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Salads:

God's Promise to the Abrahamic Traditions

The first gift from God, the forbidden fruit, wasn't given; it was taken. His first gift was the temptation we all allow ourselves to indulge in: learning. Learning is a gift from God. But an infant can only take knowledge. A child knows enough to acknowledge receipt of the giver of the gifts he's given. A child is completely hooked on learning so long as the lessons aren't bitter, but sweet. The adolescent widens his tastes and realizes that some learning has to sour him, for him to grow to become an adult. And the young man is resigned to learning in exchange for the material rewards that come with the secular education that teaches him about the world around him.

The second gift from God was a true gift freely given, His promise of loyalty to Abraham that He only asked confirmation for with the ritual of circumcision. Both Jews and Muslims acknowledge the Covenant of our spiritual father, Abraham, with the giving of our foreskin in exchange for the bounty of God's grace. Implied in the gift we give to God is that the gift of learning will continue with God as our Teacher and spiritual Guide. This begins the spiritual education that teaches us about the world within.

We Jews circumcise our sons at eight days of age, as Abraham did with Isaac in accordance with God's instructions for all future generations of Jews in Torah. Ishmael was, in a sense, Abraham's *forbidden* son conceived with Hagar, Sara's handmaiden, when he and Sarah couldn't wait to have an heir. Ishmael was circumcised at about the age of thirteen shortly before Isaac was born. And because Muslims are the descendants of Ishmael they circumcise their sons during or before puberty in memory of Ishmael.

Ishmael is the personification of forbidden fruit, the child brought down out of the heavens in a hasty and unlawful manner. Today's love child need not grow up wild like Ishmael. Today we all feel a little bit plucked from Heaven and planted here without regard to our feelings. We all feel our opinion on our life wasn't called for. The study of Torah as the psychological path to self-awareness informs every man of the implied rightful place he holds in the Creation Story as the personification of forbidden fruit, thus making every man an Ishmael, a man of God.

Every man is mysteriously attracted to forbidden fruit, the fruit upon which we project our victimhood and all those parts of ourselves that we can't yet face in ourselves. There's a part of every man that feels taken, used and as abused as Ishmael, some part of us that feels violated by our father, our ancestral fathers or our Father. This is the part that feels denied, disclaimed, disowned or disparaged in us. We are how the forbidden fruit must have felt when it was picked: like a victim, turned martyr.

After Eve ate from the Tree of knowledge we don't know whether she tempted Adam with the same piece of fruit, giving him what she hadn't consumed, or whether she picked another fruit for him. We don't even know if he asked her for a bite after he saw how it had or hadn't affected her. "WHEN THE WOMAN SAW THAT THE FRUIT OF THE TREE WAS GOOD FOR FOOD AND PLEASING TO THE EYE, AND ALSO DESIRABLE FOR GAINING WISDOM, SHE TOOK SOME AND ATE IT. SHE ALSO GAVE SOME TO HER HUSBAND, WHO WAS WITH HER, AND HE ATE IT." [Genesis 3:6]

All we do know is that the fruit of the Tree of knowledge was "DESIRABLE FOR GAINING WISDOM." When we look around with deep discernment, we see some men today are with Eve in spirit while others still act as though she betrayed all of mankind. In all truth and fairness, however, it can't disclaimed that knowledge is desirable for gaining wisdom.

The new covenant with God through Jesus is unlike circumcision in that it celebrates the male body for the way it was originally made in God's image, without a natural hood to cover its head. The ritual of baptism instead of circumcision is God's demonstration to Christ's followers of the gentle-hearted path of love God gave them that differentiates their covenant through Jesus from His Covenant with Abraham. The Christian path to God makes it their duty to transform the way they feel about themselves by sharing their love to the best of their ability.

For Christians, Jesus, not their own foreskin, is their sacrifice to God. He is their gift that keeps on giving. In some Christian sects they call their covenant a circumcision of the heart. Jews tempt Christians to know God's wisdom. Christians tempt us to know His love. And we're both tempted to know His beneficence through Ishmael's covenant to God as expressed through Islam. Would that the Abrahamic faiths had known that sooner and could have used attraction rather than promotion to enlist one another in celebrating the unique spiritual gifts each of them were given. We could have avoided a great deal of foolishness, hatred and mean-spiritedness.

Males are born with the lowest possible self-esteem. They're dependent on women {as a rule} to feed them, change their diaper and keep them warm and well. Only after puberty do males depend on other males or females to feed their sexual and emotional appetites. But when a man is ready to become spiritually mature, he has to learn how to depend on himself with God's help. This is what it is meant by, "MAN DOES NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE." [Deuteronomy 8:3]

Every seed planted in good earth germinates and eventually discards its shell. As a sprout, it tears through rock up through the darkness into the light in anticipation of growing into a mighty oak. But when you become like the tall oak, you may see yourself only as a part of the forest, not as a tree unto yourself. You may have inadvertently grown into a tree with a trunk twisted by the elements. You may suffer broken, intellectual

branches or infestations that don't give you a sense of being as fruitful as a tree. Or you may not be fruitful enough financially or feel emotionally rooted sufficiently to shade all those you love. You may find yourself with dry rot when it comes to your family's traditions or feel you're preyed on by others like mistletoe that sucks you dry.

The difference between who you think you should have been and who you really are must be measured using the wisdom of your own heart with plenty of self-forgiveness mixed with a bit of self-sorrow. It's easier to learn to live with yourself as you really are if you can see what you're going through emotionally in the moment. In truth, there's no such thing as an ugly tree. Some just more graphically depict what they've been through.

It would be easy to say that love is the cure for everything that ails you, but if you love others; forgive them; and pity them – you still may not feel tranquil within yourself. Wisdom of the heart shouldn't just whitewash others for you to claim you're pure and clean because of how you feel about them. Loving only others will leave you feeling unclean inside in no time. Christ's wisdom of the heart can teach you how to love yourself.

Familiarity shouldn't breed contempt. Familiarity should breed intimacy. But intimacy isn't always a pleasant feeling, especially between men. You may fear that the more you get to know yourself, the more you'll compare yourself to who you always wanted to be, and come away disappointed. You may have fantasies and standards you'll never give up that leave you feeling contemptuous of yourself as you are now. So the more you learn about yourself, the less you may at first like you, and your physical imperfections may only lead to even greater self-contempt because they're so much easier to see. To love yourself just the way you are requires that you first look realistically at the contempt familiarity with yourself can breed.

Your love of truth, justice and fair play is, ironically, what may motivate you to loathe yourself. In seeking an intimate relationship with yourself that your conscience can approve of, you may discover that you're far from your own ideