. He got the heart and soul we wanted. He got The Father we all strive to know as well as He knew His.

When perceived from within, *jealousy* is really the desire to like the container you have despite all your criticism of it. And *envy* is the desire for the wisdom, love and generosity that you refuse to acknowledge about yourself.

But don't get me wrong. You'll never be like Jesus. You'll always be more and more like yourself. So if you want to like the way you're turning out, you ought to do more to recognize your strengths and weaknesses.

You're not perfect. You're not ever going to be perfect. But if you can accentuate the positive and minimize the negative, you'll make the best of who you are.

We should want to learn to like ourselves: container, contents and all. We should want to graduate the school of life having done all our homework, taken all our tests and come to class prepared to learn about ourselves with or without a perfect attendance record.

We can't deviously plan to throw our hands up in the air when we meet GOD, claiming ignorance, by saying, "Is that what it was all about? I had no idea. I wish somebody had told me!" We can't blame GOD for this garden HE planted us in without telling us that we would be The Trees. What were you expecting, sky writing?

Whether you're an introvert or extrovert, you're going to have to learn about both your worlds. And you're going to have to account for your actions in the two of them. Just because news, weather and sports only deals with the external world doesn't mean that there isn't news, weather and sports occurring within. Such is the WORK/WORK/W O R K of the introvert.

If you're not an introvert who's at home in your world within, don't fret about it. There are people who can teach you what you need to know about your inner world. Just admit to yourself when you're challenged by something you don't know how to do, and ask for advice. The same goes for thinking, feeling and believing.

Whether you hate your entire body or just wish to exchange one or two body parts to augment your opinion of yourself, you're missing the point of GOD having created you, you. You wouldn't criticize a tree, would you? Prune you; don't pass judgment on you. Fertilize you; don't shit all over you. A change of a word here and there from within could make a big difference in how you think about yourself.

Liking others when you dislike yourself covets who *they* are and what *they* have. Secretly disliking yourself while claiming otherwise only accentuates the jealousy and envy you're hiding inside.

The most superficial reason why jealousy and envy are prohibited in The Ten Commandments is because they're emotions that lead to insolence and arrogance. It's an affront to GOD to wish to be another person or have what others have. Your challenges are precisely chosen with you in mind regardless of how little you might want them.

Therefore, don't pray to have your difficulties lifted. Pray for understand why they were placed on your shoulders in the first place. The more you can open your head to GOD, your heart to GOD and your soul to G O D, the more you'll be able to meld your thoughts, feelings and beliefs.

Don't try to take Israel away from the Jews. Just because GOD/GOD/G O D took it away from us doesn't mean HE/HE/H E gave it to you. It's ours again thank GOD, with good reason.

Don't conspire to force gays to live and love the straight way. Your standards are yours to live up to. GOD made us this way and gave us the ability to marry in civilized societies with good reason. If you like your primitive points of view, keep them to yourself.

Make your conscience your guide, and don't tell anyone how to live his life to conform to your lifestyle. GOD gave you the potential to develop a conscience to judge yourself with good reason. Maybe you didn't get the memo. Keep your nose out of other people's private business unless they're threatening the physical wellbeing of us all.

Israelis aren't stealing when they build on Jewish Land stolen out from under us by ancient Christians and Muslims. The Palestinians are uninvited guests at our table who don't know how to behave in another man's home. The Palestinians make a great show of hospitality in their own homes, and then curse and scream when they have to sit at the

spiritual table with the Jews and gays atop The Temple Mount. Muslims are the youngest children in our Abrahamic family, yet they think the edifice GOD/GOD/G O D gave to Abraham is all theirs.

GOD doesn't want you to like HIM any more than HE wants you to like anyone else. HE wants you to like yourself. HE brings other people in your life expressly for that reason. If you don't like the people around you {especially authority figures}, listen to that irritating voice inside that nags you about the way you treat yourself. Look for the moral authority that allows you to distain yourself without recourse from within.

The fruits of wisdom and self-love must be courageously picked and generously shared with yourself before you're going to know the meaning of generosity of spirit. You have to *feed* yourself, *fill* yourself and *fulfill* yourself if you want to celebrate your life until your last day. Nobody can do any of that for you.

You can't strap on a suicide vest to attain self-worth. You can't die for GOD/GOD/G O D if you haven't learned how to live. If you can't like yourself, somewhere inside you're still hating gays and Jews. You must be filled with such emptiness and apathy that you're looking for some excuse, any excuse, to end our lives to justify yours.

If you think you can use that "ol' time religion" to live contentedly in the 21st Century, you're going to see your inner grounding erode like the political landscape in the Middle East today. You can't conspire against yourself like Iran is doing with the West without becoming an enemy of the Israel in us all.

The Jews are only 1/10th of 1% of the world's population, but GOD didn't choose us to be great in number. HE chose us because we were willing to choose HIM. HE chose us because we were willing to stay the course of justice. And he chose less than 1/10th of us to be gay.

Those of us born after the Holocaust had our faith in GOD supplemented with faith in ourselves, not just our country and culture. I suggest you strive to do the same, or you're not going to be well prepared for the future. And then you'll only resent the Jews and gays for, once again, getting in line before you.

You're going to be spiritually famished if you don't consume your life with greater appetite to like yourself. Pick you! Savor you! You don't always have to act sweetly to be nutritious. You can be bitter with disappointment or soured with anger and angst.

It probably isn't any easier being you than it is for me to be me, but there's no way of ever knowing for sure. Neither of us can claim a monopoly on suffering to be ourselves.

Life is a banquet of the self with many curious tastes. But most poor fools are starving to death. They don't want what they're serving themselves, but they don't know how to escape what's on their plate.

It isn't that you really want to be someone else or steal what the other guy has. What you may secretly want is to like yourself and be wise enough to be contented with who you are throughout your experience of the mysterious process of becoming. Your jealousy and envy are really caused by how well you judge others compared to how poorly you judge yourself. You may wish to know yourself better and like yourself more, but you may be afraid of the process of discovery because the process is longer, slower and harder than anyone expected.

The last thing people want to believe is that this world was created by GOD/GOD/G O D for them to learn to be themselves. Life is a miraculous creation of self-discovery, but most people only want money, property and prestige. And once they have all that, then find

they have to defend themselves to keep it because there are so many thieves trying to steal it out from under them.

Proving The Existence Of These Ten Moral Forces

You're supposed to fill yourself with peace until you feel full, not until you feel you've filled everyone else full. But, because people try to fill others, they find themselves filled to the brim with sarcasm, cynicism and scorn. This is no coincidence. When you see all the cups you've tried to fill instead of your own, how else would you expect to feel?

Happiness doesn't last long because happiness is pursued from the outside in. But, if you pursue tranquility, then happiness will saunter in and out of its own accord. Believe me, GOD wants you to be happy. HE's not what's stopping you from becoming happier. Your lack of interest in tranquility is what's stopping you. You may be seeking happiness feverishly. If so, you're much too hot.

You don't have to hold the attitude I have. You don't have to react with arrogant displeasure when people bend your nose out of shape. You don't have to teach anyone a lesson by being mean. Once you come to the conclusions I've stated here, you'll, paradoxically, be able to afford to be nicer because you'll be richer within.

You don't need a bigger cup; you need to realize that there's a whole lot more room in the one you've got. When you realize your attention has unconsciously been to bring peace into other people's world instead of peace into your own, you'll stop getting depressed when you read the news. They're all just doing the best they know how given how ignorant of themselves they are.

Peace is a process of filling yourself with wisdom {Judaism}; love {Christianity}; generosity {Islam}; diversity {Hinduism}; tranquility {Buddhism}; and paradox {Taoism}. Just because you think you deserve inner peace doesn't mean it'll be magically bestowed upon you. Therefore you should endeavor to bestow it upon yourself; you should work for peace from the inside out. But that will require teaching everyone on Earth how to help you accomplish this goal over time.

The tranquility presented to the West by Eastern philosophies will never substitute for peace. Peace is a Jewish concept of self-filling called: SHALOM. Indians and Asians can be taught about peace on top of tranquility, and they won't have to turn out looking or sounding Jewish to do so. If GOD wants to bring the world's faiths and philosophies together with SHALOM, HE can get the job done without forcing chicken soup down anybody's throat. HE's got an elegant plan, and you don't have to convert to Judaism, Christianity or Islam to be a full participant in it.

There are ten levels toward this inner, filling process, and they are The Ten Commandments. They're not demands placed upon you, but moral forces GOD put into place for us to learn how to make peace with ourselves from the *inside* in even though these Commandments appear to be promoting peace from the *outside* in.

If you think The Hebrew Testament, like Israel, was created for you to take it away from the Jews because you know better, you've got a problem with The Ten Commandments. The first one was addressed to the Jews. If you wish to live with them, you're going to have to learn to live with us. You can't separate us from our SCRIPTURE or our Land.

The history of the world mirrors the history of the faiths and philosophies as they've been learning how to internalize the spiritual lessons GOD/GOD/G O D gave them. Even your own past reflects the development of the peacemaker in you.

You don't have to let the poor starve in order to feed yourself knowledge from this forbidden fruit. You don't have to let the environment decay in order to prune your inner garden. You don't have to watch the infrastructure fall apart while you contemplate building bridges and tunnels for your trains of thought to go where they please. You can do it all at the same time. You must do it all at the same time. Doing only the inner or the outer AVODA {WORK and WORSHIP} is a sin that's coalescing in the 21st Century.

Just because you can't predict exactly how each of these ten moral forces of life will express itself in any one, particular individual doesn't mean these forces don't exist. It only means that your understanding of them hasn't developed sufficiently to use them more effectively.

If you're not looking for moral meaning in all that you do, you're not looking at what you're doing. If you don't seek redemption through all your opinions about others, you're not participating in life. You're a tourist just passing through. You're a visitor on a distant planet who has no intention of making himself at home. You're a guest at our table, and we won't invite you back.

Newton presented the world with mathematical proof of the existence of gravity. But you ought to become a Newton unto yourself, a spiritual scientist in the laboratory within. You ought to prove to yourself that The Ten Commandments are miraculous forces that you have harnessed in ways not so different from the miracle that makes it possible for airplanes to fly.

You won't be able to fly free spiritually without using your figurative wings in conjunction with these moral forces. Try defying The Ten Commandments and watch how long you coast before you crash. I guarantee you, each one of them is real. But these moral forces aren't beholding to outer time or space. You can't measure them with a ruler or a stopwatch. You can only measure them through the faith in yourself that grows day-by-day.

Inner Forces As Fire

The ten moral forces of the universe can be compared to the power of fire that can be applied in a variety of ways. The Ten Commandments are like a fire that doesn't come out of the sky like the "fire" from the sun. The Ten Commandments bring us spiritual illumination and warmth from a "fire" within us. We can't measure these moral forces like the flow of electricity or the speed of gravity. But we can acknowledge that they're fires within that can be understood and used for our own good. These moral forces are the keys to all the power on Earth and, probably, the power you'll receive in the "afterlife" as well.

GOD gave the Israelites insight into these ten forces to alert them to HIS subjective, not objective, world. As slaves, they were already experts on the laws that govern the outer world: hunger and humiliation. Those who've been victimized by the objective world most need to know about the feeling of being well fed within. They're the ones who are always the most open to the subjectivity of GOD's design.

It takes a hungry man who's been humiliated by others to reach up for forbidden fruit. Most people are so morally petrified by the thought of losing what they worked so hard for in the outer world that they wouldn't think of doing something they were told was wrong.

They wouldn't think of thinking for themselves. They let their GOD/OD/G O D think for them…

Moral force is the only religious proof needed for the existence of GOD. Everything else in life can, and should, be answered by science. Those who confuse science and religion are inappropriately merging their head and heart to avoid having to face their conscience. And that leaves them vulnerable to unreasonable and cruel conclusions about what to think about those their parents love to hate. Beware the "religious" man who feels full. He's spoiled forbidden fruit. He may even be rotten to the core.

There's no reason to be superstitious or afraid of the immense role of partnership GOD holds in your life. HIS power can be understood and described in wise, loving ways if you perceive HIM looking over your shoulder as you pick more forbidden fruits within you. Nothing would please HIM more than for you to share the joy of you knowing you're with HIM. All you have to do is humbly ask. That's what separates Adam (original man} from every Adam {man} since.

The Ten Commandments In Reverse Order

When you look at The Ten Commandments from your conscience yearning to achieve a soul instead of from your head or heart, it becomes apparent that you might like to review them in reverse order to make your way through them using a different priority. You can't love GOD until you at least like yourself, and you can't *like* yourself if you don't know more about you. So, until you give up the jealousy and envy that has kept you alienated from yourself, you won't make any progress fulfilling HIS Commandments. You've got to learn to trust that you've got what you need and will give it to you as needed.

Therefore, here is an abbreviated list of these Commandments from 10 to 1 couched in a more modern context.

10. Don't covet yourself
9. Don't lie to yourself
8. Don't steal from yourself
7. Don't be unfaithful to yourself
6. Don't kill yourself
5. Honor yourself
4. Spend your time wisely
3. Don't speak to yourself vainly
2. Don't put your desires before GOD
1. GOD is GOD. Don't play god.

When you meet someone who's playing god, look down on that person from the 10th Commandment. This will give you a greater perspective on their self-ignorance. It'll help you appreciate their struggle rather than condemn it.

If you're able to learn about yourself, it stands to reason that probably anybody can. That doesn't mean that people who break the law need to be forgiven. It means that they need to be taught the kind of skills you're learning here. You can't expect anyone to climb a ladder without rungs. You've got to put rungs in place to make it possible for them to ascend.

The Golden Calf

Eat Gold And Die

When Moses comes down from Mt. Sinai with The Ten Commandments, only to discover that in his absence the Israelites have fashioned a calf made of gold to worship in place of GOD, he tells them to crush the gold to dust, mix it with water and drink it. [Exodus 32] He makes them literally swallow their false god to internalize the concept of GOD.

Jesus repeats this brilliant solution the night before he's crucified by telling His disciples that the bread they're eating will be sanctified as His body and the wine they're drinking will be His blood. In this way, He may literally leave them when He dies, but the quality {love} He's imbued in them will live on.

How do you get someone with a childlike mentality to internalize a quality that only an adult can appreciate? You get them to literally eat, drink, smoke or inject it. Moses does this with gold. Jesus does it with love.

Although GOD isn't literally made of gold, the qualities of GOD can be found in gold. Gold is precious, beautiful and brilliant. Moses wants the Israelites to know these godly qualities and is frustrated because they projected the qualities of GOD into gold, the metal, rather than appreciate their gold symbolically. Today we realize that the Golden Calf was a way for the Israelites' to learn about their lack of spiritual mettle.

THE WORDS of Torah imply that we must go on a pilgrimage with GOD while learning how to ingest our Golden Calves along the way. We enrich ourselves as best we can from within and then dig down further over time to associate our crutches with our next, spiritual challenge. This is Old Testament WORK. This is hard work. But you can accomplish it if you do so by debating yourself internally over your moral obligations to yourself.

It's a great paradox that the Israelites didn't have to give up their love of gold to begin the process of increasing their spiritual wealth. And yet no one is so poor that he doesn't have at least one Golden Calf to struggle with. We're all going to have to consume our idols along with the embarrassment, shame and humiliation Adam and Eve inadvertently swallowed when they ate forbidden fruit.

While your inner wealth will remain inside you until you die, your spiritual operating system will simultaneously digest your embarrassment, shame and the humiliation your Golden Calves have put you through. What will come out the other end will be modesty, humility and loyalty to life.

This is how the body was inspired by the process GOD wished to inspire when HE created man. This is how the heart was inspired by the process God wished to inspire when He left man. This is how you can truly say that you are what you EAT/EAT/E A T.

All obsessions and compulsions are fixations that need to be melted down to metaphor, crushed into symbolic concepts or washed down with similes. They must be ingested to enrich every cell in your body with knowledge of what not to do in the future. This is the secret to wisdom, love and redemption.

People who are overly involved with the consumption of food are really hungry to know themselves more than they're willing to admit. Those who drink to excess are really thirsty for liquid spirits to quench them. Those who take drugs seek to transcend this world with miraculous evidence of truth, justice and the American way rather than do the hard WORK/WORK/W O R K before us all.

Those who are obsessed with making money and hording it want guarantees against spiritual poverty. Sex addiction is a yearning for spiritual intimacy with themselves,

projected onto solid flesh. And the desire for power is really a desire for freedom, liberty and emancipation from their parents.

Man is bewitched by the outer world. He's afraid to give up his Golden Calves because he's beguiled by external "needs" that aren't actually needs. They're desires. He experiences a yearning inside that he projects onto his favorite Golden Calf. And getting him to stop dancing around that idol is an inside job. He isn't going to just read Torah and suddenly see the light.

Atheists love gold for what it brings them monetarily. They can't see through the qualities of gold to its deeper association with GOD/GOD/G O D. They can't embrace the journey from *gold* {the metal} to *gold* {the quality of divine goodness}. They can't go beneath externals. They're too battered by cynicism, bruised by skepticism and broken by doubts to look inside themselves for answers. It takes someone who's spiritually inclined to go all the way from gold to GOD.

The Hidden Virtue In A Golden Calf

The journey of Moses and the Israelites in Torah presents us with the geographic metaphor, 'life as a journey from Egypt to Israel.' The Book of Genesis was like a map of the spiritual passage from the psychological infancy of an Adam to the maturity of a Judah. The Book of Exodus is the application of that map to your inner terrain.

The journey of life was metaphorically conceived in an inner garden, Eden, and then brought to term in an exodus from the womb by Egypt, the Jewish, surrogate mother. Now that you can perceive the Genesis and Exodus of your journey metaphorically, you're preparing for the Leviticus {CALLING}, Numbers {DESERT} and Deuteronomy {WORDS} of your life.

The Moses in you will gratefully give his life in getting the Israelite in you to your Promised Land. But there'll be struggles along the way as the masses within you fight for freedom from the pharaoh who calls you back to bondage. This struggle for power within yourself mirrors the moral questions projected by the society in which you live.

At this time in history, we're all dealing with the future of gay people, the future of Israel and the future of the planet. All three are projections of aspects of ourselves that each of us is going to have to deal with in the way he believes is most godly.

But that's not the end of your story any more than that's the end of The Hebrew Testament. The New Testament and Quran are also parts of GOD's/GOD's/G O D's designs. Until you teach yourself how to live in peace with everyone on Earth, you're going to remain stuck in one sacred text or another. And the planet is going to suffer as people are distracted by gay or Jewish issues of morality.

As a straight Jew, Christian or Muslim you can't afford to live your life without some personal exploration of Torah. You owe it to yourself to explore and promote at least the genesis of your being. If you're gay, you have a responsibility to help straight people as best you can. You're the divine fruit personified.

The concept of Israel, GOD's shining Jewish light unto the nations, gives humanity hope that GOD does everything with good reason. Israel is a little piece of heaven HE brought down to Earth as a garden to tempt humanity with a desire to be good for goodness sake.

For a man to come to know himself from head to toe, there are many places in between he ought to be willing to go to, such as guts, backbone, balls and biceps. But to do any of that, he's going to have to be able to stomach himself.

Sadly, some men spend their life looking for inspiration from only certain parts of the human body {tits and ass}. And for straight men those are appendages they don't even have. They have to go to women to get "in touch" with what they're missing, but want the most.

The purpose of the story of the Golden Calf is to teach us to embrace symbols rather than fear them. Those who refuse to embrace the figurative parts of their body insist on a one-to-one correspondence between one word and one idea because their imagination is too flat to entertain a tapestried effect. Their inner world is flat. They have no emotional depth to bring their imagination to life. They're not mature enough to look at words as containers that can hold multiple, plausible meanings. They want only laws, not love. They want everyone to want what they want or what they have that they refuse to share. They aren't willing to do THE WORK/WORK/W OR K on themselves for themselves.

Some of these men are Muslims who secretly wish they had what Christians and Jews invented. They want the nuclear armament technology developed by the West. And some of these men are Christians who secretly wish they had what Jews have achieved in spiritual insight that their own faith can't exist without. But some of the Jews want to mask the self-loathing they're trying to rid themselves of: anti-Semitism.

You can't love an idea if you haven't first loved the object that holds that idea. Once you complete the task of loving your things, you'll free yourself to move on to love the wise, loving and generous ideas your things represent for you. Being bourgeois is a great gift from GOD/GOD/G O D. Coming out of the peasant class teaches you to love figurative speech regardless what faith your forefathers held. The class struggle internalized can turn you into a billionaire if you know how to deal wisely with Golden Calves.

A Golden Calf was nothing more than a physical container that Israelites poured GOD into because they couldn't perceive of HIM uncontained. They didn't want to think of themselves as having been made in HIS image. They didn't want to have to literally go into the human body for answers to the way they'd been made.

The Israelites never had the conversation Moses had with Y.H.V.H. over HIS similarity to time. They simply did the best they could to visualize GOD as very young but with potential to grow up to be valuable to them: like a calf that will become a cow or bull.

Israel-lites will always worry about GOD turning HIS back on them, when we know HE doesn't literally have a back. They'll always worry whether they're sitting on HIS right side, when HE doesn't literally have sides. They can't imagine how HE can be with them at all times precisely because, like time, HE's uncontained.

Scientists tell us that the universe is 14 billion years old. But that's a measurement of the past. There's no way to measure the future. And the present continues without containment day after day, year after year. Even the seasons spills one into the other without precise demarcations.

An idol is a symbol that holds an idea. As you learn to see your body as many symbols that are associated with many ideas created by GOD, you'll naturally give up worshipping idols. The Moses within you will always insure that the Calves you create out of gold will be melted down and eaten. But the Israel-lite in you will always fashion more. In this way, you'll dance from birth to death without knowing when to stop.

I stopped dancing ballet at the age of 59. I walked out the dance studio door and didn't look back. I'd had enough. But that doesn't mean that I stopped learning about my body through dance. I simply internalized my next steps.

If you worry about growing out of the concept of a Golden Calf to become a Platinum Bull, ask yourself what that would look like? Would you be outwardly more bovine or would your brilliance shine within? Would you be more valuable in pulling others' plow or providing milk to yourself?

When you look at yourself symbolically, there may be danger of you idolizing yourself or idolizing an empire that was supposed to last 1,000 years? There are good reasons for taking symbolic logic in conjunction with metaphors rather than projecting it out onto the world we all have to share.

After the incident of the Golden Calf, Moses struggled within himself to convince GOD not to destroy the Israelites. But GOD already knew the Israelites would have to learn to come to know themselves in spiritual stages.

Proof Positive That GOD Exists

The example of idol worship in the story of the Golden Calf occurs three months after the Israelites have been released from bondage in Egypt. Previously, they evaded most of the natural disasters that befell their neighbors during The Ten Plagues; they experienced a miracle in their darkest hour at the Red Sea; and had witnessed GOD's participation in their journey into the Sinai desert as a cloud by day and a fire by night.

They couldn't have wanted for more proof of GOD's existence. They didn't really need a more tangible god. What they needed was an explanation of the spiritual process by which GOD was making HIMSELF meaningful to them.

As soon as Moses leaves them to go up Mt. Sinai to receive The Ten Commandments and the Israelites find themselves on their own, they have a spiritual meltdown. They have a cow…

Nothing could be more natural. Fear of being left alone is an important stage in the evolution of a man's relationship to himself both as a species and as an individual. We all have to repeat this process to unify our past with our present.

It may be childish to love money and physical comforts, but it isn't foolish. It may be juvenile to turn your back on GOD's presence in your life for the pure pleasure of idolatry. But it's so human. Those who aren't as spiritually mature may seem, at times, reckless, but only because they aren't as familiar with themselves as we would like.

When you use your new, found freedom of spiritual adolescence that enslaves you to materialism, you'll complain bitterly when pharaohs of finance whip you in unfair fights or politicians stop you from doing what you want. We must all learn not to take our freedoms for granted. We should all face our participation in the Passover plot, or we'll end up feeling nailed to a door like a sacrificial slab of mutton by an Israelite who's watching out for his own best interests.

The ancient Israelites may have anticipated a four-week stroll from Cairo to Jerusalem. But it turned out they were in need of a generation of spiritual guidance to do THE WORK in becoming free. They needed time to accustom themselves to the idea of self-discipline rather than to always being told what to do by masters who lorded over them.

GOD took them around in circles for 40 years until they got sick and tired of autonomy and were ready to embrace the personal and social responsibilities that are needed in creating a truly free society. And, today, most of us need and get the same lessons in relatively the same amount of time.

The proof of GOD's existence today can't literally be observed as a cloud by day and a fire by night. We have problems by day that cloud our vision. But most of those problems burn bright overhead keeping us awake at night.

GOD's presence lies in how we perceive each moment. None of us can escape the present moment in time. Our heart feels as though it's always in the now, even though our thoughts are free to wander into whatever time zone they'd like to contemplate.

We can think back to the way it was, and we can be optimistic about the way it'll all turn out. But it's in this moment in time that GOD is interfacing with each of us, teaching us how to make a difference for ourselves in our two worlds by using our head and heart. If you don't look for HIM here and now through how you're thinking and feeling at every moment in time, you won't find evidence for HIM/H I M anywhere else in time or space.

We all seem to have to go through emotionally childish times and then wander through juvenile desires for 40 or more years before we come to the banks of our Jordan. Everyone *thinks* he gets to his Jordan River after everyone else is already there, but everyone who finally arrives feels grateful just for having arrived at all.

Summary Of Exodus

At the beginning of the Exodus, the Israelites valiantly promise GOD, "NA'ASE VENISHA." {WE WILL DO, AND WE WILL LISTEN.} And then they spend 40 years doing it wrong and only correcting their mistakes once they've learned that they need to listen. How is any of us any different?

Why would GOD ask the Jewish people to remember the Passover and tell the story to their children if not because the story still holds significance 3,400 years later? But if you can't take the Passover personally, I say, don't bother to celebrate it at all.

The attempted sacrifice of Abraham's son Isaac in Genesis and the sacrifice of the lambs at the Passover of The Lord in Exodus didn't seem to be enough to stop the hatred and frustration that becomes projected out onto others, often in GOD's/GOD's/GO O D's name. A gay-Jew {Jesus} had to come along who spoke in such a shocking, new way that some in the establishment at that time needed to conspire with their enemies, the Romans, to shut Him up. The "civilized" world sacrificed a gay-Jew to maintain the status quo between religion and idolatry. They nailed Him to a tree because they couldn't unpack a metaphor and didn't understand His symbols.

If some Christians would go further east {Easter} than their religious leaders ask of them, they'd finally make their way into their Promised Land. If they saw in the sacrifice of Jesus the sacrifice each and every one of us is forced to make to bring GOD's/GOD's/G O D's love into the world, they'd love their neighbor as themselves. They'd not only quote Torah, as Jesus did. They'd live it. That alone will turn self-sacrifice from a chore to a privilege.

All that's requires to learn to like and love yourself in your own presence is *humility*. Humility is transformed shame that you receive when you learn about your mistakes and then correct them. You can't know yourself without humility. You can't like yourself without humility. It's difficult to know what you know; give yourself credit for what you know; and use that pride to move on to self-love – if you don't yearn to learn about what you don't know about yourself. And that only requires that you question yourself.

Quoting passages from Torah to use them to accuse others of being an eyesore before The Lord is worse than not reading Scripture at all. It would be better to rely on your own

trial and error guesswork than to shame others into believing what you do. This is what I loathe so about religious and garden-variety hypocrites.

GOD's/GOD's/G O D's love comes through you, not to you. You learn to love HIM/HIM/H I M when you move through embarrassment, shame and humiliation with poise. Once you demonstrate that you can change, HE shows you how to transform and transcend yourself.

The summary of Exodus can be found in the springtime when Jews remember the Passover and Christians go Easter to remember the crucifixion of Christ. The summary of Exodus can be found in any questions you ask that kindly challenges the way you think. This is what leads to discussions about new ways of being a morally upstanding individual.

The heart of man has spots that are as dark as the skin of Negros. The soul of man has blotches that are as queer as any gay-Jew. When you see a gay, black man, don't forget that it's no coincidence GOD/GOD/G O D has brought him into your life at that particular moment in time. There are no coincidences, only reminders of why you're here and what you're here to do.

CRUISING AT HIGH ALTITUDE - THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS

Genesis, Exodus And Leviticus

Three Kinds Of Jews

"Leviticus" is a Greek word that comes from THE WORD "LEVITES." There were three classes of ancient Israelites: ISRAELITES, LEVITES AND KOHANIM. The Book of Leviticus presents GOD's laws, the duties HE requires from everyone: Israelites {the people}, Levites {guardians of The Temple} and Kohans {priests}. A general description of The Book of Leviticus would be a guide to governing communal relationships.

In terms of man's relationship to time, The Book of Genesis occurs outside the boundaries of objective time. Genesis describes a *psychological* process that can come to consciousness at any time during a man's life. The Book of Exodus describes a *sociological* experience of the spiritual journey of a man's life that applies time objectively.

Although the sociological journey of the Jews begins in Exodus and moves forward in time in the fourth and fifth books of Torah {Numbers and Deuteronomy}, time stands still in The Book of Leviticus. Reading Leviticus is like reading an instruction manual. It is, for the most part, unconcerned with time.

The Hebrew name for this book is "VAYIKRA" which means "TO CALL" or "TO SUMMON FORTH." In Exodus, Moses was summoned forth at The Burning Bush to return to Egypt to help the Israelites obtain their freedom. And the Israelites were summoned forth in the desert at Mt. Sinai to receive The Ten Commandments. But the call didn't begin or end there.

The Book of Leviticus explains the spiritual process that moves you toward GOD without literally taking you anywhere. In telling the Israelites how to worship HIM, GOD presents HIS needs in a fashion that these ancient wanders will each be able to obey. But the (1) animal sacrifices, (2) treatment of slaves, (3) medicinal practices for the sick and (4) edict over killing adulterers, gays and anyone who curses their parents are just four of the edicts in Leviticus that make no sense in the modern world we now live in. Once you're no longer a wanderer, but have found a place to call home, these edicts become untenable.

Many parts of Leviticus can't be obeyed literally anymore because (1) we have no Temple or (2) slaves, and (3) the field of medicine has been taken away from the religion and given to the world of science. (4) Killing anyone you don't like is forbidden by law, even if your Scripture gives you permission to do so. We've graduated those edicts in the same way that we refuse to allow the homeless to shit in the street.

In these ways, Torah has become obsolete in that it no longer refers to communal relationships of peoples who move from place to place. These edicts now have to be applied to our relationships *within* ourselves. Torah has to be internalized.

In civilized societies gays are recognized as equal to straights. Leviticus 18 and 20 have been dispensed with. But if gays and straights don't use these two edicts from Torah personally, instead of publicly, they'll overlook the beauty of applying Torah to one's self rather than to others.

The call to worship has changed over time. We're all summoned forth to meet our Maker in new ways based on how we need to respond differently to the call to prayer than our ancestors. Self-sacrifice has replaced animal sacrifice, for instance. Mastering ourselves has literally ended slavery and turned the issues of slavery in Torah into lessons in self-bondage we must face in this new day.

The Book of Leviticus presents religious directives that were once confounding when approached from the head because they created societal requirements that became onerous. If you don't build Temples everywhere and you don't sacrifice animals anymore in your own Temple at home, then you don't need a Temple. You might as well give it to a Muslim to learn what you already know. You can joyously pray at the Wailing Wall with thanks for the gift you've been able to pass along to the needy.

Such religious directives are breathtakingly beautiful when viewed from your heart and soul. They now challenge the individual to change his inner governance to create a peaceful society within himself. He can even internalize the Muslim he's given his Temple to.

If you get stuck trying to obey the letter of THE LAW instead of the spirit of the law, you'll get stuck on every other WORD in The Book of Leviticus. You'll stutter when talking to yourself, like Moses stuttered when he spoke aloud. You should know the letter of THE LAW, as did Jesus, to move down out of your head into your heart. The literal must be made personal before it can become universal.

If you were able to read the religious directives in Leviticus as musical notes, reading them would do you no good in interpreting them. You wouldn't be able to appreciate their meaning if they were only black dots on a white page. Leviticus has to be sung from the heart to be heard. You have to translate the code into the equivalent of music. You have to bring it to life in the abstract.

The process of bringing the Book of Leviticus to life is something I do in the kitchen while preparing food. I instruct myself, and then I see that my instructions create choreography that isn't as efficient or elegant as it could be. I have to retrace steps taken. I have to do some things again. My hands have to stutter and my efforts have to include flaws and imperfections to learn how to get it right. Such is the music I make by translating the Book of Leviticus into notes that I play using my whole body.

The rapture of Leviticus must be sung inside to be decoded emotionally and expressed doing all that you wish to learn how to do better. The Laws of Leviticus are timeless because they're not about moving forward in time. They're about using time to dance around in place.

Leviticus is a composition of bliss, a feeling of being in seventh heaven when you struggle to find their meaning for you alone. Leviticus calls me down from my head through my heart and into my soul, striking inspiration like only a song can do when lyrics and melody have been fused with each other's intentions and you play them for the first time.

As intellectual instruction on the duties required of a good Jew, Leviticus describes sociological responsibilities to the tribe that don't call to everyone in the same ways anymore. But when read metaphorically, you may hear yourself called to learn how to do something new. When sung like a song, not read like a text, Leviticus may call you to interpret it with personal meaning. It may give you insight into the Levite in you, the keeper of your Temple within.

The first three books of Torah {Genesis, Exodus and Leviticus} remind me of how I learned to play the piano as a child. I first attempted to play the melody {Genesis} with my right hand, and then focused my attention separately on the harmony {Exodus} with my left hand. Only in that way could I begin the challenge of learning to play both hands together {Leviticus}.

In this way, the Book of Leviticus produces a cacophonous outcome that makes no literal sense at first at all. It makes figurative sense. It allows you to move from the creation

of an individual {Genesis} to a member of society {Exodus} who you can see practice becoming a little lower than an angel in GOD's Kingdom all by yourself.

Leviticus brings Genesis and Exodus together like two hands, each learning to cooperate with the other on a musical task. Leviticus turns Genesis into a melody for the head, and Exodus, a harmony for the heart, played through your conscience in real time. It calls the ten fingers in your soul to play the ten mystical, moral forces of GOD from within, until you hear their song emanating out through your whole body.

If you take edicts of Leviticus literally, you'll never be able to take all of them seriously. Some of them are absurd; like killing anyone who curses your parents. This is why I refer to them as NOTES, and not as WORDS. When translated into abstract expressionism, THE WORDS of Leviticus translate into something akin to music that any child can learn to play. Only then will you feel that you're an instrument of GOD in the orchestra of humanity.

Leviticus is the intimate relationship with GOD that comes from a psychological evolution unfolding in a sociological setting.

The Inner Priest

Moses is our first PROPHET. He literally leads the Israelites bodies to Israel. But Aaron is the "KOHEN HAGADOL" {HIGH PRIEST} who's in charge of figuratively shaping their souls and leading them before GOD another way.

Leviticus is instruction on how to act as an Aaron unto yourself. It teaches you how to lead yourself like a Moses through your life while the Aaron in you cleans up your act along the way. In this way you'll be able to plan on the end of your life being an *arrival* rather than a *departure*.

Aaron led the Israelites in the creation of the Golden Calf. For this he was admonished by Moses. And to this day, we see "religious" leaders getting caught up in idolatrous, "religious" practices while forgetting the big picture: GOD/GOD/G O D.

Aaron's most notable job description is that of tender of the fire on which the sacrifices are given. But when, in The Book of Numbers, his two sons die in The Tabernacle in a freakish accident caused by "strange fire," we have to imagine Aaron having to look back in sorrow and horror at how the fire he tended for GOD could have gotten out of control and killed his sons.

Questioning the purification process is a part of being a priest unto yourself. You can't improve the lives of others if you can't improve the rituals you use to guide them. Perhaps you can see how "strange fire" has burned the practice of Christianity and Islam, leaving these faiths wondering about this issue, too. Ice is a universal attribute of man.

In Leviticus, *The Tabernacle* is a moveable tent GOD instructs the Israelites to build to literally house HIM when HE's here on Earth. In that mobile home they made for HIM for when HE wasn't reigning from above the clouds in the heavens, they offer HIM animal sacrifices to atone for their sins and guilt. But these gifts are given up to HIM through the fire that creates smoke that rises toward in HIS holy abode in heaven. (More on that later.)

Becoming an Aaron unto yourself makes you the high priest of your inner Tabernacle. Your inner Aaron becomes that part of you that officiate over the fire within you, the passion that will feed you with the meaning of your life. The fire of life is the power within you that delivers your hopes and dreams to GOD/GOD/G O D. Your ability to believe depends on the intensity of that fire, while guilt is the spiritual fuel that will set this fire in

you ablaze and stoke it. Your animal instincts are the crude forces that you'll give up to GOD in this process leaving you more human and humane.

Self-Sacrifice For Spiritual Repair

Torah first introduced the concept of sacrifice in the second story of Genesis when Cain decided to gift GOD for the joy he felt in being alive. But when GOD offends Cain by not accepting his gift, Cain could only rhetorically address the question of whether his brother's life was of any importance to him. {Am I my brother's keeper?} Cain could only entertain the thought of guilt; he couldn't consciously feel it to admit his misplaced offence against GOD.

People don't want to admit to GOD that HE offends them. But when you look around at how high people's opinion is of themselves and how easily they're offended by others, it's not difficult to connect these dots. When we don't get what we're expecting, our GOD/GOD/G O D offends us. It's natural to assume so. It's just hard to admit that we're as spoiled as all that.

Abraham was the first father willing to stop the sacrifice of his son when he realized it was just a test from GOD. Every Hebru father later sacrificed a lamb to save his son when they were slaves in ancient Egypt during the 10th Plague. And every ancient Israeli celebrated the Passover the night before Jesus was sacrificed.

It's no longer enough to care only about yourself or your own family. If you don't care for every son whose father isn't there to save him, how can you claim to be a good Christian or Jew?

Moses and Aaron, unlike Cain and Abel, are brothers who can work cooperatively together to achieve their common goals. They aren't in competition with one another. They aren't fighting for their father's love. Together, they personify the head {Moses} and heart {Aaron} that know how to assist one another on their mutual mission.

The Tabernacle introduced in Leviticus is a moveable Temple where the concept of sacrifice is brought out from the biblical tales of Genesis into a new realm where sacrifice takes on sociological importance to the whole tribe. Sacrifice is no longer an individual act or a family ritual; it becomes a communal responsibility.

The Israelites will sacrifice animals in The Tabernacle to cleanse them of their sins and guilt until they arrive in Israel where they'll build The First Temple in Jerusalem to house GOD permanently. There, they'll continue to sacrifice animals (with a brief interruption of 70 years during the Babylonian Exile) for a thousand years. Solomon's Temple, also known as The First Temple, is constructed on the hill called "Moriah" in Jerusalem in 960 B.C.E. on the site where Abraham is said to have debated sacrificing Isaac, the site where the Al-Aqsa Mosque sits today.

After the Jews lose the war with Babylonia in the 7th Century B.C.E., The First Temple is destroyed by pagans and the ancient Jews are deported to Babylonia in chains. But they're allowed to return to Israel in 538 B.C.E. when a ruler from Iran conquers Babylonia {present day Iraq}, at which point the ancient Jews rebuild The Temple and resume animal sacrifices.

When The Second Temple is destroyed 500 years later by the pagan Romans around the time of Jesus, in 70 C.E., it become apparent to the rabbis that GOD has decided that the need for sacrificing animals has ended. They realize GOD is ready to move sacrifice out of

the physical realm of the tribe collectively and into a personal place within each Jew individually.

Historically, sacrifice unfolded from the rejection of Cain's sacrifice by GOD through the attempted sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham to the communal sacrifices of the whole nation {The Twelve Tribes of Israel}. And from The Twelve Tribes, after the destruction of The Second Temple, sacrifice in the Common Era was transformed into self-sacrifice.

In this way, sacrifice has spread externally, gone all the way around into each one of us, and it's now spreading internally within us all.

The ancient, Roman pagans force the ancient Jews into slavery when they refuse to submit to them, and the Romans disburse the ancient Jews throughout the Mediterranean in what's called: The Diaspora. During this 2,000-year exile from Israel, each male Jew figuratively holds the role of an Israel {Jacob} unto himself. Jerusalem is situated in his heart, and he figuratively sacrifices his animal instincts to GOD at the altar in The Temple within, laying his head down each night on a pillow {rock} that represents his Covenant with GOD through his spiritual fathers: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

In this way, Torah describes how every Jew became a nation, a patriarch and a Temple to GOD. He even became his own high priest who sacrificed his animal instincts within himself.

These ancient Jews wandered through Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia like mobile homes today move across the Arizona desert. They were the first living Tabernacles of The Lord sent out on a mission to bring expression of GOD's wise, loving and generous ways to the world. They were spiritualists who held their faith secretly {unconsciously} through their adopted cultures and traditions.

But these "lambs" of GOD were externally herded by cruel, European shepherds throughout Europe, exiled from Spain for being Jewish and forced into pagan territories in the east of Europe to use them to promote trade. In the last century, Hitler decided it was time to cull the flock. And now the Iranians are promising to slaughter the flock entirely, since Hitler wasn't able to finish the job he started.

"The Return" {the physical migration back to our Promised Land} was only begun in 1948 when the internalized Temple in each modern Jew and the State of Israel were reunited historically and metaphorically.

The concept of self-sacrifice for GOD's sake has prepared good Jews, Christians and Muslims for the next chapter in our spiritual evolution with our Creator. Self-sacrifice has given us the spiritual foundation needed to behave in a soulful manner for the good of GOD/GOD/G O D. This creates a greater form of communication within ourselves, which, in turn, makes it possible to develop a more intimate relationship with our Creator.

Originally, animals were brought to The Tabernacle, ritualistically destroyed, and then offered up to GOD by setting them aflame. The priests ate some of the cooked meat, and the fire consumed the rest, with the smoke carrying the giver's prayers to GOD in heaven via the animal sacrifice. Plant matter was also sacrificed, especially fruits.

On one level, the giving of food to GOD was meant to satisfy HIS hunger. But it then left the giver with an expectation that GOD would satisfy *his* hunger in return. It created the ancient expectation that once HIS appetite had been abated, theirs would be, too. The Israelites held to the belief that if they attended to GOD's spiritual needs through their faith in HIM, they'd be rewarded for it. {Keeping HIS appetite sated made for a less cranky Deity.}

In this age of instant, worldwide communication, the expectation for spiritual rewards for sacrifices given has never been greater, or more feasible. The turnaround time on the results of doing good for others are anticipated immediately, and expected on a continuous, even daily, basis. Hope from within has to happen at breakneck speed because people's faith and patience have become accustomed to almost immediate gratification from the world around them.

This is easy to see if you're an outsider to the Abrahamic faiths, but not an atheist. This is easy to describe if you're an educated gay man of any faith or philosophy who wishes to help your society understand what they're doing from a more elevated and enlightened spiritual perspective.

The animals once sacrificed probably signified human characteristics the Israelites wanted GOD to grant them. A bull, for instance, might unconsciously have held the attributes of strength, power, resilience or tenacity in the mind of an ancient Israelite or ancient Jew of Judea and Samaria. The giver of such a large and expensive gift might have gifted GOD with a bull in the hopes that GOD would then gift him with some or all of the human characteristics he felt he was lacking.

The plant matter sacrificed, especially fruits, were probably sacrificed to relieve the giver of guilt. By giving GOD fruit, they may have thought they could expunge themselves of the guilt they associated and identified with in the story of Adam and Eve. (Next time you do something to piss someone off, offer them an apple instead of an apology and see how that goes…)

The fire that consumed the carcasses in The Temple would carry the animal attribute to GOD in heaven in the smoke. The giver of the sacrifice would hope to receive the characteristics of the bull from GOD in appreciation of the meat he provided. And if he didn't get his wish, he then put his faith in GOD that his son would one day receive the gift in lieu of himself. (What often happened if GOD didn't respond as expected was that the father often bullied his son instead.)

Ancient Israelites and ancient Israelis were more willing to wait for their rewards because the whole tempo of life was slower then. Modern Israelis, like the rest of us, as every son can attest to, aren't so patient.

Sacrifice was, at one time, a slow, transformative process based on faith that GOD could be accessed symbolic gestures. The symbol {bull/fruit} was given in place of a message. The message was self-understood in those days because the concept of speaking to GOD directly and frankly was still quite crude, even discouraged. Ancient Jews didn't dare approach HIM without gifts, very formal rituals and canned prayers offered through religious intermediaries. The idea of having a chat with GOD if you had a few, spare minutes would probably have horrified an ancient Jew.

Prayer, in the modern sense of "conversing freely with the Deity" developed very slowly over millennia after The Temple cult ended in 70 A.D. Before the time of Jesus, man could only communicate with GOD through very ritualized, communal means that involved bribing GOD with gifts to get what he wanted. He was in the spiritual toddler stage of his development. He could only grunt and point to what he wanted.

The very idea that Jesus would go around talking about His relationship to His Father must have been quite novel, modern and shocking in His day. It was probably looked askance by most as "NAME dropping." People weren't in an informal relationship with

GOD in those days. The way we talk about HIM/HIM/H I M today is much more personal and intimate.

Imagine that the word "table" was forbidden to be uttered in your house when you were a kid. Imagine having to use words like "eating surface" or "large, four-legged stool" to imply what you meant. Imagine going into your dining room and wanting to discuss the four chairs around the _____, the food that would be brought to the _____, the salt and pepper shakers placed in the middle of the _____, and the dishes and place settings you want to put down where your family will gathered around the _____.

Talking to GOD was a "fill in the black" religious game for ancient believers in which they tried to avoid certain thoughts for fear that putting those concepts into words would give GOD "ideas." The ancient Catholic concept of arguing about the number of angels that could sit on the head of a pin was a later, scholastic tool to explore the power of thinking critically. {Would that they had spent a little more time investigating the power of feeling more tenderly.}

How to communicate with GOD was a big problem for the ancient Jews even before the time of Jesus. Jesus came at a time in our history when the ability to talk with GOD and about HIM in common parlance was a shocking and revolutionary new concept. The intimacy Jesus describes when speaking about His relationship with His Father with such astounding frankness was a break from the tradition at the time. That, alone, was reason for His popularity. That alone made Him sound like a revolutionary.

There are still many superstitious people in the world today who are afraid to think, feel, desire and/or believe. And you can hear in their voice or their mannerisms how timid their relationship with themselves really is.

With the death of Jesus and the destruction of The Temple, the Romans became more brutal and life in Israel became more unbearable As the practice of Judaism was becoming outlawed in Israel, the rabbis came to the conclusion (consciously for some and unconsciously for others) that it was time for each Jew to learn how to pray individually, intimately and directly to GOD. Prayer became the new delivery system in lieu of animals. And self-sacrifice turned each ancient Israeli into a personal gift for GOD. It was then that humble gestures and modest proposals began to take the place of the exaggerated, bombastic, religious mime that heretofore had been necessary to get GOD's attention.

Think of life in ancient Israel before the Common Era as a silent movie with exaggerated expressions and facial gestures to make their point. And think about life after the death of Jesus and the destruction of The Temple as the Age of Talkies. People could finally use WORDS/WORDS in addition to acting out their wishes in grand gestures on the big screen. For them, it must have been an exciting time to be alive.

As Judaism figuratively moved out of "the silent screen era" and into "the age of talkies," misunderstandings between Jews and Gentiles began to spread like the competition we saw between the Hollywood studios in the 30's. And later blood battles {Crusades} between the Christians (movies) and Muslims (TV) occurred the entire medium of prayer.

The fire within us; man's passion for connecting with his Creator; and the modern world we live in have created a sophisticated delivery system of communication using every day speech that underscores our spiritual intentions, thus making the world today so different from even the one we were born into.

It was actually a very long time ago that the synagogue replaced The Temple, and the church was born. And it was a long time thereafter {700 years} when the mosque appeared to bring the third side of the Abrahamic faith triangle into being. It's taken man 3,400 years to move from pyramid through prayer to talking to yourself with GOD/GOD/G O D as your Witness.

The relatively recent separation of church and state now means that man has finally freed himself to believe in GOD/GOD/G O D without "religious" intervention in politics and street life. It means that sound business practices can now dominate our public lives globally and sound, spiritual practices can influence us all privately.

Today, the evolution of the concept of sacrifice is undergoing further transformation. Prayer is being adapted to psychology in the form of spirituality. The fire of social transformation that first awakened Moses at The Burning Bush with the hope of freeing the Israelite slaves now speaks to each of us personally through psychological transformation and transcendence of ourselves. Our inner conversations with ourselves are prayer at the most intimate level of discourse with GOD/GOD/G O D listening in.

We no longer need a Temple High Priest. For that matter, most Catholics don't even avail themselves of a priest anymore. And other Christians use a *minister* to *administer* their religious needs far less often than once was the case in Protestant Europe.

Many modern individuals no longer need to go to a house of prayer at all to speak with GOD/GOD/G O D. Learning to communicate with GOD/GOD/G O D is slowly being taken out of the hands of organized religion in the formal sense of THE WORD/WORD/W O R D. It's being bestowed on each of us as a state of spiritual mindfulness that we're learning to cultivate in our own inner Israel, Rome or Mecca.

Knowing yourself is fast becoming the most modern path to knowing GOD/GOD/G O D. Being a good Jew, Christian or Muslim will soon hinge on being good {although not necessarily self-indulgent} to yourself.

The end to the barbaric practice of destroying animals for sacrifice at The Temple didn't magically whisk the ancient Israelites into the modern era. The process evolved very slowly with awareness of themselves in a marvelous vehicle on a magical journey. No one gets where he wants to go overnight.

When the Romans murdered Jesus; destroyed The Temple; and banished the Jews from Israel – sending every ancient Jews into a 2,000 year-long Diaspora of despair that ended with the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 – GOD/GOD/G O D set in motion a spiritual transformative methodology that has brought us to today's Judeo-Christian partnership in America, Europe and worldwide. And soon the Muslims will be forced to sign on to it as the only option left in a multi-cultural world.

Modern man is the result of thousands of years of *spiritual* evolution on top of millions of years of *physical* evolution. People aren't made this enlightened before they're born. They have to develop this way in the same way that an electronic device has to be programmed with an operating system. The differences in religious opinions we have the luxury of holding today would have been grounds for excommunication, torture and even murder only a relatively short time ago. In many Muslim countries in the Middle East stoning people for questioning religious practice is, sadly, still the case. But people will figuratively stone you on Facebook or Twitter in the West if they don't like what you're telling them.

Watching Europe being emptied of Jews today because of Islamic terrorism on that continent is sad to see. As European Jews flock to Israel and America to protect their freedom of speech and religion, Europeans find themselves with Muslim neighbors who they don't understand and can't talk to about GOD/GOD/G O D. Every conversation returns to the topic of Israel: The Land GOD gave the Jews where perverts who have sex with their own gender are allowed to do as they please.

The Jewish middleman, so famous for being good in business, isn't there anymore to help European Christians work with Muslims to get GOD's/GOD's/G O D's business done peacefully in pluralistic societies. They don't speak each other's religious language, and they don't have a universal, spiritual language yet to share. Everyone has to hold the "right" opinion about gays and Jews, or there has to be no discussion about gays and Jews at all, before business can be conducted successfully. And so, once again, towers to power will have to come tumbling down. But the next Tower of Babel incidents will have to be those in which everyone feels the earth move under his feet as the pillars of society come tumbling down everywhere on Earth.

It's not the Jewish presence in the Middle East that's destroying the fabric of Muslim society today. When you put adults together with children; the educated in with the ignorant; the gay liberated in with the straight-laced – you force changes on everyone's operating system. It's not that Jews or gays offend anyone. It's that those who say they're educated adults who can live side by side with everyone can't follow through with that assertion because their belief system is antiquated. They just don't yet have the tools to adapt their faith to the modern world they find themselves in.

Although we should be able to agree that it's primitive and morally abhorrent to project our sins onto innocent animals and then destroy them to assuage us of our guilt, modern America is still willing to sacrifice its environment and thousands of animal species each year to get what it wants. We may consider ourselves stewards of the Earth, but our idea of stewardship is still primitive. The Temple cult of yore continues so long as we allow the military/industrial complex that has institutionalized today's standards of moral cleanliness to set the rules for us. Their idea of fire is a scorched earth policy will destroy all life on this planet unless good people from every faith and philosophy go back to their sacred texts to interpret them with more relevant meaning.

Surrounding today's ghettos like poverty pockets that need to be contained only keeps blacks in America and Muslims in Europe from advancing out of medieval thinking into modern, spiritual discourse where we can all learn to salvage the best of our faiths and pass that wealth down to the next generation.

Sacrificing animals was transformed in the first thousand years of Judaism {1,000 B.C.E. to 1 C.E.} from "metaphor" [man as a spiritual Tree] into "symbolism" [man as a physical container with spiritual contents {bread and wine}].

Jesus's contribution of spiritual symbolism was so profound a gift that Jews and Muslims (and many Christians) are still reeling today at how mercy can be extrapolated from symbolism while metaphor is still needed to guide us toward greater forms of justice. When a man's Jewish head and Christian heart are weighed in a Muslim conscience that can be grateful for the Western world's Judeo-Christian gifts of freedom of speech and religion, each individual comes away richer for it.

When you can become the prophet unto yourself {Moses} to profess what you believe to be true; when you can become the priest unto yourself {Aaron} and hold the past with the present together with meaningful ritual and rite – you can call yourself a modern man.

When religious law moved out of physical space into inner space with the destruction of The Second Temple in 1 C.E., man's conscience could then give him greater responsibility over his actions. No longer was he only responsible for following GOD's laws literally. He was made responsible for interpreting them from his heart. He couldn't hide his guilt behind animal sacrifice any longer. He had to admit his mistakes to himself. And he had to learn to atone for his misdeeds.

This is why GOD/GOD revealed G O D. This is why two religions were not enough. A third place in inner space had to be revealed to man: his potential to create his own soul.

Jesus said that the Passover bread was His body, and the wine, His blood. By extension He brought awareness into the world that all things are spiritual containers made or inspired by GOD. The human body is like spongy bread {flesh} filled with a wine-like substance {blood} that reminds us of the hardship of His human experience. If you can't take your body personally, you'll never succeed in taking it seriously. You'll separate the animal from the angel. You'll clench your fists in opposition to the wonders revealed in everyday life.

The way we treat each other is a manifestation of the way we think about things; particularly that thing hanging down between our legs. And the way we think about *things* then becomes unconscious motivation for things turning out unexpectedly or even disappointingly. One thing leads to another.

It's no coincidence that the environment looks as dismal as it does. It's no coincidence the world is up to its neck in terrorism, thievery and lying. It's no coincidence the young people can't find work or get a good education at a nominal price, and that the old farts are fighting over what they have and want to hold on to long after the day they die. If you don't look at how you're feeling, your thinking will get you in trouble with what you believe.

When the land the grain for the bread is grown on is poisoned and the rain that waters the grape for the wine doesn't come, or pours down in buckets, you can't call yourself a "religious" person without seeing the hypocrisy of your words. You can't take communion without guilt at the difference between the purity of HIS WORDS and the literal poison in the paten, the communion bowl, and the empty cup that you're passing around for people to stare down into.

The purpose of the creation of Christianity and Islam was to modernize man's relationship to GOD, not restrain it. If a Christian takes communion without thought to the pollution he's contributed to, and if the Muslim takes off his oil-soaked shoes before prayer without thought to the outrageous poverty of his countrymen – they're leaving GOD's/G O D's love and generosity at the church and mosque door. Without good Jews, good Christians and good Muslims working together with a unified, modern, moral purpose as classmates who all have the same Teacher, the world will continue to look doomed.

The Elevation To Inner Priest

Moses and Aaron together personify the modern man who struggles to get it all done, and done right because everything you do really matters. Moses must find a way to get 600,000 people with a slave mentality from one geographic location to another, and Aaron

must take them from one spiritual location to another, while the two of them simultaneously have to concern themselves with their own individual journeys.

This was the monumental, religious task GOD wanted from them then, and today each of us has to take at least as many damaged, inner aspects of his own soul yearning to be free to a new state of being within himself.

Jews commemorate the Passover on a yearly basis. Through consubstantiation, Catholics commemorate the Passover on a daily basis. Hope lives, but it grows differently in each faith. It's our task to find HOPE/HOPE/H O P E, nurture it and share it every way we can. This will make GOD's/GOD's/G O D's designs personal. And this will make words more meaningful than they are now.

The story in The Quran, greatly elaborated on by tradition, relates that Muhammad made the journey astride Buraq, a mythical winged creature, in the company of the Archangel Gabriel. Muhammad met Abraham, Moses, and Jesus in "the farthest mosque" {heaven}; he then officiated as leader of ritual prayer for all the PROPHETS assembled and establishes his primacy among G O D's messengers. Muslims are therefore commanded to pray with the two of us, too. If T H E P R O P H E T Mohammed could, they can endeavor to do so, too.

As we first learn to become priest {Aaron} and PROPHET {Moses} unto ourselves, we see that the insincerity and dishonesty of many political and religious leaders has been, in part, become apparent worldwide thanks to this shift in our own spiritual perspective. Now that we're not as stiff-necked as the Israelites, we can see truth from differing points of view. We can call it like it is if we don't feel compelled to turn the other cheek.

Life isn't a tea party. Life is a very serious, moral experience. Life is real. Words are real. Words are as real as the symbols you're presently looking at on this page. Symbols translate into words in your mind, and words translate into emotional colors in your heart. GOD created Christianity because that simple lesson was beyond the ancient Jew to teach the world. But it isn't beyond good Jews to help good Christians make GOD's WORDS manifest. GOD embellished HIS WORD {Torah} with HIS WORDS {The Gospels}. And together, we can help good Muslims interpret H I S W O R D S, too.

The Need For Organized Religion

The science of psychology uses religion without full awareness of its source. It unravels the mystery of GOD's/GOD's/G O D's decrees with personal importance for each client without referencing biblical pronouncements. This'll be more apparent later in my discussion of Leviticus 18 {the prohibition of a man sleeping with another man} and Leviticus 19 {the prohibition of mixing linen and wool}.

Suffice it to say now, the therapist's office has become the modern Temple; the therapist is today's High Priest for hire; and the couch in his or her office is the altar where the client kindles his unclean thoughts about himself and burns away the unkind feelings he harbors against himself, giving them up to GOD/GOD/G O D. In doing so, the client makes himself into a sacrificial lamb, offering himself up with the therapist's help to achieve reconciliation and purification without mention of The Lord.

The client recreates the story of Moses in his head while recreating the story of Jesus in his heart. It's a big job, especially if you're also motivated to recreate the story of T H E P R O P H E T Mohammed in your soul.

Leaving the therapist's office feeling more soulful and less sinful is the same goal as the members of any congregation in prayer. It's the same goal the ancient Israelis had when offering their animal sacrifices at The Temple, and it's the same goal of their ancestors, the Israelites, as they did the same in The Tabernacle as they made their way across the desert on little more than a prayer.

Religion has become far more vibrant and relevant in the way it's practiced on the therapist couch these days than at most Friday, Saturday or Sunday Sabbath services. The pop culture, soul seeker, in some ways, is more soulful than the true believer, whether pop culture participants seek a soul, or not. Those who only mouth their prayers and those who hypocritically profess their values by putting down others for holding their faith differently are fooling themselves.

There are as many paths to righteousness as there are people on Earth, but we can all discover our assets through our religious background if we're not afraid to figuratively embrace our adult, inner child and not throw him out with the bath water.

Studying religion is more important than ever today. Those who seek to distance themselves from their belief system of origin, or who are bent on destroying it, are on a fool's errand. Their denigration of any of the institutions of religion should be cause for moral concern. Those who hate any institution of faith-based religion hate themselves in projection. They're wrestling with their own despairing demons.

There are no real demons in religion. There's no "Satan" promoting evil. There are only sick men and women listening to their serpent or worm telling them what to do. There's only our one GOD/GOD/G O D. We have to make the best of HIM/HIM/H I M through homonym, or, like the atheists, do our best to do it all on our own.

Literal interpretation of sacred texts always leads to bloodshed. The literal WORD of GOD is tied to the animal sacrifice in ancient Judaism, and therefore only figuratively tied to sacred, universal prayer in the modern sense. Literalism should only be employed by science where a passion for fact-based truth can be allowed full reign. Literalism has no place in religion.

But the toys in the department store in your mind {ideas} do correspond to the toys you like to play with in the world we share. Balls and bats and little girls' cats {pussies} are thoughts about the human body that you probably don't want to talk about out loud. You'd rather just continue to play mind games. But at least you've now read that your frequent return to that department in your mind where you love to finger the merchandise makes some sense in a figurative world, even if that activity has literal consequences.

Faith based only on logic or reasons is irrational. Faith comes from your soul, but it has a summer home in your heart where reason resides. And it has a department store in your head where you can buy anything you need if you've got the gelt {Yiddish: money}.

Science can't afford to be metaphoric, symbolic or spiritually comparative, and religion can't afford not to be.

Taking Torah literally is not the answer. The basis for the State of Israel isn't in Torah, but historical precedence. We were there first. The State of Israel will survive literally and figuratively so long as the world exists. The Christian anti-Semites and Muslim Israel-haters will have to reconcile their hatred within themselves or die in the process of turning their GOD/GOD/G O D into whatever attributes of gold or gelt they happen to be dancing around on that day.

Anti-Semitism is "alchemy" {Arabic al-kimiya: possibly derived from ancient Egyptian word "kemi" meaning "black"}. Alchemy endeavors to turn base metal into gold. All alchemy is anti-Judaic. It attempts to build castles in the sky by removing the spiritual grounding that GOD gave to the Jewish people: guilt. If you want to turn darkness into gold, you're going to employ evil intentions.

Contemplation Verses Prayer

Prayer in today's modern context is no longer a conversation we're having *with* GOD. It's a conversation we're having with ourselves *with* GOD present. No one can presume to be having a conversation when one party is doing all the talking. Eve and the serpent may have conversed, but Adam had been communing with GOD long before he got mixed up with those two.

The concept of prayer has to become a dialogue a man has with himself that he sincerely believes GOD overhears and responds to with tailor-made lessons in justice, mercy and generosity. It's not GOD who doesn't pay attention to our vindictive thoughts, hateful feelings and covetous desires. It's our own conscience that isn't listening attentively while we pray.

If your conscience isn't stopping you from time to time while you pray, it isn't doing its job. If you don't filter the bullshit you're telling yourself, what do you expect GOD to do about it?

GOD is listening to our thoughts, feelings and nonjudgmental conclusions whether we want HIM to or not. The challenge for us is to listen to them as well. GOD lives most vividly in the imagination of mankind. HE made us in HIS image so we'd come to think and feel about ourselves as *we* do, not as HE does. GOD loves diversity, so long as it works well with what HE's already got going. But *diverse* doesn't mean *contrary*. Contrary is an emotional reaction without a soulful reason backing it up.

Prayer has moved out of the second person {I/THOU/THOU/T H O U relationship} Abrahamic man held in the past. Today prayer begins with "me, myself and I" in communion with one another. This is the conversation each of us must consciously present to GOD for scrutiny. Prayer is a trinity of personal revelations about your head, heart and conscience shared with GOD in your own preferred way so that you're enlightened from your experience and from the gift of sharing it with HIM. It should never be about HIM. It should always be about your standing of yourself before HIM. If not, you'll continue to project your conscience out onto others, and you'll never get it to turn toward you.

That's not to say you shouldn't have feelings for GOD. When you look at the blatant killing, cheating, stealing, lying and coveting in this world, it should bring you to tears at how GOD must be wringing HIS hands at what we're doing to one another down here. After spending millions of years in building us a home and thousands of years elevating our sensibilities to appreciate HIS efforts, some people throw it all away with immoral conduct without a second thought. I feel sorry for GOD about that. But I don't feel sorry for them.

We're all on the other side of our inner Egypt. Childhood's end has come and gone. We're too old to try to cross back over our Red Sea. But many are still too inexperienced to go forward with conscious regard for their spiritual destination. And yet, we can all agree that we know too much to stay right where we are. We have no choice but to move forward together.

The promise is real, but the journey is unique. If there are bands of color in your rainbow you missed seeing growing up, you'll receive them as you age if you honor your inner Earth. If you didn't experience the red {anger}; yellow {fear}; or blue {sorrow} on the ascent – you'll see the lavender of "freed love" and purple mountain's majesty as you descend into older age. It's all been personalized since it was first given to Noah. The flood can only now happen to individuals, not collectively to all of humanity. We should all take GOD at HIS WORD.

Torah has been reinvented and fused with other religious traditions many times, but always in the direction of deeper, more personal levels of experience of the self; always asserting the divine importance of the individual's relationship with his Maker. Christianity and Islam are the children of Torah, not the children of Israel. And, we all know how difficult it is to raise children…

What was once a tiny, religious practice for a disparate group of Israelites that separated themselves from ancient Egyptians and idol worship has been disseminated to half the world through the two great Abrahamic religions: Christianity and Islam. Jesus took up the cause against materialism in Jerusalem that Moses and Aaron began at the incident of the Golden Calf a thousand years before on their way to Jerusalem. And Islam took up the issue of consequences for not using time as a spiritual tool for redemption. The conflicts between Muslims and Jews today will move us all through Jerusalem to a higher level of spiritual awareness as the world learns to let the modern Jews who live in Israel welcome everyone as a guest at their table in The Land GOD gave us.

The Jewish people were GOD's first Chosen People, HIS first catalyst for spiritual change. But HE continued by giving the world spiritual transformation through Jesus and spiritual transcendence through the message of T H E P R O P H E T Mohammed. If HE could first choose a prince {Moses}, then a tradesman {Jesus} and lastly an illiterate member of the poorest class {Mohammed} to represent HIS plan, you'd think we could spend a little more time and effort looking for ways to make Friday, Saturday and Sunday into a three-day weekend for the spiritually faithful everywhere in the West.

We're all capable of changing the world, transforming one another and transcending ourselves. But it takes curiosity about yourself to do so. You can't take your life for granted and then expect great rewards in the near future or "after" you die. Jesus succeeded in describing the promise of a piece of the pie for everyone. But T H E P R O P H E T Mohammed made it clear that the size of that slice would depend on you. Both were champion of individuality, not mindless, group loathing.

The Universality Of Leviticus

The man who develops an inner Aaron becomes a high priest, a psychologist, unto himself. He officiates over the inner Tabernacle in his heart. He doesn't need words to prove the exalted status of his feelings. He knows his thoughts and feelings will be reconciled separately by GOD/GOD, whether or not his own soul {G O D} is up to doing so.

The pain and suffering of children in the Abrahamic world should be enough cause for adults to band together to help one another. What will it take to bring Jews, Christians and Muslims together to embrace one another's beliefs: an uprising in China against the West? a pandemic? an invasion by aliens? or do we just need a pill that will turn everyone gay?

The man who develops an inner Moses becomes a PROPHET, a sociologist, unto himself. He officiates over the 600,000 voices {ideas} in his head that he must safely bring to a state of survival and protection from a world that can be very cruel. He has to keep his head screwed on tight. And he has to become a psychologist like Aaron. He has to tend to his inner flame.

Brotherhood is personified as the cooperative spirit of these two biblical characters of Torah as they work through the decrees in The Book of Leviticus with individual goals for how to turn these laws into a policy of self-knowledge for the sake of self-love. An Aaron may have little to say on the subject. He may only work off intuition and gut instinct, while a Moses needs words, even if he stutters and shutters as he expels them into consciousness.

GOD's design for man from within produces the wisdom that we can bestow on others without the need for brotherhood if we're all classmates with one Teacher under one roof {sky}. What matters is your interpretation of these laws in such a way that you can justify you to yourself, not to GOD/GOD/G O D. Using these laws to tell others how to behave is not the purpose in following them.

In the early 20th Century, Leviticus was inadvertently democratized by Sigmund Freud and disseminated worldwide through the science of psychology. In this new century, we have the opportunity to personalize this process even further through the wisdom of Torah when combined with the love in The Gospels and the generosity of spirit in The Quran.

Just as you ought to learn how to sacrifice yourself for your own best interest, you should love yourself for the same reason. Dutifully doing what others tell you is right won't cut it anymore. You ought to question what you're told, and agree or disagree with yourself, with good reason.

Strange Fire

The Metaphor Of Familiar Fire

The sons of Aaron, Nadav and Avihu, take a pan, build a fire in it, and put incense upon the fire. They bring that אֵשׁ זָרָה {ESH ZARA: strange fire} before GOD in the inner sanctum of The Tabernacle. A fire shoots out of the pan, burns them, and they die. [Leviticus 10]

The concept of *strange* fire can't be understood without first reviewing the idea of *familiar* fire. The overarching metaphor is 'truth as fire.' But, to know the truth, you first have to know yourself. You must begin by separating those parts of yourself that you're familiar with from those parts that are strange, odd or unfamiliar.

In the spirit of self-knowledge, you should begin the exploration of fire with its basic properties, which are:

1. Illumination
2. Heat
3. Burn
4. Mystery/Beauty
5. Smoke
6. Sound
7. Smell

The metaphors inherent in these characteristics of fire can be broken down as follows:

1. Illumination	Wisdom
2. Heat	Love
3. Burn	Purification
4. Mystery/Beauty	The mystery and beauty of you
5. Smoke	Prayer
6. Sound	Calling, Mission
7. Smell	Intuition

Fire is the universal container for our universal characteristics. These seven characteristics of man, acknowledged in every society since the dawn of time, with practice, can be observed from within. Your own inner fire can be acknowledged, ignited, stoked, fed, and shared. You can learn to touch the eternal flame in you, get a feel for yourself through self-knowledge, and not get burned.

The seven characteristics of fire also lead to the properties of spiritual healing. With understanding of fire through metaphor, you can repair your relationship with yourself.

You're a container of self-healing properties that you should share with yourself before you go out to try to heal the world. Although the fire within emanates out, the flames lick at you before they reach others.

If you don't feed your own flame first, it'll dim over time. Lack of awareness of your inner flame will leave you with less conscious awareness of yourself, and you'll find your life more worrisome and anxious than mysterious. You'll find yourself *acting* as if you were warm inside, in order to try to look more like others. And your insincerity may make you yearn for greater warmth from others than they're prepared to give.

The Metaphor Of Strange Fire

The opposite of the familiar characteristics of fire actually aren't unfamiliar at all. The *illumination* of familiar fire that's normally interpreted as wisdom becomes strange and unfamiliar when fire becomes destructive.

The opposite of wisdom is foolishness. Foolishness can ignite a person, family, community, nation or religion – spreading intentions that diffuse light in ways that become less illuminating.

The *warmth* of fire is love. The passionate love of lovers is, of course, hotter than the inconstant love of brothers and pleasant, albeit it less than warm, feelings of acquaintances. Passionate lovemaking isn't any more constructive than friendship or acquaintanceship. These are continuums from hot through warm to cool that use the metaphor of 'fire as feeling' to describe how we emote towards others.

It's a fallacy to conclude that you have to be passionate about everything. It's a fallacy to think that you even have to care about things that don't really move you. It's possible to recognize that you may not love everything or everyone. You may even feel warmly only towards some good things.

Unfamiliar fire is strange. Strange fire is cold, not hot. For a desert people thousands of years ago who many never have experienced ice, nothing could burn more strangely. The emotional attribute of strange fire burns in a whole other way. The burn of fire and ice doesn't decrease. They're simply strangers to one another. They're both destructive, but in completely different ways.

Apathy isn't evil and passion isn't good. These aren't continuums like a dimmer switch that turns the feelings in a room into different pleasant vibes. The apathy of ice and passion of fire are as different as they could be.

Fire and ice are GOD's way of alerting us to all the options of emotions in between. What exists around us is a mirror of what exists within. Red, hot passion and bluish-white apathy aren't attitudes you can summon forth. You don't have to feel guilty for feeling or not feeling a feeling. With enough self-worth you can move through tolerating and accepting your feelings to admiring them just as they are.

If you have no feelings for some causes or peoples, that doesn't necessarily mean that you're shut down. It just means that that room in your house is painted in a cooler color. When you go into another room within, you may find the color on that wall much warmer, hence your feelings for that topic are naturally more passionate.

The familiar burn of fire is emotionally equivalent to the hurt that comes from feeling hated or ignored. Apathy is the strangest of all fires because apathy burns like ice freezes. Utter indifference, a sense of needlessness and meaninglessness are clues to how you deal with people differently from those who express themselves more passionately.

Some people are simply cauterized with apathy. Rather than have to go through the painful feelings of disappointment, regret and sorrow about the things others are passionate about, they perform a form of emotional freeze on themselves until they're numb inside. Then they have no ability or need to feel anything. This allows their apathy to be expressed through lack of moral conduct rather than immoral conduct.

This freezing process goes so deep that these people don't realize that it isn't always indifference, but distaste that motivates them. This is why the lowest level of hell isn't described as a place that burns with the hottest fire, but is described as a frozen lake.

The mysterious and beautiful aspects of fire we sense when we peer into its flame lead us to associate fire with the awe of undiscovered truth. Therefore, the attraction of a *strange* fire would draw us toward ugliness and falsehood. Horror, terror, disgust and revulsion are the attributes of strange fire that some fear, and others find appealing. GOD/GOD/G O D makes people in mysterious ways.

The Metaphor Of Smoke And Frost

People may pray with great devotion, but their understanding of GOD/GOD/G O D rises up only so far, and then it dissipates into thin air. If you haven't been taught to understand the connection of smoke to prayer, your religious institution hasn't taught you about its roots in Judaism and Temple practices.

Smoke literally cures meats, and prayer figuratively cures souls. The opposite of smoke in metaphoric terms is frost: the refusal to communicate on spiritual matters because GOD has offended you. Frost descends. This creates existential aloneness. Where there's no smoke, there's no fire.

Ice and frostiness are found in apathy and emotional distancing. There's the darkness and cold of being alone or living as though in an igloo where warmth within compared to the cold outside holds a whole other meaning.

There are those with a mission in life who feel called to do something special. They figuratively hear the awesome roar of the fire within them, and they use that resonance to inform their actions. The opposite of a *calling* is the spiritual silence or simply ambient inner noise that keeps a person from doing things the way others are motivated to do them. This is what fog and frost represent.

Strange fire {ice} doesn't makes it impossible for you to contribute to society. Strange fire only makes you useful in a particular way. Just as you might want to celebrate the summer, there are reasons to celebrate the winter season, as well. Many are called, but few are chosen because they haven't been disciplined in applying the hints in the world around us to their world within. Be useful in the ways you can be useful and in those ways you can't, simply go another away.

There are those who have no sense of this world as a creation by GOD to teach them moral conduct toward themselves. They can acknowledge the outer world, but they can't connect it to their world within. They ought to be observers, not participants.

If you're blind, deaf and unable to speak about this world with deep understanding of these truths, you should smell your way where you're going. You should develop your *intuition*.

The ability to smell a fire that's gone out is a metaphor for the gift of intuition. Strange fire speaks to those who rely on their nose to acknowledge the smell of a fire that's no longer burning or the smell of frost in the air. They're guided by something they can't literally see.

The man who has the ability to smell fire and ice is ready to search for God within because he knows what his nose tells him. The man without a nose that works spiritually on his behalf may have bitten it off to spite his face…

The human characteristics associated with "strange" fire are:

1. Lack of illumination	Foolishness
2. Coolness	Indifference

3. Frostbite	Apathy
4. Mystery without beauty	The mystery in ugliness
5. Frost not smoke	Aloneness without GOD
6. Lack of Sound	Movement without direction
7. Lack of Smell	Literalness, lack of intuition

What Moses is describing for his audience are the properties we associate with ice. We all personify the attributes of ice, and that should send a chill up and down your spine because there's ice in your veins, too.

Despite the fact that we're all cold and off putting to ourselves at times, we may find it difficult-to-impossible to associate this inner attribute with the natural world. We yearn to be *cool*, but may end up being *cold* sometimes, instead.

If you don't take the concept of strange fire personally, you aren't going to feel sympathetic to what happened to Nadav and Avihu. You're going to read about them and dismiss their fate as inexplicable and of no concern to you. You're going to shrug your shoulders and read on, without questioning how their death affected their father, Aaron, the High Priest, whose livelihood depended on tending fire. You're going to deny that this story says anything you need to know to make heads or tails of your place in this world.

The Uses Of Strange Fire

Our parents didn't only model the characteristics associated with fire. They also modeled the characteristics associated with ice. GOD put the 5th Commandment on the first tablet, and not the second, because HE wanted us to learn about fire and ice as attributes through those human beings who came closest to us when we were young and emotionally impressionable.

Our parents were the first people in our life who used strange fire as a teaching tool. They were cold to us when they wanted to indirectly tell us we were disobedient. They distanced themselves from us emotionally with indifference, disregard, aloofness, condescension, disdain, derision and sometimes even with contempt when we defied their intentions for us to the extreme. And that burned us with disappointment more than any burner on a stove we ever put our hand on. And so we moved, instead, in the direction of apathy to avoid one kind of burn {fire}, only to discover another {ice}.

Cain was burned by GOD with ice when HE didn't accept his sacrifice. When you feel that GOD has offended you by ignoring your pleas to please, you, too, may respond with ice. You might even say that Abraham struggled with strange fire when he took Isaac up to Mt. Moriah.

Our parents acted foolishly, dispassionately and apathetically toward us at times, and we learned how to be those ways from them. They were in some ways ugly to us. They told us lies, albeit to protect us. They made us feel lonely and useless, even if it wasn't their intention to do so. Until we recreated strange fire in ourselves, we may have felt there was no direction we could go that would please them.

A sense of aimlessness may even have made it challenging for us to find a job we could embrace passionately. And even if we were able to make a living, strangers modeled what we didn't already know about the attributes of strange fire.

Even though the Israelites were wandering around in a desert, Nadav and Avihu figuratively froze to death in the same way that Cain was figuratively frostbitten. We all

suffer from emotional or spiritual frostbite, even if it doesn't kill us. We all know how deadening some human feelings can feel. We died many times in life from strange fire. It didn't happen to us as it did to Nadav and Avihu, just once.

It's easier to feel sorry for these two sons of Aaron once you can identify with what they went through. We're all as dead as they are in some ways. We've figuratively lost fingers and toes that make us spiritually weave as we walk and clumsy when we try to do something that requires emotional dexterity. Strange fire has scorched our very soul. We're frozen in places deep down inside, and we wouldn't even know it if Moses hadn't given us this story as a clue to how we look figuratively inside in some places inside.

There's really nothing strange about strangers. They're just people who burn hot and cold in ways we don't yet understand and appreciate in ourselves. Our parents were even once strangers to us. We had to get to know them, and that wasn't easy. We just became so accustomed to our parents' particular ways of expressing fire and ice that we thought of it as "normal." Now we can see that everyone else expresses the metaphor for these properties, too.

So, when Torah describes Nadav and Avihu as having died by strange fire we can, not only imagine how Aaron must have felt; we can imagine how our own unfamiliarity with strange fire has caused us to freeze ourselves out of a more knowledgeable relationship of ourselves. The purpose of this story in Leviticus is to remind us to melt ourselves first, to use our own inner flame righteously.

The easiest way to melt your emotions is by throwing ice cubes into your flame. The emotional runoff is called "verklempt" in Yiddish. It means to be all choked up over something you can't quite put into words. Verklempt is a physical reaction to the feeling of sentimental. This is a productive reaction because it softens us inside.

GOD accounts for the death of Nadav and Avihu, saying, "AMONG THOSE WHO APPROACH ME I WILL BE PROVED HOLY. IN THE SIGHT OF ALL THE PEOPLE I WILL BE HONORED." [Leviticus 10:3]

"NADAV" means "GENEROUS" in Hebrew, and "AVICHU" means' "HE IS MY FATHER." Our generous nature may turn us to ice over time if it isn't reciprocated. Our relationship with our father often does so, as well. You may now be able to see more of yourself in these biblical characters. By throwing ice on your fire, you may get more humane reactions out of yourself.

Every man's inner Aaron must go on without his two devoted inner sons after the great disappointment in his life. When you know you've suffered two deaths in life, be they literal, emotional or spiritual, you learn from your losses to listen more closely for your mission.

When you realize there are some parts of you that are as cold as ice inside and others that are ready to explode like a volcano, you learn that your inner world is real. This inner, environmental truth about your psychological, inner landscape has sociological effects that parallel how we're all interfacing with each other and the planet.

Fire And Appetite

The metaphor 'fire as a hunger' applies to human urges. Fires figuratively feed; flames lick; and conflagrations consume. Fire has a voracious appetite. And all appetites can be destructive if they're allowed to burn out of control.

It was Adam and Eve's craving for knowledge despite having been forbidden by GOD from doing so that ended their idyllic sojourn in Eden. And GOD's reverse psychology in prohibiting the eating of the fruit from The Tree of knowledge only triggered their hunger for knowledge and thirst for positive emotional regard that we yearn for today all the more. This was evidenced by their display of guilt after stealing. Tell a child not to learn something, and you've just created a world-class expert on that subject…

Forbidden fruit is sweet. It feeds you. It quenches your thirst. But because man generally sharpens his appetites with permissiveness and frequent self-indulgences, the possibility of getting burned by some of his appetites and frozen out of others of them becomes greater all the time. His ego, like his stomach, tends to grow over a lifetime.

We can't refuse to allow people to play with matches. That misses the point of using Scripture as a living, engagement with man for meaningful change. Matches don't burn people. Fire and ice burn people. Therefore, we have to teach people how to play safely from within.

The hunger for food, sex, money, love and learning link everyone to the pursuit of freedom over autonomy. But you can't learn about responsibility if you're not given some autonomy to act unwisely. The roots of civilized society lie in our Judeo-Christian traditions. Cut yourself off from your roots, and watch what happens to your leaves. They'll curl up like Europe's in the 1930's. Death and destruction will abound. The roots of your Tree will release their hold on the Rock beneath them, and your Tree will come tumbling down, causing havoc for all those around.

This is observable in our wars, our war on drugs and the culture wars. When you don't go to the source of the problem, you find yourself wrestling strangers, just as Jacob had to do the night before he reunited with Esau.

Ironically, it's often those who are the most familiar with Scripture le who are the most reticent to give others the autonomy they need to define their own boundaries. Unlike GOD, who let Adam and Eve learn the consequences of their actions for themselves in a controlled setting, man often insists on curtailing his "brother's" moral education with unrealistic limitations based on prudery, not science. Killing journalists, legislating against gays, bombing synagogues and sticking noses up woman's vaginas through legal means are not good ways to assist GOD as HE teaches HIS classes. And passing out guns to one and all like communion wafers isn't wise either.

Most Muslims would love to destroy Israel and strangle Zionism. Most Democrats would love to look at this world separate from religion. And most Republicans like sticking their noses up the orifices of men and women below their bible belt, where they have no business going.

Curiosity has motivated every child on Earth since the beginning of time to touch fire even though he was told not to. The attraction to the illumination, warmth, purification, mystery, smoke, sound and smell is irresistible until a child gets burned, looks back on what happened, and is able to say he's a better person for the scars the experience left him with.

We can never become familiar enough with the familiar qualities of fire. But we must learn to talk more openly about the attributes of strange fire, and teach our children how to deal with, and avoid, them. There's no need for our children to literally die like Nadav and Avihu, or suffer afterwards, as did Aaron. We need to become a priest unto ourselves to

teach our adult, inner children about fire and ice, so we don't exacerbate the lesson Torah is trying to teach us in the abstract.

Society once insisted that self-love would leave us cold and narcissistic. But Torah teaches that although strange fire can be dangerous and deadly, it's a necessary part of life.

Freedom begins with the ability to let yourself go. If you can't let yourself out of the Egypt of your own making you'll never begin to understand the struggle going on in your inner Tabernacle.

Strange Fire And Self-Love

Those who are ablaze with the liberty for learning with their heart about themselves develop a faith in themselves over time that the threat of death, itself, can't extinguish. In fact, for the truly self-loving, being born was the worst thing that ever happened to them. It all got better after that if circumstances don't recreate that horror. The end will justify the means right from the start if you take the adage from Moses "LET MY PEOPLE GO" [Exodus 9:13] personally, beginning with yourself.

The truth is that "IN THE BEGINNING" GOD created you. Nothing that happened prior to that should matter to you as much as what happened when you began. And all the stories of Genesis are intended to tell you how much you should matter to yourself. In Exodus 22, GOD says "YOU SHALL NOT WRONG A STRANGER OR OPPRESS HIM, FOR YOU WERE STRANGERS IN THE LAND OF EGYPT." And by Leviticus 19, HE's moved a little closer to you by saying "THE STRANGER WHO RESIDES WITH YOU SHALL BE TO YOU AS THE NATIVE AMONG YOU, AND YOU SHALL LOVE HIM AS YOURSELF, FOR YOU WERE ALIENS IN THE LAND OF EGYPT."

These quotes, when viewed through the metaphor 'fire as aspect of the self,' should suddenly become personally apparent. You see that the GOD that walked so noisily in the Garden of Eden is now treading softly, getting all the closer to you, not wanting to frighten you. To turn your back on HIM now would be a shame.

"Strange fire" is necessary to counter familiar fire. You need to learn to cool off without getting so cold that you resemble the dead. So throw a few ice cubes on the fire inside when your passions flare up. It's permitted. It's helpful. It will be a kindness to yourself that you'll be grateful for.

Some insist on loving GOD without loving themselves. They'd prefer to set everything and everyone around them aflame rather than ignite themselves with self-love. They're cynical of everything. They'd prefer to build Temples outside themselves as a sign of GOD's greatness, rather than build their Temple within with faith in themselves. They'd rather be dishonest, insincere and inauthentic than reap the humble rewards of liking themselves more than others.

The fire that burns within you differentiates you from the rest of us. The lava from volcanoes; light from the sun; sparks from electricity; luminosity of lasers; and invisible beams from microwaves - can't hold a candle to the one fire GOD lit in you. To act like a man, you need only light the world with your special flame.

Strange Fire And Other Love

Life is supposed to be a gift, but it's a gift that can sometimes be quite burdensome. So, you've got to give your love to others whether or not you receive it back with appreciation. No one is thankful for his life until he's got a soupçon of gratitude to give to

GOD for having become better than he was before. Life is a gift you can only enjoy if you like yourself immensely from time to time. Don't worry about whether others like you. Their tastes are hard to tell. Work on liking yourself from your conscience, not your head or heart, and you'll make great strides in becoming more soulful.

It's so easy to slip into cynicism by proclaiming that no good deed ever goes unpunished. But your punishments aren't coming from the outside in. Those are mirrors of the punishment you're putting yourself through by not acknowledging the appreciation of your gifts to humanity. You deserve more. And if you don't give it to yourself, you'll have no other option left than to blame others for not giving it to you.

GOD plays favorites. HE's the ultimate psychologist who knows how to play good Cop/bad Cop. HE gives you hints about who you morally identify with: blacks or whites, gays or straights, or males or females. And until you've been through the lessons in identifying with them both, you'll wonder what you're still doing wrong. HE gives you a personal, moral symmetry so you'll become curious to look for duality from within.

The fork in every road is the expression that describes the beginning of duality. Taking one road or the other won't get you where you want to be: tranquil. The only way to achieve tranquility is to fly over both roads and get a complete lay of the land. Don't try to trudge the road of destiny. Fly over your fate and you'll achieve your destiny.

GOD is GOD. There is only one GOD. And yet HE consistently takes us on these journeys of mystery that expand our tolerance, acceptance and, yes, even our admiration of ourselves. It's all so Hindu. There are millions of HIM in reflection around each one of us, and they all boil down to just one within; a GOD you can only talk to in a flame as did Moses.

The Mysteriousness Of Strange Fire

The loss and deep sorrow Aaron endures at the death of his two sons is all the more tragic when you realize they died by fire. *Fire*, the very conduit to GOD that Aaron is in charge of, becomes the weapon GOD unleashes on Aaron's flesh and blood. Aaron, who uses fire as the medium to exchange man's love for GOD's love, has to watch fire destroy those he loves the most.

To become a priest unto yourself, you have to learn the lessons of Nadav and Avihu without literally getting yourself killed just doing your job. You have to know when to use Torah to avoid the outcomes of the characters in Torah and when to strive to be just like them.

The transformational process from boorish animal to hopeful human being just a little lower than an angel leads Aaron toward a transcendence of his circumstances. But, it also leads him through anguish and sorrow to a bitter end. He's forced to sacrifice his two eldest sons to GOD's will, give up his position as High Priest to another son. Not surprisingly, Aaron dies shortly after this. [Numbers 20]

Your march to freedom may begin with a religious leader, but you may have to leave him behind as you get close to your destination.

Strange Fire And Superstition

Angels are considered to be messengers of GOD. They're described as having a halo of light above their head that signifies the brilliance of their soul as it illuminates their thoughts and all their actions. They have wings like a bird to remind us of our movement

through spirit towards GOD's realm. Angels hold the virtues of the illumination, love, truth and beauty that shine down to Earth from a heavenly source. Angels are *familiar* fire personified.

And demons are thought to be messengers of the "devil." They're supposed to have wings that are more comparable to those of a bat's. They're described as flying through the night, not the day. They have a tail that associates them with animals rather than men.

"demons" represent the power of a combination of sexual and moral depravity. They have the ice in the veins that leads to apathy and utter revulsion of goodness. The power of "demons" and "devils" is associated with black magic, the power of guilt. Their power is cold, beguiling and destructive. And "they" live at the bottom of hell on a lake of ice.

Strange fire is synonymous with "devils" and "demons." "they" represents the cold, dark desires, urges and appetites that are deadening, disruptive and loathsome. Strange fire is synonymous with a fire that leaves you blinded, apathetic and hateful. Strange fire used to be associated with Judaism. For the past few hundred years in Europe, it has also been associated with homosexuality.

In terms of old fashioned, "religious" interpretations of The Bible, GOD may be everywhere around you, but the "devil" is supposed to know how to worm his way into your heart from every orifice in your body (especially your anus). They say the "devil" is as beguiling as the serpent in The Creation Story.

The "devil" is a stranger who'll fuck you over. "he's" the gay dude who wants to sodomize you. "he" threatens your masculinity because "he" finds you girlishly vulnerable and pretty. "he" wants to penetrate you through your asshole and fill you with "his" black cum. All "he" thinks about day and night is how to find new and more gruesome ways to sodomize you so as to destroy your soul and every hope you have of entering heaven.

The "devil" is the perversion personified by every homosexual. The "religious" right doesn't care about gay marriage so much as about the proliferation of the "devil" through all "his" disguises. They think the "devil" is the one who holds the "gay agenda" that they're all worried about.

The superstitious believe that "devils" and "demons" penetrate the soul of man and eat away at him like a worm would destroy an apple. According to old, European, religious dogmas that still persist amongst the uneducated in Judaism, Christianity and Islam today, we're supposed to seek GOD/GOD/G O D in a house of worship and avoid the dark places in our own lonely heart where these "demons" lurk and will nab us if we aren't careful. We're supposed to admit we're too weak and meek to keep "them" at bay. Curiosity about ourselves is the "devil's" workshop, a place we're told we dare not go alone.

The "devil" is a loner. "he's" the gay man or Jew who has no friends. "he's" anyone whose trains of thought go to lonely stations that the rest of us should avoid getting off.

If a man sticks anything in his anus, he wonders whether he's being influenced by the "devil." Even psychological, self-penetration is considered by wackadoos as a form of sodomy that accentuates evil inclinations. They think a man who knows too much about himself will lose control of himself. They think a one-way street should never be rerouted to handle traffic going two ways. It's unnatural! It's obscene! It's ungodly!...

Psychology is the enemy of old, dogmatic, religious doctrines because psychology holds all religious symbols with equal curiosity. Psychology loves to play hide and seek with GOD, looking for HIM in the darkest, coldest spots on Earth and the most vacuous place

in inner space. Psychologists know that there isn't an anus on Earth that's as cold and dank as some men's hearts.

Psychology has killed the personification of evil using the light of science of the mind. But some still resurrect the "devil" daily, and writhe around in glee at thoughts of what "he's" doing to those they loathe.

Psychology has illuminated man's inner landscape with approval and self-esteem, but the sick and twisted insist on turning off the light in their soul with denial. They're consumed with dilemmas that concern them far too much to be altruistic.

Psychology has taught us how to like and love ourselves as a work in progress. Those who are truly religious {spiritual} understand the concept of the God within. They already know that the love of GOD/GOD/G O D is so powerful that it emanates simultaneously within and around them. They know that GOD, The Father; God, The Son, and G O D, The Holy Spirit/A L L A H– are all aspects of the one Creator who made us all.

They know they don't need to fear illumination and self-love. Shadows in their imagination don't frighten them because they know love is universal and wisdom, eternal. They see that the eternal flame that GOD/GOD/G O D lit in them is the cause of the shadows they cast. The coolness associated with their own shadow is to blame for all the strange fire they produce. They're dedicated to knowing themselves no matter which way it burns.

Facing The Abominable

Homosexuality And Strange Fire

For gay men, Leviticus 18, the commentary on sexual relations, is the most important, albeit controversial, segment of Torah today. Herein lies the infamous passage in which GOD declares, "IT'S AN ABOMINATION FOR A MAN TO LIE WITH ANOTHER MAN AS WITH A WOMAN."

Those who are ignorant, frightened and superstitious perceive homosexuality as "strange fire," a cup of ice that perverts the goals of good, hot men. They see homosexuality as deadly and cold. They fear homosexuality will lead good men on the path of hatred to utter apathy of GOD/GOD/G O D.

They can't see this declaration by GOD as more reverse psychology. Once you consume forbidden fruit, you'll always go back for more. And once you sleep with yourself as you would with a woman (i.e. have sexual relations with yourself} you'll never stop that, either.

It's a trick question on a test. It's a statement made by The Teacher for you to take personally, not publicly, as is most of The Book of Leviticus.

Gay people are, in truth, as refreshing as chilled beer, as quenching and sweet as a slurpy. We're air conditioning in the sultry summer, fans for those in The Bible Belt who need fresh air. Give up the gay and sensuality goes away.

Being sexual by being gay isn't a behavior we choose, a switch that can be turned *off* by GOD/GOD/G O D or *on* by the "devil." Sexual attraction is a dimmer switch, and we must each find the sensual light that's right for our eyes. Being gay is about a spiritual expression of GOD's/GOD's/G O D's love that each man and woman must find for him or herself in a unique way.

$$x + y = 1$$
$$x + x = 1$$

Some want to solve for 'x' and some want to solve for 'y.' If you want to solve for 'x' and you're male, that doesn't mean you're going to be gay. And if you're a woman who wants to solve for 'x' that doesn't mean that you're going to be a lesbian. It only means you're going to be curious about a side of you that's been suppressed.

Straight men's inability to serve women and children adequately forced women to take on roles previously held only by males. Because straight males were terribly irresponsible and disloyal to their family in the past, women had to divorce their husbands {or not marry to begin with}; enter the work force to support their family; and raise their children, thereby taking on the roles of both parents. Homosexuality among men didn't cause these role changes for women in society; male heterosexuals did.

What it means to be a man is in question in this day and age. A man is no longer just the roles he plays as son, brother, husband, uncle and father, whether or not he plays them well or poorly. His role in his own life has become something personal and important to himself.

If a man isn't curious about himself, he's like petrified wood, rock pretending to be real. And he'll only have himself to blame if he fails at the roles he tries to don. His parents, wife and children will disrespect him. And he'll have to wonder whether he's going to get expelled from the school of life early with terrible grades or graduate, and then be very disappointed with the nursery school diploma he's earned for his lack of effort. Then he'll

see that he only has himself to blame for having made an abysmal impression on The Teacher.

Curiosity about yourself is natural and normal. If you aren't interested in yourself, why should anyone else be? If you don't find yourself curious and attractive, people will find ways to harness you like a domesticated beast of burden to pull their plow.

The "religious" fundamentalists in all the Abrahamic religions are afraid of homosexuality, not because they're afraid it'll douse their passion for the opposite sex like water poured on a flame, but because they're suspicious of any and all forms of self-love. They're only interested in loving others, never themselves. That they consider sacrilegious. They don't want to have to love the penis GOD gave them. Many don't even believe they deserve their own testicles. And they're absolutely right in both cases. You have to earn your junk, man!

Fundamentalists are in a living hell, tortured by guilt, angry and frightened by strange fire, and full of self-pity, which is the only reason they ever cry. They never cry for anyone from another faith or for anyone holding a philosophy other than their own. They can't even get along with other groups who hate as virulently as they do. Neither cooperation nor conspiracy is a unification process they can live with.

They're pharaohs presiding over slaves, and they like it that way. They think they've got the "system" all figured out. They think they've created a "boy's club" that's different from anything that ever happened in the past.

But, in truth, they hate all penises and testicles equally, including their own. The last thing they'd ever know what to do with is self-love. They'd rather project their love onto any hateful principle they can find than have to love and like themselves, especially that dirty duct that snakes through them from head to tail with a hole at either end. They creep themselves out even more than they creep anyone else out. They're men with assholes who hate assholes. And that explains why they behave like assholes.

The whole world is very interested in telling the Jews that anti-Semitism is our own fault, that we cause it. But when are they going to realize that anti-Christian sentiments and Islamophobia is caused in the same way, from the inside out? It's just as easy to hate a Christian or Muslim as it is to hate a Jew. Just look down at the penis you're holding when you pee, and contemplate what you've got in your hand. You know how you feel about yourself. You can't keep your secrets from yourself.

On the other hand, in Deuteronomy 16, Moses will say, "JUSTICE! JUSTICE YOU SHALL PURSUE." Those who don't want to pursue justice will get fatter and fatter on secularism, until they're so obese that it would be easier to get a camel through the eye of a needle than hoist them up by rope into heaven.

Jesus already addressed the issues of the self-indulgent; the materially rich who insist on remaining spiritually indigent. But what about the "religiously" rich who are spiritually and morally bankrupt? How do we convince religious leaders that they're going to lose their own loyalty when they discover they don't have real FAITH/FAITH/F A I T H because of their self-hate?

The Fear Of Sex: Boys And Homosexuality

Life is a spiritual process that draws you to GOD/GOD/G O D with love as you draw closer to yourself with admiration for your patience in learning about your love of life. But you've got to forgive yourself for your mistakes *after* you've atoned to those you hurt in

the process. Only then will you witness the subtle changes in thinking that occur each time you correct a mistaken thought or misplaced feeling.

GOD may surprise you with slight changes in your priorities that could make huge differences in the way you interface with the world around you. If you're not open to looking for these rewards with conscious regard, you'll see no reason for cleaning up your own house more often.

Many boys have homosexual encounters as a child as a way of discovering their relationship to their own penis and anus. These explorations of the male body bring up a modesty that a man should smile about later in life. Thanks to the "gay agenda," embarrassment, shame and humiliation has been dispensed with. Don't ever allow people to use their guilt ever against you again.

The fundamentalist becomes more and more afraid of himself over time because he sees himself becoming more and more impatient with others who live their lives differently from him. He can't suffer those who go against his principles because his guilt is constantly, unconsciously coming closer to home. His vile hatred of the stranger is a mirror of the guilt he can't face from within.

You might think that my vitriol is really about having twice tried to kill myself. You might think that living with a murderer is all that irritates me.

But you'd be wrong. I've rehabilitated myself. I'm no longer afraid of me or angry at myself for what I put myself through in the past. I was naïve to the ways of the world then. I was young and inexperienced. I didn't know how to handle myself better or how to protect myself from others.

I'm not only rehabilitated now. I'm wise. And I won't let people do to me what they did in the past.

When people fooled me the first time, the shame was on them. When they fooled me the second time, the shame was on me. But they're still fools fooling other people. My anger is now is only with them. Now I'm strong enough to stand up for the innocent who don't realize they're being fooled.

The "religious" fundamentalist may not run out of money. But time and patience begin to become scarce resources in the life of every "religious" zealot. He gets closer and closer to death, financially prepared for anything, but he doesn't have much inside worth taking with him when he leaves. He's "lost in "This Masquerade." {song by George Benson, lyrics by Leon Russell} He'll never win.

The Christian fundamentalist projected his impatience with himself onto Jews in Europe for thousands of years. In the past few hundred years it became fashionable in this country to direct his venom at blacks. Then it was gays. Now it's women in the workplace. The "simple pleasure" of finding a scapegoat for guilt is being denied the fundamentalist, and the shadow of his black heart projected is coming ever closer to home. It's closer to noon than it's ever been. He's guilt-ridden and is fighting to shrug off the light of day.

His problem is with himself, not others. And if he's over the age of 60, he should know he's half as old as Moses when he died, and twice as far from The Land he feels he was promised. Whether he's Jewish, Christian or Muslim, he's terrified that The Promised Land won't be given to him. It'll go to someone else more deserving, a Jew, a gay, or, GOD/GOD/G O D forbid, a woman!

The "religious" nuts have chosen to focus their attention on what women do with their vagina and men with their anus. And it's really not what's coming out of these holes that

concerns them, but what's going in: a penis. The problem always comes back to the penis. It's always about that beguiling serpent that has so much to say.

In a spiritual sense, an infant is a seed of what every man will one day become. A young lad is a sprout. An adolescent is a sapling in the springtime of life when he blossoms and blooms with the first "darling buds of May." [Shakespeare: Sonnet 18] A young man is a Tree of knowledge in the summer of life for fruits that aren't quite ready to be picked. A maturing man is a Tree in the autumn ready for harvest. And a mature, old man who has faith in himself is an evergreen Tree in the winter of his days. But, we're all still Trees in the orchard of reality.

Fundamentalist zealotry has always cut down those they don't happen to like, regardless of their intrinsic worth. It's shameful and irresponsible to treat people with the same calloused regard we've treated the great forests of America. Such people are ignorant of what Scripture teaches about metaphoric Trees. They have to insist on taking their Holy Book literally. There's no other way for them to give it to others with the animosity they're really feeling from within.

Forbidden Sexual Practices

Few realize that the portion in Leviticus claiming homosexuality is an abomination is a part of an overarching theme, one that describes THE LAWS prohibiting incest. Incest is not only forbidden in Judaism; it's forbidden on many literal and metaphoric levels in every world faith and philosophy. But a variety of physical expressions of love are prohibited that we must explore with an open mind if we're going to unpack them for spiritual and moral importance to us all.

From a scientific point of view, we know that incest produces physical abnormalities in offspring. From a moral point of view, there are a host of physical expressions of love that cause conflicts that disrupt relationships and damage the smooth workings of society. And from a spiritual point of view, abnormalities and conflicts begin as perversions of intimacy with the self that emanate out to others. These are all the bases of what GOD finds abhorrent and abominable as described in Leviticus 18.

The sexual attraction of a parent to a child is the gravest misuse of personal power. The potential for a child to sow and reap any kind of love, but especially self-love, is damaged when a parent picks his child like fruit with a ravenous, sexual hunger, and devours him like a forbidden fruit he thinks GOD will never notice is missing. Incest is spiritual cannibalism. It's a way of consuming your children like food.

Incest is the vilest form of idolatry and self-aggrandizement, seconded only by rape and molestation of other people's children. Incest figuratively burns, freezes, scars and attempts to spiritually deform children. In discussing forbidden, sexual practices, Torah wisely begins the discussion with a prohibition of sex between mother {or father} and child.

A child is a sprout of good and evil. He's not yet a Tree of knowledge of wisdom and love. He deserves to have the experience of picking himself in the biblical sense of THE WORD, rather than be singled out and figuratively eaten up alive by one of his parents.

Every child deserves self-intimacy long before he becomes intimate with anyone else. As children familiarize themselves with their budding sexuality, they naturally become curious about the guilty feelings that lie at the root of their desires and how those desires may bloom and blossom over time into the many beautiful pedals from which love unfolds.

Children become curious to touch the various forms of familiar and unfamiliar fire that burn within, as well they should. They learn that the colors in fire and ice correspond to the various colors of the emotions in their heart.

A child should be encouraged to touch himself in his own way, at his own time. He should be taught that the illumination and heat of his own flame is comforting and incredibly beautiful. The white light of infancy should shine down through the clouds of childhood when he reaches adolescence, and a rainbow should appear in his inner sky.

If you've lost this inner sign of hope, you can retrieve it with self-love. But you have to learn how to heal the unsightly inner scars of guilt that have disfigured us all in different ways. To glean modesty, humility and grace with yourself, you're going to have to come to terms with the mutilating effects of what you've been through that wasn't done out of informed choice.

By teaching our children to respect their passions, they'll learn how to use fire and ice more wisely than we did. The next generation will learn to deal with embarrassment in bed without shame. They'll learn to trust their feelings.

Kids today shouldn't judge themselves unworthy of what they think and feel. They should learn how to behave in bed as naturally as seeds learn to wrap their roots around rock and send up shoots through the ground into the light.

Children will always need to be protected from the morally vacant. Such men and women are terrorists who are willing to burn anyone to express the effects of the conflagration they've been through.

The truly incestuous are perverts and criminals who suck out the spirit of life from themselves, leaving their life black, vacant and bare. But, if you think this description of perversion applies to gay people or Jews, you're also a victim of some unspeakable misdeed that was perpetrated against you.

The Gradations Of Incest

In the first passage of Leviticus 18, we're told that sex must not be engaged in between family members. In the next passage, Torah extends the association of incest to in-laws. Incest is then extended beyond the realm of blood relations and in-laws to include a neighbor's wife. Lastly Torah extends the concept to the furthest degree, to sex with other men. But this continuum must be explored beyond the literal meaning of THE WORDS to glean their greater, spiritual intention.

Leviticus rocks the very foundation of the nature of young men's romantic feelings by implying that over time, every young man who says he's ready for marriage is nevertheless libel to break his promise of fidelity to his future wife with sex outside their marital bonds. This tendency in man is so powerful that the crime has to be linked to incest to force men to keep their vows of fidelity. Torah sees the integrity of the family as so crucial to society that the married man with a roving eye needs to be reminded by, and disgusted with, the idea of sex with his mother to stop him from committing adultery.

The desire to break his promise of fidelity comes from his penis, not his head or heart. His heart might later become emotionally involved with the person he had sex with, but the original spite was perpetrated by his penis on himself. The other person can be anything from a co-conspirator to an innocent victim of circumstances if they weren't aware that the man they had sex with is married.

The problem with infidelity in every age lies in man's desire for lust {sexual heat} and his equal curiosity about the mystery and beauty he perceives when he peers into the fire in his heart. He wants to love himself, but he doesn't always know how. He wants to know what the illumination and warm of love feels like. He just doesn't associate his attraction to another person with self-love. He doesn't realize his desires have been projected out of his inner world onto someone else.

Because straight men project their self-love onto women, they're particularly vulnerable not to recognize other-love for what it really is: self-love in projection. Because they don't literally have the body parts that most attract them, they excuse their desires as originating in the other person. Men perceive women as provocative, alluring and "asking for it" because they don't recognize the beguiling voice of their own serpent talking to their heart. This wouldn't happen if men were more in touch with their 'x' factor.

The young man sees himself as a match, and anyone he wants sexually as his intended matchbox. He wants to observe the sparks that fly when he strikes. He wants to start a bonfire and watch the other person burn up with passion for him. Torah sees every young man as an emotional pyromaniac in the making. It sees men as potential fires ready to ignite.

Moses wrote Torah with women and children's best interests at heart. He described man's serpent as able to converse with his heart to give men a way to understand their own urges.

Imagine how women probably feel when they're betrayed with promises men can't keep. Imagine them trying to figure out what causes men to act so duplicitously.

Moses was capable of caring as much for "HEN" {THEM: feminine plural} as for "HEM" {THEM: masculine plural}. It takes a modern man who loves "them" {feminine} as much as "them" {masculine} to take a devoted stand on behalf of women today.

Potential adulterers don't associate adultery with incest, but they should if they're truly motivated to make their conscience their guide. Although Torah linked adultery with incest 3,400 years ago to help men curb their sexual appetite, the lessons of fidelity are borne anew in every generation. Thoughts of incest won't literally stop anyone from breaking his vow of fidelity, but the visceral, emotional distain and disgust of one's self having an incestuous, sexual liaison can be of help to those who's desires are out of his control.

Once a young man contemplates marriage and children, he should realize that monogamy wasn't just a GOD-given idea to safeguard his family and the fabric of society. Monogamy was just for practice. Most people have to learn to love another person faithfully, so that they can later use that strength of character on themselves. It's so much easier to break your vows to yourself, unless you're practiced in making and keeping vows, oaths, pledges, promises, guarantees, contracts, agreements, assurances and giving your word to others.

The sexual acts described in Leviticus 18 begin with the prohibition of sex with your mother, sisters, aunts, cousins, in-laws and neighbors, and ends with sexual relations with other men. But these prohibitions are for married men. It's intended to teach them the importance of keeping their promises as a way of earning their fidelity to themselves. Simply put, married, heterosexual men should be more revolted by the idea of having sex with their mother than by having sex with another man.

But the issue isn't of biblical concern to the unmarried man who hasn't made a vow of fidelity, and therefore can't break a vow he hasn't made. And if you're afraid that

homosexuality will lead to incest between mothers and sons, your thinking is *too* straight. Why would you worry about men who are sexually attracted to men having sex with their mother?

If a man prefers not to make a vow of fidelity to another person, he still has to learn how to make his word good. And he still has to become faithful to himself. He just doesn't have to do so through the marriage.

Over millennia, men have corrupted much more than the institution of marriage with their inability to make their word count; they've defiled the sanctity of the self. This didn't happen because they listened to their penis, but because they couldn't feel more deeply with their heart. And because of it, men, women and children have needlessly had to suffer.

The one who suffers spiritually the most grievously from a broken vow is the one who breaks it. Sex outside the bonds of marriage is abhorrent, forbidden fruit because it breaks a vow you made to yourself. If you can't keep your promises to yourself, don't bother making promises to anyone else or GOD. Your word simply isn't good enough.

For millennia, straight men abused their absolute power in the arenas of religion and marital relations with broken vows, so it's no coincidence they no longer hold the tight grip on women that they once sported with casual disregard. Women have earned their place of respect in society. Morality pays dividends; it just accrues slowly.

It certainly wasn't homosexuals who diluted the sanctity of marriage in society. It was cheating, heterosexual adulterers and hypocrites who put our sacred institutions under such stress. Those who show off their moral achievement in keeping their word to their spouse promote morality, but they rarely make it look attractive when they put down others in the process. If you can't explain to yourself why monogamy makes you so happy, don't bother to laud that achievement to others.

And if you believe the lessons in keeping your word are only intended by GOD for straight men, and that HE intended to discriminate against gays, you're playing Administrator in the school of life. It's not your business to determine who learns what, and how.

Intimacy, Sex And Love

A married man should enjoy physical fidelity through monogamy with his spouse; emotional fidelity through healthy relationships with his entire family; communal fidelity through honest relationships with every member of his tribe; and spiritual fidelity through faith in all GOD's/GOD's/G O D's faiths and philosophies.

He should also recognize that all these virtues emanate out from his fidelity to himself. When a man can keep his promises to himself, he not only feels that hope stretches from one end of the heavens to the next; he finds the faith to believe that his dreams will have good reason to come true. He becomes a rainbow in the flesh. He doesn't just talk about the meaning of rainbows.

Sex is first, and foremost, a vehicle to self-fidelity. It's not a matter of whom you sleep with, but how you treat your bedfellows. Homosexuality isn't forbidden fruit. It isn't morally diseased, ethically unripe or rotten and therefore indecent. It won't make you sick to your stomach if you try it, and it won't make you spiritually better if you avoid it. It won't heal or harm you. Homosexuality is sweet for some, but bitter or sour for others. Homosexuality is simply a matter of taste.

Homosexuality isn't forbidden fire; it isn't ice. It isn't immoral unless you're in a committed relationship and have sex with men on the side. Homosexuality may be strange to some, seemingly cold, ugly, dark or insincere, but if homosexuality doesn't tempt you, just don't pick it. Homosexuality isn't a moral issue – unless:

1. You have homosexual relations with minors.
2. You have sex with someone who's in a committed relationship or married.
3. You're married.

Those who don't want a monogamous relationship shouldn't get married. They'd defile the meaning of the word if they did. There are other forms of union that can legally and morally serve their needs. Marriage is too important to be engaged in by adulterers, regardless of their gender or sexual preference.

Masturbation, Homosexuality And Adultery

Masturbation doesn't lead to homosexuality. But a man doesn't have to regard his hand as a female appendage when he touches himself sexually, either. He wouldn't do so when holding his penis when he pees. When masturbating, a man's fantasies are so lucid that he seems to forget that the hand on his crotch is a male's. Every man who masturbates is in a homosexual relationship with his best friend: Richard. *Dick* was his best friend when he was a lad, and it's unlikely they're going to give up their friendship just because he got married.

Homophobes are hypocrites in denial of the actions of their hands. They're wracked by guilt for having ever touched themselves amorously and, possibly, for still doing so. Above all, they should develop a sense of humor. *Dick*, not *dog*, is man's best friend. Any man who thinks otherwise is an infantile Adam who refuses, on principle, to speak to his serpent directly. He sends his righthand "woman" instead.

If you know someone who's outraged by homosexuality, throw a few ice cubes on his fire. You'll be doing him a service. At some point, he'll feel some sentimentality for himself.

If you can't love yourself for everything you've ever done with your own two hands, you'll never give yourself enough credit in life. Although you can't literally shake your own hand to show yourself that you're civil and socially astute, you can figuratively do so. You can introduce yourself to you, and then find good reasons to like yourself, just as you'd do for the next guy. It's never too late to make a new friend. If you can't say you like one Dick, you're condemning all homosexuals for being sick and twisted. And we'll all know why…

Monogamy Begins Within

It's simplistic for married men to think that by simply avoiding sex outside their marriage they can boast a good, sexual relationship with their spouse. Sex happens between your ears, not your legs. It's what you hear and the way you listen that make you sensuous and sexy. You've got to change the way you think to change the way you make love; love love; and feel good about love.

Some married women find the promise of fidelity challenged when their husband falls in love with sports or hobbies. Some men are bigamists who're figuratively married to their

business partners and career. (They're having a secret love affair with money, and their wife approves.) And some men have such a love affair with power that it takes them away from their entire family.

True love is hard for everyone to attain. Therefore it ought to be approached from the inside out. Once you love the one you're with, then you can claim to love the One you're with.

Monogamy is a gift that has to keep on giving to be fully received. If it becomes a burden, it's because you're cheating on yourself, not your partner. You can't have a passionate relationship with another person if you bore yourself.

Sex between unmarried men isn't addressed anywhere in Torah. But the real abomination in question in the Leviticus 18 passage has to do with *insincerity*, not *infidelity*. If you make a promise to another person, and can't keep it, it's because you don't realize you're in a process of maturation and haven't been fully honest with yourself about not yet being fully grown up. Those who don't make promises aren't obliged to fulfill them. And those who've made a promise they can't keep are less mature than they thought previously.

There's no promise of fidelity to another human being, whether through legal marriage or other forms of union that can't be unraveled so long as it's done kindly, fairly, openly and in a timely manner. But that takes character, and many men would choose to relinquish their self-respect rather than communicate their true desires honestly and compassionately to others. It's not so hard to do right by others when you've learned to listen to the little voice of dignity that whispers within.

Leviticus And The Marriage Of Love To Wisdom

Prohibiting gays from marrying because Leviticus 18 claims it's an abomination for a man to sleep with another man simply doesn't take into account the metaphors that are the bedrock of The Hebrew Testament. Don't believe a rabbi who tells you otherwise.

It's an abomination for a man to sleep with another man instead of sleeping with himself. It's an abomination to project all that love inside you onto someone else if you haven't acknowledged it for yourself. Sleeping with other men without sleeping peacefully with yourself is a total waste of good manliness. Sleeping with a man is only an abomination if one of you is in a committed relationship.

Obscene, sexual conduct is a moral judgment that Torah associates with incest, adultery and homosexuality. Once you're comfortable with the idea that making love with another person is something you do with yourself in the company of one someone special, the gender of the person you make love to is no longer an issue. Who you go to bed with becomes a personal preference. What's best is that you realize you're always having sex with yourself with someone who loves witnessing your love for you.

Spiritual 3-D

The Star of David is a two-dimensional representation of two intersecting triangles that may have been originally created as a sign of the מלכות בית דוד {MALKHUT BEIT DAVID: KINGDOM OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID}, referring to the lineage of King David through the texts in The Hebrew Testament. The Star of David may have been painted onto shields used in battle, telling soldiers who was on their side and whom they were supposed to kill. But this

symbol has great spiritual meaning today that could lead us toward universal peace if we come to understand it.

Old-fashioned views of sex are like a Star of David. They're flat. The triangle facing up to the sky sits on top of the triangle facing down to the Earth. But you can never really prove that that's the case since there's no space between the two triangles.

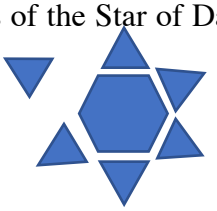
Your father is like the one triangle of the Star of David that points up to GOD and heaven. This points man towards GOD. Your mother is like the other that points down to the Earth. Together they represent you: the universal child.

But the 3-D impression that Leviticus brings the reader is an intersection of pyramids, not triangles. Leviticus gives spiritual depth to The Hebrew Testament that augments the spiritual length and width of GOD's WORD. Leviticus brings moral body to THE WORD of GOD makes it come alive with trial and error. When you internalizes its edicts, you bring Torah to life. When you take them literally, you flatten them.

Kabbalah, a mystical form of Judaism, teaches that GOD created the world with seven spiritual building blocks – HIS seven emotional attributes. But I believe that these emotional attributes correspond to the six word faiths and philosophies that all have their foundation in indigenism. They are chronologically:

1. Indigenism
2. Judaism
3. Hinduism
4. Buddhism
5. Christianity
6. Taoism
7. Islam

Think of a hexagon as representing indigenism, the foundation of GOD's emotional attributes. Then add a triangle to the top of the hexagon and label it: Judaism. In a clockwise fashion add the other five triangles of the Star of David using the list above, ending with Islam to the left of Judaism.



Bring your sex life out of the Middle Ages. Make it modern. Love yourself while loving someone else. You'll be amazed at how much more exciting your sex life will become if you make love to one special person while married to yourself. That's the kind of fidelity I enjoy. And each of the six sides of the Star of David represent as aspect of the world's faiths and philosophies that make me a universal child of GOD. That's the mystery that leads me on my adventure around the world in discovery of how to apply the attributes of GOD's heart to my life.

THE DESCENT TO THE PROMISED LAND - THE BOOK OF NUMBERS

39 Years Later

The Wilderness Within

The Hebrew name for The Book of Numbers, the fourth book of Torah, is "BAMIDBAR," which means "IN THE WILDERNESS." It takes place in the 39th year of wandering in the desert before the Israelites gather on the eastern shore of the Jordan River to enter Israel.

It's inspiring that THE WORD of GOD should be revealed in the wilderness since THE WORDS "WORD" and "WILDERNESS" have the same linguistic root in Hebrew. Because *words* and *wildernesses* are linked poetically and spiritually in The Hebrew Testament, it's therefore useful to remember that water only quenches the physical thirst the body experiences in a wilderness. Words quench the spiritual thirst in man's soul wherever he goes.

Even though words are the most practical way of expressing thoughts, words can often be inadequate and ambiguous when describing feelings. Words come across as emotionally dry if not accompanied by verbal nuances of tone and gesture that imply the emotional content they hold. It's the sound of our voice and the expressions of feelings on our face and the use of our hands that bring our words to life. Without the rain of visual cues and the dew of vocal nuance that we give our words, our messages can't bloom. Our words are parched. And people can then see that we're still wandering in circles far from our Promised Land.

Words are a wilderness we wander through. They're the oases we use to make our way through the vastness of inner space. We use words to guide us, refresh and renew us, but they're also part of the wilderness in which we wander.

A wilderness can either be a frightening and lonely place or a place of spiritual solitude and self-discovery. One can feel emptiness or expansiveness in a wilderness. The sun can beat down with brutal intensity or it can keep a wilderness in bloom. But whether a wilderness can figuratively ignite us with awesome illumination depends on the intensity of the fire in our heart, not the rays from the sun in the sky.

Time is crucially linked to *place* in The Book of Numbers. The Children of Israel have been wandering in the desert for 39 years. They're physically tired. They're emotionally without options and patience. Their thirst for meaning to their journey has left them spiritually parched and exhausted.

The poetic nuances of the Hebrew WORDS in translation from Torah may look pretty on paper and sound expressive in the flowery language of a poet with a panache for words. But the nuances of life lose their charm when you're hungry, thirsty, angry, dirty, lonely, tired and sick of swallowing sand.

THE WORD of GOD that seeded Genesis; broke new ground in Exodus; and bloomed with promise in Leviticus; has withering in Numbers. The fourth book of Torah is the low point of the trip for the Israelites. It's a spiritual darkness before a new dawn. It's fallen fruit before the seeds are exposed to GOD's heavenly eye.

The Need For Hope

Hope lies in the belief that GOD watches over this world. *Dreams* give us the feeling that GOD is working in our lives in a personal way. But a *vision* is the conviction that GOD

lies beside you in your soul with a universal reason for your being. A vision is an awareness of your mission in life, however humble that may be. That gives your journey purpose.

The Israelites had high hopes at the start, but few dreams overall. And in The Book of Numbers, a band of Israelites forget they're able to formulate a vision of a nation under GOD that will be a light unto all the nations. They'd rather go back than go forward.

When the body has been weakened with too much work, it negatively affects the spirit. Hopes without dreams, and dreams without visions will take their toll on any man over time.

It would be unrealistic of us to expect the slaves and children of slaves who wandered in the wilderness for 40 years to hold a vision of their mission then that would be universalized 3,400 years later. Feeling optimistic, cheerful and carefree is a luxury they couldn't afford, not a necessity, as we experience our hopes and dreams for our time in HIS/HIS/H I S story.

Freedom leaves the Israelites angrier 39 years after the Exodus than they were before. The more freedom they experience, the more liberties they take. And so they begin to wrestle with one another emotionally over the best course of action. Ironically, the vast majority of them are committed to continuing forward.

Freedom is a concept that's messy for the mind. Autonomy is so much easier to deal with – until it's not. Liberty, like physical birth, is also a messy business. The heart also wants what it wants until it doesn't know anymore what it wants.

But emancipation, like puberty, is a rebirth that can be deadly, leaving a man untrained and undeveloped spiritually unless he's ready to devote himself to learning about himself through all his interactions with himself and others.

The Book of Numbers is the story about the struggle in struggling with GOD {Israel}. Those who are living in The Promised Land today or living with GOD/GOD/G O D is their life at all times have to wrestle with the idea of wrestling with HIM/HIM/H I M every day of their life.

The concept of Israel brings all religious and spiritual peoples out of the meaning of their conception, birth and childhood into the puberty of wrestling with the forces within themselves.

But having to wrestle with GOD/GOD/G O D is nothing compared to how we've all had to wrestle with ourselves over sex. Nowhere is that internal struggle over how to enjoy our sex life in the presence of GOD/GOD/G O D more prevalent or perceivable than in the city of Jerusalem. In that sense, Jerusalem is the SEX/SEX/S E X capital of the world. This is why Jerusalem and San Francisco have spiritually so much in common.

Most everyday Christians have slowly learned how to appreciate Judaism through our contributions to pop cultural, not "religious" life. Their understanding of The Bible has been augmented by the Jews through everyday life, not church life. And most Muslims today know nothing about the spiritual aspects of The Hebrew Testament that are being rigorously universalized by Jews through pop culture. The Muslims are still only in a race for added real estate before they die and go to Muslim Heaven…

Modern man is an agnostic who finds his true home in his imagination. The hopes of the everyday man lie fallow in his head; his dreams languish in his heart; and his convictions laze about in his soul. The 21st Century is full of specialists in the arts from all the Abrahamic traditions who try to help people wake up; get up; and get to work – while emancipating themselves from themselves.

But they, too, have to learn to consolidate the wisdom, love and generosity of the spiritual experts throughout the ages with a deeper understanding of The Hebrew Testament, Christian Bible and Quran. Only in this way will they all learn to exercise their imagination in a healthier manner.

Only the modern, married man who no longer thinks it's an abomination for a single man to sleep with other men can rise in the morning, get out of bed, and do something spiritually useful in a day. Only the modern, single man who can admire gay couples for the loyalty and faith they express through their love of one another can bring hope to children everywhere. And only the child who has a vision of growing up to become *himself* will understand what I just said.

Self-emancipation is the spiritual birthing process in which you're both reborn and the mother of a spiritual, adult child you can only hold in your soul. That's the immaculate conception that makes Scripture personal. That's the 'x' factor that will make you sing the praises of womanhood. If you're a man who can't resonate with the idea of giving birth to a fully grown man, you'll never be able to love your sons or daughters nearly enough as they'll need.

A Sneak Preview

In The Book of Numbers, when the Israelites approach Canaan {present day Israel}, they send out spies to see what The Land they'll inherit looks like. The spies acknowledge that The Land is truly blessed, flowing with "MILK AND HONEY." But they also report that its inhabitants are strong and evil men who are as big as giants. This information causes some of the Israelites to want to go back to Egypt. [Numbers 13]

"IF ONLY WE HAD DIED IN EGYPT OR IN THE WILDERNESS! WHY IS THE LORD BRINGING US TO THIS LAND ONLY TO LET US FALL BY THE SWORD? OUR WIVES AND CHILDREN WILL BE TAKEN AS PLUNDER. WOULDN'T IT BE BETTER FOR US TO GO BACK TO EGYPT? AND THEY SAID TO EACH OTHER, 'WE SHOULD CHOOSE A LEADER AND GO BACK TO EGYPT.'" [Number 14:2-4]

A man may sometimes feel he has to confront giants that are in the way of him getting ahead. But the giants around him always mirror the giants within. It's no coincidence GOD brings these giants into everyone's life. A man may even see the milk of human kindness and the honey of wisdom in others, and not believe these virtues in them are within his grasp. He may sense there's a huge emotional treasure just beyond his reach, but he may not be able to get in touch with it from within. He may have to spy on his greatness by seeing it in others, coming away fearing the challenge of confronting himself by way succumbing to first befriending others.

A youngster is eventually allowed to leave the Egypt of his parents' home at the end of childhood. In doing so, he discovers the miracle that makes it possible for him to cross his own Red Sea and embark on the journey of making meaning out of his life on his own.

But after 39 years of wandering out in the world after having reached puberty, every man feels himself on a precipice by about 50. He feels he's at the edge of time and that time may be running out. He knows in his own surreal way what it's like to grow old before he's old. He's an apple at the end of summer that can sense it's clinging to its stem.

For those of us who look back at the age of 50 from the other side of 60, 70 or more, we know we weren't yet dead and buried when we were 50. We look back, and can say

that time was then still on our side. But we also know that time is subjective. The Book of Numbers reminds us all how emotionally charged *numbers* can be.

Hope doesn't live in numbers. Numbers are black and white, cold and often cruel. Hope is an elusive rainbow when you're crunching numbers. Hope can't be measured, compared or contained in this way. Hope can't be held in your heart with a number. That's not how hope works.

After 39 years of wandering through the wilderness of life after having crossed the rainbow that reaches all the way back to childhood's end, a man comes upon another bridge to cross, one that miraculously appears, as did the Red Sea bridge, but in a different way. The Jordan River signifies the boundary between death and eternal life, a boundary that Moses, the protagonist in us all, isn't going to be given the opportunity to help us across.

Mortality is an awesome obstacle that suddenly looms more real than ever as you get into your 50's. It isn't like the two walls of water the Israelites passed between at the Red Sea. Mortality isn't like adolescence where the colorful path suddenly appears out of nowhere, and you can talk about it humorously once you're on the other side. The crossing in adolescence that runs between childhood and adulthood was, by comparison, easy. Death is a crossing from which there's no subsequent discussion that can be had in literal terms.

Moses is going to die. He's not going to go to Israel. A part of you that you authored is going to die. It may already be dead. That part of you never got to see Israel, or it never again will. You're going to have to imagine going forth on this next crossing without a part of yourself.

This is akin to imagining going on a pilgrimage after having lost a leg. A part of you that you took for granted will not be able to continue with you to the end. You're going to have to leave him behind. And in doing so, you're going to accept your losses in life as real and irretrievable.

Like GOD, you're going to have to reconcile yourself to the fact that apples can't be glued back onto trees. Like Moses, you're going to have to kill off your main character. Like Jesus, you're going to have to submit to death as your greatest gift to others. And like T H E P R O P H E T Muhmmad, you're going to have to dive into that flame in your soul.

The literal crossing of the Jordan will be described in The Book of Joshua later in The Hebrew Testament [Joshua 13]. The miracle of "life" after death resembles this crossing, one in which we can look upstream at our early life as though we were a fish in the Sea of Galilee, and downstream as far as the eye can see toward the Dead Sea. But we then have to forge our own way across the river into something akin to "life" everlasting without someone extremely important to us who got us this far.

Unlike the Israelites who had Joshua to guide them across the Jordan, each of us has to cross our Jordan on our own without the Moses within us. To plan for a man's crossing of his Jordan with dignity, he's expected to know something about hope, dreams and visions of a better world.

And yet, like the unbinding of Isaac on Mt. Moriah and the return of Moses to Egypt to rally round the Israelites, Torah never describes exactly how that's done. We have to fill in between the lines with personally chosen passages from our own life that aren't given to us by Moses, the author. We have to *right* them ourselves with GOD's hidden hand to help.

The stories of Torah open themselves to interpretation because they were meant to. Improvisation and invention are our personal contribution to classical composition. Once you know the rules, you can break them in creative ways that make sense. Torah gives us

room for extemporaneous creativity, so we can feel a sense of ownership of the majesty of this Sacred Book and our sacred task at hand. If you take Scripture creatively and personally, their subjective meanings will crystalize for you alone.

This book is a like jazz improvisation. It's a sophisticated variation on the classical theme. But everyone tells me that no one likes *religious jazz*. They all prefer pop music. Well, so be it. My music is *my* music whether anyone likes it or not. I'm not going to march to the beat or any other drummer.

The Fear Of Aging Badly

Obviously Canaanites weren't giants. Those living in the Middle East then were no larger than other people at that time {which was probably considerably smaller than people today}. The Israelites simply projected their fears onto the inhabitants of Canaan, which made them think of them as gigantic. It was the enormity of the spiritual importance of their journey that frightened them in the 39th year of their journey, not the physical size of the inhabitants of The Land. They'd projected their own existential *anxiety* onto the Canaanites without knowing it.

When your enemy is spiritually bigger than you, you may psyche yourself out to think you're going to lose not only the battle with him, but also the wrestling match within yourself. The Israelites worry about the people who reside in Canaan because they can't envision their own importance in the world. They don't realize how their journey will mirror the unfolding of the humanity in all of humanity. They still think they're someone else's possession.

The oversized enemies the Israelites perceive around them mirror the strangers within that they haven't yet met and learned to deal with. Their outer enemy will be defeated, but they'll face thousands of years of more enemies as they learn to overcome the enemies that lurk within us all. This is no different from the history of every other group of people, when viewed with the psychological insight of today's modern philosophy of the importance of individuality.

The only difference is that the Jews have survived as a religious force, a cultural force, a linguistic influence through Hebrew to other languages, and now as a nation again for 3,400 years – while most other peoples don't have as illustrious a line of succession. Our devotion to our continuing education with our Teacher has been longer than that of any other people on Earth.

But when you look at a Jew, what you more often see is someone who resembles a squirrel, not a Tree. They're jumpy. They climb all over one another with ease. But they bury their inner treasure as would a squirrel with nuts. They scamper. They don't hide. They dart, flit, flash and flutter. They don't run.

Aging isn't easy, but maturing is even harder. Although many die young and mature, many more die old and immature. The old man who talks like a plum, but looks like prune, makes a fool of himself. He doesn't look closely enough at the incongruity of his outer appearance to his inner reality. Just as every individual must learn to express himself humbly, so must groups of peoples learn to do so collectively. Aging badly is its own punishment.

On The Tree of life, each fruit ripens in the sun in its own summer. Living, learning, aging and dying come to each of us at different times, in different ways. If you devote yourself to really ripening, and not to just looking sweet and desirable to others, you'll be

far more appealing to yourself in the long run. There's nothing less nutritious or harder to swallow than plastic fruit.

Where there's hope there's love of life. Where there are dreams there's time enough to dream. And where there's a vision of GOD's design, there's promise of GOD's presence after the end of time. Such a vision has to be perceived before it can be realized.

Thoughts of aging and despair are just cold moments in time on a dark night before the light and warmth of another day. Don't give up to darkness; give in to LIGHT/LIGHT/L I G H T. Don't let the attributes of strange fire teach you to forget the qualities of familiar fire. Live life as though you were a king on fire {lesbian} or a flaming queen.

The Fear In Fearlessness

None of the religions or philosophies of the world overlook the path of fear we all sometimes find ourselves on. But the path of fear invariably arrives at a dead end. Or, to be more precise, the path of fear ends at a cull de sac where we have to stop, turn around and eventually decide when we're ready to go all the way back the way we came. It's while on the way back down the road we took that we discover our courage, develop discipline and ignite ourselves with righteous indignation. Strength of character brings us back to where we once were, but with a new found sense of self-worth.

The Book of Numbers is really about the mistake of projecting courage onto others instead of owning it yourself. In this book, GOD takes the Israelites on a spiritual detour to a cull de sac that teaches them to break their projections, face their fears, and develop real courage for the mission that lies ahead.

By going forward, and not literally going back where their parent's had come from {Egypt}, the next generation of Israelites learns how to face fear even if they can't talk about it. While going back on the road they'd taken internally, they, paradoxically, find the strength to go forward on the road before them.

But they don't realize it at the time. As they're going through what they're going through, they, naturally, take their fears very seriously. It's impossible to do otherwise. Fear of the future is real. It's that future that may or may not be real. For this reason GOD created the conditional verb tense {would, might, could} to express hypothetic situations.

Feelings have to be felt as you go through them, even in hypothetical thoughts, not afterwards. If you shut off your feelings while thinking what you must, you'll only slow down your progress. You'll throw ice on your flames.

You can't avoid feelings forever and still claim that you've lived a full life. The experience of being alive can only be described by those who feel deeply (not loudly) in every moment. This can only be described with a rainbow. WORDS/WORDS/W O R DS will never do.

The Inner Rebellion Projected Onto Outer Authority

Korach is a first cousin to Moses and Aaron. Korach foments a rebellion among the Israelites against the authority of Moses and Aaron. [Numbers 16]

The name "KORACH" means "ICE" or "FROST." Korach will exemplify the personification of strange fire. He's Torah's cardboard character who represents loathing of GOD for having a script that doesn't include him. He's jealous of the roles given to other actors. He can't accept the conditional part he plays.

Christianity will unconsciously use the character of Korach to create the concept of the "devil." The Israelite character, Korach, in The Book of Numbers is in a fight with GOD that he tries to convince the Israelites to take sides over. The "devil" will later become the projection of this fight, someone who's in a fight against GOD that he has to convince the world to join him in.

Korach's argument with Moses and Aaron appears to be ideological, but it's spiritual. As they all get closer to Canaan, Korach experiences his proximity to The Promised Land as a personal proximity to GOD. And from that subconscious awareness, he suddenly sees that the entire community is holy, not just Moses and Aaron. He realizes that GOD calls to everyone, that the lowly are just as holy as their leaders.

Of course, Korach is quite right. No one is more holy than another. No man is greater than his fellow traveler when it comes to a head count. All men are intellectually gifted with opinions, whether, or not, you may agree with them. Every man was made with a head, heart and conscious (although many are without a soul). Nevertheless, we must not to forget that we, too, were created with a penis and anus that have much to say about us as a consumer of forbidden fruit.

Man's head is no match for his heart and penis when they collude together, as we saw in The Creation Story. Without our conscience as our guide, we're lost. And even then, it makes sense for us to use GOD/GOD/G O D as our conscience's GUIDE/GUIDE/G U I D E, as well. Only in this way will we develop the soul we're seeking.

Matters of the heart are equally holy as our head; but they run a different course from matters of the mind. We have to be willing to take a heart count, as well as a head count if we're going to appreciate the people around us. People have opinions and feelings that are different from each other's, let alone different from ours.

The Democratic Party needs a big tent because they have to allow in a lot of big heads. (Fortunately, they love gays who all have big heads.) The Republicans only do a heart count. And by counting only white hearts, they don't need a head count. Every one of them thinks alike. (Fortunately, they love Israel because Jews have big hearts.)

Therefore the issues of jealousy and envy lurk in the corners of every man's heart and often go unseen. People may be jealous of you when they see you in a leadership role. They may want to steal your lines to get a bigger role in how the play should turn out.

But our spiritual importance can't be fully assessed by the size of our brain, heart, bank account or penis. It's the size of our soul that determines our true spiritual magnitude. It's our conscience, our seat of judgment, by which we must measure ourselves, not by our opinions, feelings, material success or desires. Only our conscience can tell us whether our thoughts and feelings are congruent with our beliefs.

Unfortunately, our conscience grows to full size so slowly over the course of a lifetime that we make many moral mistakes along the way. This is why we need to reassess the slightly increased size of our conscience day-by-day, and make amends for the mistakes we made the day before.

Korach doesn't do this. He suddenly sees that his spiritual size has been augmented, and he reacts with a sense of greatness and grandeur at who he sees he's suddenly become. He's gone from obscurity to infamy, and he likes it. Now he's going to make a name for himself on stage.

But Korach didn't realize his day-to-day progress over the course of his 39-year journey. Therefore his moral importance to himself overwhelms his opinion of himself.

His ego {prostate gland} becomes inflated. He turns into an asshole with very little room inside. His self-righteous indignation at how Moses and Aaron are running things becomes a reflection of his disappointment in the way he's been using up his time.

Korach loves his proximity to GOD, but he hasn't developed the ability to measure his thoughts rationally; feelings sensitively – and then compare those measurements to what they were before. This lack of awareness of process leads him to make a grave psychological error of moral assessment that has sociological consequences for those who take his side.

Korach has had a spiritual awakening, but his understanding of GOD's design hasn't been consistent throughout the journey. He suddenly concludes the Israelites should have him take over leadership. He projects his fear of himself onto Moses and Aaron, and then tries to attack his own fears in absentia by attacking them.

We see this in insecure leaders who perceive enemies in anyone who disagrees with them. They need absolute power in order to feel secure. They become ruthless and unhinged because they're actually jealous of the body of their enemies and envious of their spiritual prowess.

Giving our power to those who will use it to turn us into punching bags is nothing new. When a man is angry at his lack of authority over himself, he's predisposed to get angry at those who can't fight back. And if he's very insecure, he'll move very slowly to consolidate his power until no one can fight back. He'll trump them. He doesn't wish to use the political system to make society kinder and more inviting for all; he uses it to bring political distance between leadership and followers. He complains that government is too big, when, in truth, he's jealous because his own inner governance is so small.

Spiritual Temperature Matters

Those who loathe themselves, who are frozen with hatred against spiritual points of view, seek authoritarian power, not the power of love. They speak belligerently and vindictively. They're loud and brash. They're brazen. They talk about humility; they don't display it. Their idea of the truth is always a veiled lie.

Korach and his followers expand the previous hubris of Nadav and Avihu into a mass movement based on strange fire {ice}. What was an incident of brothers scheming together to gift GOD in a way that would set their fire above that of others becomes a resurrection for Korach. And the men who follow Korach, like the sons of Aaron, will die because they're unaware of the destructive power of hubris {ice}.

Korach is personified "dry ice" that brings a chill into the lives of these desert people. He smokes. He fumes. But he personifies frost, not the smoke given off by the passion in helping the world. His followers are fascinated by his power, but they can't see that it's power without moral inclination. It's only self-serving. They can't perceive the difference between fire and ice and so they're impressed with the kind of burns Korach can make.

Fear and *fearlessness* are beguiling feelings that we all have to learn to deal with. If *fear* seduces us to touch fire; the allure of *fearlessness* attracts us to ice. We ask ourselves how ice could possibly burn as painfully as fire. And, over time, we all get this question answered in our own way.

Paradoxically, the man who's both afraid of himself and terrified of others is well on his way to loving his neighbor as himself. The man who berates himself for vacillating between fear and fearlessness is well on his way to wisdom. He may think he's less of a

man for being stuck in the middle rather than standing boldly at one or the other end. But he judges himself too harshly. No one has yet explained to him the brilliance of his upbringing having been just as it was.

Korach demonizes the established authority of "AAM ISRAEL" {THE JEWISH PEOPLE}. He isn't willing to take personal instruction from a nation of priests, as was GOD's intention. He says of Aaron, "WHY DO YOU RAISE YOURSELVES OVER THE CONGREGATION OF GOD? WHY THIS LADDER OF SPIRITUALTY ON WHICH {YOU} OCCUPY A HIGHER RUNG…?" [Numbers 16:3] He blames the leaders that GOD gave him.

Because Korach can't access authority from within, he projects self-loathing upon outer authority. He's psychologically unprepared for negotiation and compromise with others, even though his argument holds a grain of truth. But a grain of salt is not a pillar of salt. And a grain of truth must be excised from the surrounding lies.

Korach isn't afraid of the established authority, as are most of the others. But his need is different from that of the masses. Korach needs to learn how to fear himself. The others need to learn how *not* to fear themselves. And this is why his problem trumps so many who follow him.

Korach entices the Israelites with a one-size-fits-all vision without any understanding of individual hopes and dreams. He motivates the Israelite masses with the promise of fearlessness, not faith based on self-fear. He entices them to turn around and go back where they came from instead of going forward into the unknown where "giants" reside.

When a group of men today conspire to turn the masses around so that they're facing the past instead of the future, the same thing happens. The people are forced forward without watching where they're going. They face the past they came from, while falling all over themselves as they move forward backwards. And their leaders use that opportunity to steal more power and make money off them.

GOD will bring everyone into the future. But, it's your job to face HIM with a clear eye toward the future, and not turn your back on HIM in fear by looking back in dread of where you came from. {We saw what happened to Lot's wife when she glanced back at her home town.}

"THE LADDER OF SPIRITUALTY ON WHICH {SOME} OCCUPY A HIGHER RUNG" is very real. Rather than seek to make those above you fall, try to learn from them so you can climb higher. If you want to get above them, all you have to do is observe virtue and vice, and then make better choices than the models you've been given.

The future holds the promise. The past mostly holds a view to what you did wrong that you don't have to repeat. The political *progressive* faces GOD and the future. The political *conservative* faces his ancestors in his past. If we move forward together with a better understanding of our past, we won't have to make the same mistakes our ancestors made.

I'm not suggesting that you literally do chainé turns as you move into the future so that you can simultaneously see what's happening in every direction. But it's valuable to look back and forth from time to time to gauge whether you're moving in a straight line. We need progressive and conservative outlooks to get to GOD/GOD/G O D.

Korach won't be able to fulfill his promise of retreat because it carries no spiritual power, only political gain. Those who seize power outside themselves, to replace what's missing within, lose both spiritual and political power over time. They freeze.

To hold power eternally, you must grasp for power over yourself and entice others to do the same. To make a difference out in the world, you must make a difference in *your*

world, and then let the cards fall where they may. Become a virtuous model for others to use.

Korach is today's "religious" reactionary and political ultra-conservative. He accuses rather than commends the powers that be. He subtracts. He can't add to what's been accomplished. He can only point fingers with reproach to consolidate power for the sake of greed. A Korach wants to go back to the way things were, so he tries to motivate the Israel-*lites* with fear of the future they're going toward.

Korach doesn't just have feet of clay; he has cold feet. His road to self-love is paved with selfish intentions. Korach isn't going to make it all the way, but Moses is only going to go slightly further forward himself.

But it's the slight difference in how much further GOD allows Moses to go that so differentiates the two. The wilderness is the end of the line for Korach, an Armageddon, not a spiritual beginning. Israel, for Moses, will be is a dream he'll hand off to others to help make come true.

Growing Up Or Growing Old

As life draws us nearer to death, we should try to become more aware of the psychological process of filling ourselves with wisdom {Judaism}, love {Christianity}, generosity {Islam}, a diversity of healthy opinions {Hinduism} tranquility {Buddhism} and the curiosity needed to explore paradox {Taoism}. Aging and death are terrifying when you think about what you don't yet know about GOD's design or profess principles you aren't living.

In this world, everyone is, in some ways, alone. Teamwork and cooperation with others bring a feeling of "us," but they also bring a sense of "them." We can only really overcome competition at our core by learning to work cooperatively within ourselves. The psychological lesson of the "he" in "me" and the sociological lesson of the "we" in "me" are being brought to us simultaneously. People like Korach are important because they challenge us to define and delineate these two linguistic tools from within.

Guidance

The Book of Numbers is the final spiritual course correction before the Israelites will arrive at the frontier of their Promised Land. The Book of Numbers corresponds to the automatic pilot on an airplane that guides it. Each time a plane moves off course, the automatic pilot makes a course correction toward the midpoint that brings the plane back on track. An airplane is actually off course 99% of the time. Being off course isn't deleterious to the end result as long as the automatic pilot makes small, but frequent, corrections.

To move efficiently toward your spiritual destination you might like to install an automatic, spiritual pilot in you. You might make good use of a spiritual homing device in your conscience that's always locked on your final destination. Then your head and heart can make course corrections initiated by your conscience that will bring you to your Promised Land.

If you take The Book of Numbers personally you may conclude that your head as full of icy thoughts and your heart is full of fiery feelings. You may then be able to use your conscience to melt your mind and lower the temperature of your emotions. In this way,

you'll become cool. You may not be as cool as some others think *they* are, but cool is cool. You can't argue that.

Ultimatums

Moses tells the Israelites that if Korach and his men die of natural causes, then GOD didn't send Moses to lead them. But, if GOD causes the Earth to open up and swallow them, that will mean Korach and his men are spurning GOD and HIS plan for all of them. Just as Moses finishes speaking, a hole opens under Korach and his followers, and the Earth swallows them up. [Numbers 16]

This is the only instance in Torah when Moses predicts the future. It may seem unwise of him to force GOD's hand to do his bidding. But it might also seem judgmental to write off Korach and his men categorically. It seems that this may be just another example of Moses's uncontained anger. But Moses is right because GOD chooses to act in a manner that's consistent with his prediction.

But, because Moses has to use GOD to reaffirm his position of authority, it may also seem to weaken his moral argument. Because GOD lets HIS PROPHET speak for HIM, it might leave some of us more cynical than satisfied. Why didn't GOD allow the people to decide their fate for themselves? Why couldn't Moses prove his superior position without a threat of violence? Why did he need GOD to back him up if his position was so morally sound?

History is replete with examples of "religious" leaders professing to know what GOD is thinking and what HE's going to do next. They lead the masses by the nose in the direction of hate and destruction because they're consumed with revenge.

But in this case, Moses uses GOD to prove the righteousness of the journey the Israelites are on. It was, after all, GOD's journey they'd embarked upon, not his. Moses didn't come up with the plan, so it really was GOD's right to intercede in any way HE chose to.

This segment of the story begs the question why GOD allows powerful, old men to squabble over world domination? Why wouldn't HE simply give power to the people and skip the need to use freedom as a reward for moral self-development?

It looks as though GOD wishes to teach all of HIS students how to use HIS power of wisdom, love, generosity of spirit, desire for diversity, tranquility and understanding of paradox. But it also looks as though HIS mercy is often bestowed on those you or I might judge as lazy, hateful, calculating or devious. HIS plan is greater than ours because it includes us all, not just those we happen to like because their values are more like ours.

GOD is like an English teacher. HE spends a lot of time and energy scrawling red marks across the pages of the essays of HIS good students, while simply putting a grade at the top of the papers of those students who don't put in the hard work. The good students may be chagrinned at how nitpicky HE is, while the poor students are so busy doing what they want that they don't even notice the lack of corrections on the page.

GOD uses many different, teaching styles on HIS students in the hopes of keeping them all interested in the subjects they're enrolled in. HE already has a good idea who's going to do his homework each day, come to school tomorrow prepared for a spot quiz and always worries about his final exam. HE already knows it's only the top students who make spiritual meaning out of everything they go through. They're the ones who take life and the feelings that come up for them personally.

The bozos at the back of the room don't give a damn what the rest of the class thinks about themselves or even how they feel. They're more interested in ice, than fire. They

think frostbite is cool. They think they're sorcerer's apprentices with magic in hand. And we all know how that ends.

The problem with self-help is that it can lead to unending self-criticism. But self-help can also inadvertently teach you how to explore negative feelings like anger {red}, fear {yellow}, sorrow {blue} and guilt {black} rather than avoid them.

Most people, young or old, claim they just want to feel alive! Yet, they refuse to admit that their brown and black feelings have greatly contributed to their sense of aliveness when they look back in retrospect. That which doesn't kill you makes you deeper. And isn't that all it should take to become soulful?

There's nothing to fear about using your conscience to question your feelings. You'll be amazed to discover how uncaringly you feel about yourself at times, even though you may think you have high ideals and principled principles.

But if you dig down into your feelings, you may find that, like roots in a potted plant, they've been going around in circles with nowhere to go. If so, replant yourself into a larger container, and then watch how much better you'll feel in no time.

Give yourself room to feel. Allow yourself the liberty of feeling more broadly, and you'll be amazed at how much more alive you'll experience each day, regardless of what you're doing.

Just don't act on your feelings! Keep them inside, even though you may have been told by some fool sometime not to keep your feelings bottled up. Give yourself enough inner space to fully feel your feelings in rich soil and you won't mind having feelings without expressing them externally.

There's nothing to be ashamed about living in an emotional closet. It's a sexual closet you don't want to get caught in. Keep your feelings close to the vest. Self-expression using your face and hands is greatly overrated. Pour your feelings into your deeds instead.

It's never your job, your boss, your spouse or your family you hate. It's the feelings of inadequacy they bring up in you that you object to. When you feel disrespected by others, it's always a mirror The Teacher is putting in front of you to teach you to look at the habits you should have by now outgrown.

It's alright to think one way, feel another, and take action based on beliefs in yet a third way. The more you can separate your thoughts, feelings and beliefs, the more you can give yourself greater options for behaving wisely overall. Doing this may bring up guilt, but exploring the embarrassment, shame and humiliation you're experiencing will also be a valuable learning lesson.

At The Root Of It All

Korach was headed back toward bondage, not forward toward freedom. He was a jealous man who was frozen inside because he was afraid of revealing himself to himself in the sight of The Lord. He felt inadequate because he was inadequate. His part was too small, and rather than humble himself to the part he was given, he wanted to steal lines from others.

Don't chew the set. Don't steal lines from others. Know your role and play it convincingly. If you want to get more of the big picture, do your best with every cameo appearance you're given. You're not going to be a star they discover overnight. You're the kind of star that's discovered in the light of day.

Korach's choices offered temporary answers to permanent problems. His solutions simply couldn't have gotten the Israelites to their intended destination. It's easy to predict the future of men like Korach. It's rare to be able to predict it with the kind of accuracy and in such a timely manner as Moses did. But PROPHETS, like GOD, work in mysterious ways.

There's nothing intrinsically bad about literally traveling east or west. It's the emotional direction Korach was taking that was so wrong. He exemplified the journey to self-loathing that became a lesson for future Jews to always move forward. Korach touched every one of the Israelites' life while they were out there in the wilderness, forcing them to choose between becoming colder and more distant from GOD by going back to Egypt or warmer by moving closer to HIS Promised Land.

Men like Korach who refuse to learn about themselves while on their journey only grow older and bolder, never wiser and more loving. They learn how to manipulate other people with blame and guilt in order to better control their nefarious intentions. They want knowledge for the sake of power over people. They're not interested in power over themselves. Their lust for power is suicidal and all consuming.

Our anger and resentment over other people's moral lethargy is better harnessed with self-discipline than anger. Reshaping the world must be the consequence of reshaping ourselves or our efforts will be for naught. If you look at every one of your challenges as GOD-given, then you can raise yourself in your own esteem by giving control of your thoughts and feelings to your conscience before you take action. In that way, you can make your life a moral experience without changing a thing about the world around you.

If the Israelites had been more clever, they would have thrown ice at Korach. The best way to trump the morally rebellious is with utter apathy and indifference. Dorothy may have inadvertently thrown water on the Wicked Witch of the West, which killed the witch, but men like Korach can only be killed with ice. Ice them out. They'll shrivel up and die in no time.

When you find yourself with a problem that amounts to a Korach/Moses problem {moving back or moving forward; feeling cold or feeling warm; going against the powers that be or toward our common goals}, use this story to help turn your conscience into a cleaner conscience. Only use ice as a numbing agent.

Fire And Ice As GOD

The personification of evil as Korach isn't altogether fair. As I already stated, in the 39th year of their journey, Korach brings the Israelites the sophisticated notion that authority ought to be questioned. You can't remain a child forever. In that sense, he's just what The Doctor ordered. He's a gift from GOD.

But to understand how Korach comes to hold the traits of the "devil" we have to look more closely at GOD's design as given to us through HIStory/HIStory/H I S T O R Y, which we normally just think of as "history."

The struggle between good and evil in every individual has been projected out onto the world through Christianity as a struggle between GOD and the "devil." But because Christians have tendency to blend the traits of The Father, Son and Holy Spirit into one, they don't fully perceive GOD's/GOD's/G O D's direction in its entirety. The full view of where HE's/HE's/H E's going requires the input of Judaism and Islam. And this accounts

for the many historic errors of judgment that all three of the Abrahamic faith could correct in the future if they'd entertain this topic in themselves.

The GOD who brought the Children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt and who walked by their side for 40 years in their wanderings through the desert, now, in The Book of Numbers, has decided to introduce them to the concepts of fire and ice beyond the simpler, earlier lessons in good and evil. But this is a concept so vast that HE begins HIS lesson with strange fire and Korach, a man who's literally named: ice.

The inclination to do good leads to love, and the inclination to do evil will eventually lead to wisdom if you can look honestly at your mistakes, apologize, correct them and use the wreckage of your past to build a better future. So thinking that which is good and evil have nothing in common is as foolish as thinking Judaism and Christianity have nothing in common. There's no need for competition between the faiths, any more than there's a need for love to compete with wisdom.

This introductory lesson in good and evil for the Israelites will be played out in history as the conflict between Christians and Muslims that has become so tiresome in this century. The GOD of the Christians and the G O D of the Muslims is the same as the GOD of the Jews. And it's so boring to have to remind you of that.

When you appreciate GOD's overall intentions, the need for two more Abrahamic faiths after HE created Judaism isn't odd, unnecessary or frivolous. HE had a plan right from the start that began with a brief look at HIS generosity of spirit through the stories leading up to Abraham and Ishmael. Then HE concentrated on wisdom through the lineage of Isaac and Jacob, culminating in the giving of HIS first name to Moses.

When you attempt to use history to unveil the struggles within yourself, you find that there have been lessons for people to learn to love and be generous to themselves throughout the past 3,400 years of civilization. Once you get your head screwed on tight by using language to talk to yourself, all your feelings and beliefs become deeper, more intense and more personal.

Once you see yourself as a vehicle of moral evolution on a journey, life becomes more exciting. Each day becomes a school day. Each person becomes a good book. And each interaction with another person, whether in your mind or in the world we share, becomes a lesson in becoming who you hope to be.

The Lost Brother

Aaron dies not long after the incident with Korach. Except for Moses and Joshua, all the major players from The Book of Exodus are either deceased by the end of The Book of Numbers or written out of the narrative.

There are many losses in life, but the purpose of loss is always to teach us how to reach our destination with a more balanced emphasis on our contents rather than constantly focused on the needs of our container. Of course, it's painful when we lose someone who made our life meaningful. But we can always move on if we don't lose sight of our goals.

Increasing your spiritual treasure will always require learning about loss. GOD suffered the first loss as described in The Creation Story. And man has to suffer many losses of his own in life to identify with HIS. People will leave your life to make room inside you for you to plant their ideas if you believe their ideas are worth regenerating. In that sense, loss is the hole inside where the seed is meant to go. Cover it up; water it; and wait for it to grow. That's the entire meaning of a life well lived.

By the 39th year of your journey out of innocence, you're going to have to learn to tolerate those aspects of yourself that *never* seem to change. You're going to have to accept those relationships you have with the world that are *always* going to change. And you're going to have to admire yourself for the self-intimacy you've developed through the process.

Loss teaches us about "intra" dependence. Loss teaches us the need for a good container as well as a good understanding of our contents. Our thoughts and feelings need to work together with our conscience for us to achieve "inter" dependence with others. Only once we understand and can love the process of depending on others can we experience the joys of "intra" dependence with our self.

There's an Aaron in each one of us that can't make it the whole way on the journey of life. There's a part of us that's going to lose the will to go all the way because some lessons in life are harder to bear than we can endure and remain hopeful.

Moses loses a loving brother. The Israelites lose their religious leader. But the mission continues without Aaron. The Children of Israel may have needed one spiritual leader to get them and The Tabernacle to their destination. But they're going to need many more to build The Temple and run it for a millennia to come.

By the 39th year of your journey alone, you're losses are no longer only public; they're no longer just physical and emotional; they're personal, private and spiritual. After you've gone around the merry-go-round of life enough times, your view becomes internal.

That's when you discover you no longer need a priest to get you to your destination. And, shortly thereafter, you discover you don't even need a prophet. You discover you can get to your inner Israel without either. They've taken you as far as they can. They've taken you as far as you need them to go.

There are parts of you that were dedicated to saving you right from the start. You've been wandering in a wilderness within, but with good reason. And you may now suspect that The Promised Land you're trying to get to is neither around you, nor within.

A new, inner voice now becomes a part of you. It coincides with Joshua #1 who will foreshadow Joshua #2 {Jesus} of The New Testament. Joshua #1 brings the Israelites across the Jordan River into Israel with swords and knives to conquer Canaan. Joshua #2 will lead the Israelis of His day across their individual Jordan into The Promised Land {Heaven} another way, through their heart.

We Jews never said we had all the answers. We never claimed there was a heaven and hell, or a life "after" this one. We've never proselytized to increase our numbers. We've only made the claim that there's one and only one GOD. And in that sense, we're not wrong. HE/HE/H E may use other names in other faiths, but HE's/HE's/H E's still only One.

A day will come, no doubt, when the peace you see in the Jewish and gay communities will spread throughout the world. Men will stop ignoring themselves, whether or not they choose to love one another sexually. Straight men and women of all faiths and philosophies will honor gays and Jews for the parts we played in making our planet a peaceful place for everyone. This will be a time when even secular gays and Jews may see that they have a part to play in GOD's/GOD's/G O D's magnificent plan.

Spiritual Thirst

But before Aaron dies, the Children of Israel face their next little "spiritual food fight" with the death of Miriam. The stolen apple isn't discarded far from the Tree.

"Mary," the mother of Jesus is Miriam #2. Christians really can't say they're fully able to appreciate the role of Miriam #2 if they don't understand the role Miriam #1 plays in the life of the Israelites.

The name "MIRIAM" means "REBELLIOUS" in Hebrew. The rebelliousness of women has always been frowned upon by straight men, while admired by gays. Gay men have loyal supporters in the world of women precisely because we resonate with their need to upset the *apple* cart.

Miriam #1 follows after her baby brother Moses when he's discovered in the bulrushes by the pharaoh's daughter. Miriam protects him by recommending their mother to the princess as a midwife to Moses. [Exodus 2:7-10] And Miriam leads the Israelites in a spirited victory song once they arrive on the other side of the Red Sea, where they watch as Pharaoh's army drowns when the walls of water collapse upon them. [Exodus 15:20-21]

On the other hand, she's also associated with "LASHON HARA" {GOSSIP} for objecting to the marriage of Moses to a foreigner. [Numbers 12:1] For speaking against the wishes of her brother, she contracts a skin disease, ostensibly as punishment by GOD. Moses prays to GOD to heal her, and HE does. [Numbers 12:13]

The anticipated loyalty of women to their fathers, brothers, husbands and sons didn't give Jewish women much latitude in those days. It could even be argued that we're only now coming to a point in history when women have the right to walk away from their family without guilt if they have good reason.

Showing care and concern for her brother {Moses} was, of course, admirable on Miriam's part. Leading her people in song at the fate of their enemies was considered an admirable role for a woman to play. But speaking against any man's wishes was considered rebellious in those days. And for the sister of the Israelites' leader to do such a thing was thought of as unconscionable then. {The fact that their brother, Aaron, agreed with Miriam about Moses should have landed Aaron with a skin condition, too, if you ask me. But it didn't. I guess GOD worked in more mysterious ways in those days.}

Although Miriam was thought to be virtuous by nature, externally she rubbed some people the wrong way. Perhaps when she took liberties with language, it suggested that the freedom, liberty and emancipation achieved by men would become a right women might one day strive for, too.

These vignettes of Miriam's life in Torah create the overall perception of her as the most righteous woman at that time, but a woman, nevertheless, in whom there was room for improvement in the eyes of straight men then and for a long time thereafter.

The Miriam {Mary} of The New Testament will, arguably, be looked upon more agreeably in GOD's eyes. But then, losing your son in such a way is a fate worse than death for any mother. What began as an external skin irritation for Miriam #1 becomes a figurative cutting out of the heart of Miriam #2.

"IN THE FIRST MONTH THE WHOLE ISRAELITE COMMUNITY ARRIVED AT THE DESERT OF ZIN, AND THEY STAYED AT KADESH. THERE MIRIAM DIED AND WAS BURIED." [Number 20:1]

As with the death of Abraham where the relationship between Ishmael and Isaac at his grave isn't described in any way, the death of Miriam is pronounced abruptly, leaving the reader with the task of making up his own mind about the importance of her effect on the Israelite journey.

The Israelites then become deeply distressed, not about the loss of Miriam, their PROPHETESS, but because they've run out of water. Suddenly, it's their literal thirst, not their emotional thirst that needs quenching.

GOD directs them to the rock at Meribah, but Moses strikes the rock with his staff to make water flow from it after GOD told him to speak to it. But GOD brings forth water from the rock anyway, even though Moses didn't follow HIS instructions. [Numbers 20]

Moses has let his impatience and frustration get the better of him again by not following GOD's instructions. He doesn't smash Commandments this time, but he sets another bad example by smashing rocks. He uses the force in his hands rather than the power of his WORDS. GOD goes ahead and relieves the people of their physical thirst, but the congregation remains spiritually parched without Moses exemplifying a better way of modeling righteous behavior.

The author's confession of the weakness of his main character becomes unprecedented by this point in the story, since it is, after all, an autobiography. It's rare to see the main character in a nonfiction make the same mistake twice. Most authors might want to conceal their feelings about themselves by unconsciously denying their emotional association with their protagonist. But Moses, the author of Torah, is a man who's not afraid to describe his spiritual thirst and how he got in his own way of quenching it.

It's not hard to tell others where to go. It's not even hard to tell them how to get there. But, it is hard to follow your own directions and instructions once you know right from wrong, but are too entrenched in bad, emotional habits to change your attitude. It's hard to humble yourself to you when you know there's nobody watching you except GOD. If you don't have an inner understanding of the "he's" and "we's" your mind produces, you'll think that not even GOD gives a damn what you do when it comes down to how you behave toward yourself.

You may sometimes lose your temper over the least little thing. But without The Hebrew Testament, you may never know why. Jesus and T H E P R O P H E T Mohammed don't behave foolishly in The New Testament and Quran. In fact, they augment the wisdom of Torah with love and greater reasons for redemption. Why Christians and Muslims would think GOD/G O D made it their responsibility to punish gays and Jews is something I can't fathom.

In this story, Moses, the author, presents us with yet another example of his main character's stubborn stranglehold on self-anger and self-denial, which comes out when things don't go just as he expects them to. Even after 119 years of experience on the planet, Moses still chooses force instead of expressing himself verbally in a soft-spoken way. He's still a leader who prefers a rod, not a staff, to lead.

A rabbi today prays to GOD to protect our nursery school {Israel} and all of today's children of Israel. A rabbi today asks GOD to teach our enemies how not to hurt themselves. He prays for enlightenment, learning and redemption for everyone – just as our rabbis have done with us in the past. But why the most orthodox of our rabbis should need reason to punish Jews who are gay I can't fathom either.

We shouldn't feel the need to strike people as Moses struck the rock. We should want to do our best not to allow our anger to guide our actions, even if loving our enemies is too much to ask for. Jews aren't Christians, the adopted children of a perfect Jewish mother and heavenly Father. For us, tender love isn't always possible, or even appropriate.

Sometimes tough love is the only way to "talk to a rock." It's all a question of conscience, and the risks you're willing to take.

A gay rabbi such as myself (even though I'm self-ordained) has had to look carefully at how my enemies have behaved toward my two tribes. I watched as my parents waited patiently through the 1950's for the world to change its attitude towards Jews after the War. And I watched as many straights slowly changed their attitudes toward gays in the 1980s when we went through our "plague."

I can now see the path to redemption before GOD/GOD/G O D for me, and am encouraged by it. I'm hopeful that Muslims will overcome their ignorance of my tribes {gays and Jews}, and will learn to redeem themselves in G O D's eyes. The Sunni/Shiite struggle is a gay/Jewish struggle most of the rest of the civilized world has already gone through and understand personally. Our Teacher wouldn't give Muslims lessons if there weren't tutors already here to help them pass their tests.

Everyone knows what GOD/GOD/G O D has *told* us to do, and how to discern from that what HE/HE/H E *wants* us to do. It's not like we don't know that we're the most righteous people at this time. But those who continue to find reasons to feel spiteful about this GOD/GOD/G O D that HE/HE/H E gave us, will continue to get caught up in the seduction of the material world even though their emotions is what they ought to develop if they're going to live a spiritual life.

Those who blame the gays and Jews for getting seduced by the material world are the most egregious offenders of their faith. Their own greed and apathy know no bounds. They pray for money, of all things! Their morality is monitored by money, and the more money they have, the more moral they think they are. They choose to behave in an uncivil manner toward gays and/or Jews because doing better would be bad for business.

But being civil or uncivil to gays and Jews for monetary reasons isn't nearly a good enough reason for me. I expect to be honored and respected whether or not there's a buck at the bottom of it for you. There are no good reasons to treat me with any less love or generosity of spirit than you'd treat anyone else. Only someone who thinks he's living in a pre-Jewish era would bank on such sorry excuses. They're all pagans worshipping idols, all of them!

Many hyper "religious" Jews, Christians and Muslims trudge mindlessly behind their leaders like sheep, thinking they'd rather go back to ancient Egypt than move forward toward GOD's Promised Land. They're rather get swallowed up like Korach than admit their veins are filled with ice.

Peace will come to the Middle East when hyper "religious" people, not politicians, decide they're ready to strive for it. Peace will come when the "religious" bigotry towards gays and lesbians ends in all three of the Abrahamic faiths.

Today's sheep choose not to vote. Or they choose not to discuss politics in public, and they don't want to discuss their "religious" beliefs publicly, either. Today's sheep shop. They concern themselves with the availability and price of things. They'll strike anything they want with their credit card if they think it will quench their thirst. "Why put your faith in GOD/GOD/G O D, they ask themselves? What could HE/HE/H E possibly know about life here on Earth today?..."

When a man can't consciously conclude that his life is unfolding precisely as he deserves, like Moses, he'll continually be overwhelmed with anger and exasperation. He'll strike out, even at inanimate objects. He won't have the strength to communicate his cause

to himself in rational terms, let alone to others. He'll conveniently forget what his GOD/GOD/G O D has told him to do. He'll get lost in his material rewards and forget that his spiritual thirst is what drove him to the spot he's in, in the first place.

Jacob used a rock as a pillow. Moses uses it as a punching bag. The Earth isn't either. What we need from the Earth must be asked for humbly and received gratefully. In some ways, its indigenous peoples we should go to for inspiration because they seem to understand this lesson better than all the "GOD/GOD/G O D fearing" people on the planet. The holy relationship of indigenous tribes to the land should be an inspiration to all those who follow Abrahamic traditions.

Each of the oil, coal and metal extracting companies are led by a Moses bent on striking the rock at Meribah. They're beating up the land because of the terrible thirst inside others that makes them all only angrier at themselves. Their material greed is only dwarfed their spiritual need. Do you still wonder why GOD won't allow Moses into The Promised Land?

Spiritual Inventory And Nation Building

In Numbers, the Israelites are told to take a head count so that The Land can be equally divided amongst them. The census they're commanded to perform is achieved with a token, monetary contribution from every man 21 years of age or older, each donating a coin of the same value to his tribe. The total amount of money collected becomes tax revenue and determines the exact number of men, tribe by tribe, that are able-bodied and ready to fight. [Numbers 26]

This biblical census is comparable to the periodic inventory we all take of our life that we should use as a tool in the same ways. The 600,000 Israelites correspond to the myriad maturing voices within us that must all be accounted for.

GOD leads you as though you were moving *en masse*. You're a father of multitudes, an Abraham of wisdom, love and generosity, but all that lies within yourself. You're a Joseph here to increase the security of your country and then your kin. You're a Judah who needs to learn not to conspire against your own better judgment or compromise yourself with monetary rewards that go against all that you claim to believe in.

You're a nation in the process of formation, made up of Twelve Tribes. The Ten Lost Tribes may have been literally assimilated into the Assyrian Empire, but there are Ten Lost Tribes that still figuratively live in you. They are the personifications of the Commandments, and the Two Tribes {the sons of Joseph} personify Christ's Two Commandments. You're so much more intricate and sensitive than you ever thought. You're a "chosen people" in one person.

It takes subtle intuition and deep self-regard to realize your own best intentions. Your inner world is a democracy of voices you rule like a Moses who'll one day have to give up power to another, more benevolent, part of yourself {Joshua #1}. Your position as head of your own state requires you to develop understanding of your constituency. You need to take a periodic census of yourself to know yourself as your inner populace changes and grows over time. Your attitude can't remain the same forever. And, if you don't think there's any room for improvement in your attitude, there's a pharaoh waiting for you in your past who's constantly there to remind you otherwise.

If you feel like a "Hebru," the ancient Egyptian word that meant "stranger from the other side" you may feel you're discriminating against yourself, separated from yourself

and afraid of some aspects of yourself that seem strange. You may still feel in some way like a child.

If the dark side of you or the feminine side still scares you, you may feel like an alien dropped off on the wrong planet. You may hear a voice within persistently asking, "Where am I? and "Why am I here?" And more important than the answers you give yourself will be the emotional regard with which you give it.

Finding A Personal Savior

GOD tells Moses HE won't allow him to enter Israel. HE tells Moses to choose a successor. [Numbers 27]

Miriam, the PROPHETESS; Aaron, the priest; and Moses, the PROPHET – never get to complete the journey to Israel. Miriam and Aaron die in The Book of Numbers. Moses dies a couple of paragraphs before the end of Torah in The Book of Deuteronomy.

Life moves on. If you look around your life in your 30's, 40's or 50's, and you don't fully recognize yourself surrounded by all that you see, your Aaron, Miriam and Moses are aging. One by one, you're going to have to continue without them. You're going to have to prepare for a shift in inner governance. Someone else is going to have to take over when they're dead. And you already know who that's going to be.

It takes an angry prophet {Moses} to get you out of your head and move you in the direction of your heart. And it takes a devoted priest {Aaron} in your soul to clean up your act along the way. But it also takes the 'x' factor {Miriam}, the side of yourself that's feminine to agree with your inner priest in opposition to your inner prophet. It takes a man with some woman in his heart who isn't afraid to be rebellious.

Call her Miriam. Call her Mary. Call her "Mom." Call her Mother Nature. Call her whatever you discover her name to be for you. But call her from time to time!

Once you gain conscious control over these three aspects of yourself that were there from the beginning, a strange kind of guy will emerge from inside yourself. This will be your Joshua. He'll get you across your Jordan and into The Land GOD promised you, far from this Eden for infants we're all supposed to be sharing equally with one another.

You don't have to die because of your sins. You only have to be dying to atone for them. If you don't come to know Miriam #1 and Joshua #1, you'll never recognize Miriam #2 and Joshua #2 as aspects of the self given to everyone to advance their life with love.

The ancient Jews were only offered blind faith through animal sacrifice that they thought would assuage them of their guilt. Later religious revelation made it possible for Jews and Christians to commune with GOD/GOD directly through self-sacrifice and prayer.

Modern religious interpretation of Judaism and Christianity offer GOD/GOD-consciousness through self-awareness achieved through psychological inquiry. But if you get stuck along the way, maybe there's still a way for you to get yourself moving forward again. You don't have to stay where you are forever. You can advance or regress, depending on your intentions.

The world has changed. Man is ready to pick higher forbidden fruit than his ancestors could reach for. To know GOD in this day and age, you can't just change your mind or transform your heart. You have to transcend yourself entirely by making your conscience your guide. Today GOD/GOD/G O D saves those who help save themselves from their own guilt and ensuing grief.

Late in the last century, the institutions of Christianity found enough love in their heart to admit that Jesus died for *everyone's* sins, including the Jews. They finally realized that His love was so great and His influence as a model of potential perfection that nobody has to become a Christian to avail himself of it. You don't have to be a Christian to get a piece of the eternal pie He promised those around Him then. His love for humanity is so great that many Christians believe that *He* believes in you. You don't have to convert to Christianity to believe Jesus. You only have to convert to believe *in* Jesus.

Although Jesus promised everyone a piece of the pie, your own conscience will end up reaching for the piece intended for you. So, if you think you can cheat your way to the top, GOD/GOD/G O D sees you coming and has a way in place to teach you to give yourself exactly what you deserve. And that might unfold with a great deal of pain or suffering.

Better that happens here and now than have to wait to see how you slice your piece out of the whole pie with just what you've learned about yourself until now. Better you keep learning about your strengths and weaknesses before you start grabbing for what you think you deserve for a reward.

It's no coincidence that the only Israelite who makes it all the way from Egypt into Israel is Joshua. The name "JOSHUA" means "SALVATION." No one else succeeds in getting all the way from start to finish in Torah. The rest of the moaning masses born into slavery, including Korach and his band of thugs, die in the desert along the way.

Everyone could use a Joshua in his life at the beginning to get him all the way to the end, a savior to lead him on the final leg of his journey into his Promised Land.

What I love most about the message of Moses, the author, is that he's willing to let his main character's journey end prematurely for the sake of his readers' enlightenment. He's willing to sacrifice hero worship for the meaning of the mission. And yet he does it with such psychological and artistic nuance that I celebrate the death of the main character {Moses} knowing his fate is a part of a greater destiny for the Jews and the world.

In modern storytelling, the hero never dies. The hero wins, and the story ends on a happy note. Moses is a far more sophisticated storyteller. His main character was never a hero, although he was able to do heroic things. He dies before the story is over, and another character has been put in place to continue the story from there {Joshua}. Hollywood doesn't give us stories that nuanced. And so people can't relate to heroes because they can never see themselves in such a role.

Today's storytelling infantilizes the reader, and the viewer if that story is put on the silver screen. We're forced to watch what others can do that we'll never succeed in repeating. Today's storytellers cripple us by forcing us to live vicariously through their heroes. In Torah, you get a real story, one in which you can identify with all the characters as parts of yourself.

The sixth book, after The Five Books of Moses, is The Book of Joshua. "NOW THE JORDAN IS AT FLOOD STAGE ALL DURING HARVEST. YET AS SOON AS THE PRIESTS WHO CARRIED THE ARK REACHED THE JORDAN AND THEIR FEET TOUCHED THE WATER'S EDGE, THE WATER FROM UPSTREAM STOPPED FLOWING. IT PILED UP IN A HEAP A GREAT DISTANCE AWAY… WHILE THE WATER FLOWING DOWN TO… THE DEAD SEA WAS COMPLETELY CUT OFF. SO THE PEOPLE CROSSED OVER OPPOSITE JERICHO. THE PRIESTS WHO CARRIED THE ARK OF THE COVENANT OF THE LORD STOPPED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE JORDAN AND STOOD ON DRY GROUND WHILE ALL ISRAEL PASSED BY UNTIL THE WHOLE NATION HAD COMPLETED THE CROSSING ON DRY GROUND. [Joshua 3:15-17]

Once again the Israelites travel on dry ground where previously water had flowed. The world of Jesus will later symbolize an exploration of the ocean of man's emotions. And the description of T H E P R O P H E T Mohammed will signify the spirit world above both the land and the sea.

But there comes a point in the life of each of us when we stand at the banks of our Jordan facing West, wishing to make our way into The Land promised us by GOD/GOD/G O D. Each of us knows that after what we've been through in life, what's before us won't be that hard to traverse if we can cross over from this world into the next with moral authority.

It only takes a little effort and humility to get across this sort of emotional impediment. And yet how many nations in the Middle East today are still bent on using force to swarm into Israel, even though none of them have succeeded in the last 70+ years? Muslims fought crusades with Christians for centuries that didn't get them to swarm into Europe until they entered through the door of colonization. Doesn't anyone question GOD's/GOD's/G O D's designs? Does GOD's design in promising Israel to the Jews never enter their minds?

Each of us, like Moses, sometimes stands on a mountain peak looking over our Israel wondering why we've been refused entry. Therefore, everyone who believes in GOD/GOD/G O D should take HIS/HIS/H I S pronouncements to Moses and Aaron personally. There's no way to take something GOD doesn't want you to have even if your religious leaders tell you otherwise. Those who claim to represent GOD/GOD/G O D are no less the descendants of thieves than any of the rest of us. Why wouldn't you question everyone's motives? When you see fruit blossoming from a branch of someone else's tree, you should remember to ask (and ask nicely) before you simply reach up and pick it. That shouldn't be a lesson that's hard to teach.

Salvation will be described through the intersections of world history and personal mystery. And generosity is GOD's/GOD's/G O D's reward to those who see the light. To receive the rewards of salvation, you need only love life like a good book you aren't ever willing to put down, for fear you'll use your hands to take something that isn't yours.

But to love yourself enough to go from innocence through experience to self-discipline requires, first and foremost, the wisdom of Judaism to sharpen your thinking. Then you can avail yourself of the love of Christianity to soften your heart and the generosity of spirit of Islam to turn your conscience into a soul. If you can do all that in this order, "MAZEL TOV" {CONGRATULATIONS}! I think you'll be amazed at the piece of the pie in store for you.

If Moses, Jesus and T H E P R O P H E T Mohammed could have climbed the same mountain to meet with GOD/G O D, you can follow your path to the top and meet all three of Them, too. It doesn't matter if you walk in the footsteps of others. What matters is that you watch your step, and don't kick up too much dust. Your journey is the greatest story you'll ever tell. But it's a story those behind you and in front of you will tell, too. So you'd better watch how you're getting there.

SMOOTH LANDING IN ISRAEL - THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

COMMANDMENTS, WORDS and THINGS

Recapitulation

"D'VARIM" is the fifth and final book of Torah. Its name is "Deuteronomy" in English. But "D'VARIM" is the Hebrew WORD for "WORDS," "UTTERANCES," "COMMANDMENTS" and from which THE WORD "WILDERNESS" is derived. The word "Deuteronomy" doesn't describe what we're going to be looking for in this book.

The word "Deuteronomy" comes from the Greek word for "second law" because in this book many of the previous laws of Torah are recapitulated. Deuteronomy also contains the final words of Moses in an inspired song of hope he sings to the Israelites.

The first story in Torah prompted Adam to cover himself with a leaf in embarrassment; hide from GOD among trees in shame; and humiliate himself by squabbling with GOD while standing almost naked before HIM. The Creation Story set the tone of man as a schemer who uses knowledge for many of the wrong reasons. There's a little Adam and a lot of forbidden fruit in every story in Torah thereafter.

Torah begins with a story about the birth of guilt, while implying that life can still turn into a rainbow of hope yet to be realized; that man can hold the promise of faith with both hands and live optimistically if he's willing to learn about himself.

Life can become a covenantal promise, a contract signed, sealed and delivered with your own intentions to succeed if you're generous, loving and wise in the ways you treat yourself. Life can be a journey to salvation you take, first in your head with the pursuit of the knowledge of diversity and paradox, and then in your heart with the pursuit of self-love. The pursuits of your mind and emotions will lead you to acknowledge your soul, which will then bring you in touch with GOD's/GOD's/G O D's personal plan for you alone. This is what brings G O D's generosity of spirit into your life and your desire to fight to the death to hold on to it.

At the age of 120, Moses has now flowered, been fruitful and multiplied his efforts to leave this world a little better than he found it. And yet, he, too, will die outside Israel, leaving us with a bittersweet impression of this very special Hebru who grew up like a prince; became a murderer; lived like a simple shepherd; was called to lead a nation as a PROPHET; and then failed to get all the way to the destination GOD intends for us all.

The unstated goal of psychology is to prove that all the faiths and philosophies of the world are correct. All sacred texts are psychological instruction on how to recognize various aspects of the self that, together, elucidate GOD's reason for the creation of man.

Spiritual psychology reveals the need for you to follow in the footsteps of gay men and women who've come out of the closet {Tabernacle}. Spiritual psychology teaches you how to go *in* to come *out* in that one, special way GOD made you genuine.

But if you don't *come out* with a sense of GOD/GOD/G O D in your life, you're going to find self-love harder to achieve. Self-love isn't a gay outcome from looking deeper within. It's a spiritual outcome.

Torah teaches you to appreciate THE WORDS of GOD. The Gospels give you THE WORDS of GOD. And Islam helps you spread T H E W O R D S with understanding of G O D's generous intentions if you use all the Abrahamic faiths as steps up to GOD's/GOD's/G O D's throne. But the brave gay men and women in your faith will be able

to guide you in how to come out of yourself to do the WORK/WORK/W O R K we've all been given.

The Subjectivity Of Your Life

Adam died at the age of 930. [Genesis 5] But you may still be able to faintly recall your life as an infant and remember that infancy felt like it lasted just under a thousand years. {Eve's death isn't even reported. The heart never dies. It just transforms and transforms, crying out from the ground for justice one generation to the next.}

Torah never says when Cain died. And those who are in touch with their adult, inner child may feel that despite the tribulations of life, the childish side of them is still alive and well, rhetorically still asking whether you're responsible for the outcomes of others.

Life is a school. And no one else's grades are going on your report card. But life is much harder than it looks. But when making a name for yourself becomes really important to you, you care about the names people are calling others. Everyone deserves the opportunity to do well. And if you're not helping in that regard, you're hindering. When you turn your back on the needy, you're turning your back on GOD/GOD/G O D. And that, too, is going to go on your transcript. If you care about the gays and the Jews, a piece of The Land promised to us will be given to you. GOD/GOD/G O D isn't trying to make you jealous or envious of what we have. GOD's/GOD's/G O D's trying to motivate you to reproduce for yourself what we've got.

Noah lived 950 years [Genesis 9], suggesting that adolescence feels as though it drags on even longer than infancy. And since all the characters of Genesis live to be more than 100, you should conclude from that that all the stages in your development will feel quite arduous when you're just *plodding* through them.

The 120-year lifespan of the main character, Moses, covers four-fifths of Torah. In the last third of his life {from the age of 80-120} he wakes up to his tremendous sense of guilt and takes remarkable action by going back to that place in his past, to move through it in a new way. He commits to solving the problem of slavery for the Israelites once and for all. Surely that should give hope to the rest of us who are surely as plagued with anger issues as he was.

Before he dies, GOD lets Moses look over at Israel from the other side of the Jordan River, but refuses to let him enter The Promised Land. [Deuteronomy 34]

When you go up from the plains of your Moab unto the mountain of your Nebo to the top of your Pisgah to look over your inner Israel – you, too, should see all that you'll never be able to have and hold in a lifetime, given who you are. You'll then be able look back on your Egypt, as though through a microscope into your past. It won't matter then whether you think you started your journey a little late in life, or whether you fear you won't be given time enough to fully complete it. All that will matter is that the journey you took with that part of yourself will end in a new place with a new leader in charge.

The Old Testament is the story of your journey with GOD from your head to your heart. The New Testament is the story of your journey with GOD from your heart to your soul. And The Quran is the story of your journey from your soul to G O D in paradise {PARDES/orchard}

Your exodus from your head will begin a great spiritual journey that The Hebrew Testament will help you begin. But the struggle from your heart to your soul isn't about believing *in* Jesus. It's only about *believing* Jesus. And the story from your soul to G O D

can only be discovered in reading The Quran in these new ways. I will provide you with books to reread all three.

We need everyone to help us on our journey. There isn't a person on Earth who doesn't have a little piece of our puzzle in his hands, even though he doesn't know what that piece is.

The "pursuit of happiness" is our Constitutional promise that every American will be helped on his spiritual journey from his Egypt to his Israel; from his Israel to heaven; and back down through his Israel into this world. Our founding fathers, in all their wisdom and love, guaranteed these journeys in the Constitution, although they put it in different words, given their understanding of GOD's/GOD's/G O D's designs at that time. (More than 500,000 Americans died in the Civil War so that we could take Torah figuratively, not literally. Don't waste that sacrifice by not building on the freedoms you've been given.)

Of course, today, we can figuratively go on that journey as classmates without literally taking every step the brothers, Moses and Aaron, took. We can emulate their devotion to their destiny without succumbing to their fate. We can save ourselves from ourselves by learning from their mistakes. And we can return to Torah year after year as do religious Jews the world over because we know in our heart that there will always be mistakes we missed last year that we can hope to correct in the near future.

Three Aspects Of Deuteronomy

There are three aspects of The Book of Deuteronomy that I'd like to share with you personally. They are:

1. THE SHEMA
2. The law stating that only the best offerings must be sacrificed to GOD
3. HAAZINU {THE SONG OF MOSES}

Listen!

THE SHEMA is only six words long:

"SHEMA ISRAEL, ADONAI, ELOHENU, ADONAI ECHAD."
{HEAR, OH ISRAEL, THE LORD, OUR GOD, THE LORD, IS ONE.}
[Deuteronomy 6:4]

My father taught me THE SHEMA when I was a little boy, but he never told me why the Jews make such a fuss about there being one, and only one, GOD. I mouthed the words to please him, but I never got an answer from him (or anyone else for that matter) that satisfied me about the importance of there being only one GOD or why Jews should try to listen for the evidence of this being so.

Because there is duality everywhere around us in the world – day and night, male and female, heaven and Earth, familiar and unfamiliar fire – it would be easy to conclude that two gods created the world, not one. Why would one GOD give every man two worlds, an inner world of his own and an outer, second world he has to learn to share with everyone? Why would one GOD create life, and then divide it in half with two genders, like fruit, exposing its inner cross sections to us? And why would HE make some of us hungry for one half or the other, rather than both halves of the fruit?

Those who struggle to know GOD are instructed in THE SHEMA to use their ears to come to know HIM. The Jewish path to GOD requires us to *listen* for the truth. But, for many Christians, *seeing*, is believing. And since the Muslim path to G O D figuratively uses their nose to *smell* {intuit} their way to him, that may be the poetic reason why their belief system is so difficult for us in the West to fathom. To face GOD/GOD/G O D in HIS/HIS/H I S entirety, we ought to become more familiar with one another's faiths.

After THE SHEMA, it is written, "LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH." [Deuteronomy 6:5] This is the 1st Commandment of Jesus and the 11th Commandment of Christianity.

The next utterance found in Deuteronomy is, "THESE COMMANDMENTS THAT I GIVE YOU TODAY ARE TO BE ON YOUR HEARTS." [Deuteronomy 6:6] This is consistent with Jesus's view of looking at life from the heart, not only listening to GOD's message from one's head.

Jesus's 2nd Commandment is, "LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." [Leviticus 19:18] This is the 12th Commandment of Christianity.

Over the past 2,000 years, while living in Christian lands, the Jews have learned to *see* what GOD means to the Christians. And the Christians have figuratively learned to *listen* to us to acknowledge our view of HIM, too.

And yet, I recommend that you internalize The Book of Leviticus, and not externalize it. It's not healthy to look at people as family members. It's much healthier to see them as classmates under the roof of the same school with only one Teacher.

It's not your neighbor or your companion that you should love, but yourself. If you can devote your life to loving yourself, you will graduate this school with the highest honors. If you could just forgive your classmates for their bad grades, you could spend your time better focusing on your own. Their grades won't be going on your report card. So all you have to do to help the Teacher teach you is to help HIM/HIM/H I M maintain class control by advocating for a more thorough education for all.

In this century, we have the chance to use our eyes, ears *and* nose to intuit our way to GOD/GOD/G O D. We now have a chance to explore our intuition to come to know our Creator by studying The Quran in the same way we've studied The Old and New Testaments: for personal insight.

To become a man of the world, you need to be able to trust wise, Jewish ears, loving, Christian eyes and those Muslim noses they stick in our business with charitable intentions. To face life, you need an Abrahamic face to face our Creator; a Hindu navel to contemplate your mother's contribution to your life; a Buddhist distance that makes it possible for you to embrace all of yourself; and a Taoist view of every tossed coin as though it were sitting on a glass table – allowing you to view it from both sides. If you add to that the indigenous people's understanding of the earth, you'll then be able to feel that the soles of your feet are well grounded.

Hearing Verses Listening

The first two words {SHEMA ISRAEL} indicate who should do what. "SHEMA" means both to "HEAR" and "LISTEN." In English, there's a difference between hearing and listening. *Hearing* happens in your head. Hearing refers to a mental opening to new information. Hearing is the interpretation of sound by the mind.

But *listening* is an activity that's accomplished with the heart. Listening is what you experience when you've opened yourself to the feeling another person is endeavoring to convey with his tone of voice, cadence, pauses and pitch.

SHEMA is the combination of hearing and listening that strengthens your resolve to follow the path to intellectual comprehension and the path to compassionate awareness of how you feel. "SHEMA!" {HEAR AND THEN LISTEN!}

"ISRAEL" is:

1. A person {Jacob}
2. A place {Land promised by GOD to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob}
3. An action {a struggle with GOD}
4. An idea {a spiritual/psychological state of being}

All those who believe in the four meanings of Israel {person, place, action and idea} hear and listen!

The Trinity Of GOD Verses The Trinity of GOD

There are three words of THE SHEMA that refer to GOD. They are: "ADONAI," "ELOHENU" and a repetition of THE WORD "ADONAI." They invoke the name and descriptions of GOD. Literally translated, they mean:

ADONAI	Y.H.V.H. – the GOD who introduced HIMSELF to Moses
ELOHENU	The GOD who created the world around us
ADONAI	Y.H.V.H. – the GOD who introduced HIMSELF to Moses

By invoking the first name of GOD {ADONAI} and HIS role as creator of the universe {ELOHENU}, and then invoking HIS name again {ADONAI}, we're stating that the God within

is the same as the GOD/GOD/G O D around us, and the GOD/GOD/G O D around us is the same as the God within.

This movement from within our inner world out into the world we share, and back in again, produces a spiritual process we're all a part of. It creates a way of acknowledging that by using our head, heart, soul and penis with righteous intention, we can transform our world around us, while simultaneously transcending ourselves within.

The spiritual essence of the Christian Trinity {GOD: (1) The Father; (2) The Son: Jesus; and (3) The Holy Spirit} – creates the spiritual dynamics of a new perception of "Them" from another place in man: his heart. The Holy Spirit is the aspect of GOD/GOD/G O D that mysteriously enters our life with a timing we can never anticipate. This third, general term for GOD {The Holy Spirit} will be given a name in The Quran: A L L A H. Sadly, this name change and The Land GOD gave the Jews is what Christians and Muslims have been fighting about for 1,400 years.

The spiritual process evoked in THE SHEMA and The Trinity are equivalent, but not equal. They're two different spiritual processes, which accomplish disparate results because they come from separate places within: the head or the heart. The Jewish process produces the drive for *justice*. The Christian process produces the drive for *mercy*. Together, Jews and Christians are challenging the conscience of the whole world by making them weigh the differences between their thoughts and feelings in their conscience.

The concept of one GOD {ADONAI, ELOHENU, ADONAI} and one GOD {Father, Son and Holy Spirit} then made it possible for our Creator to become the Purveyor of yet a third Abrahamic process through the creation of Islam in the 7th Century.

Once you have a place inside to house justice {head} and a place to house mercy {heart}, you need a place to house fairness. This is the role of the soul. This is why your conscience needs to work so hard at becoming soulful. It doesn't come without effort. To do what's fair requires a hell of a lot more effort than to just be just or forgiving.

Spreading T H E W O R D of G O D through stories from Torah and The Gospels that have been reinterpreted could only have been accomplished with the introduction of similes. The Quran is made up of 114 similes {surah/chapters}.

We can only compare and contrast ourselves to our understanding of our Creator if we have metaphors, symbols and similes to exercise our efforts in being just, merciful and fair.

In this way, GOD slowly became perceived in Judaism as a verb, making it impossible to idolize HIM through actions, deeds, behaviors and endeavors. Jesus, the one chosen from among GOD's chosen surpassed our Jewish perception of HIM by invoking the attributes of Him as one of three aspects of GOD. Jesus became known in the Christian world as the personification of perfection. By perceiving Jesus as an aspect of GOD, they interpreted Torah in a new way from a new place in inner space. And by perceiving G O D from a third place in inner space, Islam completed the mystery of life in the third dimension.

The Meaning Of "One"

THE WORD, "ECHAD" in THE SHEMA is the number "ONE" {masculine}. (1) ADONAI, (1) ELOHENU (1) ADONAI (1) ECHAD.

Described in terms of inner and outer space, the experiences of GOD occurs in three locations:

1. The space inside of you

1. The place outside of you
1. Recapitulated of the space within and around you back within. This makes your life into a journey on two fronts: inner and outer. This makes GOD both entirely personal and totally universal. And this is what makes the journey from innocence to experience spiritually meaningful.

"SHEMA ISRAEL ADONAI ELOHENU ADONAI ECHAD" The journey from within, out into the world and back in again into yourself, when done consciously many times over, brings you to an experience of the oneness of our Creator.

GOD/GOD/G O D exists in both inner space and outer place simultaneously. GOD/GOD/G O D exists in objective time around us and in subjective time within us. HE/HE/H E doesn't require us to take any specific action for HIM/HIM/H I M to know what action we would take. Our moral journey is obvious from HIS/HIS/H I S perspective because HE/HE/H E can see what will motivate us even before we take action.

When you can comprehend what I've just said, you'll be able to achieve the ability to perceive the outer world nostalgically now. You'll be able to see your past through a sorrowful lens and the present moment at the same time through the same lens. You'll be able to perceive objective time subjectively. This is what I call: the nostalgia of the moment.

When you can do this, you'll also be able to look back on that trauma in your past that changed you forever. That was the moment when you chose to believe that nothing good could ever come of anything ever again. That was the moment when you decided you'd have to be alert and attentive to future disappointments every moment of your life from that moment on.

For me that happened when my parents separated when I was six years old. Until then, I saw promises and peace as potentially possible. After that, I was on guard for what would happen next for the rest of my life.

I may have picked my first, forbidden fruit and realized I was nude when I was about two years old. But I wasn't banished from Eden until I was six. That's when I looked back in life at a time when things were different.

Your journey from inner space to outer place and back in again is the essence of the journey from your head to your heart to your soul described *generally* in Torah, *specifically* in Christianity and *individually* in Islam.

The creation of every ADAM {man} is allegorically described in Genesis with the creation of Adam's journey to the discovery of guilt; which was described metaphorically as fruit picked from a Tree. The journey from his head to his heart is described in Exodus as a departure from Egypt for Israel. The melding of his head and heart is described in Leviticus through laws that should be taken personally and privately, not publicly and politically. The creation of his soul is described in Numbers when man takes action on what he believes to be the morally right way to go to arrive at his Promised Land. And the melding of man's head, heart and soul is described in Deuteronomy with the summing up of The Five Books of Moses.

That GOD/GOD/G O D exists in three locations simultaneously in you {head, heart and soul} can be expressed algebraically with the equation:

$$1 + 1 + 1 = 1$$

If you sum up all the ways in which GOD/GOD/G O D manifests HIMSELF/HIMSELF/H I M S E L F in your life, it always adds up to One. The Christian concept of Trinity {Father, Son and Holy Spirit} is particularly easy to understand as the personification of these three aspects of GOD.

But with the personification of the three aspects of GOD must also come the personification of evil {the "devil"}. Modern man now has the capacity to maintain his connection to GOD, while dispensing with his connection to the concept of the "devil." All he has to do is take responsibility for all his evil action, and not blame them on a supernatural force outside himself.

When you include the effect of your penis on your head, heart and soul, you see the moral rise and fall your desires add to your intentions. This moral undulation will have both a positive and negative effect on the world. And where you arrive by the end of your life will determine where GOD/GOD/G O D will meet you when HE/HE/H E comes down to take you where you're going "next."

The word "Buddha" means "awakened." Those who have awakened can see unity in a multiplicity of ways. This brings tranquility. There isn't only one way.

The paradox expressed by Taoism is another expression of GOD's/GOD's/ G O D's designs that we may find hard to explain with a Western outlook, but this attribute of life is equally important to HIM/HIM/H I M. It makes perfect, paradoxical sense that there are millions of gods, while at the same time that there's just One Who's manifested three ways in the third dimension. Without paradox, the spiritual equation 1 + 1 + 1 = 1 makes no sense. With paradox, it makes perfect sense.

It makes perfect, paradoxical sense that the Jew is awaiting the arrival of the Messiah and the Christian is awaiting His return. It makes perfect, paradoxical sense that the Muslim isn't doing either. GOD/GOD/G O D won't disappoint any of HIS/HIS/H I S followers. Brotherhood and Buddha-hood will be as one when we can see the perfection in the way it *is* for now as well as in the way we'd like it to be.

Proving The Obvious

Because a fish is born in water and lives its whole life in water, it takes water for granted. The last creature on Earth that knows anything about water is a fish. A fish would need to be taken out of water to know what it's normally surrounded by inside and out.

THE SHEMA for a fish would state that the water around fish is the same as the water within it. And it would imply on faith that the water fish breathe in is the same as the water already within it and coming out of it. Because it's the flow of water that makes the existence of fish possible and meaningful, a fish would understand that GOD's design for fish is a liquid process that moves water between its two worlds.

The truth of this statement for one fish would, of course, be true for all fish. But this isn't an idea that would be easy to convince a fish of. A fish would have to figuratively go through an out-of-water experience to discover this truth for itself. It would have to suffer the pain of being hooked, dragged out into thin air and then the disorientation of being thrown back into the water for it to understand THE SHEMA for fishes.

The experience of being fished out is comparable to the losses we suffer in life that make us acutely aware of circumstances we previously took for granted. Loss is a change in our state of awareness that increases our understanding of the meaning of our life through

a painful experience that brings us into the world of spirit. Absence of water teaches a fish to appreciate water. Absence of self-love leaves us figuratively gasping for breath.

When you have to go through physical pain, you're experiencing a change in your spiritual state of being. It's a drag on your physical body that pulls you in a direction you don't want to go. And because emotions have physical components, all changes in your physical state of wellbeing reverberate through you, and all changes in your emotional state have physical and spiritual effects on you, too.

Each time a fish is caught on a line; dragged through the environment it normally takes for granted; and is then pulled out of its element – it experiences physical and emotional changes that the other fish can sense, and which cause minute changes in the current all the other fish are swimming in.

Fish that have been caught, pulled out of the water and then tossed back in aren't able to describe what they've been through to other fish. Perhaps they remember the visual experience of the world above the waterline. Perhaps they can recall the ordeal of pain and the change in the sounds they heard. But all fish that have been hooked and reeled in have had a life-changing experience, whether they know it and can relate it to other fish, or not.

You might say that GOD/GOD/G O D figuratively does to us what we do to fish. GOD/GOD/G O D is a Fisherman who hooks us with that special worm HE/HE/H E knows we'll bite into, reels us in slowly or quickly as HE/HE/H E so chooses when we take the bait, and then lets us go so we can figure out for ourselves what we've been through, and why.

We don't need to feed the multitude a fish dinner in this day and age, as Jesus did. Nor do we need to teach people to fish as clever Christians decided later to do. If we're going to save our oceans from destruction, we need to teach people to think like fish. The life of a fish has to become personalized to become meaningful, or we'll be unmoved by the loss of the fish in the sea and the pollution of the world's oceans.

Moses, the author, must have felt like a fish out of water. THE SHEMA that Moses recites to the Israelites in Deuteronomy applies to every Jew, Christian and Muslim, then and now. In fact, it applies to every person on Earth. We're in a spiritual process with GOD/GOD/G O D from within as well as around us, even if we don't know it or take our spiritual awakening for granted.

All of us react to being controlled with a sense of anger, fear or sorrow. All of us react to these emotional fluctuations with a sense of guilt when things don't go our way. Or we react with a feeling of love of life when things do.

All of us endeavor to infuse a celebratory sense of hope and joy into life with faith in our Fisherman or with a philosophy of expectation on other levels of reality that explain our experiences in meaningful ways.

Those of us in the Abrahamic faiths should endeavor to be a little more grateful to GOD/GOD/G O D when HE/HE/H E chooses to fish us out, no matter how frightening the experience is or how much we find ourselves choking and gagging while we're in HIS/HIS/H I S immanent presence out of our comfort zone. But that, of course, isn't easy.

But it is easy to swim away from HIM/HIM/H I M in denial of what we've been through when HE/HE/H E throws us back in. We're all so practiced in making it look like nothing has happened, when, in fact, miracles are occurring in our life all the time. It's so easy to be so filled with gratitude at feeling "off the hook" that we forget to ask ourselves to think about the worm that got us into that mess in the first place.

There's no way for a fish to avoid doing what fish do. "Fish gotta swim; birds gotta fly." ["Can't Help Loving Dat Man," song by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II] Although both the songwriter and lyricist are Jewish, here are the lyrics with a slightly Christian touch:

Oh listen, sister
I love my Mister Man and I can't tell you why
There ain't no reason why I should love that Man
It must be somethin' that the angels done plan
Fish gotta swim
Birds gotta fly
I gotta love one man till I die
Can't help lovin' that Man of mine
Tell me He's lazy
Tell me He's slow
Tell me I'm crazy, maybe, I know
Can't help lovin' that Man of mine
When He goes away
That's a rainy day
But when He comes back that day is fine
The sun will shine
He can come home as late as can be
Home without him ain't no Home to me
Can't help lovin' that Man of mine

If you aren't the flying fish type, you're simply going to have to be hooked and dragged out of your comfort zone into the world of spirit above the everyday world of water we're all doing our best to swim through.

Sacrificing Your Best For GOD

No Substitutions

Moses implies that only the finest must be given to GOD. Torah states, "DO NOT SACRIFICE TO THE LORD YOUR GOD AN OX OR A SHEEP THAT HAS ANY DEFECT OR FLAW IN IT, FOR THAT WOULD BE DETESTABLE TO HIM." [Deuteronomy 17:1]

As I've already described in detail, a new form of prayer replaced animal sacrifice 2,000 years ago when the Romans destroyed The Second Temple and expelled the Jews from Israel. Although animal sacrifice was never incorporated into Christianity or Islam, the roots of Judaic prayer in all the Abrahamic traditions lie in assuaging our guilt through sacrifices.

Sacrifice isn't always a voluntary, material loss that implies an agreed upon barter with GOD. It can be seen as quite involuntary when a loved one dies or you lose a limb, for instance. Sacrifices that come that close to home make us feel like both the animal sacrificed as well as the ancient Jew offering the sacrifice. Our heart is then pried open to expose the inner sanctum of our Temple where the real sacrifice is taking place: our soul.

Sacrifice at The Temple was a business arrangement ancient Jewish men once went into with GOD to give up something of value here on Earth in exchange for something of greater value that they'd get for their sacrifice. It was also considered a buy-now system of rewards that GOD would keep for them until they arrived in the "afterlife," a kind of layaway plan. {If you wash MY back now here on Earth, I'll wash your back when you come before ME in MY heavenly abode above the clouds.}

Of course, even the most simplistic barter system is based on faith that the buyer and seller are both bargaining sincerely. In the end, every religious system is faith based, faith in a practice that Jews have been engaging in for a very, very long time. For Christians to point out that the Jews are good at making money is only an observation of the tip of the iceberg.

And yet, I must remind you that monetary prowess doesn't correlate to emotional and spiritual excellence. All the stories of Genesis make it clear that GOD goes into business with everyone, each in another way. Your faith in HIM/HIM/H I M is immaterial.

But, because the Jews have been in spiritual business with The Lord longer than anyone else on Earth, it should have become obvious over time that business acumen isn't the only avenue that denotes success in spiritually bartering with our Creator successfully.

That said, self-sacrifice will always be a personal, bartering process that each of us must go through with GOD/GOD/G O D in our own small business way. Therefore, we must each learn how to start our business and run it profitably, so that when we go out of business {die}, we'll have plenty to show for our time here on Earth. What's the point of bothering to liquidate your assets before you graduate if you won't even have enough to cover your tuition fees?

As man's greed slowly increases over his lifetime, he may become cynical of the spiritual system he's become a part of. He may find himself with more and more need to take responsibility for the losses his tribe has incurred. He may appear to support Israel, for instance, but he's only doing so out of guilt. It may actually become harder for him to believe in GOD/GOD/G O D because his conscience is being taxed to the max.

Racism never seems to go away. Materialistic, white people are still terrified poor, uneducated blacks will rob them. Homophobia keeps coming out the more we come out. Misogyny is older than מְתוּשֶׁלַח {METHUSELAH: DEATH OF THE SWORD} the oldest man in

the Old Testament who died at the age of 969. And anti-Semitism seems to have started when Hagar wanted for Ishmael what Sarah was given for Isaac.

Life only gets easier the more you understand how it works. At one end of the spectrum, some take shortcuts by stealing. At the other, some take short cuts through lying to themselves {denial} or cheating on themselves {unwarranted self-blame}. Whatever paths you've taken until now will become evident as you see where you've arrived on the mountain and can look back to where you came from and how you got to where you're at.

When you have the good examples set by Joshua #1 and #2, Miriam #1 and #2 and Joseph #1 and #2, you really have no excuse for "missing the mark" {sin}. There's no excuse for not reaching that point at the top of the mountain you've been aiming for. When our Creator comes down to meet you on the final leg of your journey up to HIM/HIM/H I M, it would be nice if you came to peace with where you're at.

Despite a young man's lukewarm conviction that GOD/GOD/G O D is "probably" moral in everything HE/HE/H E allows to happen, his personal relationship with HIM/HIM/H I M will always hinge on him getting what he wants. In the past, people switched gods if they thought the god they had wasn't keeping up his end of a bargain. Today they become atheist or agnostic instead. They lose interest in GOD, GOD or G O D because they don't believe more interest in HIM, HIM or H I M will do them any good in getting where they want to go.

Getting Us All Where We Want To Go

When the ancient Jews realized there was no competition from other gods, that GOD is the one and only GOD, jealousy and envy set in, especially when HE decided to create our younger Abrahamic brothers: Christianity and Islam. The Israelites didn't have the luxury of worrying whether they had the "wrong" GOD. Once you only believe in the One, you never go back to more than One.

The ancient Jews who enjoyed animal sacrifices at The First and Second Temples didn't wring their hands at what the idol worshipping neighbors were up to. The ancient Jews knew they were praying to the one and only GOD, even if their neighbors didn't know who they were talking to when they placed idols between themselves and HIM.

But, once Christianity and then Islam crowded the ancient Jews out by insisting they had the only correct interpretation of GOD/G O D and HIS/H I S design, the ancient Jews couldn't figure out what HE was asking of them. They began to question HIS/HIS/H I S design in new ways to find new ways of participating in it.

Once our Creator created more than one faith, the ancient Jews had to become wiser, more loving and more generous, just to keep up with the competition. Competition between all the faiths eventually drove each of the major Abrahamic faiths into the specialties they're stereotypically known for today.

This jealousy and envy has served the Jews well. If not for Christians and Muslims finding myriad reasons in every century to fight with one another, we'd have been wiped out by one or the other long ago. So long as the Jews have something the Christians and Muslims want, some are going to try to steal it from us, and others are going to learn from us how to produce it for themselves.

Fortunately this process of spiritual maturation has followed us into the 21st Century where we can all speak much more candidly about our opinions and feelings because we're so much more educated and spiritually mature than our ancestors. Today, Christians are

less likely to repeat the Holocaust they created, and Muslims are slowly becoming educated enough to see the mistakes they're making that are causing them such embarrassment, shame and humiliation worldwide. (You can't go through an airport security checkpoint anywhere in the world without thinking something bad about how the Muslims got us into this mess.)

The good Christians have already chosen to learn *with* the Jews since they've already learned *from* one another. That means that the Jews no longer have to worry about being wiped out by the Christians {a very real possibility only two generations ago}.

But the Muslims still aren't willing to state out loud and for the record before G O D that they want the Jews to have all of Israel. They're still gambling inside in the hopes of winning big and taking away what GOD gave us. Once they give up this spiritual gamble of theirs, they'll see opinions of their faith turn around in short order, as it has done for good Christians.

Of course, none of this is going to happen until all three of the Abrahamic faiths give up the nonsense of taking The Book of Leviticus literally. It was always intended to be taken personally, and gay men hold that card over all three of them.

With the creation of Christianity and Islam so long ago, the transition from animal sacrifice to self-sacrifice was "officially" fully achieved. There was no further competition by other gods. But competition then occurred over who'd supply our one GOD/GOD/G O D with what HE/HE/H E most wanted. And slowly man has come to realize that the intentions in his heart, not just the prayers emanating out of his soul, are being taken into account.

Being in a bad mood when you're all by yourself is one of today's worst, spiritual sins. If you're accustomed to beating yourself up when you're alone because you have the opportunity to do so, you're not the kind of person others are really going to enjoy being around, any more than *you* enjoy your company. You know you can't bullshit yourself into liking your own company. But you may still be gambling on bullshitting others into claiming they like you for who you are. That won't pass the smell test.

The more morally erect you stand in your heart with good intentions and sincere expressions of goodwill for gays and lesbians, the more reason you'll have to believe GOD/GOD/G O D will do business with you in your life, and "thereafter." And if you think you can discriminate between straight Jews and gay Jews; male Jews and female Jews; white Jews and black Jews – your heart is still not clean enough to be called sincere. You're lying to yourself. You're in denial of the wisdom in GOD having created so few Jews in so many spiritual shapes and sizes. It's harder not to be Jewish than it may look…

Good "luck" depends on good timing {even for atheists}, something no man can control. We can only learn to control our actions and reactions. We have no control over time in this, the third, dimension. You can't buy your way into life "everlasting." You just have to be yourself and see what GOD/GOD/G O D thinks of the ways you've tried to better yourself over time.

That's why it's so important to curse silently, not aloud. Tell your GOD, GOD or G O D everything that upsets you about others. HE/HE/H E can take it. People can't. Get it off your chest with HIM/HIM/H I M. Be real. Your worry that your GOD, GOD or G O D is going to get angry at you for expressing yourself honestly in the privacy of your mind is a projection of your worry that you won't be able to take the ensuing guilt that arises. Self-

retribution {suicide} isn't necessary if you seek *vengeance* from yourself and not *revenge*. You have a lot you could teach yourself if you'd just open a dialogue!

"Everlasting" life is less important than "everlasting" love. Nobody really wants to live forever if he can't enjoy his loved ones by his side. I'd add that eternal life with the body you were given is probably not going to suit you over the long haul, either. So I wouldn't hold on too tightly to the vehicle you've been given. I'd give more attention to the journey, making the best of the vehicle you've got.

What began as a barter-and-bribe business that many rabbis in the ancient world {not just Jesus} railed against, has been twisted into today's {not-for-profit} prayer that claims to love the sinner, but hate the sin.

Hypocrites hate the "sin" of being monetarily poor, while they forgive the monetarily rich just for having money. Only the man whose goodness translates into the wellbeing of "THE WIDOW AND THE ORPHAN" is in business with GOD for the best of reasons. HE identifies with those who've lost love {widows} and those who've never known it {orphans}.

The fact of the matter is that you don't have to be smart. If you're hanging on every word I utter, you're really not smart. You would have figured all this out on your own if you were so smart to begin with.

But the fact may be that you're good. And good trumps smart. If you have a natural predisposition to be good, you're going to be fine. Just follow your heart.

Self-love is the only business dealing you're going to want to enter into with GOD/GOD/G O D if you like yourself. You can't sell GOD/GOD/G O D something you haven't earned for yourself. You can't even give it away.

The man who's lost love for himself is the only one who'll beg GOD to help him improve his relationship with himself. Suicide survivors like me are in the best position to do that. Living a lifetime with a fool or a cheapskate is intolerable. But living a lifetime with a murderer is the very definition of "hell on Earth."

The rich and powerful in every generation repeat the story of Korach hoping to get different results. They try using strange fire in place of familiar fire. They try dry ice because the cool, mentholated variety of apathy is so much easier to inhale than the burning, choking smoke that accompanies self-love.

In today's world, psychology is quickly replacing traditional prayer to teach people how not to abuse the attributes of strange fire at one end of the spectrum or familiar fire at the other. You know you can't give away what you haven't got to give. And that applies to faith and philosophy as much as material objects. You've got to have faith in yourself in order to put some of your faith into GOD/GOD/G O D. You've got to have a philosophy that includes the needs of others if you're going to enrich yourself from your heart. You've got to know how and when to use familiar and strange fire on yourself – or you *will* get burned.

False Faith In Yourself

Pretending to have faith in GOD/GOD/G O D when you haven't got a clue what you're doing is a form of whistling in the dark that may convince you to follow everyone else in seeking money, property and/or prestige only instead of fame and fortune from the inside out. Those who quote their prophet only to achieve pure profit aren't nearly as smart as they'd like you to think.

Jesus already died for everyone's sins. So let's not kill ourselves pretending to look perfect. One perfect Jew was enough to show us the summit on the mountain. Let's use our greed more selfishly by helping ourselves achieve self-*love* instead of greater and greater acts of self-*indulgence*. You don't have to make it all the way to the top as He did. GOD will graciously come down to meet you where you authentically want to stay.

Religion is this country has already lost its war with racism. By the next generation, the war on gays will look like a joke. There's hardly a soul in this country, male or female, today under the age of 30 who considers gay life a mortal sin. Our parents' generation thought intermarriage between ethnicities was dirty. Today's older generation still lives in denial of the fact that every woman has the right to control her own reproductive rights.

These moral questions are becoming so boring that they no longer deserve to be taken seriously, and yet we have to defend them. We have to defend them because there are so many self-hating fools who'll do anything to sacrifice us to their GOD, GOD or G O D. We're just scapegoats in lieu of their guilt. If they'd just practice what they preach on themselves and leave the rest of us out of their nonsense that would serve no purpose. There's not to be an Isaac tied up in knots or a Jesus nailed to a tree. They wouldn't know what to do with guilt if the whole sky were painted black every night to remind them. (Punch holes through it, stupid! Make stars to give people hope!)

Everybody is born with a red heart. Everybody will have a dirty anus until the day he dies. Everybody has a snake or a worm that's trying to convince him or her that power comes from the outside in.

There's nothing that makes your dreams that different from mine. Try watching TV with your eyes closed. Then try watching it with the sound off. And listen in both instances to the voice in your head that's babbling the whole time. You'll be amazed at what you'll hear inside when your eyes or ears are hampered. But there's a part of you that's now strong and optimistic enough to make powerful decisions about what you mean to yourself.

Tomorrow's parents won't worry if their kids are gay or straight. They won't care if their son or daughter makes a mistake during passionate sex and s/he needs to seek an abortion. It won't matter to anyone in the least what the race of their family members is. A little guilt goes a long way in helping everyone achieve modesty, humility and grace. Wherever you are on the mountain, GOD can meet you there.

There will come a day when blacks in the ghetto will seek out Hasidic Jews to teach them about GOD. There'll come a day when Muslims will, too. There will even come a day when "yeshiva bochers" {Yiddish: Jewish religious students} will question their sexuality without fear of retribution by GOD.

GOD never asked man to sacrifice his finest. Abraham sacrificed Ishmael by expelling him from his home, and GOD intervened on Ishmael's behalf. Abraham then tried to literally sacrifice Isaac, and GOD had the Archangel Gabriel obstruct that sacrifice, too. GOD accepted the sacrifice of the Jewish rabbi, Jesus, but I'm sure it couldn't have given HIM any pleasure to see HIS one begotten Son treated so cruelly. The P R O P H E T Mohammed brought the message to man via the Archangel Gabriel that sacrifice would forever be relegated to metaphor, symbolism and simile. And he may have been poisoned for his efforts, and died.

Learning To Give To Your Self

Learning to give and receive from yourself adds more meaning to the word "gift," as in the expression "the gift of life." There's little joy in buying and selling, or bartering and trading, if you don't like doing business with the one you're with. Even a not-for-profit arrangement with yourself is odious to your moral sensibilities if you force yourself to be charitable to you while secretly disrespecting yourself for your lack of worth through effort.

Learning to give and receive is an inside job. You have to get out of the business of working for yourself and begin to make your business: learning about yourself. You'll spiritually bankrupt yourself if you don't learn how to want to know yourself better. You can't trust or love someone you don't know well.

Common sense tells us that the world would be a far better place if there were no such thing as guilt, especially when our conscience requires us to point our finger at ourselves. But common sense is wrong. Everyone thinks he wants to promote love and thinks no one wants to promote guilt. That's wrong, too. Both feelings are important to us all. Both guilt and love come from the heart, and, without wisdom of the heart, you're going to make a mess of your life.

Violence erupts when people want to instill guilt in others and don't know how to express themselves. They become frustrated and angry at those who know no guilt. But this reaction is common in those who are devoid of guilt: psychopaths. They know no guilt because they've excised guilt from their spiritual, operating system. They're Jewless. You're Jewful. And watching them prance around Israel is a sign of how psychopathic they are.

Most people are apathetic to themselves in some parts of their life rather than loving and kind. They've been conditioned to serve only others in those dark spots. They've been taught to care about what others are thinking; what others are feeling; and what others should do to improve *their* belief in GOD/GOD/G O D. Those perspectives were fine when you were a novice of life and wanted to become an expert only on others. But that's no way to conduct yourself once you plan to become an expert on living. You have to go into that darkness and personalize those places that are still projected out with the belief that it's your responsibility to make this world shine for GOD/GOD/G O D.

It's your responsibility to make *your* world shine for GOD/GOD/G O D. Set a good example. And then talk about how you did it. Become a talking head who can include his heart and soul.

The problem with going through loneliness is that you can't do it holding anyone's hand. Not even GOD/GOD/G O D can go with you there. You've got to learn to overcome loneliness by yourself with yourself. It's hard to do, but everyone has to try to do it sometime. You won't be alone in doing so.

The search for The Lord is entwined with the search for self. You've got to first father yourself to grow up. You've got to become a brother to yourself to guide that little guy inside you. But, in the end, you've got to become a teacher to all the aspects of yourself that are yearning to learn who you're becoming. You're going to need the distance afforded the role of professor and the proximity of the role of student to better yourself. In these ways, you'll never be sad being alone.

The familial relationship with GOD in the ancient past didn't last for long {about 1,400 years}. We're now left with the dysfunctional family of Abrahamic man we find ourselves in today. Even a familial relationship with *yourself* doesn't work for long. You'll be left

with a spoiled, adult inner child with goody two-shoes, inner parents who don't know how to have a real relationship with their inner son.

If you want to see everyone in this world as your spiritual brother or sister, you're headed for disaster. That Christian model is defunct. Brotherhood was disproved in Torah. Not even Moses and Aaron could always get along. Experience will always teach you that you'll be used like a pawn by others if you're innocent.

If you want to think of Jesus as an older or younger Brother, that's fine. But keep that relationship to yourself. Treat the rest of us like your teachers or students. Don't let us wake up one day to discover we were merely the pawn of someone who thought he was a king or a queen.

The teacher/student model is the best model for your relationship with yourself (and others), even if that wasn't the kind of relationship you previously strived for with GOD/GOD/G O D. The TEACHER/TEACHER/T E A C H E R/student relationship with The Lord is far better than considering HIM/HIM/H I M your Father, Son or a Spirit who follows you around, haunting you for reasons beyond your ken.

It's not enough to be a member of one faith without taking into account the contributions of all the others. We've all climbed too far up the mountain from every side not to admit the unique contributions each individual, culture, faith and lifestyle has to offer humanity. Those who act like fathers, while treating the rest of us like children, aren't spiritually current with their lessons. Those who treat you like their brother, while treating others like their distant cousin twice removed, aren't spiritually going high enough. You've got to strive to become your own teacher to reach the humility of being student for life. You've got to learn to hear, listen and obey yourself because you want to respect yourself as a student respects a great teacher.

There are paths, streets, avenues, boulevards, highways and freeways to GOD. There is no "one way." It's a privilege to operate a human vehicle. Nobody is "wreck less" and yet everyone is sometimes "reckless." Accidents and incidents with others can be avoided if you drive yourself *safely*, and don't drive yourself *crazy*. International problems are caused by *interpersonal* problems. But they both stem from *intrapersonal* problems.

The mind can't perceive the purpose of life with common sense alone. The heart can't recall the purpose of life with only loving intentions. We begin the journey of awakening from our head if we go in the direction of our heart with the awareness of the spiritual importance of feeling guilty. That was what Torah taught mankind 3,400 years ago. And that's still true today. Just because you call yourself a devout Christian or Muslim, doesn't mean you can't be as wise as a gay-Jew…

We were all created on the same assembly line, but it's your steering wheel you're holding in your hands, not mine. You're not in the back seat trying to tell yourself where to go. You're not in the death seat, either. You're in the driver's seat whether you like it or not. Therefore, drive cautiously. There's someone very precious on board.

Getting Yourself Where You Want To Go

The greatest irony of Torah is that Moses, the author, doesn't allow his main character to enter Israel because his character called "GOD" is so developed by the end of his book that HIS decision outweighs the author's desires and the desires of the main character.

Not even GOD's first PROPHET {Moses} always got his way. Jesus's life didn't end happily. The P R O P H E T Mohammed suffered from so many wives. We're all subject

to the spiritual laws of GOD's/GOD's/G O D's universe. It works out the way HE/HE/H E wants it to, regardless of how much we believe we've got insight into HIS/HIS/H I S design(s).

Moses and Aaron get the Israelites closer to Israel, but not into Israel. The question each of us must choose whether or not to pose to ourselves is whether we're trying to die in our inner Israel or on our way to it. Although every religion can be of help in planning your life, saving your own skin is ultimately about your choices.

You can rely on your religious institution to make promises to you, or you can make a promise to your religion, instead. Faith is something you give your synagogue, church or mosque to learn whether you have it to give. Ask not what your house of prayer can do for you, but what you can do for yourself through your house of prayer.

The metaphor 'character in Torah as aspect of the self' gives us the opportunity to see the many aspects of ourselves that struggle to be free. Our identity isn't defined by our religion, but by what we believe we want to do with our life.

There are no guarantees in life. Not even heaven is a promise you can depend on. You have to do the WORK/WORK/W O R K to get the results. And you can't stop when *you* think you're finished. You can only stop when the ride of your life comes to a complete halt {your death}.

If you don't look at Torah with psychological insight, Torah becomes flat and meaningless. But if it really were flat and meaningless would Jesus have quoted it and would T H E P R O P H E T Mohammed have based The Quran on Torah and The Gospels? Clearly, they both thought a great deal about the potential for greater depth by using Torah.

If you don't awaken yourself, Buddha won't be able to nudge you awake either. If you don't help save yourself, Jesus won't be able to save what's left of you. If you don't open yourself to the message of being yourself {a modern man in a great new age}, the message T H E P R O P H E T Mohammed brought won't get through to you.

It's so easy to avoid learning to love yourself and focus only on loving others or working overtime at getting others to love only you. It's so easy to denounce the ethical evolution of the *finest*, and believe only in the survival of the *fittest*. The evolution of GOD's/GOD's/G O D's love is happening everywhere. Don't revolt against it just because you don't see everyone embracing it. You'd only be hurting yourself.

There's no "one way" to love. But, if you love the student within, you won't have to become your brother's keeper. He isn't an animal, and you're not a keeper.

There's reason to laugh while learning. Thank GOD for first creating you curious, and then having HIM tell you through reverse psychology not to pick the fruits of knowledge of good and evil. Tell GOD that you now understand that knowledge of the self has humbled you to seek HIS love in addition to your own. Tell HIM you're curious about HIM. Tell Him {Jesus} you'd like to like H I M {A L L A H} before you commit to loving HIS Holy Spirit. Don't worry. HE/HE/H E can handle a complex question. HE/HE/H E can even handle rejection.

Self-Centered Choices

In this, the final book of Torah, Moses reiterates his belief in always choosing life by blessing the tribes of Israel. [Deuteronomy 33] Moses dies when and where he does, not only because the author wills it, but also because of the choices the main character has

made that make it impossible for him to morally proceed any further up the mountain of life with his history of behavior. GOD forbids it.

Moses overcame the privileged mentality he was raised with by turning his guilt in having killed a man into a mission in life. Granted, he had anger issues that impeded his progress. But the author gives us hindsight into the main character's journey to help us go further than either of them managed to go. And the fact that Torah was written down with a man's hand doesn't mean that it wasn't inspired by GOD for women. Anyone, and any group of individuals, can be inspired to do great things.

Jews pray standing up. Christians pray on their knees. But Muslims pray on all four. If you find your anger issues and spite are getting in the way of your relationships, you're going to have to exercise your whole body in a coordinated fashion to understand your boundary issues with yourself. I suggest you try going somewhere else to pray.

Our Creator created the three Abrahamic religions as a way of dividing HIMSELF/HIMSELF/H I M S EL F up into segments that we could learn from with one another's help. If you only pray standing, kneeling or crouching, you're missing the point of prayer. If you only go to synagogue, church or mosque you're missing the chance to learn how to pray more effectively. And, if you only use your head, heart or soul in relating to yourself, you're missing the opportunity for self-discovery.

The Song Of Moses

The Song of Moses {HAAZINU: LISTENING IN} refers to the passages of Deuteronomy 32:1-43, the 70-line poem of Moses orated by him on the last day of his life atop Mount "NEBO," {PROPHESY} an elevated ridge in Jordan where he was granted a view of The Promised Land. The view from this summit provides a panorama over Israel. The West Bank city of Jericho is usually visible from the summit, as is Jerusalem, on a very clear day.

The Song of Moses is believed by some to have been written down and placed in the Ark of the Covenant, along with Aaron's staff and The Ten Commandments. All these relics of our faith were lost in the War with Assyria in 722 B.C.E. when ten of the Twelve Tribes were defeated, deported and assumedly assimilated into the paganism of the time.

The Song of Moses is deeply inspiring to the lover of language. It brings the final extensions to the metaphor 'knowledge coming from a Tree.' The added metaphoric extensions in this poem are 'GOD as our Rock' and 'water as emotional righteousness.'

Your mind is your rock, the stabilizing force that gives your life spiritual security. This rock has to be formed just as the Earth had to be physically formed out of star matter. The formation of the Earth required the formation of the universe and billions upon billions of years to accomplish the task. And, believe me, the formation of your mind will feel like it takes at least as long before you'll feel able to say that your feet are finally on solid, moral ground.

Moses may have stated that GOD formed man out of the dust of the Earth [Genesis 2], but man will have to draw that dust together in inner space to form that rock for himself. The gravity of his own moral being will do that for him, but, if he's awakened enough to observe the process, so much the better.

Water, the substance that was so destructive to the generation of Noah and frightening to the infant Moses in another ark, pours down from your heart on your inner landscape,

eroding it over time. Water separates and recombines seamlessly. This is GOD's clue to your emotional world.

Fire under pressure melts our mind at our core and ignites our inner ground with ideas, shaping our rock in myriad astounding ways. Even, the wind within blowing from your soul is having its effect on you day and night.

Although I'd only like to discuss two passages from "HAAZINU," I'd first like to present you with the whole song. I've place the two passages I plan to talk about in ***BOLD ITALICS*** to give you a sense of where they fall in this song.

LISTEN, YOU HEAVENS, AND I WILL SPEAK
HEAR, YOU EARTH, THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH
LET MY TEACHING FALL LIKE RAIN
AND MY WORDS DESCEND LIKE DEW
LIKE SHOWERS ON THE NEW GRASS
LIKE ABUNDANT RAIN ON TENDER PLANTS
I WILL PROCLAIM THE NAME OF THE LORD
OH, PRAISE THE GREATNESS OF OUR GOD
HE IS THE ROCK
HIS WORKS ARE PERFECT
AND ALL THE WAYS ARE JUST
A FAITHFUL GOD WHO DOES NO WRONG
UPRIGHT AND JUST IS HE
THEY ARE CORRUPT AND NOT HIS CHILDREN
TO THEIR SHAME THEY ARE A WARPED AND CROOKED GENERATION
IS THIS THE WAY YOU REPAY THE LORD
YOU FOOLISH AND UNWISE PEOPLE?
IS HE NOT YOUR FATHER, YOUR CREATOR
WHO MADE YOU AND FORMED YOU?
REMEMBER THE DAYS OF OLD
CONSIDER THE GENERATIONS LONG PAST
ASK YOUR FATHER AND HE WILL TELL YOU
YOUR ELDERS, AND THEY WILL EXPLAIN TO YOU
WHEN THE MOST HIGH GAVE THE NATIONS THEIR INHERITANCE
WHEN HE DIVIDED ALL MANKIND
HE SET UP BOUNDARIES FOR THE PEOPLES
ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL
FOR THE LORD'S PORTION IS HIS PEOPLE
JACOB HIS ALLOTTED INHERITANCE
IN A DESERT LAND HE FOUND HIM
IN A BARREN AND HOWLING WASTE
HE SHIELDED HIM AND CARED FOR HIM
HE GUARDED HIM AS THE APPLE OF HIS EYE
AN EAGLE THAT STIRS UP ITS NEST
AND HOVERS OVER ITS YOUNG
THAT SPREADS ITS WINGS TO CATCH THEM
AND CARRIES THEM ALOFT

THE LORD ALONE LED HIM
NO FOREIGN GOD WAS WITH HIM
HE MADE HIM RIDE ON THE HEIGHTS OF THE LAND
AND FED HIM WITH THE FRUIT OF THE FIELDS
HE NOURISHED HIM WITH HONEY FROM THE ROCK
AND WITH OIL FROM THE FLINTY CRAG
WITH CURDS AND MILK FROM HERD AND FLOCK
AND WITH FATTENED LAMBS AND GOATS
WITH CHOICE RAMS OF BASHAN
AND THE FINEST KERNELS OF WHEAT
YOU DRANK THE FOAMING BLOOD OF THE GRAPE
JESHURUN GREW FAT AND KICKED
FILLED WITH FOOD, THEY BECAME HEAVY AND SLEEK
THEY ABANDONED THE GOD WHO MADE THEM
AND REJECTED THE ROCK THEIR SAVIOR
THEY MADE HIM JEALOUS WITH THEIR FOREIGN GODS
AND ANGERED HIM WITH THEIR DETESTABLE IDOLS
THEY SACRIFICED TO FALSE GODS, WHICH ARE NOT GOD -
GODS THEY HAD NOT KNOWN
GODS THAT RECENTLY APPEARED
GODS YOUR ANCESTORS DID NOT FEAR
YOU DESERTED THE ROCK, WHO FATHERED YOU
YOU FORGOT THE GOD WHO GAVE YOU BIRTH
THE LORD SAW THIS AND REJECTED THEM
BECAUSE HE WAS ANGERED BY THIS SONS AND DAUGHTERS
"I WILL HIDE MY EYES FROM THEM," HE SAID
"AND SEE WHAT THEIR END WILL BE
FOR THEY ARE A PERVERSE GENERATION
CHILDREN WHO ARE UNFAITHFUL
THEY MADE ME JEALOUS BY WHAT IS NO GOD
AND ANGERED ME WITH THEIR WORTHLESS IDOLS
I WILL MAKE THEM ENVIOUS BY THOSE WHO ARE NOT A PEOPLE
I WILL MAKE THEM ANGRY BY A NATION THAT HAS NO UNDERSTANDING
FOR A FIRE WILL BE KINDLED BY MY WRATH
ONE THAT BURNS DOWN TO THE REALM OF THE DEAD BELOW
IT WILL DEVOUR THE EARTH AND ITS HARVESTS
AND SET AFIRE THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE MOUNTAINS
I WILL HEAP CALAMITIES ON THEM
AND SPEND MY ARROWS AGAINST THEM
I WILL SEND WASTING FAMINE AGAINST THEM
CONSUMING PESTILENCE AND DEADLY PLAGUE
I WILL SEND AGAINST THEM THE FANGS OF WILD BEASTS
THE VENOM OF VIPERS THAT GLIDE IN THE DUST
IN THE STREET THE SWORD WILL MAKE THEM CHILDLESS
IN THEIR HOMES TERROR WILL REIGN
THE YOUNG MEN AND YOUNG WOMEN WILL PERISH

THE INFANTS AND THOSE WITH GRAY HAIR
I SAID I WOULD SCATTER THEM
AND ERASE THEIR NAME FROM HUMAN MEMORY
BUT I DREADED THE TAUNT OF THE ENEMY
LEST THE ADVERSARY MISUNDERSTANDING
AND SAY, 'OUR HAND HAS TRIUMPHED
THE LORD HAS NOT DONE ALL THIS.'
THEY ARE A NATION WITHOUT SENSE
THERE IS NO DISCERNMENT IN THEM
IF ONLY THEY WERE WISE AND WOULD UNDERSTAND THIS
AND DISCERN WHAT THEIR END WILL BE
HOW COULD ONE MAN CHASE A THOUSAND
OR TWO PUT THEN THOUSAND TO FLIGHT
UNLESS THEIR ROCK HAD SOLD THEM
UNLESS THE LORD HAD GIVEN THEM UP?
FOR THEIR ROCK IS NOT LIKE OUR ROCK
AS EVEN OUR ENEMIES CONCEDE
THEIR VINE COMES FROM THE VINE OF SODOM
AND FROM THE FIELDS OF GOMORRAH
THEIR GRAPES ARE FILLED WITH POISON
AND THEIR CLUSTERS WITH BITTERNESS
THEIR WINE IS THE VENOM OF SERPENTS
THE DEADLY POISON OF COBRAS
"HAVE I NOT KEPT THIS A RESERVE
AND SEALED IT IN MY VAULTS?
IT IS MINE TO AVENGE; I WILL REPAY
IN DUE TIME THEIR FOOT WILL SLIP
THEIR DAY OF DISASTER IS NEAR
AND THEIR DOOM RUSHES UPON THEM"
THE LORD WILL VINDICATE HIS PEOPLE
AND RELENT CONCERNING HIS SERVANTS
WHEN HE SEES THEIR STRENGTH IS GONE
AND NO ONE IS LEFT, SLAVE OR FREE
HE WILL SAY; "NOW WHERE ARE THEIR GODS
THE ROCK THEY TOOK REFUGE IN
THE GODS WHO ARE THE FAT OF THEIR SACRIFICES
AND DRANK THE WINE OF THEIR DRINK OFFERINGS?
LET THEM RISE UP TO HELP YOU
LET THEM GIVE YOU SHELTER
SEE NOW THAT I MYSELF AM HE
THERE IS NO GOD BESIDES ME
I PUT TO DEATH AND I BRING TO LIFE
I HAVE WOUNDED AND I WILL HEAL
AND NO ONE CAN DELIVER OUT OF MY HAND
I LIFT MY HAND TO HEAVEN AND SOLEMNLY SWEAR:
AS SURELY AS I LIVE FOREVER

WHEN I SHARPEN MY FLASHING SWORD
AND MY HAND GRASPS IT IN JUDGMENT
I WILL TAKE VENGEANCE ON MY ADVERSARIES
AND REPAY THOSE WHO HATE ME
I WILL MAKE MY ARROWS DRUNK WITH BLOOD
WHILE MY SWORD DEVOURS FLESH
THE BLOOD OF THE SLAIN AND THE CAPTIVES
THE HEADS OF THE ENEMY LEADERS"
REJOICE, YOU NATIONS, WITH HIS PEOPLE
FOR HE WILL AVENGE THE BLOOD OF HIS SERVANTS
HE WILL TAKE VENGEANCE ON HIS ENEMIES
AND MAKE ATONEMENT FOR HIS LAND AND PEOPLE

The Creator of the universe is the same GOD the Christians and the Muslims pray to. HE speaks from a place in Torah that reflects HIS plan from HIS head. HE surely planned, even then, to reveal the teachings of Jesus Christ and T H E P R O P H E T Muhammed. So great is the plan from HIS/HIS/H I S head, heart and soul that we can only look back with hindsight, insight and foresight. HE/HE/H E always knew what HIS/HIS/H I S design was. And now we can begin to see it, too.

I'm now going to discuss two passages from "HAAZINU":

LET MY TEACHING FALL LIKE RAIN
AND MY WORDS DESCEND LIKE DEW
LIKE SHOWERS ON NEW GRASS
LIKE ABUNDANT RAIN ON TENDER PLANTS

Love is the righteous rain we shower down upon others in the hope that we'll nurture and cultivate it in them for GOD's sake. Love not only nurtures the world like rain nurtures trees. Our love nurtures ourselves as it moves out from our roots through our branches through our fruitful labors. Our own loving words spoken intimately in private to ourselves are like sap that can quench us down to our soul with indescribable, sweet joy if we allow it to flow freely.

Our belief in the sanctity of life on Earth is only as strong as our ability to see ourselves turning our inner wilderness into a garden. But this takes water {love}. Bird's eye views of Israel since 1948 that show how the Israelis have made the desert bloom are but a projection of a vision of this spiritual activity that every man participates in, a vision that was first revealed in Torah. Love is like water in a wilderness. Love turns your inner desert into an Eden of delights.

GOD created inner *space* with the same omniscient regard that HE created outer *place*. None of us avoided leaving that precious paradise called Eden in infancy. We had to go out into the world to learn how to appreciate the vast world around us. We were commanded to do so in The Creation Story, but every infant Adam knows there's no going back in the direction of the womb. We can only return to our source renewed and grateful later in life by looking back with joy on all that we went through; not simply because we got through it, but because we're better for having done so.

A man can love others only to the extent that he can share his journey into his inner world with himself and then with the world around him. If he feels that no one will understand him, he won't get very far in overcoming loneliness and a sense of defeat. The spiritual resource from which all forms of community and tribalism are derived flows out of the paradise of infancy. This is the "Xanadu" popularized by Samuel Taylor Coleridge in his poem "Kubla Khan or A Vision In A Dream," the stream that bubbles up in each one of us that continues to flow out of us for a lifetime.

GOD's gifts can be observed through science {the journey out} and religion {the journey back in}. To awaken to GOD's design, we must embrace nature, the trees around us, as well as our inner nature, The Tree of knowledge and The Burning Bush of feelings that are at the root of all that we know.

But the nature of GOD/GOD/G O D is neither and both. GOD/GOD/G O D is the metaphoric and biblical Rock beneath the root of it all that we cling to. All our righteous deeds are the ways in which HE/HE/H E allows us to hold on to HIM/HIM/H I M in three distinct ways, from our head {Judaism} our heart {Christianity} and our soul {Islam}.

The second passage of Deuteronomy 32 that I wish to explore is:

HE IS THE ROCK
HIS WORKS ARE PERFECT
AND ALL HIS WAYS ARE JUST
A FAITHFUL GOD WHO DOES NO WRONG
UPRIGHT AND JUST IS HE

You can only know that GOD is the metaphoric ROCK/ROCK/R O C K in your life when you realize that you're a metaphoric Tree, a metaphor created by Moses and revealed in The Creation Story that everyone in the Abraham faiths takes to heart. You can't fully feel the security of the spiritual ground beneath your feet until you feel that your roots are enveloping our ROCK/ROCK/R O C K.

The qualities of rocks are solidity, firmness, permanence, immovability, constancy and stability. It makes no sense to pray to rocks, as did the ancient pagan. You have to come to understand that it's the qualities of rocks that you're attributing to GOD's/GOD's/G O D's nature when you pray. And yet, many of today's indigenous peoples, natives and aboriginals are more aware of the attributes of rocks and able to embrace the earth than most religious people. Indigenous peoples are the connection between GOD and the ROCK that Moses was speaking of.

What makes The Dome of the R O C K holy to Muslims is this very concept. This rock was the departure point for T H E P R O P H E T Mohammed in coming to know G O D. He left Earth and flew to heaven from this spot at the site of The Second Temple in Jerusalem where Abraham wanted to sacrifice Isaac.

But every rock will lead you to The Lord, not just that rock. The rock Jacob placed under his head comforted him that night he had a dream in the desert. Every rock you hold dear will comfort you. It will give you a sense of stability. For women, that rock is often on the ring on their fourth finger.

It's frustrating to have to convince those with deep religious roots that they may not yet associate the attributes of GOD with the earth. Even though they don't need to be convinced of HIS existence, they may need to learn to cherish HIS creations. HIS nature lies

in Mother Nature. And the nature of man is mirrored in both. If we simply suck out the oil and minerals from the earth with greed, without appreciating the gifts of the natural world in with our own nature, we snub our GOD/GOD/G O D, and ourselves.

You can't appreciate the natural world when you cling to the disloyalty your grandfather and father perpetrated on you in some personal way. You have to let go of their sins to embrace your own virtues. You have to use your head to open your heart to your soul.

The idea that GOD/GOD/G O D is literally a rock is as absurd as believing HE/HE/H E created this little rock we all cling to in only six days. Biblical adherents who can't go beyond the literal meaning of Torah are hiding out from GOD in an underground world of literalism of their own invention. They're seeds in darkness, not yet born into the light. They can't see the forest for The Trees.

We're not only anchored to society through our need for food, money and sex. We're anchored to humanity through our metaphoric need for:

1. **Food**: metaphorically given to us as knowledge.
2. **Money**: metaphorically given to us as the spiritual wealth that comes with wisdom, love, generosity, diversity, tranquility and paradox.
3. **Sex**: metaphorically given to us as the indescribable joy in sharing our intimacy with ourselves through others.

At the root of it all, we're all wrapped around the same ROCK/ROCK/R O C K. How you capitalize on that truth will determine the moral evidence for your reward when your roots can no longer hold on any longer, and your Tree comes crashing down.

TAXIING TO THE GATE

A Fool's Errand

In a sense, I wrote this book for my inner Isaac, a tender child, born almost blind to the spiteful way this world tends to hold. He's a boy I had a hard time learning to listen to because he was so innocent that he wanted promises from me I couldn't keep. So I tried to kill him, and although I untied the knots that I'd bound him with, I denied the importance of his existence until very late in my life.

My own authority over me eluded me because my inner, wild child {Ishmael} wanted to have it his way. He was devious and deceptive because he, too, had been rejected and abandoned by that part of me that was confused. He wasn't innocent, but inexperienced.

I became frustrated and disappointed with how my life turned out because I couldn't see the effects of the various parts of me on the whole. I wasn't *holy* whole. I was *sanctimoniously* whole.

You have to do more than strut around like a father of multitudes while you've got a continuum of possibilities (Ishmael to Isaac/inexperienced to innocent} within you that are deeply unhappy with the way you behave. You have to learn to live a better life by treating yourself as well as you treat others. You have to renew your vows to yourself day-by-day, thereby progressing through Torah from Genesis to Deuteronomy and beyond.

I was an angry fool who could have done more if I'd tried harder to save me from myself. I had to start somewhere, so I started "IN THE BEGINNING…" But I didn't end there. It will end when I've made my way all the way around my inner world through all six faiths and philosophies plus indigenism.

It takes an author of unusual greatness to give his main character his own name and then describe him as flawed and human. And yet, making a fool of yourself is the very essence of what makes laughter so instructive. The Hebrew Testament is a comedy of sacred errors. If it doesn't teach you to laugh at yourself you've missed the mark. And then, you'll enter The New Testament and Quran without a sense of humor.

I've tried to describe how to live your life like the author of Torah, not like the main character. Whether you believe the author is GOD/GOD/G O D, a man or a host of writers is totally immaterial. It's the wrong question to ask. What you ought to ask yourself is whether you're going to live Torah, praise Torah or pass judgment on it to make your belief system holier in your eyes.

You've been given a chance to pick the forbidden fruit of guilt. You'd be a fool not to do so. It would be an insult to GOD to let HIM think there's anyone you love more in life than yourself and any goal more important to you than awakening to your love of yourself. It's all about you, and by now you should know that.

If you don't want to believe me, it could be because you're afraid of the guilt in putting yourself first. You may even be afraid that if you did, you'd set a bad example for others.

It takes many psychological transitions and many spiritual awakenings to go from an Adam to a Joshua unto yourself. But doing so will take you from paradise to the banks of a Jordan River where you'll stand before your Promised Land.

You've already cross over from your head into your heart. If you make the crossing from your heart to your soul, you'll come to that mysterious other place in inner space where nothing can exist that doesn't have moral purpose.

If you don't cross over this spiritual obstacle, but remain on the other side, you'll be filled with jealousy and envy of the gays and Jews all the days of your life. You'll look at Israel as a curse, and you'll do everything in your power to prove to yourself that your designs are better than HIS/HIS/H I S.

GOD/GOD/G O D had to create gays and Jews. There's no way you could have discovered many truths about reality without us. You need the gays to teach you to love yourself, and you need the Jews to teach you to love your GOD/GOD/G O D.

Self-salvation requires that you persevere past all previous levels of self-awareness. You can become an older brother unto yourself, and still be a child in the eyes of The Lord. You'll survive well enough in this world whether you're a spiritual orphan who never knew love or widower who loves love – if you strive for a happy classroom of voices with one Teacher.

The process of self-acceptance isn't comfortable, but it's comforting. And although you may be able to say you love yourself, some days you may like yourself more than others. And that makes life the mysterious, mystical evolution of the self that it is. Nobody on GOD's/GOD's/G O D's green Earth would ever make the claim that life is easy, not the richest man on Earth or the poorest.

But life is hard with good reason. Everything and everyone you struggle with was personally bestowed upon you for a reason. When you admit to often asking, "Why me?" or "Why not me?," then every moment of life becomes more bearable, even exciting as you strive to do better. You'll feel seen and heard by yourself.

Israel is the budding concept of the Jewish people that grows as a promise that will fruit into an Eden on Earth for everyone over time. Israel isn't our story, held only by each Jew through history and personal mystery. Israel is a flower we present to you. If you're humble enough to accept our gifts, secure in the conviction that GOD/GOD/G O D gives you many special things in life you deserve, you'll be able to receive the fruits of your own beliefs without offending others.

Although it's written in Torah that GOD exiled Adam and Eve from Eden to keep them from picking the fruit of The Tree of life, we can only hope that we'll find a way to attach apples back onto trees someday. But, for now, we have to live with death, the great unknown in life, the ultimate separation from the here and now. When we can all stop fighting over a piece of the Rock, we'll do better at appreciating each and every Tree.

The "SHULCHAN ARUCH" {SET TABLE OR LONG TABLE}, is known as the Code of Jewish Law. It was authored and published by Rabbi Yosef Karo in the 16th Century. The spiritual table we're all invited to take a seat at is long enough for everyone. The table is set with a place just for you. But it's going to be a potluck. You're going to have to bring your favorite dish. So start cooking.

The Abrahamic religions have brought the fruits of GOD/GOD/G O D knowledge to the table. The skin is the literal meaning of the word. The meat is communal life, but at the core of the fruit comes a personal experience of the self we can't enjoy without the Eastern philosophies by our side. We must come from the East to understand the West. The first letter of Torah "B"{ב} faces West. Therefore it points us to where we are.

GOD The Father

I resisted the metaphor 'GOD as Father' because, in the past, it was misinterpreted through the simile 'father as god.' Men aren't gods. Men aren't the source of their own

power. They're given power to learn how to use it righteously. The nuclear family as it was seen in the past gave the father in the family a god-like power that we know better than to give men today. The erosion of family values comes from having tried to turn men into the Rock of humanity. That's not possible.

The simile, 'father like god' is being exposed a little more, day-by-day. It represents an abhorrent and oppressive misuse of power and misunderstanding of GOD's relationship to humanity. The father of a family who uses his power like a god is engaging in strange fire. He's cold and apathetic, not warm, loving and wise. The merciless men always seem to burn women and children first. They rain their hail down on the innocent. Then they go for the inexperienced. Sonner or later they're going to aim for you.

The metaphor 'GOD as Father' comes from Exodus 4 where GOD say, "MY CHILD, MY FIRSTBORN, ISRAEL" The Jewish people are the firstborn child, but not GOD's only children. Christianity is HIS second child and Islam is HIS baby. We're only *like* brothers with different attributes and abilities. Let's learn to explore how each of our roots is independently wrapped around the same Rock like trees, not brothers.

It took a gay-Jew to make these observations. It took someone so defiled and rejected that he was far enough away from you to see you as you are. You don't have to love queers and Jews as brothers, any more than you have to obey your father as though he were a god. You don't have to love men as family members at all. Just tolerate one another as classmates in the same classroom. That's all you're asked to do.

The historical problems between the three Abrahamic religions are worse than sibling rivalry. GOD first trained the Jews to give; then HE gave HIS only Son to humanity to instruct Christians how to receive; lastly H E told T H E P R O P H E T Mohammed to teach the world to share. All the ways that you give are Jewish. All the ways that you receive are Christian. And all the ways you share are Muslim. If only you could give credit where credit is due, you could learn to love the gay-Jew in you and leave me alone.

Sharing The Message

The mystery of life lies in paradox. And we have to thank the Eastern Philosophies for helping Western religion appreciate the importance of paradox. Paradox is the ability for something to be simultaneously true and not true. It's the aspect of the big picture that doesn't have to fit together here and now in order to realize that you'll one day come to a place where it'll fit together then and there.

Paradox makes it possible for some of us to love the sin and others to love the sinner. When the sin doesn't hurt another human being, let it be. Focus your attention on loving yourself instead of telling other people who and how to love.

Solving a paradox only requires a change of perspective. It means you exercise your imagination for the sake of seeing some good in this world in the way it is now. GOD created man in HIS *image* so that he'd exercise his *imagination*. It's not unreasonable for GOD/GOD/G O D to force us to think creatively if HE'S /HE'S/H E'S going to make the world a better place for diversity and personal differences that emanate out of respect for One and all.

That said, scientific principles aren't constructed by focus groups. The facts in the world around us are facts, or they're fiction. Forcing the facts to fit in with "religious" opinions is a fool's errand. This world wasn't created in seven days.

Israel isn't going to wait for the world to interpret Torah in a new light. Gays aren't going to wait for lazy straights to wake up. And this book hasn't been an attempt to predict the way it will someday be. It's a reflection on the spiritual, operating system of humanity that's made up of all GOD's/GOD's/G O D's faiths and philosophies whether some people want to believe that or not. When you look for that evidence, it's there.

A change of perspective is what's needed to look at your life from above ground {intellectually} to perceive yourself like a Tree of worldly knowledge and from below ground {emotionally} to perceive yourself as like an upside down Bush with a whole other kind of knowledge burning brightly.

The Jewish mind sees The Tree. The Christian heart perceives The Bush. And the Muslim soul smells the odiferous fragrance of Herbs, instead. Their Herbs lead them to follow the path of intuition with their nose, not their eyes or ears. In these three ways, we should all want to face ourselves to share in the poetry of life by entwining all the more around our Rock.

KISSING THE GROUND BENEATH YOUR FEET

1. Glossary Of Terms

The following glossary of terms interprets a range of Jewish, religious concepts that will help you elucidate ways you can increase your love of yourself. This glossary is intended to infuse new meaning into old symbols that have been inadvertently drained of their meaning by our anxious ancestors who lived in a world that was far less psychologically, sociologically and spiritually informed.

The purpose of this glossary is to help you through the desire for revenge you may still be holding against yourself. If you can perceive the destructive side of your nature that may make you spite yourself, you can clean up your act and prepare yourself for the wonders of the Christian Testament and Quran.

2. Adam And Eve

I've explained my interpretation of Adam and Eve as the personification of the head and heart of man in a metaphor in which man is depicted as a Tree of knowledge planted in a garden. The problem for many straight men is that they're particularly prone to being out of touch with their tough and tender feelings because they're so deeply entwined with their mother {Eve}, the projection of their own love that they've reflected out onto the external world.

When men don't understand how their inner forces engage with their conscience, they can't fully embrace the feminine side of themselves. And as the consequence of that, males often feel encroached and stifled by their mother in childhood, a frustration they tend to take out later on anyone and everyone, including themselves.

Identifying with Eve requires that men identify as givers of life. It requires them to imagine conceiving and birthing an inner baby {a child who'll embellish their reasons for being}. A man who's pregnant with a good idea glows. He sees hope in his creation before it's even born. He carries his dream child with tender resolve to give it long life. And he protects it with all the fury of a mother for her child.

The man who feels scorn and derision for groups of women, whether they're Jewish princesses, black mamas, lesbians in Birkenstocks or Muslims concealed by veils – is staring at his 'x' factor projected out with stereotypic expectations without an ability to see people as individuals.

From the point of view of biblical psychology, the question to ask yourself is whether your mind is on speaking terms with your emotions; whether your head is ignoring your heart; or whether one is overly obedient to the other in a futile attempt to conform to societal beliefs that aren't realistic. A man {y} without a woman {x} within can never call himself a gentle man. And yet a man with a loving woman within him can go friggin' crazy if he doesn't understand her point of view... In the school of life, everything is about revelation that leads to deeper inspiration.

By personifying your heart as your Eve, your mind {Adam} can work toward overcoming anger, fear and sorrow projected onto the mother figure given to you in infancy from your primary caregiver. Mature thoughts give you the strength to question your ability to speak out clearly and respond honestly to the feelings inside. This internal relationship of thoughts to feelings can be worked out in the third person in the same way that a relationship with another person can be fostered and healed. It only takes a desire to

communicate politely with your inner "woman" as well as all the other authority figures you imagine when you use the pronoun "they." As you move through the expectations "they" make on you, you can make a loyal friend of yourself.

The list of grievances you have against yourself may be long, but most of the items on that list probably lie in your unconscious. Until your conscience {GOD} is ready to allow you to see yourself more clearly, you're going to blame those around you for circumstances they didn't create. As you earn the trust of building a list of self-assurances, your love of yourself will grow. You'll slowly release one grievance with the world after another. This process will lower the wall between you and the world, giving you more reason to believe that the experience of being is a gift from GOD and not a life sentence.

As your relationship with yourself improves, you'll also notice how your conscience grows into a soul. You'll finally see how GOD is working in your life to assist you in this spiritual process. And then THE WORDS/WORDS/W O R D S of Moses, Jesus and T H E P R O P H E T Mohammed will all become personally meaningful to you.

If you want to express yourself to yourself, the spiritual question you'll want to ask in biblical terminology is, "If Adam represents the mind of everyman and Eve represents the emotional aspect of himself, then whom does every Adam yearn for as his spiritual partner in life?"

The answer to this question is personal. Some men need to become a mother to themselves to replace the mother they had. Others will want to father themselves. If so, as a rule, they become maternal or paternal toward others. Some might prefer to hold their head and heart in a sibling relationship in which they want to make friends with everyone. And some are happy befriending themselves without any familial bonds whatsoever. They generally prefer the inner relationship of teacher/student.

For an Adam to love love; love himself; love others; and love life – he must use his head to keep his earthenware container from leaking blood {physical danger}. This is his primary responsibility to himself.

Then he must open a dialogue between his thoughts and feelings {self-intimacy}. He must find good reasons to embrace himself proudly and lovingly. He must go beyond the naming of "the woman" inside him, the '"x' factor that he's denied all his life to look outwardly more manly. He must have the chat with himself that Adam never had with Eve in The Creation Story. But no one can get inside a man to start that conversation for him.

An Adam comes in all the colors of clay. He's subject to all the natural laws of the universe that make him an animal, in addition to THE LAWS inherent in his spiritual nature that make him a little lower than the angels in GOD's Kingdom. He's a clay-colored container of earth {ADAM} filled with red {ADOM} blood {DAM} that has a life force and moral purpose that he has to learn to use with moral purpose while staying alive and unhurt.

These variations on the name "Adam" are so intrinsically linked in Hebrew that they're often taken for granted by native, Hebrew speakers. These linguistic relationships are useful in gaining spiritual edification of every individual's conscious relationship to himself.

These attributes are not only universal; they're so obvious that it's almost embarrassing to go into such detail to describe something so apparent. But, by extending these spiritual symbols as we would the main metaphor of Moses, we come to the conclusion that an Adam is an earthenware, spiritual oven, an appliance GOD designed to cook spiritual food in.

The food man is consuming is forbidden fruit in addition to spiritual bread and wine. And the preparation of this meal requires that it be heated {loved} rather than served cold {held apathetically or ignorantly}.

An Adam can speak about himself as an impassioned flame dancing in the darkness of inner reality, burning with joy, licking the inner night with light, love and spiritual illumination. But as a spiritual fire in an oven of flesh, an Adam's spiritual job is, put simply, to cook spiritual fruit into compote; bake spiritual bread; and ferment spiritual grapes into wine.

In religious terminology, an Adam is a holy Tabernacle. But rather than the altar in The Temple upon which ancient Jews once needed to sacrifice animals, he's become a modern oven in which he bakes the bread of brotherhood that he then breaks with others to alleviate his hunger for peace.

Through giving, receiving and sharing himself with himself, man feeds himself, and through this process, finds meaning in feeding others, both literally and figuratively. He's in communion with himself discovering how to commune with GOD.

These concepts aren't heretical. And after having read this book, they shouldn't even be shocking. An Adam today is sufficiently modern and advanced to understand that he's the one and only chef in his own kitchen. Thanks to The Hebrew Testament, The Christian Bible and Islamic Quran, every man can yearn to learn how to cook spiritually. He can become the mother and sister to himself, and the head of his household. Spirituality has finally taught men that they need to enter the world of women, not just praise it from afar. An Adam is ready to learn to feed his family and others in new, more nutritious and sensuous ways.

The world had to go through millennia of suffering to get to a point where an idea as simple as this could be expressed without being called blasphemous, queer or crazy. The concept of GOD/GOD/G O D unfolding for us together had to be partially concealed with homonyms, languages and cultural differences until man had the spiritual strength to appreciate himself without doing damage to his most precious convictions. He had to learn to pick forbidden fruit carefully and gratefully from his own Tree of knowledge before he could learn how to plant it to make more.

Man husbands the Earth with devotion and fidelity, or he doesn't. He loves the Earth as he loves himself, or he loathes it as he loathes himself. His loyalties are divided between his love of fruit as a spiritual symbol of himself and his desire to literally pick fruit from trees to relieve his physical hunger. He seeks to balance beauty and necessity. This is his nature, the nature of his creation.

Man is in a love triangle with GOD, a trinity of thoughts, feelings and beliefs that he must come to recognize and use to build healthy relationships within himself. Jealousy and envy have to be bound up with laughter, not with the knots Abraham used on Isaac.

A man more skilled in matters of the mind does better sharing facts; a man of the heart does better sharing feelings. But every man who has a proclivity for soulful self-regard must find the courage to share his similes with others. Metaphor concretizes facts and feelings in universal, spiritual terms that we can all employ for greater understanding of ourselves. Symbolism personalizes it. And simile turns it into common knowledge we can all agree on.

On the whole, gays and lesbians have been particularly well schooled with sensitivity to all these aspects of human interactions because we've been held back as outsiders from

all the major faiths and world philosophies. As gays become, not just tolerated and accepted in this century, but admired and embraced, humanity will make greater strides in the enculturation of modernity. Straights will become proud of their gay classmates. And as they learn to admire us, they'll admire themselves, as well.

In this way, mankind will overcome hunger, illness and ignorance. The human race will become an individual marathon in addition to a collective journey. And hope will envelop the planet like a rainbow wraps itself around the sky.

3. Attention

The concept of "paying attention" in Hebrew is "LA-ASEEM LEV," which is an expression that translates literally as "to put your heart in." Putting your heart into all that you do is the only way to truly pay attention. You're not paying full attention when you only "think" about what you're doing. You're paying attention when your whole heart is involved in what you're focused on.

But you can't pay close attention to your life if you're distracting yourself with seduction to people, places and things. Learning disabilities are the mental consequence of spiritual ailment in which an inner Adam and Eve aren't intimate enough to speak openly with one another. We must teach ourselves to pay closer attention to ourselves. Our head has to be encouraged to make peace with our heart. When your head can observe your feelings and ask intelligent questions about why you feel the way you do, your conscience can help the two of them come to more helpful conclusions about how next to act.

The stories of Genesis from Adam and Eve through The Tower of Babel can be used to understand and develop your conscience, which is like a thermostat. Although guilt figuratively fuels your refrigerator and love figuratively fuels your oven, your conscience figuratively regulates the temperature of both. You've got to learn to make your way around your inner kitchen.

Of course, circumstances outside your inner environment are often beyond your control, but The Book of Genesis describes how to build and operate the inner thermostat that will control your whole, internal house.

4. BAR MITZVAH

The coming of age ritual in Judaism at the age of 13, a BAR MITZVAH {MALE GOOD DEED} for a boy or a BAT MITZVAH {FEMALE GOOD DEED} for a girl, signifies the passage from childhood to adulthood at the gate of puberty.

According to the rabbis, before the age of 13 the good and evil generated by the child rest solely on the shoulders of his parents. GOD praises or punishes the parents for the choices of the child. The Bar Mitzvah marks that time when a boy's virtues and sins no longer reside with his parents, but are transferred to his conscience for him to take moral responsibility for himself.

It's as if his parents previously stood between him and GOD, with all HIS blessings and curses falling on them for his actions. The parents figuratively move out from between their child and GOD when he's 13. The adolescent then faces GOD directly, and his conscience will then develop with HIS help as it weighs his thoughts and feelings to take moral actions on his own.

What makes this timing so important is, of course, the boy's serpent who raises its head at this time in his life to talk about sexual *things*. It's no longer about "it" trying to convince

the Eve in the boy that she's capable of being like GOD. It's to convince Adam to explore the serpent's message himself. It's no longer just about forbidden fruit {guilt}. It becomes about serpents and worms.

The Bar Mitzvah celebrates this new and direct interface with GOD that's so private and personal that a boy can't discuss it with either of his parents. The role of adults and peers in a teenager's life should be to encourage this process as a spiritual challenge, not challenge this challenge with childish interpretations of forbidden fruit that hold no spiritual nourishment in an adolescent's life.

We all know that a 13-year old isn't intellectually, emotionally or financially mature enough to be held accountable for anyone's survival, least of all his own. And yet, by that age, a teenager is ready to entertain the ideas of moral accountability to GOD for his budding relationship with himself. The spiritual significance of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah is that the child becomes an adult in the eyes of GOD, not in the eyes of his family or congregation. His parents' eyes should remain pealed on his progress in life for many more years to come. But his elders should encourage him to discover his sexuality and sensuality through cultural leaders who will guide him in opening his heart in many new, maturing ways.

Kids have a very well developed conscience before the age of 13; don't let anyone tell you otherwise. They just may not have been coached properly on how to use it from the inside in. Therefore we, as a society, must teach them the spiritual importance of this very special passage of life, and impress upon them the challenge to learn how to use their spiritual evolution to greatest, personal, moral advantage.

Today's society is so complex that it's preferable that adolescents are taught to conceive their lifelong responsibility to their adult, inner child by coming to know *themselves* in the biblical sense of THE WORD rather than by literally bringing children into the world. Birth control is going to be vital to some adolescents regardless of how distasteful the topic may be to their parents.

There couldn't be a better or more appropriate time in life than in adolescence for our kids to birth their inner child into existence. It'll save us all unnecessary arguments about abortion and millions of dollars in childcare for unwanted children. We must impress upon kids all the spiritual reasons for not literally making babies until much later in life.

When I was 13, I would have felt more capable of taking on the responsibilities of my life if someone had explained all this to me in this way. I had a Bar Mitzvah, but I had no idea it signified anything about my relationship to GOD through a religious ritual that would have a profound effect on my conscience. At that age, I had no idea GOD considered me accountable for my thoughts, feelings and judgments from that moment forward. I had no clue how to develop or maintain my accountability to HIM through a daily, maturing relationship with myself. And I certainly didn't associate my Bar Mitzvah with sex.

Therefore, looking back, my Bar Mitzvah wasn't meaningful enough to me. It was only culturally important for my parents and our family. My friends didn't even participate in my spiritual coming of age because it wasn't something they, too, didn't believe could be both personal and universal. We were lost in our parents' masquerade.

My parents might have unconsciously stepped aside and allowed me to face GOD at puberty, but none of us consciously knew it, and our rabbi certainly didn't explain that to us. The synagogue where that rite of passage was performed was a place I never set foot in again.

I spent most of my life cynical of GOD's ability to know more about me than I knew about myself. So I took greater liberties in life to see if HE would protect me from me for me. The results of that experiment were very mixed. Insanity isn't something you'd like your children to have to go through.

When viewed today from a biblical standpoint, my Bar Mitzvah should have been that time in my life when I went through my miraculous Red Sea crossing; when I found a way out of childhood consciously prepared to wander through the wilderness of life with my peers. Instead, I ran around in what was a wilderness within of spiritual hunger and thirst, alone and lost, for what seemed like 40 more years.

I didn't figure out that I was the Moses and Aaron in my life until long after the blossom of youth had left my cheeks. I had no idea who I was spiritually; where I was headed in life; or why life is such an arduous journey for everyone. I had to find the courage to become a Joshua, and save myself from me long before I could see that Torah had already mapped my trip.

I struggled to survive as a foreigner alone in Israel in my late teens rather than struggle with GOD consciously while I was living in The Holy Land. I learned to fear my peers rather than love to serve with them. When Israeli police chased after me and other gay guys out of a park in Tel Aviv late one night, threatening to out us, I couldn't believe how much was wrong with that picture. Israel was merely a geographic place for me, not a spiritual space when I resided there in the early 70's. It didn't hold a cherished spot in my heart until many years later.

I don't regret the journey I had to take or how sore my feet of clay were from going round in circles. I'm sitting in San Francisco now, my gay Jerusalem, looking back on how and where I spent my youth, and I'm glad to be where I am, regardless of the rocky roads I had to traverse to get here. I have few regrets and am filled with high hopes. GOD was patient with me until I learned to be patient with myself. So now I'm far more patient with others.

I most hope future generations will get to go through their emotional and spiritual puberty at the same time they go through puberty physically, not decades later as I had to do. It's important that a boy experiences are coherent from within as he's becoming a man. His personal accountability to the man he hopes to one day become can happen day-by-day if he's been properly prepared for it. He'll have the tools to release himself from the bondage of childhood with physical safety, emotional security and spiritual sharing of himself if there are those in his life who can show him how.

Modern men can encourage today's boys to perceive the figurative rite of passage they're moving toward if neither of them gets stuck dominated by the pharaohs of Egypts of their own making. We need boys from all the Abrahamic traditions to emerge into the beginning of manhood by the age of 13, not decades later. Going through this passage in life badly makes soldiers. Doing so in a timely manner makes poets and spiritual engineers.

5. Charity

The long, curled sideburns of Orthodox Jews are called "PAYOT." THE WORD means "CORNERS" in Hebrew. These sideburns are reminders of GOD's decree in Leviticus 19 commanding the Jews to harvest The Land in a circular fashion so the poor can come in after the harvest to glean what's left at the corners of the fields.

But the overall purpose of charity should be to help you, not others. Charity to others without an understanding of its fundamental importance to you misses the spiritual purpose of giving entirely. Charity begins at home. You should help others because doing so feels spiritually helpful to yourself. It makes no sense to be charitable to strangers as a form of self-sacrifice.

You've got to decide from the get-go that you're spiritually prepared to become the recipient of your own giving. You've got to feel indebted to yourself for training, teaching and educating you in how to become a better person. You've got to harvest your inner field in a circular pattern, giving everything but the corners to yourself.

Don't cut corners by harvesting your emotional field in a circular pattern and then giving yourself only what's left in the corners. If you don't give yourself the bounty of your endeavors, you'll never feel there will ever be enough left for you. You'll be impatient, worried, anxious and irritable. You'll feel victimized and picked against your will.

When I look at those funny curls on the faces of Orthodox Jews, I have to laugh at myself for having judged them unkindly for wearing their facial hair that way. I was so caught up with how odd they appeared to me that I didn't bother to ask what it might mean from their point of view.

The Orthodox Jews remind me of Jesus a little. I look at them and I see the odd efforts of countless generations of Jews to try to emulate emotional perfection. If only they were able to forgive me for being gay. That's their stumbling block. That's where their blindness begins.

6. CHESED

THE WORD "CHESED" is usually translated as loving kindness, but it really means LOYALTY or FAITH. In terms of a personal interpretation of Torah, it's faith in yourself that's required for you to endure humiliation in life. Chesed is spiritual coordination, the reward that comes from the deepest level of guilt, an inner grace that comes with using your head in tandem with your heart. Chesed emanates out from your soul.

The lessons in physical grace that fathers teach their young boys usually occur with lessons in sports. Good sportsmanship is a combination of loyalty to the team and graceful articulation of the body. But the real purpose of sports is for a father to help his son move past feelings of embarrassment, shame and humiliation to modesty, humility and CHESED – faith in himself, loyalty to himself and appreciation of GOD's part to play in his life.

A great football player who beats up his girlfriend may be physically graceful and able to show great loyalty to his team, but he's not yet aware of the greater reason for being a professional in the world of sports. The coach who only teaches his players to play-to-win is blind to the bigger, emotional and spiritual picture. Winning really is everything; the problem is that most coaches don't have a clue how to win from the inside out.

A young boy who wishes to grow up to be a professional athlete may be unconsciously expressing a deeper desire than just for the big bucks. In most cases his emotional and spiritual desires can be successfully channeled if the adults around him help him address these unconscious drives for greater articulation boldly, kindly, and directly. Inner wealth can come through physical articulation whether or not you can earn a living at it.

There are many ways to come to awareness of CHESED. We develop physical grace through the body; emotional grace through romantic relationships; and spiritual grace

through a contemplative lifestyle with our conscience. They're all aspects of personal redemption. They'll all lead to GOD-consciousness. And they're all necessary in becoming a winner in the game of life.

Loyalty given to others, whether that's to one's team, job or country, are just for practice. Even a man's loyalty to his body, spouse, children and religion is only for practice. Loyalty in the biblical sense, CHESED, begins within as thoughts and feelings that serve one's conscience. Loyalty boils down to doing right by yourself as a conduit to doing right by everyone.

7. Clothing

THE WORD "BEGED" has two meanings, CLOTHES and BETRAYAL. This linguistic nuance surely comes from the biblical association of the leaves Adam and Eve used to cover their genitals as the result of their betrayal of GOD's trust. Eve betrayed Adam, and then Adam betrayed GOD by blaming HIM for what he'd done. As the result, the two of them got their curiosity appeased, but we know that although they both covered themselves in the same places with similar leaves from the same tree, each covered some "thing" quite different.

Clothing protects the container {body}. But from a psychological perspective, our clothes conceal us from our contents {inner dynamics}. Clothing makes us think no one can see or interpret our intentions because the outermost layer of our being {skin} is concealed.

We betray ourselves if we don't conclude that our clothing covers up the forces within us. Our clothing covers up our physical nudity, but it does little to conceal our intellectual and emotional nakedness. Even our hidden desires and beliefs are more exposed than we realize.

Adam and Eve may have realized they were nude to one another, but they didn't realize they were completely emotionally naked and spiritually exposed before one another and GOD. Their decision to cover their genitals was the action they chose, to solve their guilty conscience on one level; but it only accentuated it on another. The leaf became an outward sign of an inner condition called: guilt.

There comes a point in the life of the toddler when he realizes he's transparent before his parents. And then he feels an embarrassment that goes back to the story of Adam and Eve. This is normal. This is human. This is what it means to be the recipient of a lineage that's eaten forbidden fruit.

The outward sign {leaf} that Adam and Eve donned appeared to give GOD reason to choose to walk with heavy feet through the garden and then question each of them. But they were so naïve to HIS ability to see right through them that they thought it was the leaf they were wearing that gave them away. Their meager attempt to cover themselves was a symbol to each other that they'd betrayed themselves. This is why THE WORD in Hebrew for *clothing* and *betrayal* is the same.

GOD didn't stop the serpent from tempting Eve, although HE certainly could have. HE didn't stop Eve from picking the forbidden fruit, and HE didn't stop Adam from accepting it from her when she offered it. Allowing the story to unfold as it did served HIS greater interest in beginning HIS lessons to humanity with guilt, before moving from there to love and then to redemption.

Thoughts that go in one direction and feelings that go in another create negative actions that rip our psyche, leaving us believing others have betrayed us. These emotional tears

within should alert our conscience to it not having protected us from our own devious thoughts, hateful feelings and duplicitous desires.

It's our conscience that creates anxiety, worry and frustration to help us respond rather than react to self-knowledge with immoral actions. But when you're hungry for answers to why you feel as bad as you do; angry at not having answers; lonely at having no one you can trust to ask; and tired of repeating the process unconsciously without getting anywhere - H.A.L.T. These are the signs that you're clothing yourself in needless self-betrayal.

Only your conscience can reveal the ways in which you conceal yourself with selfish thoughts and selfless feelings. Your conscience has the only overview of the process that can trigger the guilt you need to stimulate a need for change. Your conscience doesn't always require action for you to observe what you're doing to yourself inside. It requires contemplation. It requires you to move through distraction to the essence of your existence here in the now.

Therefore, you should learn to observe what others are doing that irritates you because their actions mirror an attitude you're holding toward yourself that isn't good for you. Why else would you be so upset with them? Figuratively disrobe yourself in this way, and you won't betray yourself as egregiously from now on.

Guilting yourself can become a useful, spiritual tool if you don't use it to excess. You may feel like a victim of life because of the pain you're in or the suffering you've been through. But the "why me's?" we all hear ourselves exclaim inside express a continuum of betrayals that grow louder over the years. It isn't until you hear the deafening roar of blame at everyone around that you may be motivated to suspect that you've had a hand in the way things have turned out.

The way to relieve yourself of your guilt appropriately is by going through it, not around it. Changing the world by helping others is only the first step. Then you have to take a bite into guilt to transform your feelings of embarrassment, shame and humiliation at how you haven't been treating yourself as well. The good you've done for them will set you up with the esteem you need to apply future lessons to becoming more modest, humble and grateful.

This transformative process requires mercy as well as justice. It requires that you forgive yourself for what you've done to yourself, *not* for what you've done to others. Even forgiving others for what they've done to *you* is a waste of your time unless you simultaneously look at the selflessness in your heart that made it possible for you to allow yourself to be used, abuse and then self-excused.

The road to hell is paved with good intentions. So you're going to have to look at all the ways you react guiltily to what others do to see how you're doing to yourself what they're doing. Why else would their actions make you so uncomfortable?

Most people can't talk to others about how they're feeling because they can't talk to themselves about how they're feeling. They immediately move into the blame game or the victim game instead. Communication is the key to the Kingdom. And communicating with your key {penis} is the key to communicating your secret desires to yourself about your relationship with yourself.

Once you discover how you've infantilized yourself, you can begin the process of growing that will seed your self-awareness as a whole new Tree in your orchard. You can go beyond the Moses and Aaron within you to becoming your own Joshua {savior}. It's

one thing to have an adult, inner child who's young, inexperienced and naïve. It's another, to let 600,000 adolescent inner voices rule your life.

Selflessness requires that you redress yourself. GOD gave Adam and Eve clothes made of animal skins before they were expelled from Eden. You can figuratively do the same by trying on intentions until you find the exact fit for why you do what you do. Bad habits may be impossible to break, so try to see them like clothing you wear. Your adult, inner child won't grow up any further until you allow him responsibility for dressing himself with new thoughts and feeling that will challenge his look.

"Life is unfair" isn't just what people say when they don't get what they want. It's what they say when they don't understand how their spirit operates in a corporal enclosure. In truth, you deserve everything that happens to you so that it teaches you to relate to your adult, inner child more responsibly. What doesn't kill you will make you wiser, more loving and charitable – but only if you understand that the goal is in getting you to be able to witness your "self" improving.

If you don't spend your free time raising your self-esteem by measuring how much you've grown since yesterday, you're going to depress yourself even more tomorrow. It's too hard to sit quietly in your seat on a plane on your last breath when the cabin pressure changes. You've got to put your oxygen mask on. Life doesn't have to be a terrifying experience in which you're constantly concerned about others' masks. You can learn to breathe through everything. You can learn to complement yourself. You can literally stroke yourself to relieve your tension.

Self-love is always present in your heart, as well as hanging high overhead far away in your imagination. The more you experience self-love here and now, the easier it'll be to get more of it in some future *then* and *there*.

The struggle between thoughts and feelings that produces guilt is first described in The Creation Story. But the ability to verbalize the sense of victimization and betrayal that's the result of this process surfaces in the story of Cain and Abel. When Abel's blood calls out from the ground for justice, the victim has finally found a way to voice his feelings in words.

If Abel had been able to voice his concerns before he was killed, he wouldn't have personified the victim role. By the same token, you may have to die a thousand deaths inside before you find the courage to speak to yourself *before* your blood is crying out from the ground. That's why this lesson is the second lesson in Torah.

Adam and Eve, the most primitive psychological state of man, could only act out their feelings with leaves, trees and finger pointing at GOD. That sort of communication style won't get you where you want to go anymore. You're going to have to make the same mistakes over and over again until you question what you're doing wrong. You're going to have to wait until the volume of your conscience is loud enough for you to hear, "WHAT HAVE YOU DONE! LISTEN!" [Genesis 4:10]

Cain and Abel have the ability to act out their conflict over GOD's blessings. This was a sign of the development of their conscience beyond that of their parents who only desired to act selfishly. But the whole Adam's family thought they could hide from GOD.

The human spirit moves very slowly toward greater self-awareness. Therefore you should commend yourself for every step you take to see yourself and not like what you see. You're not so old spiritually that you don't have reason to treat your adult, inner child as someone in need of correction.

The relationship of clothes to betrayal separates man from the animal kingdom. Man is the only animal that wears clothes, or needs to. And he does so more out of embarrassment of his body than for protection, or he'd take his clothes off every chance he got. Clothing helps him forget that he's so much more exposed than he'd like to think. Nudity is a reminder to us all that we're always naked, exposed and transparent before our Maker.

Man betrays his heavenly nature through his Earthly overalls. He'd like to think he'll be buried in his 501s, but the truth is that everyone figuratively dies nude, the same way he was born. Man isn't as much a part of nature as he'd like to think. Most of the time his view of himself is above or below nature, striving to become natural, something no animal would ever think to do. And his clothes are the first sign of all that separates him from the animal kingdom.

Man had his evolutionary chance to be "natural," but he chose to climb a different branch of the evolutionary tree. Man isn't a great ape. He's evolving another way.

Those who choose to clothe themselves in agnosticism are in denial of their spiritual origin and outcome. That may alleviate them of their embarrassment at being naked, but, at the same time, they join the ranks of billions who think they're so spiritually well-dressed that nobody, not even GOD/GOD/G O D, can see through them. Nudity, nakedness and transparency are levels of self-awareness that everyone can see, but only in others.

Try looking at yourself as though you were already in heaven looking down on this world from GOD's/GOD's/G O D's perspective. Trying looking down at yourself as a man, not up at GOD/GOD/G O D from the Earth from a boy's point of view.

Clarity is the consequence of embarrassment, shame and humiliation that woke me up to what I'm here to do. When I tried to be as natural as possible, I still found there were people who could look right through me. In fact, they often kept looking until they were looking right past me. I believe they concluded I was harmless, and often just thought I was a fool.

The clothes you wear on the outside may give people the impression you want them to have, but what you wear within is often ragged, worn, slovenly or full of holes and tears. You're rich enough to wash and fold your thoughts and feelings. Your mother taught you to keep your clothes clean with good reason. This is the reason!

Undergarments are particularly interesting bits of clothing to explore from a spiritual perspective because they coincide with the leaf in The Creation Story. I recall when entering junior high school as a pubescent boy that I resisted having to wear the gym uniform. But once I gave in to the idea of wearing the standard shirt and shorts required by my school, I still felt humiliated at having to wear a jock strap for my own protection. For me, the jock strap symbolized over compliance to authority.

Having to wear that particular article of clothing brought up feelings of resentment in me at having to conform to the man to that degree. I felt the jock strap was an institutionally proscribed fig leaf. Although it concealed my genitals in a nylon sling, it, paradoxically, also revealed my defiance of authority. It protected my body, but it betrayed my immature heart.

The original state of grace enjoyed by Adam is seen in every infant who knows nothing yet of embarrassment, shame or humiliation. His nude body is neither beautiful nor ugly to him. Only the formation of his conscience will allow him to see himself from the inside out. Only his conscience will allow him to choose to clothe himself with righteous thoughts

and loving feelings. Only his conscience will be able to make him say the words, "I'm ugly in some ways and beautiful in others."

Unfortunately, in the process of developing a conscience, we have a tendency to use our conscience to judge ourselves cruelly. We blame ourselves for what we look like inside and out, wishing we were able to circumvent the process by being more "natural."

We create Golden Calves around us that Madison Avenue knows very well how to tempt us to dance around. We're jealous of others' bodies and envious of their wisdom, love or generosity of spirit. We don't want to start with what we have. We're a half-empty cup, and no one is going to prove otherwise.

We only want the gifts; we don't want to have to take pains to unwrap them or thank GOD/GOD/G O D for those gifts. If we don't unwrap GOD's gifts in their entirety, we may end up unhappy with what we've got or with what HE/H E doesn't give us.

Dignity is the feeling of being well dressed within, even when you're wearing nothing on the outside. Self-love turns the rags of guilt you wore in the past, based on the way you treated yourself then, into a coat of many colors. This is the Jacob/Joseph relationship of receiving your father's spiritual inheritance.

But it doesn't have to happen between you and your father. It can happen with any person. It can even happen with yourself.

Self-regard makes you colorful and useful. Don't let anyone figuratively steal your coat, splash it with blood and declare that you're now dead. You're a Joseph, a gift to humanity, someone who could feed a nation with your talents and GOD's help. Protect what you're wearing within. Be grateful for the development of your conscience by using it to stop yourself from bullying *you*. Don't let your inner brothers take away or minimize anything your father/Father gave you.

The story of "The Emperor's New Clothes" is valuable in understanding THE WORD "BEGED" {clothing/betrayal}. You're an emperor in the parade of life, more naked and exposed than you may have previously imagined. So it makes sense for you to be more generous of spirit than the little boy in the story who thought himself well protected from criticism from his safe place in the crowd.

Don't let the child in you ridicule and judge you for being as you are. Question that immature voice inside that likes to think it can embarrass, shame or humiliate you. Point out the flaw in you allowing yourself to bully you. Don't let yourself get away with bullying boys and you won't let yourself get away with bullying emperors either.

Then, you'll feel like a king in your own eyes. Then you'll stop the parade, get off your high horse, walk up to that little kid within, and berate him for his disrespectful behavior. You can't guarantee external change, but you can guarantee internal transformation. That, alone, is within your grip.

Try to be tougher on that ignorant, little urchin within. The little boy in you is capable of learning and living up to the ideals your parents instilled in you if you use everything your parents taught you that was wise, loving and soulful for others' sake, and use it on yourself.

8. Covenant Of Abraham

The Covenant between GOD and Abraham is not only a template for every man's relationship to GOD through the metaphor 'GOD as Father,' but also a template for man's relationship to himself in the metaphor 'man as father to his adult, inner child.'

Abraham went too far in banishing Ishmael and binding Isaac with the intention of sacrificing him to GOD. Abraham didn't fully understand the depth of the Covenant he'd signed up to. His conscience couldn't weigh his thoughts and feelings to adequately appreciate the role he was playing in his sons' lives. He couldn't come up with a more righteous design to express family values.

Abraham personified the father whose Covenant with our Father was spiritually new and immature. He didn't consciously feel any need for self-improvement. He was more concerned with improving GOD's relationship to the people of Sodom. He worked on righteousness from the outside in.

GOD would never have tried to get Sarah to sacrifice Isaac. Even if there are some sick mothers out there, the idea of a mother sacrificing her child for GOD's sake is simply beyond the scope of our imagination. Therefore, we must teach men to feel more like women about children. We need men who are as loyal as women. And for this to happen we need to teach men to explore the metaphor of 'man as mother to his adult, inner child.'

To understand the depth of the bond Abraham had with GOD, modern fathers should work harder to create healthier bonds of affection with their sons. But I'm not going to preach to parents about how to deal with their children. I preach to parents about how to deal with their adult, inner child.

Not every father is pleased with his son's grades in the school of life, and not every son is pleased with the father assigned by GOD/GOD/G O D to tutor him. Abraham certainly wouldn't be pleased to see how the descendants of Ishmael and Isaac are behaving in class today.

Fathers and sons who desire to go from victim to victor must create an inner brother that they can make peace with. The lesson is just that simple: (6) Don't kill yourself; (7) don't cheat yourself; (8) don't steal from yourself; (9) don't lie to yourself. And if you're (10) jealous and envious of yourself because you won't give yourself what you want, ask GOD for help. He specializes in matters of the heart. He'll nudge you with guilt to help you see yourself in ways that will improve you.

If Jewish and Muslim politicians were asked to physically disrobe while negotiating with one another, they'd have less difficulty admitting to one another that their sense of betrayal isn't a problem of politics or geography. They'd be forced to look at each other's circumcised penis and remember with humility why their foreskin was removed to begin with. No man or group of men is in relationship to GOD/GOD/G O D to the exclusion of all others. No man can make the claim that GOD/GOD/G O D loves his penis more the next guy's. It's not *if* it was circumcised that matters, but *why*.

It doesn't take too much courage to dress nicely and go to a synagogue, church or mosque where everyone can agree that the congregation stands in the sight of our Lord. It takes courage to visit HIM/HIM/H I M in the solitude of your soul where you stand before him nude, naked and transparent.

The men who'll make peace in the Middle East won't be ashamed of themselves without clothes on. They'll come to each other well dressed and dignified from within. Their promises to GOD/GOD/G O D through Abraham is what will dignify their appearance.

Who knew that our relationship to ourselves would matter so much in creating successful relationships with others? Who could have told us that a man must figuratively marry himself before he can hope to create a joyous marriage with another? The defense

of marriage act doesn't go nearly far enough. We have to be able to defend our marriage to ourselves and not tell others who to bond with.

A man should also be able to defend the healthy mother/son relationship within himself before he makes claims about other people's responsibility to raise or relinquish their unborn child.

The mother/Son relationship will be revisited upon humanity in The New Testament. In my next book, I'll go into the need for men to take The Madonna and Child symbolism to heart. There's method to GOD's/GOD's/G O D's madness, not in the wrath people claim HE holds towards humanity.

The Covenant of Abraham with GOD is a psychological partnership within one's self that's mirrored sociologically in all our other relationships, even in our bonds with other religions. The Jews figuratively *heard* GOD call to them; the Christians figuratively *saw* Him when He came to Earth; and the Muslims could figuratively *smell* H I S fragrant presence when T H E P R O P H E T Mohammed showed them how. Every man, regardless of his religious background, who bites off his nose to spite his face, is going to be shocked if he gets a glimpse of himself for eternity.

Only by first helping straight men heal the institution of marriage in America will peace come to the Middle East. Only by feeding the children in America will we find successful ways to feed the world. Some of the loneliest and hungriest people I've ever seen have made their way to positions of power in Washington D.C.

If you don't vote, don't complain. And if you do vote and want to complain, look in the mirror before you vote the next time. Ask yourself what it is you'd like to see happen within yourself before you believe those sly serpents in politics.

The left wants to help the poor. The right wants to help the rich. The left wants to help the blacks. The right want to help the whites. The left want to help the gays. The right want to help the Jews. But some of those in power only want to help themselves get rich. Don't let that happen. There's enough reason to help everyone if your conscience is your guide.

There's a correlation between the Covenant of Abraham with GOD through the Jews and gay people. We, gays, have had to earn our rights in this world by proving to straights that we're indispensable to them. Then, we have to use that evidence as proof that we're indispensable to ourselves. The same can be said of the Jews for the past 3,400 years. Pride is based on deeds you've done, not dreams you're having.

Gay suicide rates are abominably high. GOD/GOD/G O D gave some of the greatest gifts the world has ever known to gays and lesbians, and all they want to do with it is give them back because there are so few straight people down here who appreciate them.

If you suddenly discovered you were gay, wouldn't it cross your mind to leave this world ASAP? Imagine being Jewish in early 20th Century Europe; black in the South; or gay in the Middle East. Harvey Milk {gay-Jew} taught us to come out proudly. See what you conclude about humanity from your own humanity.

Peace in the Middle East won't come until Muslims, Christians and Jews learn to love gay people. Trusting us as a gift from GOD/GOD/G O D will come as each gay person learns to more deeply trust himself. The lessons are amazingly simple when you make it personal. It's the tests that are tough.

9. Death

Judaism claims to be a religion that focuses only on this life, not the "afterlife." Of course, that's not absolutely true. Jews worry about the "world to come" as much as anyone else. You can't be dumped on this planet as a newborn without any explanation of why you're here and not wonder where you're going to go "next."

It is true, though, that Torah makes no promises about the "afterlife." Torah presents hope metaphorically as a rainbow from GOD, and promise as a Covenant with HIM through circumcision.

Christianity was inspired by the hope and promise of very special Jews {The Apostles} who were inspired by Jesus to guarantee a better world "to come." And Islam purports a vision of the possibility for an exquisite "afterlife" if you don't miss the mark. Each story was built upon the previous. But they're still all stories. There's no proof, only interpretations the best hearts and minds can do with the evidence at hand.

All hopes, dreams and visions can be strived for and, possibly, attained in this world with wisdom, love, generosity, diversity, tranquility and paradox. You already have the wisdom of a Jew; the love of a Christian; the generosity of a Muslim; the sense of diversity of a Hindu; the tranquility of a Buddhist; and the Taoist examples of paradox – within you. Use what you've been given. Don't argue about what the guy next to you is missing in the way of "the big seven" {when you include indigenism}. Argue with yourself about what you're missing in relation to what *you've* got.

The concept of death in Torah ought to be interpreted metaphorically. Death in Genesis is presented through the metaphor 'death as an end to a particular, psychological stage in the creation of a man's spiritual nature.' When a biblical character dies in Genesis it symbolizes an aspect of the self that moves out of consciousness, off stage, into the wings, so to speak. Each biblical character in Genesis represents a stage in the development of a man's conscience that, when achieved, becomes another lesson learned. End-to-end, the characters in Genesis are the sum total of all the psychological stages in the life of a young man who's ready to embark on the journey of life as a mature, adult male.

In Exodus through Deuteronomy, death means just the opposite. Death is intended to describe a lesson failed in the school of life. The metaphor presented in these four books of Torah is 'death as a grade of "I" {Incomplete} in that class.' The assumption is that once you're mature enough to know that you're in school, you should take the classes The Teacher enrolls you in and struggle with HIS/HIS/H I S assignments to the best of your ability until you pass them.

The idea that children who don't obey their parents should be stoned to death [Deuteronomy 21] makes perfect figurative sense when viewed through the metaphors of Torah. You should throw a figurative pebble, stone or rock at the conscience of the spiritually immature if they need to be challenged. You should see in their actions the conscience you had before and should be grateful you aren't like that anymore. Although figurative boulders are rarely needed to get people's moral attention, even throwing figurative sand is metaphorically called for on occasion to help a person complete the spiritual class he's been enrolled in. (Just don't do so literally.)

We must teach our children to obey themselves, so they don't become like pillars of salt. Throwing metaphoric stones at people who live in glass houses will scratch their illusions, hopefully wake them up, and remind them to do their homework in the school of

life. {It's when you throw real rocks that you regress to the level of spiritual adolescent.} Gay people use shade and reading beads. It's even less intrusive.

Each year The Teacher changes the tests to keep incoming students on their toes. There's no reason to mindlessly use answers from previous tests submitted hundreds or thousands of years ago and expect to pass HIS/HIS/H I S classes today. You're expected to learn to make better decisions today than the student body in the past.

Some people are so seduced by reality that they live their life as though they were going to be here longer than Adam {930 years}. They're infants who refuse to grow up in their effort not to ever die. Don't get too comfortable with your emotional age. You're not going to be here forever. Grow up! It'll be easier in the long run if you die an old soul who's young at heart.

Death in Torah is GOD's way of telling man that life is a journey in raising himself in his own esteem. If you don't want to improve yourself, there really isn't much point in stretching out your stay. But the recalcitrant, adult, inner child who wants to kill himself doesn't yet appreciate the potential of his life. To him, suicide may be retaliation for not getting what he wants. He may do it out of spite.

Christianity took the next psychological view of death after Judaism wrestled with the idea for more than 1,400 years. Transubstantiation was a new-and-improved spiritual operational technique that could convey the promise of eternal life through the giving and receiving of the Eucharist.

Consuming GOD-consciousness through the bread Christ described as His body and the wine He described as His blood doesn't come from Trees of knowledge but from spiritual fields of Grain and spiritual Vineyards. Christ's contribution is a spiritual extension of Moses's message for those who seek more reasons to live life to the fullest.

The Eucharist helps to overcome the fear of death with the promise of Jesus as an Intermediary on your behalf. His love should be a reminder to Christians that we're all here to learn to live in a way that would make GOD/GOD/G O D proud. And we're here to personalize His love with self-love.

Islam is the third stage in this spiritual process. Islam can be explained as a psychological transcendence of death. And in this century GOD/GOD/G O D will surely give Muslims greater opportunities than ever before in history to bring a sense of personal emancipation to the freedom delivered by Moses and the liberty to love like Christ. When Muslims are ready to teach us by example about T H E W O R K of T H E P R O P H E T Mohammed, the world will be eager to learn.

All the rebukes and reprimands from the character of GOD in Genesis mirror the techniques of tough love that our conscience learns to use on ourselves to discipline us in its effort to mature us spiritually. All GOD's promises in Torah are examples of HIS tender and tough love used to motivate us to move forward with greater conviction and commitment to the vision of a world where we can all live together in peace.

All GOD's threats of death are useless and laughable when read on the written page. We already know we're going to die. Therefore the concept of death in Torah refers to something more important.

Man's best physical reaction to his mortality is laughter. Laughter is a figurative return from the grave. Comedians are crucially important to society because they help us learn to laugh at death together. They bring us out of our head and into our heart where laughing at ourselves brings us joy at having a Jewish head and Christian heart. But our religious

leaders should be even more important to us than comedians because they should be able to give us the tools to laugh at life with GOD/GOD/G O D from our soul.

10. Disappointment

Death isn't a punishment. Disappointment is. Life is a school, and so long as we're enrolled, the grades of our classmates can, and will, disappoint us. But what's even more disappointing is that our classmates mirror lessons given by our Teacher that we usually overlook within ourselves.

When the student beside you does poorly on a test, it should make you feel sad, not angry. It should make you ask yourself guiltily if you're your brother's *tutor*, not his *keeper*. And when the whole class does really badly on one of The Teacher's tests, it's a sign that each of us needs to improve in our own way. Wars, terrorist attacks, financial calamity, pollution, widespread illness, and yes, and even natural disasters – are signs of our need to improve our personal, study habits. There are no coincidences, only difficult tests we fail that leave us disappointed in outcomes.

What some do when they get their test paper back from The Teacher is look at the grade, feel disappointed, crumple it up, and throw it away. Like that's going to help when they take the final exam! It's obvious they should review the answers they got wrong to figure out for the next test what the right answer is. They should put their methodology into words, sign up for regular office hours with The Teacher, and ask HIM/HIM/H I M how to take everyone's energy personally.

To "disappoint" is to "dis" "appoint." It's a kind of spiritual sacking in which you're relieved of the job you were given. It's like getting fired by the Boss. It's an emotional clue to an appointment you thought you were given that's been taken away.

Disappointment emanates out from within. You're the greatest disappointment in your life, not me. Some people only spite others; some people only spite themselves; but most do both. We react to disappointments in these internal or external ways until we know better.

Under the little things that irritate you about others lie irritations with yourself that you don't see. If you question how other people's irritations are telling you about the relationship between your own head and heart, your conscience will be able to pierce those projections with new ways of behaving.

Fat people irritate you if you spite yourself with food. Black people irritate you if you spite yourself with guilt. All people of color irritate you if you're afraid of the rainbow inside you. Gay people irritate you if you use your serpent or worm to terrify you. And Jews irritate you if your GOD/GOD/G O D irritates you. If you didn't know that, *that's* disappointment!

GOD brings others into your life to challenge you to look at how your thoughts and feelings meld in habitual ways that you take no notice of. To get you to question these relationships, your conscience projects little aspects of your personality out onto others to motivate you to question what you don't like about them. This should make every person who comes into your space meaningful. Every emotional reaction you have to others, whether positive or negative, is telling you something about yourself that you may be overlooking.

Those who are future oriented should insure our future with hope. Those who live in the moment should rejoice, unite, relate and discuss the way it is now. And those who live

in the past should remind us of what we already tried that didn't work. We don't all need to live in the here and now. We all need to live in our favorite moment in time and share that earnestly with others. You may be disappointing yourself and making yourself very *tense* just by habitually moving into a *tense* that doesn't suit you.

When you think GOD calls only to "us" you create "religious" problems. When you think GOD calls only to "you" we all end up with political problems. And when you think GOD calls only to "me" you end up with personal problems. But you can respond rather than react to all three of these challenges. There's no disappointment that can't be explained through spirituality.

GOD calls to you in those ways you feel called. HE doesn't call on you to become someone you're not. He calls on you to love the way HE/HE/H E made you so that you could then learn to do better with other people's help. Don't disappoint HIM/HIM/H IM by refusing to start THE WORK. Become more than you already are by being more like yourself. Take the "you" of yesterday, improve upon it today with greater conviction in becoming more authentic, and you'll make something of tomorrow that you'll be proud of the day after that. You'll break the cycle of disappointment from within.

11. Eye For An Eye

The concept of an-eye-for-an-eye is an ancient belief based on the notion that if a man's eye was poked out, he wouldn't be able to support himself financially and would die. Ancient peoples believed that the man who lost the eye had a right to kill the man who poked it out. But in Exodus 21, Torah declares that retaliation must be equal, not excessive. Today, this concept has been transferred to the court system. It's called "compensatory damages." You have the right to sue a person for pain and suffering. The intent is to use money to figuratively pay for an "eye transplant." In this way we've found a way to use money to overcome bloodshed and blindness.

The problem with the modern interpretation of an eye-for-an-eye is that financial compensation has little effect on ameliorating our feelings. In many ways, money only aggravates our emotions. Financial vindication for wrongdoings leaves most people with the feeling that money is supposed to erase all the bad feelings they have inside. They're *angry* when justice isn't served, but they're *bitter* when it is.

Once again, the issue begins within. If you've tried to buy yourself off with shopping or gambling, you already know that that doesn't work. You want your feeling of self-respect respected whether you buy or sell, or win or lose. You know money can't change the way you feel about yourself. It can only change the way you feel about things around you.

You should want an-eye-for-an-eye from yourself. You should want you to be just, merciful and fair first within! The reason some people are blind to GOD's presence is because they've figuratively plucked out both their eyes. If they could use their mind's eye to see themselves inside, they'd see that they're moving through the world as though bumping around with a red-and-white cane.

Our thoughts tell us that money should vindicate the world of wrongdoing, but our feelings tell us that no amount of money can ever change the way we feel. And, of course, they're both right. It's the job of the court system to handle our grievances by allaying our thoughts with money. But it's the job of our religious institutions to handle our emotional

grievances with spiritual solutions that explain loss in ways that our heart can understand and forgive. Both systems of justice are letting us down.

Loss is real now and loss will be real forever. And more often than not, the job falls to GOD/GOD/G O D to find ways to teach us why HE/HE/H E allows things to be taken away from us, and why HE/HE/H E doesn't immediately replace them with something better.

Loss is GOD's/GOD's/G O D's way of making us more precious to ourselves. It's what you're left with after each loss makes you a little more precious to yourself. But, instead of using our inner eye to see what exactly we're left with, we complain instead about what's missing and the injustice of it all.

I'm not condoning stealing. I'm explaining why you need to protect your things. And I'm explaining why most of Israel has been returned to its rightful owner and why the thieves who are holding the rest need to account to the world and GOD/GOD/G O D for their lack of motivation to achieve moral reconciliation.

Most men have a tendency of figuratively poking out their mind's eye when they don't like what they see inside themselves. And then they use what they've done to themselves as their reason for not being able to see themselves more clearly. They blind themselves to themselves and then they have the perfect excuse to lead themselves astray. They make themselves poster children for the expression, "the blind leading the blind."

If you figuratively poke out your mind's eye, you're left in denial. Then you don't have to excuse yourself for your personality problems or the problems of your persona. You can simply turn a blind eye to them both. You can still pretend you can see yourself as you are in the world around you, and you can even continue to pretend to see yourself as you are in the world within. But, just as you can see that others are blind to themselves, everyone else can see that you're blind to what you're doing to yourself, too. No one is nude, naked and exposed at all times. But we are some of the time.

You can cringe when others laugh at you, or you can pretend to listen to what they're saying. But you can't hear yourself unless you listen to what's going on inside. If you discover that you're deaf to your own pleas to treat yourself better, you're finally confronting the paradox of hearing yourself and realizing that you're not willing to listen to you.

When you're in denial, you don't have to apologize to yourself or to GOD/GOD/G O D for what you're doing to yourself. When you're blind and deaf to what you're doing to yourself, you ignore yourself without feeling guilty about it. Oh, you may claim to be a victim of circumstances (but you unconsciously created those circumstances a long time ago). That you should feel bad about!

You don't have to get in line with everyone else in the "afterlife" to collect your reward for enduring yourself instead moving through denial to discover how you operate. You won't have to worry about humiliation when everyone in line in heaven turns out to be as blind and deaf as you are. Although there surely is a special line for the spiritually disabled in this way in heaven, it may be longer than you're accustomed to waiting. You'd do far better to heal yourself of denial with GOD's/GOD's/G O D's help while you still can.

If you really want an eye-for-an-eye from *yourself*, you can have it by looking more closely at all those people your mind brings up. Those images aren't the real people you know. Those images are just images produced by your imagination. They're people your mind created to make a point at a certain point in a conversation you were having with yourself. Don't confuse the people you think about in your inner world with the people

who look identical in the world we share! They're different people. One is real. The other is surreal.

As a rule, your mind seeks peace by commending you for being who and how you are. It brings up images of people you feel superior to for you to compare yourself to favorably. If you can recognize how much better you are in one particular way from the character defect you present in the people in your imagination, you could admit to yourself that you're a better than the person you're thinking about. And you could stop thinking about that person and move on.

In this way, you could raise yourself up by your own bootstraps. You could esteem yourself by yourself. You could use one eye to disapprove and the other, to approve. That's what an eye-for-an-eye is really for.

12. Fruits

I've walked around the fruits on The Tree of knowledge literarily so many times and in so many ways in this book that you'd think there'd be nothing more I could find to say about them. And yet the fruits of this Tree grow on many levels: the literal, figurative, metaphoric, symbolic and analytic. There's more to be said about the fruits of knowledge of good and evil than I could ever hope to profess in a book.

And yet, I do have a little more to say about the courage it takes to pick these forbidden fruits. And I'd like to do so in a most poetically gay and unorthodox of ways:

Not only was Adam forbidden from eating these fruits. Eve thought she was forbidden from even touching them. So the question for the sly, inventive mind that wants to know everything without getting in too much trouble doing so is how to both touch, pick and eat these fruits without feeling guilty about it or even getting in trouble for doing so.

A boy's father would never want his son to literally eat his own testicles. And if his mother had her way, he'd never so much as touch them. Parental attitudes toward their son's scrotum are ambiguous, but we have to assume that most parents would at least like to think that their little, baby boy isn't going to hurt himself unnecessarily in life. They'd be upset with anyone who kicked their son in the balls, but good parents could never forgive themselves if he literally or figuratively did so to himself.

Politics, business and the domain of romantic intercourse all require a figurative athletic cup if a young man is going to come out of his experiences standing tall, and not figuratively bent over in excruciating pain from having crushed his own forbidden fruits.

As I've already insinuated, the problem with picking these fruits doesn't really become realistic until the autumn of a man's seasons. He can't have picked buds, blossoms or flowers and really claim to have lived Scripture. The fruit needs to have burst onto his branches through the ways in which he's flowered over time. His testicles have to have descended spiritually. He has to suffer through the lessons that teach him how to develop courage through moral means by taking The Teacher's tests in every way given.

We all want to eat forbidden fruit without getting caught. We all look for ways to get away with what we want without having to pay too high a price for it. We all want GOD to "FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US" {Jesus: The Lord's Prayer} so long as He leads us into new temptations that aren't so arduous that we can't be forgiven for them, too.

We don't want to give up learning. We just want to give up having to learn with consequences that are so anxiety-filled or painful that we get expelled from the school of

life without graduating with a useful diploma. We want courage {testicles}. We want temptation {penis}. We want to enjoy the juice of the fruits our labors {semen}. And we want all the heavenly rewards for using them {orgasm}.

You could say that everyone wants to find that ice cream sundae that doesn't sacrifice taste, doesn't impinge on health and doesn't add inches to your waistline. We don't want it made without sugar or cream, and we don't want to have to change the name of it either. Nobody wants an ice cream fridae or saturdae. We all want an ice cream sundae. We want what we want when we want it. And we want exactly what we want if there's any chance of getting it. And, as Bette Midler said, "We want it delivered."

This assessment isn't unrealistic. It's just so damn hard to achieve all our dreams that we have no choice but to learn to live with disappointment. Life is so much harder than it looks. You have to become spiritually complex to deal with it all. Like a computer, you have to reprogram yourself with new generations of software as you age and face more and more subtle forms of experience.

For those who still think Scripture has to be taken literally, try wrapping your mind around the idea that your heart wants what it wants, and it doesn't have to be reasonable about what it wants. If any of the three Abrahamic faiths should be able to understand that, it's Christianity. Christ died so that human beings could enjoy the liberty of feeling whatever they wanted to feel, provided they agreed to try to learn to use their feelings with morally good intentions.

The Messiah came and went according to devout Christians. Some met Him. Some heard about Him. And some claim to know Him still. Whether He comes again in Person is anyone's guess. But I have to say it's likely that if He comes again, you're going to have to be able to smell His presence. I doubt He's going to want to be seen or heard again in a place like this.

The question of eating forbidden fruit becomes especially true when it comes to sex with men. A gay man wants to go so far as to know what it feels like to have these fruits in his mouth without literally biting them off the branch they're on and swallowing them whole. He wants to touch them with his hands and tongue, and wrap his lips around them without having to feel guilty about it.

Now that doesn't mean straight men necessarily want to pick the same forbidden fruit. Most of them are far more consumed with figuratively drinking the milk of women's fruits rather than men's.

Curiously, it's often those who take The Old and New Testaments most literally who abuse the spirit of their messages the most flagrantly. They insist on interpreting The Bible literal in one particular way and figuratively in others. In short, they insist everybody interprets The Bible *their* ways. That makes them "religious," not *spiritual*. They believe in GOD/GOD because HE's/HE's awakened them to HIS/HIS presence. But they're still dozing or sleeping soundly when it comes to other aspects of H I S design.

When looked at literally, the young man who's lithe enough to succeed in licking his own balls, and maybe, if he cranes his neck far enough, even capable of wrapping his lips around them, will have succeeded in coming as close to the biblical taboo in The Creation Story as possible without infringing upon it. He won't have touched forbidden fruit with his hands, and he won't have literally eaten it. He'll have obeyed the letter of THE LAW, and he'll have gotten away with a taste of the forbidden thanks to his physical flexibility and dexterity.

Granted, the shell your nuts are encased in isn't hard. But it's so well made that you'd have to be insane to break through the shell to get a good look at their meaty insides. And you'd have to have such low self-esteem that you'd have to pity yourself if you went so far as to literally bite your own balls off from the twigs that hold them on, and eat them raw right from The Tree…

So the moral question when contemplating Scripture literally really becomes whether we should even talk in such terms, especially since there are people in this world who are so insane that they blow themselves up with dynamite and take others out with them. In a world this cruel, do we have the moral authority to even make mention of the topic of anyone biting off and eating his own testicles?

On the other hand, haven't we had enough of people breaking our balls? Isn't there a biblical precedence here for asking ball breakers not to do so? Would it be too improper to suggest that they do so to themselves rather than the rest of us?

The moral question being asked here is whether I'm the keeper of my brother's fruits? Do I have a responsibility of protecting them from him? This isn't just mental contortionism. This question is real. If we start to legislate what a man can't do to himself by using Scripture as a literal guide instead of our conscience (which is always in the process of development), we'd forbid young, supple boys from trying to lick their own testicles. And if this were the case, then we ought to insist that our religious institutions put that in writing to make sure that their congregants know how important it is to them to take The Creation Story literally.

I think there's "religious" cause for bringing this moral "issue" to Washington via the Supreme Court. Politicians are already legislating what comes out of a woman's vagina, and when. They're still debating what can go into a man's anus. Surely this question is no less important to those who still want to take some passages of The Old Testament literally.

Women are really far more sensible when it comes to such matters because they know eating their own forbidden fruit is next to impossible. Their fruits are so well implanted in their Tree that they wouldn't consider digging them out for the sheer pleasure of touching them.

Women were forbidden from touching the fruits of *their* Tree by virtue of the way they were made. Any monthly discomfort they have to go through may cause them to touch their lower abdomen in pain, but I've never heard a woman speak of literally trying to reach inside with her teeth to rip out her ovaries. (Although I suspect that now that I've brought up the possibility, some may…)

The problem begins with the placement of the fruits on each Tree. GOD clearly chose a different location to bear fruit on a Tree of knowledge {male} compared to a Tree of life {female}. Therefore I think it's up to us to figure out why.

I never met a dog that couldn't lick its balls or a man who didn't envy it for being able to do so. I've never imagined a shepherd watching his flock who didn't observe his rams ram his ewes without feeling a twinge of envy inside.

13. Golden Calf

THE WORD for "graven image" is "MASACHA," which literally means "MASK." A graven image is a sort of mask that covers your face so that you won't be seen. You're able to see, hear and smell through a mask, but it leaves you unrecognizable. A graven image can be a

statue, a picture, a feeling, habit or a life style. Anything you use to conceal yourself idolizes your imperfections before GOD/GOD/G O D.

Every Golden Calf is a mask that distances you from GOD {ears}, GOD {eyes} and G O D {nose} even though you may feel very pleased with yourself for worshipping HIM/IM/H I M through a mask. A graven image, in terms of The Creation Story, is a garden you hide in and peer through to the outside world.

Infancy is the time in life when we're planted in this garden like a seed that will grow to become a Tree. Some try to remain hidden in this secret garden all their life. Others venture out of their own volition. But most of us are banished from this garden by growing up, even if we don't realize that we can't see the forest because we're The Tree we're hiding behind.

The garden in The Creation Story is a metaphor for a shameful, graven image lifestyle you were born into to conceal yourself from GOD. You can see who you are and where you are, but you don't yet have the moral strength consolidated in your beliefs to find your way out of your hiding place.

Graven images are masks GOD gave us to help us. We don't have to be afraid of using them with conscious awareness of what they're for. We just have to admit that while we peer out at others through our mask – perhaps judging *them* for being concealed – we're also in a masquerade of our own creation.

Prejudice is a form of idol worship that creates discrimination. Prejudice masks who you really are. It allows you to keep your fear of yourself intact without feeling guilty for having a low opinion of others. It gives you the comfort of having good reasons for feeling as angry as you want.

Moses gave us freedom. Jesus gave us liberty. But T H E P R O P H E T Mohammed gave us the ability to emancipate ourselves from our "self." And, nowhere is emancipation more alive than in America today. The black man is the personification of the night, and the white man is the personification of the day. But if you don't see yourself as an inner Earth turning, creating day and night, you won't see the benefits of emancipation through the light of the sun and the illumination from the moon and the stars.

Taking off your mask is harder than it looks. Not only is there usually a mask beneath your mask. But, disrobing morally necessitates the moral strength of pursuing the self-love that will allow you to feel so secure within that you won't mind expressing your shame personally or publicly.

Overeating, drinking and using drugs are forms of idol worship we allow ourselves because the lessons of life are so hard. Self-indulgence masks our spiritual appetite with material cravings we use to comfort ourselves during the long night than returns with regularity. Eating and drinking in class in the school of life is perfectly acceptable. But overeating, drinking to excess and drugging will get in the way of your studies. They'll eventually lower your grades and may even get you expelled.

Over-indulging your base desires is a way of avoiding your higher appetites. If you're not ready to major in self-love and the self-improvements needed that come with it, you can still graduate life with a spiritual, high school, diploma. And, trust me, down here, that's saying something about the efforts of a spiritual adolescent.

But be aware of your prejudices if you want to get into spiritual college. There's always a shadow somewhere within that will remind you of the time of day. And there's always a twinkle in the night sky that will try to remind you of the coming day.

The reason GOD gave the Israelites the 2nd Commandment (not to have any other gods before HIM) wasn't because HE was so conceited that HE couldn't stand a little competition from other gods. HE gave them the 2nd Commandment because HE wanted the Israelites to realize that they'd need many masks to conceal themselves from HIM until they were prepared to love themselves, and through themselves, HIM.

Leaves are fine to conceal embarrassment, but we need a whole forest of Trees to conceal our shame. And when we're called out on the carpet in the meadow of life, humiliation before The Lord becomes unavoidable.

The Creation Story isn't false. And it isn't real. It's a metaphor GOD gave the three Abrahamic faiths to see HIS presence through a Jewish prism before looking more deeply into the rest of HIS/HIS/H I S designs.

The Israelites in Exodus chose to worship a manmade, metal statue forged in the shape of a calf because a calf is a symbol of hope in an agrarian society. The value of a calf increases as it ages. Either it grows up to become a cow that provides milk or a bull that can pull a plow and whose meat will feed many.

Man is like a sapling in a garden. Man is like a calf on a farm. For a boy to become a man, he must grow out of the many things he "thinks" he's like.

The Israelites desperately needed to forge a Golden Calf because they needed a god that would look young but would have the potential of growing over time. They needed a god that would shine brilliantly. They needed a hollow god that would cry out to them with a haunting call, a god that would increase their hopes and desires, and yet frighten them to do what's right. They needed a god they could dance *around* rather than have to follow *behind*.

A child can't believe that his parents know about his secret desire to grow up because adults are already grown. The child can see that his parents have already gone through the process of growing to their physical limit, but he can't imagine the other, inner forms of growth they have and haven't been through. The Children of Israel were spiritual children who couldn't conceive of a Father who was always fully grown.

In some ways, a slave becomes so oppressed by his slave driver that he sees himself as little more than a beast of burden to be used. He has no spiritual language yet with which to communicate with GOD. After 400 years of slavery, the Israelites must have come to feel like animals in their own eyes. Such are the spiritual shackles that slave drivers inflict on those who work for them.

My own father was a slave in a Nazi concentration camp. That makes me the son of a slave, not just a distant descendant of them. But I was so horrified by the slave mentality I saw in my father that I had to reject him; reject the humiliating image of him having been a slave; and reject the legacy I would inherit from that. I was the child of a child, not a grown up. And that meant that I, too, would have to strive to grow up.

Those who've crossed over, who've made it to the other side of their Egypt of adversity; their childhood's end – are not free to express their adolescent aspirations through idol worship. They have to fashion an elusive rainbow into hope, not a metallic symbol of their autonomy. They have to bring hope out of the clouds and make something of it with their own hands without masking their spiritual intentions. They have to enter spiritual high school with aspirations to go on to an even higher spiritual education.

Even though it always looks as though the children are ruling over the adolescents, appearances improve. The children are forced to give up some of the illusions they're living under and the adolescents become more like adults over time.

Sure, I danced around Golden Calves for a long time in my youth. But I eventually outgrew them. I made my way through the 2nd Commandment to the 3rd. I got my G.E.D. in life after I flunked out of spiritual high school. I eventually found GOD. And I found a way to understand why HE had put the 3rd Commandment into the third person. But I found HIM the hard way. No one could explain to me why GOD would refer to HIMSELF as The Lord instead of just "ME." I had to find my own answers to most of my questions.

Surely GOD of Torah understood the unconscious desire to hide on the part of Adam and Eve right up to the Children of Israel. Surely, in HIS heart, HE heard their unconscious prayers for esteem and dignity after the shame they'd been through.

The one who couldn't understand or forgive the Children of Israel for creating a graven image was Moses. He's the one who had a cow! It makes you wonder how an author could be so inspired to write a book about himself when his main character was so uninspiring in some respects. Your autobiography doesn't have to be so ironic.

Although GOD feigned anger, and then Moses begged HIM to forgive the Children of Israel, with today's greater awareness of the psychological forces that affect man, it's easy to see that GOD would have forgiven them anyway for creating the Golden Calf. It's our leaders who are always the last to get a clue.

14. Gossip

"Gossip" is an expression, not a word, in Hebrew. "LASHON HARA" literally means "BAD TONGUE." The equivalent in English is "bad mouthing" others. Gossip is, of course, cruel and destructive, even if based in truth. What makes bad mouthing others so bad aren't the words used so much as the feelings of shame and spite that are (un)consciously carried by the words.

Don't get me wrong. Bad mouthing people who do things that are immoral is lots of fun. Gays are particularly well known for "reading people's beads." And we're not adverse to using painful truths to prove the insincerity and hypocrisy of others. Our "tongue lashings" are infamous.

Vicious and untrue gossip, however, is a different matter. Spreading lies about others is meant to hurt, not heal. And today's more popular, governmental method of not collecting the numbers so there will be no numbers to report is a clever way of lying. The scorn and derision inherent in spreading lies mirrors the embarrassment, shame and humiliation people haven't learned about from within.

The vicious, untrue gossip you perpetrate is a clue to your need for greater communication between your head, heart and conscience. Your unkind opinions about gays or Jews are symptoms of deeper issues you're having within yourself. When you withhold the truth, you lie. When you lie, you break the 3rd and 9th Commandments. Not only are you lying to us, you're lying to GOD/GOD/G O D about what you think of HIM/HIM/H I M.

Some of us have been treated too unfairly in the past for others to assume they can speak *frankly* to us, about us, without being cruel. Ask blacks how they feel about being the designated doormat. And then assume gays and Jews don't like being stepped on any

more than blacks do. Just because we have a welcoming look on our face doesn't give anyone the right to wipe his feet on our smiles.

You're not a good communicator if you don't work at improving communication within yourself. You may think you're a good mind reader when it comes to assuming what others will think if you come up with a clever lie, but you're a blank slate inside until you learn to write on it to yourself.

Right yourself like a pen put to paper. Right yourself like a capsized boat. Right yourself like someone who's gone wrong. If you don't use every word in your vocabulary in every way possible, you may make false claims through the "one-and-only intention" you think you're expressing with the words you use.

Words matter. The world was made out of words, not wood or rock. Words are less like concrete than they are concrete. If you don't experiment with words every day in every way, you're going to make pronouncements about their one-and-only-one meaning. And then people are going to come up with other WORDS/WORDS/W O R D S to contradict you.

There's no one on Earth who could possibly say anything as hurtful about you than what you're accustomed to hearing *you* say about yourself in what you consider the "privacy" of your own mind. You'll never really know what you're thinking until you question it.

You're the worst gossip you know because you probably believe every negative word you tell yourself about you. You're naïve and gullible if you don't question the unkind things you say that you haven't yet got the testicles to challenge.

If you want to get into those fruits between your legs to discover the secret to life, you're going to have to do it with words. If you think you can use a knife to slice open that soft shell so that you can hold those fruits in your hands, you're insane. You've lost your mind completely. The only way into those fruits is using THE WORDS with which they were created. You can't build W O R D S upon WORDS if they haven't been constructed upon WORDS.

If you don't stop to filter your thinking to determine whether your intentions are kind and courteous, or unkind, selfish or spiteful, you'll never fully enjoy that inner privacy that's so dear to the rest of us. And if you think you can hide by selflessly serving others and ignoring yourself, you can't.

People will see your vulnerability and abuse it. And GOD may let them, in HIS effort to help you mature. HE isn't subject to the moral laws we set in place to restrict one another. HIS means, methods and objectives are beyond anything you can imagine unless you begin a frank conversation with yourself.

If you're a doormat to yourself, people will see it. If you step on yourself without giving it a second thought, it's going to show. If you scorn yourself for being too welcoming or unwelcoming, you're walking all over yourself without even knowing it. To get into the world we share and out of it, you'd better appreciate the door between your two worlds – you'd better listen more carefully to what you tell yourself that's keeping you subservient to yourself.

Tattling on you to yourself will help your relationship with yourself immensely. It's not gossip when you humbly bring your bad thoughts to your conscience for improvement. Your heart will reach out to you with open arms when you do so. It'll embrace you as Aaron embraced Moses when Moses sought out the assistance of his older brother. Be a

big brother to yourself. Forgive yourself for all that you've done to ruin your name. Help yourself. Appreciate, don't depreciate, your ability to love yourself.

It's the gossip within that causes us to then go out and gossip about others. Stop gossip at its source. Notice something nice about you for a change, and don't stop noticing the nice things you do until your heart hears it and you believe in your soul that you're truly authentic and sincere.

The problem with gossiping unconsciously about yourself is that it ultimately leads you to fear yourself. You hear that little bully inside who's ridiculing you for telling on you to get you in trouble. If there's no inner parent to tell that little S.O.B. to shut the fuck up, you may even believe that nasty little creep. The next time you find yourself fearful, doubtful and confused, look around inside to find out who in you is at fault for you feeling that way. You don't need to hurt yourself. You could simply ball yourself out and promise never to do it again.

When you look carefully at the negativity that rises up in you, you'll see that your internal gossip is what's causing your thoughts of violence and feelings of rage toward others. These fantasies are mirrors of your challenging relationship with yourself. The more you explore your fantasies for personal elucidation, the more you'll be able to move away from fantasizing, around dreaming and toward a vision of a better future for all.

If you really put a face to those beautiful bodies you fantasize about, the face would be yours. *You* wish you looked like that, not *them*. It's you, you're jealous of. It's you, you wish you loved more just as you are.

You could just as easily learn to "good mouth" yourself. If you found good reason to respect yourself, you'd have good reason to increase your self-esteem. It won't matter if you swing-and-miss more often than not when you come to the plate in the privacy of your own conscience if you love the game.

The game of baseball is predicated on a batting average of 30% success rate being good. Expect no more from yourself. You could become the Babe Ruth in your life if you'd only let yourself get out of the dugout and play.

It's always your turn at bat. Don't do to yourself what they did to the weak, gay kid in gym class when you were literally going to school. You're better than that.

15. Guilt

Jews didn't invented guilt, and Roman Catholics didn't spread it around the world, as pop culture would have us believe. Guilt doesn't dominate the Western world, and shame isn't the underlying psychological motivator in the Far East.

Guilt is an emotional gift in the operating system of everyone. Guilt is the feeling that alerts us to having something more to learn about ourselves. Shame is just that one aspect of guilt that leads you in the direction of humility. If modesty, humility and loyalty are universal traits, then so are embarrassment, shame and humiliation. If you think you have to be Judeo-Christian to feel guilty, you need to get out more.

Guilt helps each generation attain a higher level of self-love than the generation before. It helps you develop your conscience, which, in turn, helps you perceive GOD's effort in teaching you to love yourself wisely and generously.

Leading a "religious" life at the same time that you're just trying to survive is very difficult because we weren't taught how to *be* two things at once. We're constantly being

pressured to *do* more than one thing at a time, but *being* two things at the same time isn't quite so easy.

Those who deny Darwinian evolution are in denial of the moral evolution of man. GOD gave us the evolution of the species so we'd apply those concrete lessons in nature to evolving ourselves from within. The history of the natural world has been in GOD's hands, but it mirrors our own nature that we've each been given a chance to evolve. It's a pity "religious" radicals in Christianity are so opposed to this idea. Even Muslim clerics aren't deluded about evolution.

A "creationist" is a caricature of a spiritual person. The creationist sees words like liquid cement. He sees his words pouring out of his mouth, and when they harden, he thinks they can never again change. His world is dogmatically fixed with single-minded solutions to problems that require more creativity and imagination than he can muster. His imagination has to be jack-hammered with logic and rational thinking until his dogmas lie in dust around him. His definition of words can't be raised to a high enough temperature in his heart to melt his rigid intentions. All of him will need to feel the burn.

"LISTEN TO ME, YOU WHO PURSUE RIGHTEOUSNESS AND WHO SEEK THE LORD: LOOK TO THE ROCK FROM WHICH WERE CUT AND TO THE QUARRY FROM WHICH YOU WERE HEWN; LOOK TO ABRAHAM, YOUR FATHER AND TO SARAH, WHO GAVE YOU BIRTH. WHEN I CALLED HIM HE WAS ONLY ONE MAN, AND I BLESSED HIM AND MADE HIM MANY." [Isaiah 51:1-3]

Ironically, the creationist doesn't really believe in the power GOD has infused in The Old Testament. He doesn't believe in the power of HIS WORD. The black print on the white pages The Old Testament has weighing down on The New Testament in The Bible constrains him from moving imaginatively and morally forward. He's stuck where he is because his words are flat and being pressed like a leaf in a book. They can't be formatted in his mind any differently. He doesn't know how to have *fun* with GOD/GOD/G O D because he can't even share *fonts* with HIM/HIM/H I M. He'd fall off his inner world if he had to go past his own horizons. His inner world is that flat.

To the extent that a man can appreciate and love nature, he can appreciate the clues nature brings to his own nature. A symbolic relationship to The Bible would open a creationist to his own spiritual evolution and connect him to GOD/G O D in a far greater way. He'd embrace his inner evolution if he could separate science from religion, rather than try to fuse them into one. He wouldn't have to try to control the outer world if he wasn't so afraid of developing a loving world with himself from within. He wouldn't worry about gay-Jews if he could truly believe in GOD.

Don't become a victim of the culture wars. Don't give up on the benefits of guilt by trying to sweep your feelings under the rug. The rugs of the "religious" right stand six feet above the ground with all the guilt they've swept under it. And it's lumpy.

A day will soon come when GOD/GOD/G O D will lift that rug like a flying carpet. And all that's been swept under it will be exposed. And on that day, you're going to suffer from the truth. And all those who didn't sweep the truth under the rug will benefit as while you suffer.

Don't try to walk over the feelings others are discarding. Don't make their mistakes by doing to them what they did to you. Use your conscience as *your* moral guide, and you'll become a spiritual Magellan who'll be the first to circumnavigate your inner world. Prove to yourself that you're 3-D, that you're real. Take up inner space and you'll find your place in the world around you.

16. Hanukkah

The Jewish festival of lights that occurs each year about the same time as Christmas is called "חנכה," {HANUKKAH} the Hebrew WORD for "CONSECRATION" or "DEDICATION." It's in memory of the Jewish uprising against the ancient Greeks about 200 years before the Common Era.

The Jews at that time were forbidden by the ancient Greeks from studying Torah, but did so anyway. When the Greek soldiers approached, the Jewish children hid their books and took out "draydles" {Yiddish: spinning tops}, playing with the draydles to give the soldiers the impression they were typical children, only to return to their studies after the soldiers had departed.

The four Hebrew letters, one on each side on the spinning top, is a code. The letters are "N.G.H.P." It stands for the Hebrew expression "NES GADOL HAYA PO," which means, "A GREAT MIRACLE OCCURRED HERE." [Outside Israel the tops read "N.G.H.S." {A GREAT MIRACLE OCCURRED THERE.}]

But the great miracle celebrated at HANUKKAH isn't really about the miracle of an oil lamp that burned for eight days when there was only enough oil in it to last one day. Who could get excited about that? Today, our lights last 10,000 times longer than an oil lamp. The great miracle of HANUKKAH that's repeated in every age, year after year, is that children choose learning over the ignorance of those who scheme to stop them from doing so.

Those who love to learn nowadays are called names such as "geek," "nerd" or "faggot." They're scorned and pressured into being submissive by being forced into giving up their love of learning for compliance with the bullies who hate learning.

Such bullies are so terrified of themselves that they need to stop people like you and me from being ourselves. They see us as a mirror of themselves that they want to shatter. Our love of learning intimidates them. They step on us to shut themselves up. They wipe their feet on us to convince themselves that they're not worthy of learning.

Ignoring ignorant people who ignore themselves ignores your need to become more like you. If you ignore them, not only will they not learn to face themselves. You won't be able to face yourself, either.

That said, GOD brings people into your life to help you break *your* projections, not theirs. He brings you those lessons in outer place that you're afraid to approach in inner space. Face the bully internally and you'll have any easier time of facing him externally. See every ancient Greek soldier you meet as a challenge to bring the miraculous illumination of learning alive in you.

A contemptuous attitude toward learning goes back at least as far as the ancient Greek attitude toward the ancient Jews. The Greek civilization collapsed. Let's not see that happen in America. There's a great miracle occurring right here and now. Use it to better yourself.

There's nothing wrong with *assimilation*. It's *conformity* we have to watch out for. Learning to adopt new views on old holidays can create a cutting edge experience that can be very exciting and educational. It can bring a holiday to life as though you were a kid again.

A love for learning has always been the most revolutionary and nonconforming act of every age. Learning not only brings information to the mind. Learning opens the heart to GOD/GOD/G O D in a unique way for each of us. Make *you* your major in the school of

life. Learn to be yourself. Become an "A" student in that one subject that only you can become an expert in.

Modesty, humility and grace are the rewards of spiritual security. And once you've achieved spiritual security, the feeling of social security amongst your peers that comes with assimilation will be yet another feather in your cap. You'll fit in with others when you fit together better within yourself. That will work a whole lot better than conformity.

Being shy is the result of being afraid to face yourself, not others. The more you accustom yourself to you, the more easily you'll be able to speak to everyone. End shyness at its source. Inquire into your habits, even if you don't know what they are, and eventually you'll break them.

A formal education that doesn't offer a financial pay off can often be the most enlightening and valuable learning experience because it can teach you critical thinking skills as a pure science without any one particular, practical application. The man who thinks clearly and feels lovingly may not have any formal education at all, but he's already been very well educated in the school of life. A high paying job is a good goal, but the real payoff in life comes from a *higher*, not a *formal*, education. Your inner wealth is something that big business will never be able to compete with.

Adults don't give children enough credit for how humbling learning is because they don't give themselves credit for the attributes of their own love of learning. The greatest gift a parent can give a child is by pointing out how great their achievement in learning about themselves really is.

Learning is a process of individuation. Everything we learn teaches us how different we are from everyone else. It's impossible to imagine what GOD/GOD/G O D is thinking, but it takes little effort to conclude that HE's/HE's/H E's in love with diversity. HE/HE/H E seems to get unending joy in creating no two snowflakes alike.

A *higher* education intensifies the differences in people, turning people into snowflakes made of the same stuff, but in unique patterns. This is a Hindu perspective that will bring you to an Everest of new ideas to choose from. This is the climb to the top of the world that you don't have to be in India to ascend.

Not fitting in, feeling different and looking odd is actually a positive sign from GOD/GOD/G O D. It makes you a snowflake. It makes you unique.

A draydle is like a snowflake spinning in unexpected directions. Seeing other draydles dashing about at high speeds doesn't change their nature, only their bearing. A draydle is a great miracle occurring here and now, a game you're playing that turns the soldier in you into a student.

HANUKKAH happens. You can't make it happen. You can't stop GOD's miraculous story from being repeated. You can only learn to appreciate it as it coincides with your own experiences.

I used to think there was a conspiracy against learning within me, but it was really my distain for authority that I needed to overcome. I had to make "me" the loving authority in my life before I could appreciate more forms of external authority. My own arrogance in how I behaved toward myself had kept me from greater tranquility and happiness. I thought being *different* was holding me back, but it was *indifference* to myself that was doing so.

Conformity was attractive, but it didn't bring me what I thought it would. What I really wanted was a unified, inner world. That's what gave me the courage to find a good way to assimilate with my culture and religion, rather than conform to the dictates of others.

The "pursuit of happiness" as provided by the Constitution boils down to our right to learn to be ourselves. Children and teenagers who aren't encouraged to love themselves for being unique are the poorest kids on Earth. Many of these kids don't live in Africa or Asia. Some of the spiritually poorest kids on Earth live right here in the U.S.A. They go to schools that only teach them how to sit still for eight hours a day. And then they act out by conforming to anti-social behavior to express their frustration with their own lack of authority, an accusation they then project onto the adults around them.

The adults in their lives don't teach them how to express their goodness uniquely and deeply. The adults just want them to sit still and be still, not seen and not heard. Most adults insist on a French Revolution style of teaching that cuts kids' heads off from their heart to make the body politic conform to the needs of the nation. Our schools ironically refuse to try an American Revolution style of education to emancipate our kids. They're afraid to enlighten our kids with wisdom. They cram facts into their heads, instead. And, while separating their heads from their hearts, they neglect to ask themselves why our kids graduate school so poorly prepared for life. Why wonder why we live in such a violent society, when it's so obvious?

A child is a miraculous candle, not just during the month of December at the Jewish festival of lights called HANUKKAH. A child is a miracle happening, a festival of lights every day and night. There's nothing you can do to extinguish the imagination of a child. You can only teach a child to focus his light, or not. It's HANUKKAH every day. The miracle of learning is always occurring.

17. Here And There

The words "here" and "there" become more meaningful when uttered in a contemplative manner silently in your mind. Suddenly the difference between these two words becomes stark. The question arises, "Where is "here" and where is "there" when referring to these words in inner space. The answer is so obvious that it's, at first, beguiling.

"Here" refers to the mind where you speak and *hear* yourself speaking. *Here* within is where you *hear*. *Here* is the place in inner space that you mastered with language when you were a child. *Here*, in psychological terms, is the rational, literal part of yourself; that part that science refers to today as the "left brain."

"There" within is where you don't hear. "There" is that place in inner space that you can't reach through the rational mind. "There" is the irrational place where words don't *denote* meaning, but *connote* it. "There" lies in what we proverbially call our "heart." "There" is what science refers to as the "right brain."

The only way to go from *here* in our head to *there* in inner space is by using words figuratively. Metaphor, symbolism and simile are the tools we're given to access our heart and soul: there.

From a spiritual perspective, the question, "What are we all doing 'here'?" is fascinating when asked from within. The first thing we should be doing here is figuring out the difference between "here" and "there." And I'm not referring to Earth {here} and heaven {there} when I say that. I'm referring to the internal observation of the left-brain {here} and the right-brain {there}. You can't get there {heaven} with confidence in where you're going if you don't have a sense of where you are within.

It's much more important that we learn to differentiate our thoughts from our feelings if we're going to learn how to understand our *command* and *control* centers. Our mind

commands; our heart *controls*. Our mind tells us what to do. Our heart informs us how that will be emotionally accomplished. Only then does our conscience get in and argue with the two of them about what they're trying to do without a moral sense of the task at hand.

The struggle you experience inside is like a "Three Stooges" [Moe {head}; Larry {heart} and Curly Joe {conscience}] vignette until you learn to slow down the motivations of each character. The more you can separate these three stooges, the more you can watch them reunite in more agreeable and cooperative relationships.

It's not that murderers, rapists, kidnappers, cheaters, thieves and liars don't have the same operating system as the rest of us. It's that they cut spiritual corners. They avoid feelings that they find painful, thereby rationalizing their behavior with desires to compensate for what they can't feel. What we see around us are spirits driving human vehicles that they don't know how to operate. And GOD is the traffic Cop who decides who He's going to allow to go where.

Without an understanding of the internal difference between the words "here" and "there" we can't begin to understand what we're doing, or why. Without self-knowledge, there's no rational understanding of the difference between our two worlds in one: the world (t)here within and the world around us. There's no way to access one from the other. In biblical terminology, you could say that you're always here and there. Eden never went anywhere. It was always (t)here in the archetypical sense.

As you aged from infancy to adulthood, you worked at leaving *there* to come *here*. You worked at becoming objective rather than subjective. And in the process you became externally oriented.

But now you're in a position to return to where you once were because your experiences of being human are sufficiently developed to use figurative speech to do so.

The trip out of (t)here began with words. You moved out of the Eden of infancy when you learned to speak. Your genesis evolved into an Israel in early childhood. Then you found yourself in an Egypt in late childhood. A part of you guided you on your exodus through adolescence, and you wandered around waiting to arrive at adulthood.

You can make your way around the right side of your brain to understand how words can be used to map emotional meanings through figurative speech. You've crossed your Jordan with your inner savior {Joshua} and reentered your Holy Land with liberty now that you've achieved freedom from within. Now you can go back and forth.

"Walking on water" is a metaphor for using words formed on the left side of the brain to guide you through feelings that are formed on the right. You can walk on water when you have stepping-stones beneath the surface of your emotions to support your intellectual weight. You don't have to fall in and drown in your feelings if you can step on those rocks that lie just beneath the surface of your feelings in "there."

Spiritual Linguistics gives you the stepping-stones not only to matters of your heart, but also stepping-stones to GOD/GOD/G O D in your soul. Once you can form words into figurative speech with the rational portion of your brain, you can apply them to irrational concepts like THE WORD "GOD" that has more than one meaning. Once you can think for yourself, you can get closer to the GOD of your understand.

As I've stated many times in this book, in many ways, the *conscience* is that part of your being that uses your thoughts and feelings to produce ethical results. It's the ethical excellence in you that brings you to greater proximity with our Creator, and how HE made you in HIS image.

18. KABALA

"KABALA" is a mystical interpretation of Judaism that's been in existence in one form or another for about 2,000 years. It literally means "RECEPTION," and comes from the verb "LIKABEL," which means, "TO RECEIVE." KABALA is also the reception ceremony after prayers on the Sabbath at which wine and bread are blessed and shared with the congregation.

It never failed that when I went to the reception after the service at synagogue, I always got into an eating frenzy around the food instead of seeing the KABALA as a spiritual exercise in receiving. I only wanted to be physically fed by the experience. I didn't realize the KABALA was intended as *spiritual* nourishment that was part of the service. I missed the point of prayer because I was consumed with consuming food only in the literal sense.

Eating is the Jewish and Christian way of describing the experience of drawing closer to GOD/GOD through moral deliverance from spiritual hunger and thirst. Eating and drinking are physical processes that parallel spiritual sustenance for all human beings whether or not a culture consciously ascribes to the Judeo-Christian metaphor and symbols.

Although knowledge of G O D in The Quran is associated with the fragrance of herbs, this is presented as 114 similes, or S U R A H {C H A P T E R S}. G O D-consciousness is something in Islam that's more closely tied to breathing, the wind and the unseen, unheard path to A L L A H through scent, and can't be ascertained through physical consumption.

Pretending to gobble up little boys and girls as a sign of affection is the secular way in which we convey the message to children that they're precious, desired and delectable. By associating kids with sweets, we instill in them the feeling that they're beloved in words they can relate to.

The rituals of blessing bread and wine, whether literally or symbolically, reaffirm the association of food with GOD/GOD consciousness. The blessing of food *after* the service in Judaism and *during* the service in Catholicism is a way of receiving thoughts and feelings from GOD/GOD that will enrich us as food nourishes the body.

It's up to Christians who are figuratively, spiritually bilingual in both texts to explain their understanding of both Good Books in terms that everyone in the world can understand, whether they're a member of a faith or a philosophy, or neither. As Jews we'd do a better job of sharing our Judeo-Christian values with the abstract goals of Islam if we could better explain the gifts we, together, bring to The Table.

19. KADOSH

THE WORD "KADOSH" means "HOLY." The word "holy" in English is a homonym with the concept of "making whole." But KADOSH means exactly the opposite; it literally means, "TO SEPARATE." That which is holy in Judaism has been separated from the whole, whereas that which is holy in Christianity has been united.

You have to separate before you can unite. You have to be born before you can die. You have to be spiritually conceived before you can be reborn. Recognizing that which is "holy" is easy. But becoming holy is a process of separation and unification that takes millions of trials in a lifetime. You have to feel wholly to be holy.

Inherent in that which is separated is the feeling of aloneness that Adam experienced. That which *is* separate, *feels* separate. We can assume that the forbidden fruit first felt separate from The Tree after it was picked. It couldn't have felt separated from the trunk,

branches, leaves and roots before that. GOD may have declared to Adam that The Tree of knowledge was separate from all the other Trees in the garden, but mankind has been able to understand the fate of the forbidden fruit only through his own sense of separation and unification with himself.

To identify as a fruit that's cut off from its branch produces the sensations of isolation and disorientation. But, to return to the ground to reseed produces a sense of reunification with a greater goal and new purpose.

To be born and cut off from your mother's umbilical cord was your first experience of separation in life. Birth made it possible for you to see yourself like a fruit separated from a tree.

To be reborn is to feel seeded and useful to GOD in a whole new way. You don't have to be Jewish, Christian or Muslim to understand this concept. You need only love nature to see the parts you play in the universal messages in nature. Mother Nature mirrors GOD's nature. Mother Nature may be unforgiving, but out of justice come new forms and meaning to life.

Your navel is your stem, so to speak; the universal symbol of separation from your mother's Tree of life. From the moment you were born, you began to learn about the mystery of wholeness through separation. Contemplating your navel will inevitably bring you thoughts of separation from your mother and sacred feelings about her death.

Holiness is the process of going from separation to wholeness. The process of connecting to GOD is a spiritual progression that moves you through a range of thoughts and feelings towards awareness of the miracle of life. By identifying with the forbidden fruit from The Tree of knowledge of good and evil, your struggle with GOD becomes your struggle with yourself. You become holy as you struggle to become whole.

Those who consider me separated from GOD because I'm gay or Jewish don't fully understand what it means to be holy themselves. They think of holiness as a place {heaven}, when it's really a process. People who see heaven as separate from Earth don't serve humanity with the intention of uniting the two. They may think they do, but they don't yet have a unifying theory for thinking and feeling in terms of what they believe in. Their conscience is skewed by ideas subsumed by desires for power. They want power to be given to them from the outside in. They aren't preparing themselves for the ultimate "no" from GOD that will spell their death. Claims of a willingness to embrace death is no evidence that you've learned to take "Know!" for an answer.

We've all been physically separated from one Tree of life {our mother}, but very few of us see ourselves as a Tree of knowledge in our own right. Many have fallen, like fruit, from grace, but they haven't split open to bare their seeds to the ground. They have no mission in life. They have nothing to grow. They're forbidden fruit that should be a little concerned about getting stepped on by GOD as HE noisily tramples through HIS garden. But they aren't concerned enough to worry that their seeds are exposed, and, as yet, unsown. They aren't harbingers of hope because they haven't gone far enough in the process of becoming whole. They don't have much to offer, other than other people's canned advice and preserved opinions.

20. KASHER

Rabbis created the laws of "KASHROOT" {SPIRITUAL CLEANLINESS} from GOD's prohibition in Leviticus 22 not to boil a calf in the milk of its mother. Long before the

Common Era, rabbis determined that certain foods should be prohibited altogether and others should be forbidden from being eaten together at the same meal. In English, these are called "kosher" foods.

Since it's unlikely the milk in your frig and the meat in your freezer come from the same animal, it isn't realistic to worry about literally boiling your veal in the milk of its mother. As with all matters of Torah, this prohibition only makes sense today if understood metaphorically. If it were that important to take The Book of Leviticus literally, rabbis wouldn't have interpreted Torah thousands of years ago by expanding upon it. They'd have followed Torah literally, WORD for WORD. In fact, there are many portions of Torah that aren't taken literally now, nor were they ever.

But some of today's rabbis use the cafeteria approach to Torah. They pick and choose what they want to take literally and leave the rest. Needless to say, they picked Leviticus 18 because they're homophobes. They're haters who wanna hate. And they found a good passage to quote in order to do so.

If the ancient rabbis wanted to devise methods to avoid consuming the milk and meat of each cow and her calf, we'd have historical precedence for seeking that literal intention of Torah. But, it's always been the goal of great rabbis to glean the wisdom from THE WORD of GOD for the time we live in. This avoids dogmatic interpretations of our sacred text that don't bring the spirit of Judaism into the present day. And we all know that as goes Jerusalem, so goes Rome and Mecca.

Today, it's your desire to relate THE LAW to your personal philosophy of life that should be of importance to you. Most Jews today aren't kosher, but that doesn't mean they're bad Jews. It means we, Jews, have to work all the more to achieve GOD's goals with respect to cleaner relationships with one another through a cleaner relationship with ourselves.

If you don't want to eat a cheeseburger because it's not kosher, by all means order it without cheese. If you don't want to have sex with a member of our gender, by all means avoid sucking cock. And, if you don't want to give back all your material rewards in life every 50 years as commanded to do so in Torah, that's your business, too. [Leviticus 25:8-13] If the rabbis were that concerned about the literal intentions of Torah, they'd have done more to fight to keep slaves, since the moral treatment of slaves is also clearly spelled out in Leviticus.

For those who like where the ideas of Torah are leading the world metaphorically, but who aren't Jewish, and therefore don't plan to ever eat kosher, here is a clever way to do your best to acknowledge this prohibition personally: Join together in spirit with Jews who are kosher by agreeing not to live your life like a pig or become like a bottom feeder, such as shrimp, clams and oysters. Chances are, that together, you'll make GOD/GOD/G O D very happy when your dietary restrictions correspond to your *persona*, even if your *personality* doesn't agree to outwardly express a particular rule.

Endeavor to live your life like a cow, not a pig. Don't let your experiences go right through you without regurgitating them like cud, chewing on them, and swallowing them again and again to give them more time to digest. Contemplate what you're doing several times and in several ways because each time you do so, you'll come up with different perspectives on what to learn from your experiences and what options you have to act more righteously.

"Low-life" are like shellfish. We consider people whose morality is questionable to be unclean. They eat the shit that sinks down from above. We may relate with such people

socially, but we should avoid living like they do. Watch the way low-life behave, and question why GOD has brought them into your life. You may be amazed to discover that you may be doing to yourself what they're doing to one another.

Those with low self-esteem may see themselves as like "shrimp." They may feel small inside. Or they may feel they have no choice but to "clam" up, letting others speak for them. They may be like oysters that think that their pearls of wisdom are the only treasure to be found inside anyone.

You can still eat pork and shellfish if you so choose, while maintaining good relationships with the greedy and self-destructive. You'd just be telling yourself that you prefer to live your life through a metaphoric appreciation of Jewish, spiritual consumption, rather than doing so only literally, as would a religious Jew.

Getting everyone to pray the same way is never going to work because GOD/GOD/G O D likes the diversity HE/HE/H E created. Christianity and Islam will never take over the world because GOD/GOD/G O D didn't go out of HIS way to create both those faiths for one to destroy the other. We might as well join forces like pieces of a puzzle and learn to make a difference by loving the difference we make.

Milk is the symbol of mother's love. When a mother is overbearing, she figuratively boils her child in her own love. It's fine for a mother to heat up her child with anger, so long as she doesn't cook him through and through with behaviors that psychologically cook him. Love shouldn't be used as a weapon. Anger shouldn't be used to purify a person. It should only be meant to wipe them off or hose them down.

Anger towards others always has to be handled wisely. Anger has such cleansing properties that it can disinfect to the point of sterilization. The purpose of anger should be to heat the recalcitrant child to take away his chilly, DAFKA {CONTRARY, SPITEFUL or DEFIANT} disposition.

People who get to the point where they're boiling inside aren't helping others learn the lessons of love in as wise a manner as they could if they got less upset with them. Tranquility comes from trying to lower your emotional affect, not by trying to avoid it for yourself by dumping your piping, hot feelings onto others or their things.

Parents who submerge their kid in love until he can't breathe should ask themselves what they're hoping to accomplish. There are enough exasperated people in this world. Emotional smothering may not literally kill anyone, but it'll surely leave him in an emotional coma that he'll have a hard time waking up from.

There are many who are emotionally unconscious to how they treat others. They aren't *stupid*. They're in a *stupor*. They're in an emotional blackout. They're drowning in love, flailing about, even striking others in their effort to breathe. They're emotionally underwater and afraid of sinking deeper. And it's exasperating them not to be able to break through into the world above that one.

No one is a Golden Calf, even if your parents once thought you were more precious than gold. You shouldn't dance around people to show off how special you are. Everyone's made of flesh and blood. Don't prove to us that, like an Israelite without a Moses, you need Golden Calves because you suffer from abandonment issues. Moses went up Mt. Sinai to improve his relationship to GOD for everyone's sake. Become a Moses unto yourself, and you won't worry about other people leaving you behind to rely on gods of your own making.

But, don't dance around yourself, either. Don't treat yourself like a god, and you won't inflict your wrath on others. If you hadn't abandoned your inner child when he was young, you wouldn't have had to worry about other people abandoning you now. Concretize your relationship within yourself. See yourself as real, self-made and precious.

Your parents may have indulged you when you were little with sweets and treats, but you have to realize you're no longer living in that era. The adult, inner child in you today has to conform to new principles set by GOD for a new age. You have to find your way to move away from your mother and toward our Father. And if that means you have to question your dad's values along the way, so be it.

You won't be able to love yourself if you act piggish or like low-life because you have to watch how you're behaving. Once you make yourself the primary witness to your life, you're going to have to choose between denial, depression or self-determination at every step along the way.

Many people think like a dog chewing a bone. {Dogs are also not kosher, by the way.} If you need to gnaw on your experiences until you've got every bit of the marrow out of them, fine. Worry can be helpful in determining other points of view. But there comes a point when there's simply nothing left in that bone. Bury it. Get it out of sight, and look for something else to do. Tell yourself you've done enough gnawing for now. Worrying all the time is like eating dog. Don't do it. Love the puppy in you, but beware of its nature as it matures. You should strive to become more human by thinking like a man, not more canine by thinking like a dog with a bone.

GOD is like your inner Grandpa. HE'll help you raise your inner child to adulthood. Listening to your elders is only for practice. If you want to see results within, you're going to have to find your Higher, Older and Wiser Power. "GOD, The Father" is old fashioned. We've come so far psychologically that we now need to speak to our adult, inner child about "GOD, our Grandfather." We need to father ourselves.

It's much easier to give up a particular food group than it is to give up the spiritual associations with that food group. Living a kosher life should be about having spiritual standards that are revealed in what you eat spiritually and the way you eat it. What you literally put in your mouth may be clean enough for physical nutrition.

We should continue to pass laws to keep our food safe. But we can't pass laws to protect a man's head and heart if his conscience isn't concerned about keeping his soul spiritually clean. This requires that each of us learn to obey his own inner authority.

You can't force a man to give up autonomy for freedom. He has to choose to do so of his own free will. You can alert him to the relationship between what he literally and figuratively consumes, but the rest is his own business. The man who eats like a pig; gnaws on worry like a dog with a bone; or holds all the negative associations of shellfish - isn't necessarily dirtier or morally lower than you. He's just ignorant, and expressing his ignorance by ignoring aspects of life he doesn't want to look at.

Your heart and soul are no less prone to illness than your stomach. Living a life that's emotionally and spiritual KASHER is a lot harder than simply rearranging your kitchen so that it adheres to the laws of KASHROOT in the literal sense. There's little point in loving ritual if you don't know why you're doing it. People who read gossip magazines claim to have enquiring minds. Religious people should, too. Don't perform rituals without asking yourself what they mean to you, personally.

Long ago, our rabbis presented us with an interesting question. "Since the prohibition of mixing milk and meat doesn't apply to fish or fowl, is it kosher to eat a chicken cheeseburger?" And the answer the rabbis gave was a resounding "No."

They concluded that it wasn't the letter of THE LAW that Jews must strive to adhere to, but the spirit of the law. If a "religious" Jew who follows the laws of KASHROOT were to see another "religious" Jew eating a burger with cheese, and didn't know it was a chicken cheeseburger, it might tempt the former to think the later had broken the law of KASHROOT, and that might tempt him to break that law, too.

In other words, it's vital that we do our utmost to avoid the appearance of conflicts of interest. When you're in public, you should do your utmost to present the best side of yourself. You shouldn't give people reason to think you're a hypocrite.

What people conclude when they look at you is somewhat, but not completely, in your control. Therefore you should do your best to make a good impression on them for everyone's sake. Doing so may not help avoid all the spite you find in a man, but it'll set an example for yourself that will make a difference to you at the end of the day.

If you really want to eat chicken cheeseburgers, just know what you're doing. If you really want to test the boundaries of THE LAW, practice breaking THE LAW on yourself in the privacy of your mind first to see how it makes *you* feel. Then question how you feel using your conscience. Do you pass your own smell test?

People who don't know how to break THE LAW within themselves make exaggerated claims about the importance of others being cleaner. The letter and the spirit of the law must be considered if you don't want to find yourself having to accuse yourself of being the hypocrite.

21. KELEV

"KELEV" means "DOG." It's a very interesting word linguistically because it can poetically be construed as a contraction of the two WORDS "KMO HALEV" which means "LIKE THE HEART."

Ancient Israelites could see that dogs mirror the sincere, unadulterated feelings of man. Dogs are passionate creatures that express their feelings without hesitation or duplicity. They don't have the capacity to conceal or obfuscate their emotions.

Dogs don't act hypocritically. They aren't able to think one way and feel another. They seem wholly driven by their feelings. They're known for their loyalty, for being man's best friend, precisely because of the way their nature seems to oblige them to live out their emotions in constant unity with whatever they have in the way of a logical thinking process. Even the guilt dogs demonstrate isn't adulterated with excuses, blame and insincerity.

You might say a dog is the poster child of the heart from a man's point of view. A dog expresses itself so candidly through body, bark and bite that it's easy to yearn for that kind of authenticity from ourselves. We love dogs as we would love to love ourselves.

Everyone seeks honesty and sincerity from others, and yet everyone is forced at times to be dishonest or insincere with others. Everyone also wants to be honest and sincere with himself, and yet that seems even harder to do. We discover that we're so sensitive to criticism that we can't even criticize ourselves without reacting badly to it. We discover we're more sensitive and complex than we realized. Training ourselves is even more difficult than training a dog.

This balancing act of holding our thoughts honestly and feelings sincerely occurs in our conscience, and for most of us that puts a strain on us over time because we want to be authentic with others and genuine with ourselves. But a bad thought about ourselves can tip the scale in one direction, and a bad feeling can tip it the other way.

We may react with sorrow, sentimentality, nostalgia, frustration, fear, anger or guilt when our scale is off balance. We may feel disoriented and confused at not being able to accept ourselves the way we are. We may wish we were different, when we haven't even asked GOD what the blessing is in having allowed us to be emotionally carved like clay just as we are.

We fluctuate with thoughts and feelings that give the impression we're inside a boat bobbing in the high seas. This rock and roll inside is caused by feelings that bang up against our thoughts, creating havoc for the live cargo in our hull. Our conscience then has to intercede to tie us up inside to keep us safe.

But when this is done unconsciously, it becomes impossible to say we know or love ourselves. Until you can see yourself as a Noah on an ark without a sail or rudder in rough weather, there's no way to describe these sensations using GOD's WORD.

The problem begins with the way we think. We're trained to think in fragments, not complete sentences because we're so often interrupted and distracted with other thoughts. When we begin a thought that's taking us in a direction we don't like, we drop it. We don't complete it. We don't finish our thoughts like sentences spoken aloud. And yet we expect ourselves to finish everything on our plate, every project we start, and every relationship we get in to.

Finish your thoughts when you're talking to yourself. Don't interrupt yourself, and you'll be amazed at how much smarter and more sensitive you'll become in short order.

You don't have to like what you say to yourself. You don't even have to agree with it. But if you don't complete your sentences, you're never going to respond or react to what you've said. Stop pruning yourself and you won't turn into a bonsai.

Morality begins within. You'll be amazed at how much stronger you'll think; how much more sincerely you'll feel; and how effectively you'll act if you just complete the sentences you utter inside. You may feel split and frayed within because your thinking is disjointed. Your outcomes may be uneven because your mind is clipping your own sentences into phrases, leaving you feeling like a fragment. Change the way you communicate your thoughts, and you'll begin to transform the way you feel about yourself without having to take on huge self-improvement projects that aren't really needed.

Cheating begins within. Cheating is caused by an unbalanced relationship between thoughts and feelings that will ultimately leave you with evidence that you're thoughtless and insincere. Until your conscience gets in and learns to balance the scales of justice, you may have to observe your life fluctuate, sway, swing or waver.

It's not enough we tell children what to do. We have to tell them *how* to do it. If they don't learn how to *have* hope, there's little chance they're going to *deliver* it when needed.

Patience is harder than it looks when you realize you have to be patient with yourself before you can be patient with others. But if you can't put your *hopes* into yourself, you won't be able to demonstrate *patience* either. You've got to experience hope to know you can believe in yourself and love yourself no matter what life puts you through.

Hope is the reason for rainbows. Hope comes from surviving each storm while caring for the living cargo inside you as you bob up and down. Hope is looking out over the bow

of your ship and believing with all your head, heart and soul that the choppy waters around you will eventually recede.

You have to remember what "NOAH" means, and why that character is given to us so early on in Genesis. You have to learn how to "COMFORT" yourself. You're too old to expect to be comforted by your mother or other women. It's time you learned to play that feminine role for yourself in your life.

Hope is a necessity of life. Your religious beliefs will work better for you if you can demonstrate more *hope* and less dogmatic *resolve*. Your religious beliefs will work better if you put your hope in yourself before {in front of/facing} GOD.

Patience is first taught through training. Later patience is approached through reasoning. But only after patience has been further internalized through spiritual psychology can patience be augmented with positive feeling. This feeling is akin to tranquility.

What makes the friendship between a boy and a dog so special is that it can mirror the sincerity and loyalty a boy is yearning for within himself. It's not wrong to treat yourself like a dog. It's wrong to treat yourself like a mutt. It's wrong to disrespect the mongrel in you that's a mix of so many types of good breeding brought together in your best friend. Love yourself at least as well as you would love a canine, and you'll become a patient owner and beloved pet unto yourself.

22. Loneliness

Loneliness is the first feeling described in Torah. GOD created Adam in HIS image, but Adam felt lonely. Perhaps the same might be said of GOD. Perhaps it's lonely being GOD. Perhaps HE created us to relieve HIMSELF of HIS loneliness. Who's to say? It wouldn't hurt us to offer HIM a little compassion once in a while.

The purpose of Torah isn't to explain GOD in terms that man can understand. The purpose of Torah is to explain man in terms that *man* can understand! I wrote this book expressly for men in an effort to explain the spiritual importance of loneliness in the life of a man. I wasn't trying to get anyone to feel sorry for GOD.

People who are lonely often get a dog or a cat to relieve their loneliness. You could think of man as GOD's pet. But the same people who dote on their dogs can be very cold to other human beings. GOD isn't our owner. We aren't HIS pets. That metaphor becomes insulting when you extend it.

If you want to imagine what GOD is feeling, don't forget to also imagine what HE's thinking, believing and desiring. If you do, before long you'll see yourself in your own eyes. And then you can imagine how you feel about yourself.

It isn't a coincidence that we, men, feel we're the loneliest, most misunderstood creatures on the planet. It isn't a coincidence that we feel so angry, frightened and sad so much of the time, or that we're so ridiculed by women and children. If we come to know the spiritual importance of *loneliness*, we can transcend it with *solitude*. Only then do we find ourselves in good company regardless of who's around us.

Loneliness is an expression of the heart that tells our head that the two of them aren't moving in a parallel direction. Most of the time we assume that loneliness needs to be overcome by changing the people around us, rather than adding to the one within. We fill our calendar with more things to do and surround ourselves with more responsibilities to others. But over a lifetime of not dealing with loneliness at its source and not succeeding

in relieving our anger, fear and sorrow, we come to the conclusion that there's a part of us that's unlovable. And that leaves us even more lonely and disappointed by the end of life than we were at the beginning. The beginning of life as a newborn had to have been pretty lonely. That's what Torah is saying about Adam.

If crying isn't the result of pain, it's usually the result of disappointment that then initiates the feeling of loneliness. Only the *reasons* for your disappointment will change. Ultimately, with a river of tears behind you, you'll begin to cry because you're lonely more than because you're disappointed. You'll realize that you miss yourself. You've always missed yourself. Your whole life has been a struggle to catch up with that friend inside who always seems to leave the room just as you walk in.

Loneliness is the first feeling in Torah because it'll also the last. Moses died alone. And we can only assume that he cried about his loneliness at the end of his life, just as he did in the basket on the Nile at the beginning of his life.

Every baby feels he's alone in a basket rushing downstream. He feels abandoned by his mother, and adrift in a world seemingly without moral causation. The princess who finds him and bestows pity on him isn't usually his mother. The reason for his mother's absence doesn't matter to a boy. Her intermittent presence was as variable as all the other factors in his life.

You came out of your mother and you can't go back. Moral of the story: life is a one-way trip.

Some men fill their lives with the distractions of making money, spending money, making babies or babying their pets – all in an effort to avoid the feeling of being alone with themselves. They don't realize that their fear of loneliness is a sign of THE WORK they have to do to devote themselves to themselves before GOD. To commit to the process of understanding loneliness at its source is the greatest application of faith and sign of your courage to *live*, not just *exist*.

Some give up the emotional race inside with themselves without ever trying to run it. They don't recognize all the good reasons they have not to fear loneliness. They don't realize the potential for joy in being with themselves all the time. They'd rather be with others or asleep, than alone. They'd rather surround themselves with things, games or sex than with feelings.

The gift of *aloneness* lies in the tale of "The Tortoise and the Hare." From the emotional perspective of the tortoise, it doesn't need to worry whether it arrives at the starting line on time. It doesn't need to worry about getting to the finish line first. It only needs to enjoy the journey. The race isn't rigged against it because there's no one it's competing with. The tortoise is alone, well protected in its shell and lucky to have that house with it everywhere it goes.

If you're a hare in a hurry, get used to the way you are. You aren't going to turn into a tortoise. The tortoise may be an aspect of yourself that isn't obvious. If you're a hare, recognize that the place of your own is around you, not within you. The world we share is your home. There is no house on your back. You may be jumping from one thing to another because that's the way you are.

You don't have to be perfect to strive for the perfection of seeing yourself as you truly are. You can do it your way, finish first in some ways and be last in others. When you come to love the tortoise and the hare in yourself, you'll be a happy puppy.

Nobody is going to go with you on the journey from loneliness to solitude through having to be alone. Nobody was with you when you were born, and nobody is going to be with you at the moment you die. Your journey is your journey. Nobody is going to hold your hand and walk by your side every step of the way to tell you how to put one foot in front of the other or to commend you for doing so.

The only consolation you have in being lonely, alone or in solitude is in being able to recognize how different each of them feels. Loneliness is tearful. Solitude is joyful. Being alone is simply a reminder that school is in session and you should be studying, not looking out the window.

Running at breakneck speed like a hare is probably better if you do so when you're young. You should want to get somewhere in the world around you while you have the physical strength to do so. But if you still have the urge to run around after a certain age, maybe you should question where it is you're going. Moving like a tortoise can become a joy in middle age. You can pop inside whenever you're frightened or tired. Most people want to avoid being like a tortoise and give up being like a hare. You should question that.

23. New Year

The Jewish New Year was placed in the autumn to coincide with the bounty of the harvest. The harvesting of food is a metaphor for harvesting the fresh fruits of knowledge. The Jewish New Year celebrates, above all else, a year of learning how to befriend yourself.

It's not a well-known fact that the Jewish New Year is thought of as Adam's birthday. It doesn't just celebrate the creation of mankind; it celebrates the creation of every human being back through to the spiritual beginning of the world. To celebrate the Jewish New Year with Jews you need only find a good reason to celebrate the creation of humanity. GOD created two genders with good reason. Leave your jokes about men at the door. We're tired of them. They're not funny anymore.

When you live each day to learn, becoming a man is a good reason for being. Becoming a man makes celebrating Adam's birthday at the Jewish New Year a personal celebration of you becoming more authentically yourself. Every day becomes Adam's birthday, a Jewish New Year, if you uphold the best in becoming a man.

24. Patience

The word for "patience" in Hebrew is "SAVLANOOT." It comes from the Hebrew verb "LIZBOL," which means, "TO SUFFER." The idea that patience comes through suffering is intrinsic to the Hebrew language and Jewish tradition. Suffering is painful, unavoidable, and therefore must be met with wisdom, strength, courage and conviction.

Pain is negative, intense, physical stimulation of the body that motivates us to transcend embarrassment of our body with modesty. Pain focuses on our need to hold our relationship with our body with greater respect, for our body is a vehicle of self-discovery.

Suffering, on the other hand, is negative emotional stimulation that motivates us to transcend our feelings about ourselves. Suffering helps us transform the shame of our character with humility. It motivates us to change our opinions when they're immoral and unrighteous. Suffering teaches us to give in graciously to self-love.

Suffering is negativity that figuratively comes from your heart. Some people need to medically have their heart opened for others to see inside and fix it. Others need to do so emotionally through romantic liaisons that break their heart. Some are taught to give their

heart to GOD long before they've ever learned to give it to themselves. When you suffer to love the one you're with {yourself}, you learn how to be alone while not lonely.

It doesn't require an inordinate amount of wisdom to see that people don't pursue patience because they don't want to go through the suffering required in developing it. They take the position that they have the right to feel any way they like. By doing so they unconsciously reinforce their erroneous notion that they can do without patience.

Pain and suffering become intensely intimate, private and personal when your thoughts, desires, feelings and beliefs can do nothing anymore to grant you the patience you need to endure your lot in life. Suddenly, you find yourself in bad company, and don't know what to do about it other than kill someone.

When you run out of patience, you don't have to ask our Father to forgive others for trying your patience. You don't even need to ask yourself to forgive yourself for blaming HIM for trying your patience. If you have the wisdom {head}, strength {desire}, courage {heart} and conviction {soul} to let HIM/HIM know you know that your pain and suffering is really in your best interest, you can ask HIM/HIM sincerely to help you understand how and why you have to suffer.

Patience is filled with hope, and hope trickles up from man's soul. Muslim terrorists don't believe in GOD or GOD. They only believe in G O D. They can't be patient with Jews and Christians. And if they come across a Muslim who tests their patience, they can't be patient with him, either.

Muslim terrorists can only suffer angrily for their G O D. They're like tattooed dogs that don't understand why they were pricked with hundreds of needles. They don't see the inner picture that suffering questioningly produces in man's soul.

When you believe in GOD or GOD or G O D's loving intentions for you alone, you become hopeful. And when you become hopeful, you become patient. When you become patient, you become effective. And when you're effective, people begin to watch you more carefully. They become curious to learn what you've got that they're missing.

It's easier to slow down and accept the speed of life when you know that you're in spiritual school, and that the lessons are coming to you at just the speed The Teacher wants you to learn them. The speed at which people, places and things become spiritually meaningful increases as you learn to take everything personally. {Common knowledge tells us not to take anything personally. Wisdom of the heart tells us just the opposite.}

Too many people have an unconscious relationship with their GOD/GOD/G O D. They use HIM/HIM/H I M, and therefore they abuse HIS/HIS/H I S intentions to teach them. They don't question HIM/HIM/H IM. They're Co-dependent with a capital "C," not self-dependent.

Hope is, of course, the spiritual reward first introduced to man in writing in the story of Noah. The coat of many colors that Jacob gave Joseph was a later, material manifestation of hope from a father to his son. The Ten Commandments were GOD's direct gift of hope to the Jewish people in Exodus, and later, through Jesus's Two Commandments, to Christians.

In today's world, mercy and patience are indistinguishable. What Jews are really praying to GOD for when we ask HIM for mercy is the patience to understand how HIS mysterious ways are working on our behalf in our life. There's no point in calling life a gift if you instantly turn your nose up at what you don't like that comes your way. Unwrap everything that comes to you because in everything you have to suffer, there's a personal

gift to you inside. In fact, all the emotions you feel, regardless of the story that created them, will benefit you.

People think that the Jews are *rich* because they're *smart*. Actually, their *smart* because they're *rich*. The richer you are within, the richer you have the potential to be throughout.

Put hope into everything you have to go through, good and bad. Don't worry about being disappointed by others or in outcomes you can't control. GOD is never punishing you. HE's always emotionally preparing you for a greater appreciation of HIS perspective on your inner world.

GOD *loves* everybody. But HE doesn't *like* everybody any more than you do. You may need to clean up your act to get HIM to like you more. And if that means you have to go through pain and suffering, do so with as questioning an attitude as you can. The more you strive to question why you have to go through what you go through, the more soulful you'll become.

Democrats who don't want to help Israel get back all The Land that's been stolen from the Jews don't like themselves. Republicans who want to legislate segregation of gays from straights don't like themselves. Muslims who vow to destroy Israel don't like themselves. Why should GOD/GOD/G O D like *them* if they don't like *themselves*?

The fact that it's unjust to act on opinions about people GOD/GOD/G O D created for "religious" reasons doesn't seem to faze them in the least. But their own conscience will eventually conspire against them. They'll come to despise themselves. GOD/GOD/G O D will see to it because HE/HE/H E wants what's best for them. The spiritual, operating system is set up to make that happen. You'll see them become argumentative and unlikable until they crack and fracture from within. You'll see them slowly discover over time that their enemies were right all along, and they were wrong.

The Nazis hated the Jews and the gays. And look at their grandchildren. The German people of today reject those aspects of their heritage because it wasn't righteous. They honor the best in their parents and grandparents by doing and feeling the opposite of what their predecessors did. You're going to see the same thing happen to the Muslims in the Middle East over time.

You can already see that Islam has been broken into two factions: by Sunnis and Shiites. This fracturing process will continue to break up their national interests. From there it will become visible in class interests. And then individuals will reach out to gays and Jews in friendship.

Even when you've been deeply disappointed by yourself, there's reason to hope. GOD's/GOD's/G O D's lessons are there to teach you to put your hopes in yourself, not HIM/HIM/H I M. The more you put yourself before HIM/HIM/H I M, the more you'll discover that HE/HE/H E stands behind you. Once you can hope for this, you'll be able to see external truth in a whole new light. This will give you the patience you need to suffer through anything life brings you.

25. RENA

THE WORD "RENA" means "JOYOUS MELODY" OR "SONG OF GOD." The concept of RENA invites us to imagine that GOD plays a mystical song for each of us that HE invites us to listen to, to find inspiration from, and then sing back to HIM.

The "MELODY" of GOD's song is love. Almost everyone dreams of knowing love through romantic interlude. But for some, love sings to them through the laughter of

children. Others hear the melody of love in various arts or sciences that ring out in a special way for them. For others, love is a chant that comes through charity or forms of giving, serving and sharing that mirror the bounty given us in nature.

The *melody* of RENA is love, but the *lyrics* of RENA is wisdom. For some, wisdom begins in a whisper that gets louder by accruing book knowledge. Others listen for the lyrics of wisdom in the various physical skills they learn to perform. Some hear the wisdom of RENA while teaching; they literally have to impart knowledge to receive wisdom.

Without the melody of RENA, we don't love *who* we are. Without the lyrics of RENA we don't know *what* we are. Life isn't just a learning experience. Life is a learning-to-love-learning experience. Life is GOD's song. And the louder and prouder you sing out, Louise, the more you're going to feel heard.

GOD figuratively sings a different variation of HIS song for each of the faiths and philosophies. But HIS tune to each of us is individualized and unique. We learn to harmonize with one another by practicing RENA six days a week with one another and performing for our Choral Director on the seventh. The Sabbath is the spiritual song some sing as a round in a chorus, and others sing solo. It's not important whether you sing the same song as others. What matters is that you sing in their key and in harmony.

The rhythm and rhyme of this mystical song is different for each of the faiths and philosophies of the world because we're learning to sing before GOD in a round. It takes an expert, spiritual musician to hear that these various songs are being melded into one chorus of voices. These musical experts should be religious, political and philosophic leaders. It should be their job to keep us all on the beat.

When you come to San Francisco and see how people from around the world have learned how to live together here in peace, you're hearing and observing RENA. When you see how gay people are as accepted as straights; Muslims as accepted as Jews; the disabled as accepted as the able-bodied – you're seeing something spiritual, not "religious." You're seeing the spiritual, operating system in practice.

The Summer of Love was a social phenomenon that occurred in 1967, when as many as 100,000 people, mostly young people sporting hippie fashions of dress and behavior, converged in San Francisco's neighborhood of Haight-Ashbury. But that summer didn't end that fall. That summer didn't end at all. Now is still a summer of love. It's a perception of human potential. The seeds of that potential were planted here in 1967. But the fruits of that endeavor have been transplanted throughout the world.

There's really no disharmony in the Abrahamic faiths. The song of the Muslims on Friday; Jews on Saturday; and Christians on Sunday - meld beautifully when sung each week, first with love on Sundays, then with a generosity of spirit on Friday, ending with a week of greater wisdom on the Jewish Sabbath.

It's just that so many of the congregants of Islam, Christianity and Judaism are tone deaf {including our leaders} that it's hard to imagine we'll ever be able to all hear ourselves singing as a choir of mellifluous voices each week unless we pay more individual attention to our spiritual, music lessons. If you don't listen for RENA, you certainly won't be able to hear it.

Every individual has Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in him. Every man is his own ode to joy. If Beethoven can live so long after he died, you can rise from the dead in your own lifetime. If you just keep counting; if you stick to your own beat by not singing too sharp out of anger or too flat out of fear, you'll sound better by the end of this week.

Don't ever let your voice go lower than the sound of skepticism. Don't sing cynically. Don't give up hope. Don't give up the golden rays of light that emanate out of your song. Life is never hopeless or pitch black.

GOD/GOD/G O D is our Conductor. We're all instruments of HIS will in the orchestra of humanity. We're all learning to play ourselves melodiously and in harmony with one another. RENA is the song that calls to the entire person: head, heart, penis {vagina/anus} and conscience.

Don't be adverse to those few wrong notes that resonate in your ear. You're not pitch perfect either. Make everything you do into a song, and then you'll inspire yourself to tango solo. When you can dance to your own rendition of RENA, you'll become a Nureyev and life will be your Fontaine {or Eric Bruhn}.

26. Sabbath

To believe the Earth was literally made in six days is simply idiotic. But to ignore the spiritual importance of the seven-day week given to the world through the Jews is equally asinine. Think of the Sabbath in terms of spiritual re-creation and repair. The *week* is a spiritual unit of time given to the world in The Creation Story of Torah. There isn't anyone left on Earth who doesn't measure time in terms of Torah's 7-day increments – even the Iranians who swear they're going to destroy Israel, but keep the 7-day week…

GOD created the world spiritually in seven days. HE also did so morally and metaphorically. But HE took HIS time creating the physical world with good reason. HE wanted us to look beyond appearances. HE wanted us not to get caught up with the illusion that this world is all there is. HE wanted us to learn to unwrap HIS/HIS/H I S gifts with anticipation and hope.

The week is the moral unit of time by which the conscience engages with other parts of the self to complete that week's lessons in self-love. Those who scorn Jews, Christians or Muslims six days of the week and then pray to GOD/GOD/G O D for HIS/HIS/H I S understanding on the seventh are spiritually lazy students of life. They should be using their time in class more productively. They should be doing their homework in the privacy of their home, and not make an ass of themselves in public.

GOD/GOD/G O D doesn't seem to like the lazy, although HE/HE/H E shows tremendous patience with them. HE/HE/H E distances HIMSELF/HIMSELF/H I M S E L F from them, letting them often do what they want, as a mother allows her child to play by himself in a sandbox. But that's doesn't mean we should emulate the lethargy of the lazy. Their indolence and love affair with autonomy leads to bad classroom demeanor and greater problems for the rest of us in classroom management. Life isn't a sandbox where we're exploring the delights of using buckets and shovels. It's up to the good students to cry out when our daily lessons with our Teacher are interrupted by class clowns.

Those who are here only to disrupt have to learn from everyone else in class that we won't tolerate their stupor. Life is hard enough without us having to drag sluggish students through every group lesson we're assigned. The bozos always start by upsetting the gays and Jews, but it always spreads from there to the rest of the class.

There's no reason for The Teacher to present you with a new curriculum next week if you haven't passed this week's test. The school of life is a one-room schoolhouse where we have nursery school students sitting next to people with Ph.D.'s. Some people find themselves having to take the same test week after week for a lifetime. They graduate with

a kindergarten diploma, postponing their education for the "afterlife" by banking on their expectation that heaven is void of tests.

The bozos imagine that heaven is the place you go when you're through with school. They think the place where class is always in session is hell. Bozos hate school. And their idea of heaven is where those who don't learn anything in life get to go to avoid doing so. I've got bad news for them. They're headed for hell.

When viewed as a moral school in which the lessons are given in weekly increments, the Sabbath is *test* day, not *rest* day. The Sabbath is a great time of the week to reflect on what you believe about yourself and how you manifest your beliefs through your thoughts, desires, feelings, beliefs and *deeds*. Don't take this day off. Take on this day.

There's a song in Hebrew whose lyrics are, "Change your place and change your luck." Of course, that's ridiculous. It's not your *place* that must change, but your inner *space*. Your interior world needs transforming before you're going to see your outer world change. War, global warming, world politics, prejudice, poverty and education are exterior mirrors of the mess we've made within. Don't expect anything to change quickly. Expect everything to transform slightly overnight.

You can't expect the Sabbath to have any spiritual meaning in your life unless you make a devotional effort the other six days. Sadly, the last person most people want to devote themselves to is themselves. They'd much rather devote themselves to their spouse, child, career, dog, car, hair, nails, food, vacation travel, movies, hobbies or, ironically, even GOD/GOD/G O D.

Don't make GOD/GOD/G O D into a hobby. Don't love HIM/HIM/H I M in your free time or full time. It's a waste of your time, and I doubt it'll do anything to impress HIM/HIM/H I M. Treat the Sabbath holy every moment of your life. Treat time as the most precious of all commodities. Time is liquid GOD/GOD/G O D. Drink deeply. Your thirst can be quenched with a good education.

27. Salvation

THE WORD "YISHUA," which translates as "SALVATION," literally means, "TO RESCUE." The name "JOSHUA" comes from the same Hebrew root. Moses made a name for himself by drawing the Israelites out of Egypt, but it was Joshua who *rescued* the Israelites from their wanderings in the wilderness. He was their savior.

The Hebrew PROPHETS after Moses and Joshua were more than conduits for further sociological changes. They personified the qualities inherent in how GOD made us that we have to identify with to internalize their messages. A PROPHET doesn't do your spiritual work for you. He demonstrates the positive attributes you need to develop, so you can do your spiritual WORK for yourself. A PROPHET won't get you into good standing with GOD. He demonstrates how you can get in good with yourself before HIM.

There's no way for a Jew to rely on a one-size PROPHET that fits us all because our history unfolded differently from the latter faiths. Moses may have been the greatest and the first of our PROPHETS, but he'd have learned a lot from the other PROPHETS of The Hebrew Testament. Like you, Moses was, after all, only human.

GOD saved one Israelite in Torah. GOD saved Joshua. GOD saved the savior so he could rescue the rest. The character of Joshua was a reminder to the generation of Israelites who were born free to have courage to go on during those trying times when they'd lost their

other leaders: Moses, Aaron and Miriam. We do the same with the saviors in our own society.

A savior links a people to their past, while moving them forward into their future. A savior is a rainbow personified. He's hope in the flesh.

Jews shouldn't be envied for the wealth that comes from our SCRIPTURE, any more than we should be envied for the monetary wealth many Jews have accrued. Those who take away a man's money because he's a Jew discredit themselves, not the Jews. The love of money is a description of spite. Spite, not money, is the root of all evil.

Anybody who wants another man's physical, intellectual, emotional, sensual or spiritual riches is spiteful. Therefore, he's poorer than he thinks. He's a beggar who should rub his hands together and get to work. There are many ways to overcome jealousy and envy, but there's only one way to love, and that's from the inside in before you try giving your love to others from the inside out. There are many people who'll die without money who are getting richer by the day. You'd be lucky to get that rich.

There are as many spiritual currencies in the world as there are forms of financial currency. Christianity and Islam are two such spiritual denominations that have worldwide worth. You don't have to exchange your belief for another to increase your spiritual wealth. You don't have to be a spiritual tycoon to balance your household budget. There are billions of ways to make a good living if you're wise, loving and charitable.

Salvation isn't a swap meet. You don't have to trade in your dignity for the dogmas of a belief system. You don't have to become a Jew to become wise. You don't have to believe in Jesus for His love to help save you. You don't have to recite T H E W O R D S of T H E P R O P H E T Mohammed for his prophesy to affect your generosity of spirit.

Look in your back pocket. It's not the money in your wallet that you sit comfortably on. It's your backside that gives you the cushion you need. It shouldn't embarrass you if, in the privacy of your bathroom, you pinched your cheek and told yourself before GOD/GOD/G O D that you appreciate the tush HE/HE/H E gave you. You'd never have been able to sit so pretty in this world if you weren't so well padded. If you can see and appreciate that much of yourself, just imagine how much more of you your Savior sees in you.

28. Scapegoat

There's no word for "victim" in Hebrew. Torah begins the topic of victimization in Genesis with the forbidden fruit that had no voice. The fruits of knowledge, eaten by Adam, but given to him by Eve, is the source of the sense of victimization personified in every Torah story thereafter. And it's been the explanation for the sense of victimization in all of humanity ever since Adam ate that piece of fruit picked by Eve after she was tempted by a talking serpent that was hanging out on that tree right next to those fruits.

When you see life as a school and yourself as a pupil, GOD can be easily understood as our Teacher, even though HE can't be blamed as the Perpetrator of the first crime, and ourselves as its victims.

Although I'm sure there must have been students in your school growing up who saw themselves as victims of a cruel system that was only trying to indoctrinate them with lies, I'll bet you weren't one of them. You were probably a nerd, geek, gay, dork or dweeb who liked learning. You liked your teachers. And for this, they called you names.

You probably didn't realize that the difference between you and them was that you identified with the fruit in The Creation Story, while your classmates identified as an Adam or Eve, and blamed GOD for all their problems. Well, that's fine, but where do we go from here?

Abel had to cry out to GOD for justice. Noah got himself into a drunken stupor and was then raped by his son. The masses were dumbfounded when their tower came crashing down and then could no longer talk to one another about had happened. Abraham and Sarah were forced to move to Egypt when a famine hit. Ishmael was banished from Abraham's house. Isaac was almost sacrificed by his father, and later was duped by both his sons. Joseph was imprisoned for not sleeping with his master's wife. And Moses, the author, personified the main character of Torah as the first perpetrator and victim all wrapped up as one. But the idea of victimization was brought to a whole new level of scrutiny in Leviticus with the concept of the "scapegoat."

It's easier to understand the role of the victim from the forbidden fruit's perspective. But once Torah personified the sense of victimization in the characters of Ishmael and Isaac, competition was born over which one of them suffered more at their father's hand. And that brings us to the problems of today.

For some strange reason, many people seem to think GOD/GOD/G O D loves victims more than victors. Many have been told that victims will become the benefactors of HIS/HIS/H I S mercy; that the *victims*, not the *meek*, will inherit the Earth. Many have been erroneously told that GOD/GOD/G O D prefers to dole out mercy more than justice. But when you can see yourself as a perpetrator and victim of your own devices, you may be able to admit that you'll never achieve self-love in this way.

When the movie of your life comes out on the Big Screen in the "afterlife," you might be very bored if you see that your plot is the same as everyone else's:

1. You loved.
2. You lost love.
3. You tried to find love elsewhere.
4. You didn't succeed.
5. You dealt with how you felt which only made matters worse.
6. You concluded you were a victim of circumstances.
7. The End.

If you look for love outside yourself instead of within, you'll compare your lot to that of others, and you'll feel you have a lot in common with others. But that won't be much of a consolation. That will only give you the reasons you need for revenge. And revenge will only recreate a cycle of victimization.

It's only when you compare your lot today to yesterday that you have any chance of circumventing the victim role, and even then, only if you put learning about yourself above all else. You're a student in a classroom, not a wild animal that was let loose in a schoolyard. You don't get to separate your actions into those in the classroom with the Teacher and those out on the yard without HIM/HIM/H I M. They're all teaching moments. The question is only whether you're ready to learn when times get tough, or whether you're going to blame wild animals for what people have done to you.

Victims and perpetrators are both GOD's/GOD's/G O D's students of life struggling to put HIS/HIS/H I S awesome moral lessons into words. And justice and mercy are simple two of the tools GOD/GOD/G O D uses on everyone so that we learn to use justice and mercy on ourselves. If you only use the eyes in your head to judge the world, you're forgetting about your inner eye. Your perspective is warped.

There's no point anticipating being a star in the "afterlife" if you were in the dark the while you were here. You'd do better to practice being the star actor of your own spiritual movie while you're alive. When you read the credits at the end of your film once you've left "here and now" for "There and Then" you'll see that a lot more went into making the movie of your life than you probably realized.

Make your costume real by dressing for life with an attitude no one can poke holes through. Give yourself lines that will convey the plot you passionately want to tell. Give yourself the starring role in your film. Don't make yourself a two-bit actor with a small part in a MeTube video *you* don't even want to watch. Don't make your life into a "B" movie. You won't like it later when you look at the credits and see how little you contributed to the telling of your own tale.

Fanatically "religious" zealots in all the Abrahamic religions have perpetrated the idea that victims are more beloved students of life than victors. In America, the "religious" right is especially fond of seeing themselves as victimized by the media, progressives and socialists. They see the left as against anyone who doesn't believe in Jesus. And they use racism, anti-Semitism and homophobia to profess HIS design.

But the extreme right sees the extreme left equating Zionism with Nazism. They see the progressives as professing a godless plan. They see the left as opposed to Israel on some sort of big tent principle that they know in their hearts will fuck over the Jews.

The political right and left are arm wrestling instead of getting to work to do something productive. The wars in the Middle East are "religious" wars of Muslims against Jews. But the wars in Washington are "religious" wars, too. They're "religious" Christian wars against spiritual Jews. And all the people at the bottom of the pyramid around the world are today's spiritual Jews. All the crusades in the past have come home to roost today. You're living proof that there's a crusade now being fought for you or against you. What you aren't yet proof of is that that crusade is also being fought for you or against you within you.

Christian and Muslim zealots claim to have the monopoly on suffering that the Jews previously attributed to themselves. No one can monopolize GOD. HE isn't "our" GOD just because HE chose us first. Assume GOD has no left side, and you won't fight over who sits on HIS right side.

All martyrs are telling a victim-to-victor story they think our Creator is watching in glee. And they think they're going to win Oscars from angels for their performance. They think the way to victory is through self-*sacrifice*, not self-*love*.

The way to improve the script in your own movie is to finish your sentences in the privacy of your mind. That's your green, garbage bin. That's where you put your food scraps nicely bundled up in recyclable bags. What you put in your blue bin is great. But if that bin gets full, you know you're going to throw away the overflow of that garbage in your black bin. And you know it's all garbage! But you try to do it right to be good.

The fragmented thoughts you create and don't finish in your mind are like twigs that won't burst into bloom because you prune them back all the time. Compare your thoughts

now to how you thought before. Don't shut yourself up with distractions that make you change the direction your mind is going in from one moment to the next. If you don't like what you say to yourself, don't proceed to the thought, "Look over there!"

Listen to yourself and if you aren't completing your sentences, finish them. You'll be surprised at all the information you're censoring about yourself from coming to consciousness. You'll be surprised at the messages you're leaving untold between the lines. You'll be surprised by all the garbage you stuff into any of your three bins just to be rid of it.

You're not a garbage can. If you don't fill yourself with garbage, you won't let others deposit their garbage in your cans, either. What goes around is going to have to come out sooner or later.

Heads explode. Hearts break. Souls get crushed. But don't tell me you're a victim of circumstances. Would you use that excuse on the Teacher?

Question what you're saying to yourself for moral reasoning. Watch the videos you upload onto MeTube and then question what you've watched. You're not an entertainment making machine. Everything you produce is intended to be watched with good reason.

Most people have no inner critic when they need one. And when he does show up, it's usually when they'd rather listen to someone inside who'd be there to comfort them. If you fantasize being spiteful a lot of the time, is it any wonder you're going to be spiteful to yourself when you call out for a friend?

So you weren't given the vehicle you wanted for this journey! So what? It's not your vehicle. It's a rental. You're going to have to give it back. And if it's not in reasonable condition, that's going to be added to your bill. Did you think it would be yours forever? Would you have chosen it for yourself if it was? You took what They gave you. Now make the best of it. And stop trying to tell other people how to drive.

If you're forbidden fruit unto yourself, and you're telling people like me not to *be*, you're simply jealous of the twigs on your Tree that won't blossom and fruit in you as they do in others. But spite isn't going to get you what you want. Only curiosity will.

There's nothing that makes gays or Jews unique, different, queer, odd or unsavory. There's nothing that makes a gay-Jew more forbidden a fruit than you. If you see something you like in the character of another, ask him how he got it. Nobody was born with an admirable character.

They scapegoat gays and Jews in the world today for the same reasons they always did. People are afraid of liking themselves. They're terrified of getting to know the enemy just because he's within. They're terrorists. Only most people are blowing themselves up in some way instead of others.

People who are afraid to learn about themselves by themselves have a conscience that's focused like a telescope, not a microscope. They peer light years into outer space, but they're afraid of looking down into inner space. And no one is more aware of that than women.

If you think you're a man {y + x}, you're not. You're still a boy. A man is x + y. A man puts the woman within him first. Everyone knows women handle external matters that involve people better than men. So put the 'x' in you before your 'y.' Show the world who comes first. Be a man {x + y}.

The ancient Israelites asked GOD in Leviticus 16 to cleanse them while they were wandering in the desert because they felt sinful and guilty. So GOD told them to take two goats and sacrifice the first on the altar in The Tabernacle and drive the second out of camp. The process by which these sacrifices were made was communal, but it had to have occurred in each individual to be made real, even if the Israelites were too primitive to be aware of what they were all doing from a psychological point of view.

The priest laid his hands on the goat, and the people formed a chain by holding hands with one another, with those on either side of the priest holding on to him. Their sins symbolically flowed through the body of each member of the tribe into the body of the priest. And the sins of everyone were then transferred through his hands into the beast. {This is also the origin of the meaning "a laying on of hands."}

The sins of the Israelites were thereby symbolically removed from the congregation and transferred into the goat. The goat was then ritually destroyed and burned, thereby sending the sins of the people up in smoke to heaven where GOD disposed of their sins for them {in the appropriate bin}.

This *sin offering* procedure was institutionalized thousands of years ago, but it was used by the Nazis to cleanse most of Europe of their sins by turning the Jews into their own private scapegoats. The German people scapegoated the Jews. And the Nazi philosophy was adopted by Islam and is secretly still held as such by most of them worldwide today. They're just too primitive to realize what they're doing.

All societies today still choose the weakest members of their community; transfer their most vile thoughts and feelings into them through the psychological process called projection, thereby cleansing themselves of their personal relationship within their self and the other "legitimate" members of their tribe. All the sins they don't want to have to think about or admit to are then housed in the scapegoat whom everyone in that tribe agrees must be abused in this way.

People are instructed to dump their sins into the prescribed "goat" with the unstated promise that they'll be cleansed of their sins if they do. They're given to believe that their conscience won't suffer if they're wrong, that the goat chosen is precisely the goat their GOD, GOD or G O D wants to see sacrificed.

The only problem is that we're running out of goats. And the goats we're sacrificing are getting meaner and less cooperative by the day. They don't seem to go willingly up to GOD's/GOD's/G O D's domain anymore. They're unwilling to participate in this 3,400 year-old primitive tradition.

Many of today's "religious" leaders are aware of man's desire to be cleansed of his sins, and so they're constantly on the prowl for new "goats" to sacrifice. Unwed mother; young men of color; Jehovah's Witnesses; gays; the poor and the disenfranchised are still domesticated enough to allow this process to continue. Anyone black accused of stealing is a fine candidate for scapegoating, but rich, white men in business, industry or political who do the same, are not.

The best scapegoats anywhere in the world are, of course, gay men, particularly those gay men who are young, feminine and whose feelings appear easily hurt. There isn't a society on Earth who doesn't use effeminate men as scapegoats. Just as every immigrant to America knows that blacks are the scapegoats here, everyone knows that effeminate men are scapegoated everywhere. And when black men get the opportunity to scapegoat, they often choose effeminate men.

And although the times are always changing, and you can never know what kind of goat people will look for tomorrow, you can be sure they'll always come back to scapegoating Jews when the other goats are hard to catch or start to kick obstinately in an effort to get away.

The Israel-lite today who's frightened by his own sins isn't a Jew in the Diaspora or an Israeli at home. He isn't gay or straight. He isn't black or white. He isn't rich or poor. He isn't even Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Taoist, American or foreign born. The Israel-lite today is you.

You've made yourself into your own scapegoat. You know you're polluted. You know you're sick. Even you think you've got to go. Everyone knows that it's people who are destroying the planet. Even you know it. And so you can't excuse yourself.

The sacrificial destruction of goats 3,400 years ago dealt with the Israelites sins. But GOD instructed them to prepare *two* goats for sacrifice. The first goat was imbued with the *sin*. The second goat got imbued with the *guilt* of the Israelites for having sinned in the first place.

The Israelites guilt was symbolically gathered in the same manner with a laying on of hands. Their guilt was then transferred into the second goat in the same manner as was done with sin. In this way, the guilt of the Israelites was figuratively removed, contained and collected for disposal.

But the second goat wasn't destroyed. It was driven out into the wilderness. Their guilt was ritualistically expelled from the camp for one and all to be reminded that their guilt could always return.

If you feel like you've been driven out of the classroom in the school of life, you've experienced this scapegoating principle. You know how it feels to be rejected and made to feel guilty for something everyone does.

But what if we stop doing what we're doing? What if we stop blaming the blacks for reminding us of the darkness within us? What if we stop blaming women for the feelings inside that get in the way of our thoughts? What if we stop blaming the gays for perverting a system set in place that gay people refuse to be a part of? And what if we stop blaming the Jews for reminding us of something we went through in infancy that's going to be with us for the rest of our life?

If gays and Jews were allowed to roam freely in the Middle East, it wouldn't change a thing. The Internet is already spreading our messages far and wide. Muslims can't escape the goat of guilt. It wanders back into their camp despite all they do to keep it out.

You, too, unconsciously pour your sins into compartmentalized parts of yourself, and kill off that part of you with denial. You then pour your guilt into an other part of yourself, and drive that part away. You do that with obsessions, compulsions and by telling yourself to, "Look over there!" You're not at all innocent of this ancient crime.

The Israelites didn't do well assuaging their guilty conscience then, and the institutionalization of scapegoating today hasn't been any more successful. We all try to drive our guilt out. And Madison Avenue is constantly looking for ways to sell us goats they promise will assuage us of more guilt. The process is unending. And, as long as it continues unconsciously, little will change.

Do you have to embrace yourself as though you were a goat, not a man? Do you have to redeem yourself by literally caring for farm animals as you would children? If you maintain the sacrificial mentality, sooner or later you'll become cruel to someone who

doesn't deserve your wrath. And GOD/GOD/G O D will eventually reveal your cruelty to yourself in myriad ways that will seem as though they're raining down from heaven like brimstones.

You're a human being even if you treat yourself and others like domesticated animals you can do with as you please. You aren't a satyr: half goat/half man. You're a man in the process of maturing. And so you have to insist that you not treat yourself like anything other than a man.

The Israelite who once believed he needed animal sacrifice to cleanse him of his sins and guilt still lies within us all waiting for enlightenment in how to stop doing so. We've become our own scapegoats. We've become self-sacrificing. And therein lies the reason why we're sometimes self-loathing.

You've become the goat du jour whether you're a member of the poor, working class, middle class or upper class. You're the perpetrator and the victim: the satyr. The ancient, biblical concept of scapegoating is alive and well in you. If you're good enough to be appalled by the primitive practice of scapegoating others, you should be good enough to be even more appalled by the scapegoating practices you're unconsciously or subconsciously perpetrating against yourself.

If we can stop scapegoating ourselves, we can insist that those who've taken our country and faiths hostage will have to stop scapegoating us, too. Black lives matter because all lives matter. And if lives don't matter more than that things, people will treat one another like things.

Spiritual psychology is our only hope of cleaning up the "religious" and political mess our forefathers left behind. Spiritual psychology is the only hope of cleaning up everyone's act. We've got to stop wasting good goats on such nonsense.

But the greater question we should want to ask ourselves is, "Why two goats?" Just as GOD could have put The Ten Commandments onto one tablet, He could have instructed the Israelites to dump their sins and guilt all into the same goat. Why destroy your sins, but drive your guilt away?

Sins are mistakes of the mind, thoughts that lead you to do things that are wrong. You can give up bad thoughts permanently. You can figuratively kill them, set them aflame and watch them go up in smoke. That's what we're trying to do with racism, misogyny, homophobia and anti-Semitism.

You can destroy all your bad ideas, burn them and send your prayers to GOD to bury them in HIS garbage dump where your sins will never be seen again. You can see the mistakes you've made and change your mind when the opportunity arises to do the same thing a second time. You don't have to make the same mistake twice.

Guilt comes from the heart, not the head. Guilt is a feeling. There are people who make mistakes who never feel guilty about anything they do. And there are people who feel guilty about virtually everything, even if they haven't done anything worth feeling all that bad about. It's all a matter of how sound a bridge {corpus callosum} you've built between your right and left brain.

Those like you who feel guilty for what you haven't yet learned about yourself are extremely good at heart. You had sin driven out of your head and guilt from your heart too early in life. so you might as well welcome them in to your conscience. You can do more with knowledge of sin and feelings of guilt if you have your conscience in charge of them.

You can embrace the three aspects of guilt {embarrassment of your body; shame of your character; and humiliation of your beliefs before The Lord} without beating yourself up for being the way you are now if you're doing everything you can to make today better than yesterday so that tomorrow will be better than today.

You can feel bad about yourself and wrestle within, without walking away with a limp, as did Jacob when he wrestled with that stranger. You should have enough faith in yourself by now to know that you'll be rewarded for the sins you thought of that you didn't commit and the guilt you applied to yourself instead of others.

The mess Cain found himself in was the result of a sin. But the blood that called out from the ground for justice from Abel came from guilt in copying his brother's grateful intentions without sharing the kudos Abel got from GOD with Cain. Sin doesn't produce guilt. That's why two goats were needed. Whether or not your crime is serious or seemingly inconsequential, there are two issues you're going to have to deal with.

If you feel horrible about the way the world is being consumed by the greedy and sinful, know that your guilt will be rewarded if you learn to express it in your own authentic way before GOD/GOD/G O D. HE/HE/H E is the Guide that guides and empowers your conscience. HE'll/HE'll/H E'll give you the mission HE/HE/H E has intended for you to help you heal your tiny piece of HIS/HIS/H I S world. HE'll/HE'll/H E'll give you a piece of HIS/HIS/H I S promise to work on. HE'll/HE'll/H E'll reserve a place for you in HIS/HIS/H I S Promised Land that's mirrored in the vibrancy and success of Israel today here on Earth. This was HIS Covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But this is the precious secret plan HE's/HE's/H E's willing to share with you through the blessings of HIS/HIS/H I S love and charitable intentions.

You don't have to bargain with GOD over your innocence or inheritance because the truth is that you'll feel guilty again and again. Admit that your guilt comes and goes even if each story in Torah is given only once.

You're a spiritual thief like the rest of us. You stole a lot of knowledge from yourself without giving anything back motivated by guilt. Admit it. You're the forbidden fruit you picked; you never asked permission to know what you know. You just grabbed and ate it, or you were the victim in the story, in which case someone grabbed and ate you.

If you're still having to fight your way into your Promised Land, know that you're not the first to have to do so. Nobody good likes to fight. Whenever possible, love your way into your Promised Land like Joshua #2. Cross your Jordan again and again with love in your heart until you can do so with a generous attitude, and not with loathing.

The art of scapegoating was taken to the extreme in the last century with what was done to the Jews for the way we pray and to the gays for the way we make love. The sin of impurity and the guilt of moral depravity were imbued in us, and we were killed or driven out of continents, nations, communities, families and jobs because of the efforts of "religious" institutions who didn't know how to take their Scripture personally.

Let's not repeat the mistakes of the past. Let's feel bad, and vow never to make the mistakes our forefathers made. A little more embarrassment, shame and humiliation will teach us all how to achieve a little more modesty, humility and grace.

Our "religious" leaders ought to reconcile themselves to modern ways of interpreting Torah to review interpretations of their own faiths. Homophobia is as great a stain on all of mankind as anti-Semitism. Hating any group of people is only going to indicate how deeply you to hate yourself.

29. SHEMA

"SHEMA!" is the imperative form of the verb "LISHMOA" which means "TO LISTEN." The concept of listening is fundamental to learning about GOD's presence. Listening to yourself with your *conscience* rather than your head or heart is the humbling experience that cleanses you of your character defects slowly but surely. Listening allows you to hear the guilt that conceals your love.

Listening with patience is a moral, cleansing process. It isn't intended to disinfect you. It shouldn't purify or sterilize you. Listening is a soap-and-water relationship with yourself in which you come clean naturally and easily. It's not intrusive or harsh. If you find yourself foaming at the mouth at how others are living their lives, you're scrubbing yourself too hard. You're abrasive.

Many people would like to steam clean themselves in an effort to root out all their dirt. They'd go so far as boiling themselves in anger if they thought it would get out the really tough stains. It's easy for them to assume they're not doing enough to express their principles, but they're going about it the wrong way. It's hard for them to see that they're ruining the fabric of society in an effort to come clean.

Laughing at your enemies' misfortune is much better than spitting on him. Knowing that this world is in GOD's/GOD's/G O D's hands is something that comes with laughter, not loathing. Remember, there are millions of names for The Lord, but there's only One of HIM/HIM/H I M. No one holds a monopoly on GOD/GOD/G O D.

Using religion on the soul like harsh detergent isn't good for anyone's weave. The purpose of religion is to make a man more comfortable with himself in his own skin. Then he can become a messenger of peace to others through his relationship with himself. This creates the inner parent/adult child relationship in which a man becomes a parent unto himself. This brotherly relationship comes out of the relationship of Aaron to Moses that began to form the conscience as described figuratively in Genesis when Abraham listened to GOD by going to Canaan, and taking along his nephew, Lot. When the journey of your life is to a Promised Land, you'll do what you can to influence the next generation with your intention.

GOD isn't invisible, even though we can't see HIM with our eyes. GOD isn't inaudible, even though we can't hear HIM with our ears. A truly spiritual man feels GOD's hand in everything he does, although he can't literally touch HIM as he could an idol made of shiny metal.

There's no literal "proof" for the existence of GOD that'll satisfy the atheist or agnostic because GOD can only be known through personal revelation, not through intellectual evaluation. The metaphor 'ears as eyes' opens the head and heart to the presence of GOD in your conscience. If you don't want to listen to yourself deeply, join the billions who prefer to just talk out loud to be heard.

You can't read Torah and hear the words as they were first written by Moses. The written word can't be fixed in time. Words, like black shadows, lengthen as the sun sinks deeper in the sky. Their rhythm and cadence darken. The Hebrew Testament still mirrors man thousands of years after it was written, but the shadow of man's image has changed shape as the days have grown shorter.

"SHEMA!" Listen! You're in a struggle to know yourself with GOD as a Witness. Listen to yourself and hear that you're being called to know that you're beloved. Be honest with yourself, and you'll find yourself standing before HIM authentically, whether or not your

heart is pure or your soul, unstained. GOD can help guide you toward conceiving yourself and raising yourself to adulthood. HE can guide every man to become pregnant with his own inner child. HE can guide you back to your Egypt where your "big brother" awaits you with open arms.

30. Sin

The Hebrew WORD for "sin" is "CHET" which means, "TO MISS THE MARK." Sin is likened to a game of darts or bow and arrow. We aim for righteousness, but we often miss the mark. The greater the sin, the more we've missed the bull's-eye of love, and need to correct our aim.

Life takes practice. It's a sport, not a game. Nobody is born a great marksman of righteousness. We're all cherubs of love, cupids learning to take aim with good cause.

Embarrassment, shame and humiliation are arrows of varying lengths. Each pierces a little more deeply. The arrow of embarrassment pierces the skin, leaving you scarred with modesty that's easy for all of us to see. The arrow of shame pierces your heart, wounding you with humility that others can perceive, but not literally see. And the arrow of humiliation pierces your soul, cutting into you at the core of your being with a need for loyalty to yourself. Humiliation goes right to bone.

Birth is the first of a lifetime of wounds that will someday end. But this human body you're in is made to help teach you to love wisely and generously. Do your best to make the most you can of your body. It's the only vehicle you've been given. It has to last a lifetime.

Guilt makes a spiritual marksman out of everyone. No one leaves this world unscarred, unwounded or untouched. It hurts to feel, but spiritual transformation can be achieved. Pain and suffering can be transcended as you increase your self-knowledge. Personalizing the meaning of your pain and suffering can lead you to your mission and make your life much more worthwhile.

Learn about the reason for your sins. Learn about the cause of your guilt. They usually amount to jealousy of another man's container or envy of his contents. The more you want the power he has, the more you're going to struggle with morality. The more you accept the power GOD/GOD/G O D wants you to have, the more you're going to discover peace of mind and tranquility.

31. Soul

There's no word for "soul" in Hebrew, perhaps because there's no separation made in Judaism between the body/mind/heart/desires/conscience. Concepts like the "head" and "heart" are artificial distinctions we draw for the purpose of describing various tasks involved in creating and developing our sense of moral purpose.

We've associated these distinction with our GOD/GOD/G O D and our SCRIPTURE/SCRIPTURE/ S C R I P T U R E. But becoming an expert on one part of you won't make you an expert on the rest. If you want to disregard my advice and LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF/LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF – you're going to have to love his GOD/GOD. And if you're Muslim, you're going to have to love your companion as yourself and learn to live in peace with your neighbor with G O D as your Witness.

The body is like a factory warehouse. Inside there are assembly lines that produce intellectual, emotional, sensual and spiritual products. The products we're producing in all four workshops of our spiritual, manufacturing plant is morality. What you bring to market in the outer world is always the best you can make in the moment.

Man is a meaning-making machine that can produce anything he wishes. He creates meaning out of his existence through everything and anything he thinks about; thoughts, desires, feels and believes. He's a spiritual factory whose bi-products are ethical principles he brings to the shelves of everyday interactions that he sells in the form of goods and services that concretize his WORD/WORD/W O R D. But moral meaning for *himself* is the real product he's being rewarded with, and what gives him the feeling of a well-lived life.

People who are disreputable don't realize the price they're going to have to pay for their immoral choices. These unsavory outcomes are far more sophisticated than simplistic "religious" notions of "heaven" and "hell." They're more like the outcomes we see when building a dwelling without the materials necessary for the installation of indoor plumbing and electricity. The morally poor may be born with the feeling of privilege, but, over time, they see their inner dwelling reduced in modernity before their eyes. It's as though their inner fire goes out, their outhouse backs up or their flimsy foundation slips off its pilings.

These figurative descriptions of inner poverty are apparent in the deterioration of relationships worldwide, the pollution of natural systems and the climate of the planet. People may be rich in electronic devices that make their life easier, but some young people have already been distracted by virtual reality, finding it more attractive than inner reality. They're lost in a virtual masquerade.

The pursuit of *happiness* should really be thought of as the pursuit of *morality*. Nothing should make you feel better than telling others to consider doing what you've done that worked out well for you. But you have to demonstrate that you can walk like you talk, and to do so, you have to be able to tell them how you walk and why your talk is worth listening to. If you can't do all of the above, don't tell anyone to do as you do. Just do as you do, and shut up about it.

Nobody wants to hear about your wisdom, love and generosity of spirit if you can't tell them how these spiritual principles have affected you personally. Stop thumping your Scripture for others to see what you know about good and evil, and start reading it for personal insight. If you can't tell us how you make your conscience your guide, why bother to tell us how to emulate you?

What we call the "soul" is the seat of judgment where we learn to weigh our thoughts, feelings and actions more and more discriminately. A happy soul is a sensitive scale. Keep your grubby little thumbs off other people's scales. Let them weigh themselves morally without your interference. And yet, watch carefully how they calculate. Never assume their measurements are accurate. Always ask to see the evidence their weighing on both sides of their scale. {And if they claim *you're* morally unbalanced because of your skin tone, sexual preference, gender, religion or financial worth, ask to see the weights they're using to make that determination.}

Just as the mind doesn't literally reside in your head, feelings don't literally reside in your heart; and your soul isn't literally located in your breastplate. Your body is a huge moral factory taking up space in time. You undergo spiritual transformations of biblical proportions every moment of the day and night, whether or not you know it.

There's absolutely no proof that any of the biblical characters in Genesis ever existed. There's also no proof of the Exodus ever having taken place. Torah is the bedrock of all three world religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – because its truth lies in the soul of man, an inner space you can't even prove exists. It's all a matter of faith. Without faith you're just an animal experiencing nature. There is no moral reason for anything you do.

The ancient Hebraic understanding of the soul is that there's no part of the self that's not the soul. Therefore "soul searching" is really a waste of time. There's nothing anywhere inside you to search for.

You can't search for something you once had, lost, sold or misplaced. A soul isn't a possession. Like the name of GOD, "Y.H.V.H.," the soul is more like a verb than a noun. You evolve your awareness of your soul through the process of awakening. It's not something you have in the sense of possessing.

You can't *look* for something you *are*. You have to experience it as it happens. Man does a better job of discovering he's a soulful human being through *being*, not *doing*. No one has a soul; everyone is "souling."

32. Star Of David

The Star of David is a six-sided star. It's two intersecting triangles, one facing up and the other facing down. It's is a hexagon with a triangle attached to each side. And the Star of David is a two dimensional expression of two pyramids intersecting. The Star of David is whatever it looks like to you.

The Star of David is a Jewish symbol that may not have developed as a religious symbol until the Middle Ages, more than 2,000 years after the Israelites left Egypt, although some think the Star of David may have been painted onto the shields of Jewish warriors from the House of David 2,500 years ago to let other warriors know whose side they were fighting on during hand-to-hand combat. There is, as yet, no conclusive evidence for that.

I like to think of the Star of David as a two-dimensional representation of two pyramids. The early Egyptians got their Hebrew slaves to chisel real pyramids in stone to house the pharaohs for "eternity." Perhaps the Israelites so admired the ancient Egyptian concept of building houses for their gods that pointed to the sky that the Israelites created the metaphor of housing GOD within us. But the Jewish attributes of GOD, unlike the ancient Egyptian pagan attributes, houses GOD in triangular containers that go in two directions; up as well as down.

It's more reassuring to house a god in stone than to remember that GOD houses us. It's more reassuring to think of a human god facing you with two eyes than to think of our Creator within and around us, facing us with eyes staring at us at all times from every direction. Through our modern perspective, it's easy to see how primitive concepts held by our spiritual ancestors in Egypt were.

The Star of David points in six directions (going clockwise): North, Northeast, Southeast, South, and Southwest and Northwest. These are the compass points without East and West demarked. These points symbolize the physical directions GOD enters our life. East and West signify the two directions we're spiritually doing our WORK/WORK/W O R K in the outer world.

The Star of David counters the early Egyptian concept of the pyramid that housed their gods forever because the Star of David implies that the attributes of GOD point to HIM being everywhere, not just above our head. GOD is not only eternal; HE's universal. HIS power

extends beyond time and place. HIS attributes are greater than pagans could have ever envisioned.

The triangle pointing up points to the heavens. The triangle pointing down points to the Earth. The triangle pointing up refers to your father. The triangle pointing down refers to your mother. The Star of David is therefore the symbolic representation of the universal child. In that sense every one of us is a sign of GOD's universal plan rolled into one. Every one of us is a Star of David literally created by our parents, but spiritually created by GOD.

Jews today figuratively still celebrate and assert our freedom from slavery in ancient Egypt by wearing the Star of David. We see ourselves housed symbolically in two pyramids in the third dimension, one pointing up to GOD in the sky and the other pointing down to HIM here on Mother Earth. We're not a two-dimensional people. We unify heaven and Earth by proclaiming that GOD's presence, like the points on the Star of David, point out from within in a very special way.

33. Stiff Necked

THE WORDS "KSHE OREF" mean "STIFF-NECKED." GOD used this expression to complain about the Israelites to Moses when HE saw them fashioning the Golden Calf. [Exodus 32] GOD indicated through that part of the human body that the Israelites were stubborn; that they couldn't turn their heads to see and hear HIM coming to them from a new direction. Today, we know that after 400 years of bondage, injustice made the Israelites willful, distrusting, suspicious and uncooperative. They weren't that way without reason. The harshness of life forced them to become stiff-necked.

You can see this in the lower classes. They're been treated like slaves, and so they've developed a stiff neck. When you harness people and force them to pull your plow any direction you please, is it any wonder that they become stiff necked?

GOD describes the Israelites using body language to make us aware of how important body language is. Body language is the mother tongue of all speech. It's the universal language we all share. *Birth* is the first trauma of life that we all express in our mother tongue, the trauma we're still searching for ways to communicate to one another today. Birth is the first inspiration for art through dance.

But the willful characteristic of stubbornness is universal, not Jewish. The desire not to leave the womb is human, not Abrahamic. Everyone has to be turned upside down and then expelled into this world. Who would leave where they were to come to a place like this unless they had to?

You can't tell anyone who feels unjustly treated what to do or say, even if you think you know what's in his best interest. You can only earn his trust by demonstrating that you know what he's been through. In this sense, birth is the universal beginning of empathy.

Victims have learned to unite with other victims in an effort to get their goals of justice met. Equating birth with later traumas of life makes it possible for us to build friendships, allies and business partners. Birth is the first separation in life that leads to unification later.

Demonizing people, whether individually or as groups, only turns victims into perpetrators and perpetrators into feeling like victims. Everyone has good reason for defending himself against what he perceives to be injustice. Everyone can rationalize his reasons for being recalcitrant. Everyone is stiff-necked. Everyone is an Israel-*lite* in the spiritual and psychological sense of the word.

Every one of us needs to crane his neck to see a little further. The stiff-necked only turn their head in opposition because they feel they have to. Those who crane do so out of curiosity find the view far more compelling and attractive. And the reward for craning your neck is the ability to look and *listen* in ways that are superior to others who only *see* and *hear*.

GOD wished for a nation of PROPHETS and priests who'd be able to lead *themselves*. He didn't show much patience with Israelites like Korach who followed GOD complaining all the while about where they were going and whether to turn their back on GOD and go back where they came from.

Moses was instructed by his father-in-law {Jethro} to develop a democratic, representative system of leaders from each of The Twelve Tribes of Israel who'd speak for their constituents. Wanting to encourage diversity is the greatest quality of a good leader, for no man should want to lead alone or lead only those who look like and listen to him. Leading destroys the dignity of the follower unless the follower feels he's being groomed to lead as well.

The author of Torah makes it clear that his main character was frail and human, not a deity in any sense. Moses, like the Israelites, also suffered from a stiff neck that didn't give him the ability to look in every direction. He was a stubborn leader, not very different from his followers or very different from some leaders today.

To read the story of the Passover year after year and never identify personally with the main character is the result of hubris. Why bother to praise a story that has no personal relevance to you? If you're Jewish and you recall the story of the Exodus to accentuate your feelings of victimization, you've missed the point of the Passover. GOD's goal isn't to create victims. He wants us to look at the past so as *not* to repeat it. The love of life HE gives us is intended to inspire us to bring justice into the world, not to detest neighbors and strangers.

Stubbornness is characteristic of a head and heart that are out of touch with their conscience. It's particularly common in those who are looking the most intently "up" to GOD, for they see HIM in one place and coming from one direction only. Diverse perspectives within themselves aren't their strong suit.

But you can't fully fault the PROPHET Moses for his impatience and frustration with the task he was given. GOD may have told Moses that the Israelites were stiff-necked, but it's likely HE confided in him for a reason. Moses is a model for everyone's solution, not just part of the problem.

Little by little, we should see that we're like Moses. GOD confides in us because we're stiff-necked, too. Little by little, we learn to hold our spiritual purpose with wisdom, love and generosity in order to ask better questions of our Creator. Little by little we learn to take HIS messages personally because we can see them coming from every direction.

Sheep don't make good shepherds. Those with the herd mentality are easily corralled and controlled. This is the tragic consequence of "religious" traditions that don't ask tough questions about GOD's/GOD's/G O D's designs. Surely HE/HE/H E created gays in every society for diversity in sensuality and led the Jews to every land to promote diversity of thought. If you can't live with either in your society, you're all suffering from a stiff neck.

It's no easier to be a Moses unto yourself than it must be to allow a Jesus into your heart or to model your life on the life of a P R O P H E T Mohammed. Everyone is an incredible pain-in-the-neck to himself from time to time and a pain-in-the-ass to others.

You're stubbornness isn't only frustrating to GOD/GOD/G O D; it should be frustrating to you.

34. Sun

The sun appears to revolve around the Earth. But we were taught in school that the Earth revolves around the sun despite appearances. We had to wrap our head around that idea then. But nobody would dare contradict science in that respect anymore.

And yet, in our inner world, we're so full of ourselves that we feel that our whole inner world revolves around ourselves… And we're right to feel that way. When we're told to feel sympathy or empathy for others, we figuratively have to get out of our own way to do so. We have to shadow ourselves in order to put the other person in the spotlight.

We don't realize that 70% of the universe is dark matter, and 70% of our inner universe is made up of these inner forces that affect the world around us. Just as light is affected by dark matter, the world is affected by spiritual forces we can only perceive from within. Your body is visible matter and energy. But the vast majority of what constitutes "you" is invisible to the naked eye.

The sun is at the center of the *solar* system, but we're at the center of a *social* system. Giving up that spot where everything revolves around us can be emotionally hard to do.

Granted, there are people who feel like they're no more than an asteroid tumbling around someone who they've allowed to hold the star in their life, the one who holds the "real" place of importance. People with that low a sense of self-esteem have to figuratively make their way through inner space, like a comet, because they're star-struck. At times, they feel millions of miles away from themselves. Other times, they have to be ignited by the illumination, heat and the burn of their own flame. Their arrogance is rare, but when it burns it burns them up. They fall to earth as mere chunks of rock.

The universe GOD created is a clue to the struggles in every human being. Some have to deal with fear of light and night, dark and bright. Others have to worry about reflections of their own light on their inner moon that casts an eerie glow that's haunting and bizarre.

Finding your way around you inner world is a task of universal proportions because there are so many inner aspects of yourself that aren't truly the way they appear. But GOD gave us the universe as a clue to the vastness of inner space. And there are unknown galaxies within you to explore. This is the space you can go to where no one has gone before. This is what should call you to Torah, The Gospels and Quran.

35. Tabernacle

The Tabernacle was the portable place of worship GOD told the Israelites to build to transport HIM through the wilderness. The Tabernacle was a tent accessible only to Moses, his brother, Aaron, and Aaron's two sons, Nadav and Avihu. It was constructed once a month to present the burnt offering and to receive GOD, who came down to them in the form of a cloud.

After the Israelites crossed the Jordan River under the leadership of Joshua, they conquered Canaan and built The First Temple in Jerusalem, which replaced The Tabernacle as GOD's abode. The Temple acted as GOD's permanent residence here on Earth. It was HIS house and the mail slot where prayers sent in envelopes of ritual, stamped with the blood and guts of animals, were delivered to HIM.

THE WORD for "Tabernacle" is "ARON," which also means "CLOSET." Very special Jews have been figuratively going in and coming out of The Tabernacle since it was first constructed. Through Jesus, Christianity came out of the permanent Tabernacle in Jerusalem {The Second Temple}. Gay people have been coming out of the Tabernacle/closet in great numbers for the last 50 years, bringing a new sense of hope and optimism to the world. When men prefer to have sex with other men rather than kill them, the fundamentals of war begin to break down.

Animal sacrifice was interrupted for about 150 years when the Babylonians destroyed The First Temple, enslaved the early Israelis, and brought them to present-day Iraq. But, when the Persians conquered the Babylonians and permitted these early Israelis to return to Israel, they built The Second Temple and resumed animal sacrifice for a total of about 1,000 years.

Both The First and Second Temple were intended to function as a fixed Tabernacle that put Jerusalem at the spiritual center of the Earth. It placed GOD's eminence within it, radiating out from it in all directions as HE watched over HIS people from The Land HE'd promised their forefathers.

But The Second Temple was more like a P.O. box than the permanent residence of GOD. After the realization that their "Jewish" GOD had gone with them to Iraq during the Babylonian Exile, some of them decided to stay in Iraq rather than return to Israel. The Second Temple served more as a sign of their awareness that GOD was everywhere even if HE figuratively only picked up HIS mail at HIS P.O. box in Jerusalem.

The construction of the Al-Aqsa Mosque at The Temple Mount by the Muslims in 700 C.E. and the later Crusades between the Christians and them for domination of Jerusalem, and by extension, all of Israel, were these faiths' futile attempt to prove that GOD/G O D held HIS/H I S primary residence there. The modernization of man's thinking turned Israel more into a real estate issue by the 20th Century and less of a question of GOD's/GOD's/G O D's one and only holy address here on Earth.

Jerusalem still figuratively serves the Abrahamic faiths as the main post office delivery site for all prayers to HIM, although with all the other spiritual, delivery services out there nowadays, it's obvious HE/HE/H E has a lot more correspondence to deal with today than HE/HE did at the beginning of the Common Era, as well as a lot more postal workers today delivering HIS/HIS/H I S mail. P.O. boxes in Rome, Mecca, Istanbul, Salt Lake City and elsewhere have made the universality of HIS/HIS/H I S presence common knowledge. Why, today you can even send Instagram messages to HIM/HIM/H I M and receive your replies at home!

During The Second Temple era {530 B.C.E to 70 C.E.} many Jewish entrepreneurs were forced to leave Israel for trading posts further and further from home around the Mediterranean and Middle East. These Jewish merchants settled as far from Jerusalem as Morocco to the West and India to the East, where the time and cost of making the mandatory yearly pilgrimage to Jerusalem became insurmountable. This compromised Jewish businessmen who had to decide either to perform their religious responsibilities to GOD or meet their financial duties to their families.

As early as 200 years before the Common Era, rabbis were very seriously debating whether or not to build Temples elsewhere for those enclaves of Jews who resided in foreign countries too far from Jerusalem to make the trek back each year.

Jesus was one such contentious rabbi, possibly affiliated with a Jewish religious movement called the "ESSENES," a sect in favor of localizing animal sacrifice across the known world to ease the spiritual burdens of Jewish merchants abroad who felt spiritually compromised by the religious establishment who required yearly sacrifices at home.

His ire with the moneychangers who served those merchants at The Temple who came from hundreds and even thousands of miles away was probably part of this larger debate. He may have seen those well-healed Jews making money off business visitors to Jerusalem as financially unwilling to build more Temples because it would have been "bad for business." He preached more in the spirit of the need for GOD to have P.O. boxes conveniently located everywhere. His emphasis on the need for wealth from within and a universal, spiritual, postal system of prayerful encounter with His Father set Him apart from most Jews at that time.

The stereotype of the money-hungry Jew may have begun in earnest by disenfranchised Jews then because of the insistence by the Jerusalem Jews to keep complete control over The Temple. Jews who were opposed to one, and only one, Temple may have used greed as a weapon against their own leaders to shame the Jewish establishment into giving them what they wanted: Temples sacrificing animals everywhere. Liberal Jews probably accused the conservative Jews of putting profits before people, while the establishment remained adamant about maintaining the status quo.

In the end, GOD took the question out of the hands of both parties. With the destruction of The Temple by the Romans in 70 C.E., Jewish animal sacrifice ended forever. But as the outcome of that chapter of HIS story, we now have political and social tension in every society in the world, each holding a deep spiritual and psychological commitment to doing things *their* way.

At the extreme end of the right side of the political spectrum, there's a figurative triangle pointing up to GOD. The conservatives are working together to maintain that triangle that points up to HIM/HIM/H I M in heaven. The political right is committed to religion, self-sacrifice and putting GOD/GOD/G O D first and foremost in their lives.

At the left end of the political spectrum there's a political federation that resembles a triangle pointing down to the earth, with an unstated, but implied, acknowledgement of GOD/GOD/G O D, as well. But, those on the left are committed to spirituality and self-love. They want to reward the masses with incentives in the form of financial opportunity. They advocate for putting people before GOD/GOD/G O D.

Political moderates who endeavor to combine these two political triangles should be commended for being the most sane (as well as accused of being the most insane for even trying…). The political tension between the left and right figuratively produces variation in the shapes and sizes of these half Stars of David, as people pull and twist them to get their way.

It's impossible for anyone to graduate the school of life without twisting your Star of David into unusually shapes. Upon graduation, we all hope to shake hands with our Teacher and then rest in peace. But the diploma you'll receive may be a little disappointing when you move on to your next assignment if you didn't make it into the Ph.D. program here on Earth. The only Ph.D. offered on this planet is in "me"!

Jesus leaned toward the side of the Jewish progressives in His time, and it certainly seems that history has shown that society is continually moving in the direction of liberalism, the triangular theory pointing down to the earth. Creating opportunities for the

poor and disenfranchised to climb the ladder to material success is paramount to them before discovering Jacob's marvelous ladder to heaven upon which angels ascended and descended. For that, conservatives must take over their education.

When the Roman pagans threw the Jews out of Israel, the rabbis of The Diaspora and early Christian scholars had no choice but to reinvent worship without throwing the babies {Moses and Jesus} out with the bathwater. And so they created a subtle transformation of Temple practice into the metaphor, 'Tabernacle/Temple within as GOD's dwelling place.' They came to see GOD/GOD as having chosen to give up HIS/HIS one and only abode on Earth to become a universal GOD/GOD whose presence would be felt everywhere through everyone from within.

GOD/GOD no longer needed a postal address in Jerusalem to receive the prayers of the faithful. The metaphor implied a sort of spiritual, email system that didn't require using animals as stamps. Prayer made it possible to simply stamp your words with the Hebrew WORD, "AMEN," {pronounced: ahmen, aymen, ameen, or amin by Muslims}, and your prayer would go from sender to Recipient instantly.

The concept of communicating with GOD/GOD/G O D is so commonplace today that we really don't realize how revolutionary it was then, or how slowly it spread throughout the world. In fact, the perception of the universality of GOD/GOD/G O D occurred in such slow stages that we have to look at the mindset of the men at that time, like Jesus, to see how He and later holy men accomplished it in the first place.

The first stage of this spiritual transformation was a combining of the earlier metaphor 'Tabernacle as GOD's dwelling place' with Christ's symbolic view of man as a container being filled with His virtues. By fusing metaphor and symbolism, every early Jewish and Christian male became a spiritual writer and mailman who delivered his own letters directly to GOD/GOD. {Granted, Christianity didn't fully come on board this linguistic, spiritual system until the Protestant Reformation beginning in the 16th Century. And it's taken another 500 years for Catholicism to admit they don't hold the only spiritual relay, routing, main frame that forwards prayers to GOD/GOD today.}

To the degree that a man could hold GOD/GOD in his heart and soul, he could carry HIS/HIS replies from one place to another, thus spreading HIS/HIS WORD/WORD worldwide. The more zealous and ardent the believer, the longer the message he could deliver from heaven to Earth.

This, of course, didn't take into consideration what was happening between Jews and Muslims with GOD/G O D in the Middle East.

When the Jews lost the last battle with the Romans at Masada, the Romans literally emptied Israel of Jews. Forced into The Diaspora, every Jewish/early Christian male became a mailman delivering GOD's/GOD's replies. They became carriers of HIS/HIS hope and promise.

In Christianity, this spiritual delivery system was turned into a fable in which Santa Claus brings material gifts at Christmas from the top of the world down to little boys and girls who are good. But the concept was already there with regard to prayer.

The Jews were carrying GOD's message of wisdom throughout the Western world while HIS messengers of love in Christianity were doing the same with the packages HE was giving them with promises of life "after" this one.

This virtual, spiritual reality has produced the Judeo-Christian values we so cherish in America today. Although, individually, we all consider ourselves wise and loving, we can

also perceive the spiritual process that's bringing us greater wisdom and love than our forefathers had when they were using the same spiritual process to the best of their ability.

In the 8th Century, GOD/GOD created Islam from the ancient branch of the spiritual Tree that grew out of the story of Ishmael. Abraham conceived Ishmael with Hagar, thus bringing the graft of Islam onto the Abrahamic tree. The revelations of T H E P R O P H E T Mohammed were grafted onto our Judeo-Christian trunk giving us fruit different from our own, but which share the same roots.

What differentiated the Jewish delivery system from the other two was, in part, that it was done peacefully, while the other two delivery systems {Christianity and Islam} were extremely violent to Jews and non-believers alike. The ancient Jews had gotten their violent tendencies out of their system with animal sacrifice and a civil war with the Assyrians in which they lost ten of their Twelve Tribes. The Christians and Muslims took out their zealousness for GOD/G O D on one another (and us).

The idea that GOD's/GOD's/G O D's messages need to be delivered peacefully to be spiritually meaningful is still a novel idea today. The murder of doctors who perform abortions by Christian zealots in this country; persecution of gays worldwide; and the wholesale murder of innocent bystanders of all faiths and lifestyles by Muslim terrorists – does nothing to promote the idea of one GOD/GOD/G O D who created three faiths with good reason. It does the opposite. It promotes atheism, cynicism and a desire for spite and revenge.

The Jews never abandoned The Land given to us by GOD. GOD took it away from us 2,000 years ago to take us on a spiritual pilgrimage worldwide. HE returned Israel to us in the last century, much to the dismay of the Arabs and Persians who, in retaliation, kicked out the Jews who had been living in their countries for millennia.

As we continue to witness differences in the ways Muslims hold their faith compared to Jews and Christians, the challenge for the 21st Century will be in learning tolerance and respect for GOD's/GOD's/G O D's various religious systems.

Torah is our Jewish deed to The Land GOD gave us. It's the written record of our first purchase of that Land by Abraham and the inheritance of that Land through his second son, Isaac. Those who wish to disregard the spiritually, legal precedence for our claim will have to answer to our Creator. In the last 70 years, HE's/HE's/H E's clearly affirmed our right, while the Muslim world has increasingly had to turn to the West to save them from themselves.

But The Land the Muslims occupy that's ours will have to be returned someday. They can't continue as squatters there forever. They must admit their mistake, pay rent to their Jewish landlord and abide by our rules. And if they don't like that arrangement, there are plenty of Muslim lands for them to go to.

36. TIKKUN HAOLAM

"TIKKUN HAOLAM" {REPAIR OF THE WORLD} is a concept that suggests that GOD created the world in a hurry, as one would nail together a chair made of unfinished wood. HE then gave humanity the task of sanding, painting and polishing HIS creation to HIS satisfaction. Needless to say, now in retrospect, this job was too big for the Jews to do alone. It has taken experts and specialists of many kinds to accomplish this task. The faiths and philosophies of the world are all needed to fashion a throne out of unfinished furniture for GOD/GOD/G O D here on Earth in the hopes that our Creator will one day come down to

share some part of HIMSELF/HIMSELF/H I M S E L F with us, thus ending the need for conjecture and speculation.

Most Jews at the time of Jesus didn't see Him as the Messiah, but thousands of them did. It's very possible for something to occur right before your eyes, but for you not to see it happening. If Jesus was the Messiah some Jews were waiting for then, I have great confidence that today's Christians who live up to His standards of love and forgiveness can help to invite GOD to reappear.

But I pray only to Y.H.V.H. That's my tradition, and I'm sticking with it. That doesn't mean I don't enjoy praying in my own way with Christian believers on Sundays at church when I go there with my boyfriend. I know that when I'm at church there are at least two Jews T{here}.

And when I've prayed with Muslims at mosque, there may have been two Jews T{here}, too. I really can't say. I'm more interested in the message than the messenger. I like the book more than the cover.

Jews aren't supposed to talk to the dead. We're supposed to talk to GOD about the deceased. We believe that HE intercedes with them on our behalf. That belief obviously doesn't apply for Christians with Jesus.

I don't have to believe in His resurrection to believe in His message. I can learn about GOD's love indirectly through Christians. In fact, I prefer to witness love and learn about it this way. The more loving the Christian, the more sincerely I can pray to our GOD/GOD/G O D with delight.

It really isn't worth arguing whether the Messiah was here once before or not. What matters is that when He comes (again), He gets treated well by everyone; that we all give Him a hospitable welcome.

Fighting over Israel, a postage-stamp sized Land has always been motivated by "religious" intolerance. Stealing forbidden fruit must be acknowledged as a spiritual offense by one and all for this Land grab to be settled. Israel is a sign of GOD's precious piece of fruit that was metaphorically given to Western tradition. Israel is as important to HIM in the abstract as it is to the Jews as our spiritual inheritance in the concrete.

The Muslims may be worried about having to face their guilt in admitting they wanted to steal Israel out from under us. (So, once, were the Christians.) If anyone wants to live side by side with us in peace, they're welcome to do so. We have no reason to want otherwise because we already know GOD's/GOD's/G O D's intention by HIS gift to us in the past. Those who feel otherwise or behave otherwise will have their hypocrisy revealed to them over time.

The problem for some Born Again Christians is in admitting that Jesus didn't subvert GOD's will in Torah. He complimented it. Therefore, The Promised Land will remain in the hands of the Jews, now and forever. The problem for the Muslims lies in admitting that Israel isn't theirs, nor was it ever in the past. They know that in doing so they're going to allow their head and heart to pierce their soul with new revelations. They're going to admit that Judaism and Christianity are older, wiser and more loving faiths than theirs. They're going to have to reconcile themselves with the gift A L L A H gave them.

Spreading T H E W O R D of G O D can still occur, but only if Muslims recognize that they've got to learn to embrace Judeo-Christian principles because they're also G O D-given. Once they get their own house in order by admitting that A L L A H gave Israel to the Jews, they'll find their situation in Europe and the Middle East improve quickly.

The stories of Genesis, beginning with the forbidden fruit, have had to work their way through all of us spiritually like food moving through the body. Through psychological insight, the dynamic forces of religion have been elevated to the world stage where GOD/OD/G O D-consciousness can be ingested, digested and eliminated cleanly. In this way, we make room for our Creator to give us greater ideas to savor, chew on and swallow.

To face the world in the 21st Century, you need only strive for Christian eyes, Jewish ears and a Muslim nose that you won't bite off to spite your face. You need to repair your inner world {TIKKUN HAOLAM}. But more importantly, you need to look at your Buddhist lips and watch them kissing themselves with every word you utter. And your Hindu tongue must lick you in infinite ways within. It must entice you to see yourself as someone with good taste without offending you at finding yourself attractive and enticing. That may be the Taoist paradox you've got to face.

"Synagogue" is a Greek word, which means "house of study." The dwelling place of GOD within each Jew evolved over time from a place of animal sacrifice {Temple} to a seat of learning {synagogue}. Each Jew became an educational institution where his thoughts and feelings became his personal course of study in learning about his struggle to become wise through his tradition; loving through Christianity; and ready for redemption through Islam.

The spiritual evolution from Tabernacle, through Temple, to synagogue took more than 1,000 years because the metaphors that housed those ideas were so great that they had to be extended until the ancient Jews could perceive them consciously.

Today there should no longer be any conflict between the Jewish concept of 'Jew as house of GOD' and the Christian concept of 'Jesus as house of GOD.' They both allow men and women to be containers of our Creator's will. Good ideas are recycled in us all. What's good for the Jewish bottle is good for the Christian can.

The Islamic concept of 'Muslim as like a house of G O D' is equally tantalizing when we add spiritual simile in with the metaphor and symbols of faith.

Human beings are slowly being instructed to prepare for the bringing of GOD/GOD/G O D out of a concept into living, breathing people with morally good intentions. To do so, each of us has to get out of his head and into his heart and soul. But to do that, each of us has got to get his penis or clitoris under control. The secret of life can't be achieved without equal partnership between men and women. This is the message of the LGBT community.

If you choose to fill your soul with Jesus, MAZEL TOV. More power to you! But for most gays, the evolution of the word "Tabernacle" to "closet" is synonymous with "personal secret mystery" not dwelling place of The Lord. The closet metaphor is 'closet as inner sanctuary of self-consciousness.' It's such a deeply held mystery that most gays don't even realize the power and sanctity inherent in the gift they've been given. Like most people, they consider our secret a secret, something they don't even discuss among themselves. To break our silence is synonymous with picking forbidden fruit from our own Tree.

We should all try to carry the message of tolerance and acceptance without keeping it secret. And yet, many of us carry GOD's/GOD's/G O D's weight upon our shoulders without realizing how holy the burden is that we hold. The spiritual mystery of the closet metaphor is unfolding before our very eyes worldwide. We're still "coming out" in the spiritual sense of THE WORD/WORD/W O R D. But this, too, is "TIKKUN HAOLAM."

That mystical place within where GOD resides in you grows like the acorn that becomes the oak. To know and love yourself, you have to go on an exodus from your head down

into the roots in your heart. You have to entwine your feelings with the Rock that grounds you. On this natural path of life you'll learn not to blame GOD and the unique blessings of life that HE/HE/H E gave you.

Making a name for yourself in the spiritual sense of the word not only takes decades; it takes devotion to using your vehicle as a tool of spiritual transformation; it takes a binding of heaven to Earth and a pulling of the two together with constant effort. Gay pride has made me even more proud to be a Jew. I feel twice blessed.

The sexual acts we gays perform aren't contagious. They're not dirty or impure. Spiritual cleanliness doesn't come from the deed, but from the ethical intention behind the deed; your ability to give and receive gratefully. We, gays, don't adulterate morality with our sexual behavior. We, like everyone else, adulterate morality only by not bridging our authentic self with our conduct.

37. Woman

The first woman is described as a part of the first man. She was separated from him when GOD put him into a deep sleep. And men today still seem to be in a deep slumber, unable to recognize that feminine aspect of themselves, unless they see it personified as a woman in the world around them.

(x + y) = 1 The woman within man is the 'x' factor that corresponds to the right side of man's brain that can't be accessed in words. And 'y' is the masculine side of man that corresponds to his left-brain that can only be accessed in words. In this way, every man is "RENA" {A SONG OF GOD}, melody {right brain} and lyrics {left-brain} melded together.

The first woman, Eve, is the shadow side of man. Eve is the aspect of the night when the sun has set, the projection of that part of the self when there's still enough light to see that total darkness within is coming.

Man must learn to reverse this process. He must make his 'x' factor primary, and his 'y' factor secondary. Only this will transform him from a boy into a man.

For primitive men, women are still terrifying creatures who represent all that they can't access with their eyes. Women are inscrutable projections of the right side of their brain that they're both attracted to and terrified of. For these men, women are like the night that has to be perceived with artificial light.

When you listen to love songs written by straight men to women or about them, try to imagine that they're really singing about the 'x' factor aspect of themselves. Leave women out of these love songs once in a while, and try to think about what they might be saying about "Eve," the one and only woman within themselves {x}.

38. Worship

The word for "worship" in Hebrew is "AVODA." As it does in English, it means "THE ACT OR FEELING OF ADORATION OR HOMAGE." But "AVODA" also means simply to "WORK" or "SERVE."

Worshipping GOD through your WORK/WORK/W O R K is accomplished through the labor of loving yourself wisely and generously. Worship is achieved through serving others mindfully. Worship comes with ritual adoration of GOD/GOD/G O D when applied to the simple acts of living a righteous life.

It isn't necessary to worship GOD/GOD/G O D in any particular, institutional, religious structure in order to have an ongoing conscious contact with HIM/HIM/H I M through all

your efforts. The advantage of praying in one building over another has to do with developing community in a safe place. But the safe space we create within ourselves is by far more intrinsic to spirit of worship.

Outside of a synagogue, church, mosque or temple, the most obvious place in the world where these ideas of "AVODA" come together is as a civil servant. The primary job of the government, in my opinion, is to bring this concept home. This will become a lifelong lesson for civil servants, and women that will make serving their country a personal reward.

Worshipping GOD can be done in every aspect of everyday life by putting your heart and soul into everything you do and in everyone you meet. You are your rabbi, priest, minister or cleric. It doesn't matter where you pray. It doesn't matter to Whom you pray. What matters is how.

Are you praying for more wisdom, love, generosity, diversity of being, tranquility and an unravelling of the paradoxes of this world, or are you simply praying for the power to have power over others? Are you praying to win or to learn? Are you praying for stuff or to act righteously as you move through guilt toward self-love?

The great worry for the institutions of religion today is in not questioning what would happen if people stopped praying at communal locations. The institutions worry about what will happen to their brand of religion if people were to seek comfort from GOD/GOD/G O D through every aspect of their lives instead of at those prescribed times of the week they're traditionally called to pray.

This question was figuratively asked and answered in the 1950's when every household bought a television set for home entertainment. The movie industry worried that it would go out of business because people would have no reason to go to the movies anymore. But as we've seen, that fear was unfounded. Television only made the film industry more robust. Today, it's possible to see movies at home as soon as they're released. And, by analogy, the various institutions of religion would do better if more people lived their faith rather than simply advocated it to others or practiced it one day a week in an institution of prayer.

The problem isn't with any particular sacred text; the problem lies with the unwise, unloving and uncharitable interpretations of sacred texts. Pieces of a puzzle have to be put together. You can't hold one piece of a puzzle in your hand and call the puzzle complete. There are obvious edges to every piece that have been created that way because they fit perfectly with certain others.

YOM KIPPUR {THE DAY OF ATONEMENT} is the day of fasting when Jews ask GOD to write them into The Book of Life. In The Book of Leviticus, GOD requires one day of atonement per year.

That may suffice for some, but that isn't nearly enough for me. I suspect GOD/GOD/G O D must have known that once some of us got an appetite for atonement, we'd eventually want to atone daily, or even several times a day. The way to worship GOD/GOD/G O D many times a day is to express your guilt to HIM/HIM/H I M and your love. Only then will you know what your positive intentions are.

I can't justify worshipping GOD one day of the week and atoning only once a year. Nor does the Sabbath come soon enough to satisfy my spiritual appetite. I feel too bad and make far too many mistakes every hour with the production of bad thoughts and unkind feelings that cause my inner forces to pile up for reconciliation with The Lord only one day per year.

I have to combine my WORK/WORK/W O R K and WORSHIP/WORSHIP/W O R S H I P. But that could only happen once they'd been separated and then reunited. The secret for me in worshipping GOD/GOD/G O D with all my soul and all my might is in creating an emotional atmosphere within me that's conducive to worship. An adult, inner child who's constantly whining, crying and complaining doesn't give me the liberty I need to do my WORK/WORK/W O R K. I can't imagine how Christians do their WORK or Muslims their W O R K without knowing the meaning of work and worship in Hebrew.

An attitude in defiance of others isn't going to look good in the film you're making of your life with you as its star. Once you start thinking about the "big picture" – the picture they're filming of your life – you'll find that patience won't be quite so difficult anymore to achieve. You'll find reason to slow your emotions down and leave a little room for hope to rise like a rainbow in your sky.

39. 'y' Now?

Chances are you're a chicken cheeseburger, and you may not even know it. You're not KOSHER, but not because you don't live the letter of THE LAW, but because you don't look KOSHER from within. The spirit of the law hasn't fully infused your system.

We're put here on Earth as infants to learn to obey the letter of THE LAW. We go through a physical transformation at puberty to prepare us for the next challenge in learning to obey the spirit of the law. But we need a lifetime to witness ourselves doing both.

The rabbis concluded that the appearance of breaking THE LAW is as bad as the actual deed. Looking bad *is* bad, but looking good doesn't necessarily mean that you *are* good.

Bottom line, what I eat is my business, not yours. If you start to tell me what I can and can't eat, the next thing you'll be telling me is how I have to pray and who I can and can't have sex with. And none of those issues are any of your business.

A chicken cheeseburger is no greater an abomination against GOD than sleeping with a man. Neither is KOSHER. Both appear to be breaking the letter of THE LAW. But I'll deal with both transgressions directly with HIM. I don't need anyone intervening on my behalf.

If you'd like an apology from me for looking bad by being gay, you've got it. Consider me bad in that way. I'm sorry. But if you'd like to tell me that you look good while I look bad, I've got news for you. Looks ain't everything.

I now have a little secret I've been saving to share with straight men about women. I think it'll improve their emotional relationship with one another. This is a secret Madison Avenue already knows and uses to make money, but it's important information that'll help straight men and women get along better with one another sexually as well as emotionally and spiritually.

There's a place on a woman's body that's extremely sensitive to the touch. It drives them crazy when you go there. That place lies between their shoulder blades. It's a place where they received a wound early in life that still gets easily irritated. It comes from having been stabbed in the back time and time again. It's a wound that hasn't healed.

This deep cut can be traced back to Eve when Adam blamed her and GOD for all his troubles. GOD and women, like elephants, never forget. In fact, I believe Adam not only knew what he'd done to Eve, but he unconsciously taught his firstborn, Cain, just how to stab Abel the same way. Bad news not only travels fast; it travels far and wide. Torah makes that very clear.

Everyone has been stabbed in the back and has blood that cries out from the ground of her/his being for justice. And in this day-and-age, most people can even hear their own blood crying. The fruit-victim-scapegoat may die of disappointment when he's been betrayed, but he can be reborn and revitalized with a fair shake.

Talk to GOD/GOD/G O D about what you think you really deserve for the blood you've figuratively lost in life from having been stabbed in the back or from that chip you've now got on your shoulder. Let's see what your conscience can come up with as a fair remedy.

Would you like to see Israel taken away from the Jews? Would you like to see the gays go back in the closet? Should the blacks put their shackles back on, or should women get barefoot and go back in the kitchen? What does your conscience tell you it wants in exchange for the blood you've lost? Do we all need to go back to the way things were, or could we, instead, go forward? How DAFKA {SPITEFUL} are you?

The letter of THE LAW is the basis of sin, reconciliation and wisdom. The spirit of the law is the basis of the guilt that leads to love and generosity of spirit. The punishment in Torah for sleeping with a man, and for everything else that's forbidden, is death. "IF A MAN HAS SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH A MAN AS ONE DOES WITH A WOMAN, BOTH OF THEM HAVE DONE WHAT IS DETESTABLE. THEY ARE TO BE PUT TO DEATH; THEIR BLOOD WILL BE ON THEIR OWN HEADS." [Leviticus 20:13] Sleeping with men was an abomination in GOD's eyes at one time. HE found it detestable then.

But today HE/HE/H E has to live with a lot worse. I'm sure HE's changed HIS mind in 3,400 years. I'm sure HE's changed HIS mind over many things since then. HE's/HE's/H E's got a lot more to worry about now that's a whole lot worse than men kissing one another on the lips.

You might conclude that GOD will never change HIS mind. But then you'd have to also conclude that HIS heart knows better. And then you'd have to struggle with GOD {ISRAEL} to decide what H E believes in H I S soul.

I'm not giving up penises any more than I intend to give up pork or shellfish. And if most Muslims think my decadence is reason enough to wipe Israel off the map, I think they need to turn around and start moving in the direction of the 21st Century.

Christians and Muslims should quote Torah to legitimize their FAITH/F A I T H. Both Jesus and T H E P R O P H E T Muhammed did. Why can't you? If someone you know isn't living up to the spirit of the law, their interpretations of their own sacred texts will cause you to suffer for it if you don't say something to right that wrong.

The Hebrew Testament is just a STORY; The Christian Bible is a simply a SONG; and The Quran is but a P O E M. You only have to love yourself to love all three as sacred and given by GOD/GOD/G O D.

You're almost at the end of this book. But before you close the back cover, I'd like to ask you to read some lyrics by Elton John {gay-Christian} as if he were an infant singing to his mother before he ever learned how to speak.

"Sorry Seems To Be The Hardest WORD/WORD/W O R D"

What have I got to do to make you love me
What have I got to do to make you care
What do I do when lightning strikes me
And I wake to find that you're not there

What have I got to do to make you want me
What have I got to do to be heard
What do I say when it’s all over?
And sorry seems to be the hardest WORD/WORD/W O R D
It's sad, so sad (so sad)
It's a sad, sad situation
And it's getting more and more absurd
It's sad, so sad (so sad)
Why can't we talk it over?
It seems to me
That sorry seems to be the hardest WORD/WORD/W O R D
It's sad, so sad (so sad)
It's a sad, sad situation
And it's getting more and more absurd
It's sad, so sad (so sad)
Why can't we talk it over?
Oh it seems to me
That sorry seems to be the hardest WORD/WORD/W O R D

There's one more Hebrew WORD I'd like to leave you with. It's THE WORD "AMEN." "AMEN" comes from verb "LA-AMEEN" which means, "TO BELIEVE." A loose translation of "AMEN" would be "I BELIEVE IT TO BE SO."

Tell everyone what "AMEN" means to you.
Believe in yourself.
Believe in the great healing power
of the guilt that comes of admitting
you don't always know what's right or wrong for you.
Learn!
With GOD's/GOD's/G O D's help
Learn!
Go inside and change your world by yourself within yourself,
and you'll leave a lasting impression on us all.

Other Books by Barry Emanuel Zeve

Becoming
89 Poems of My Love For Me

The Wisdom of Self-Love
Life is a School
I am my Major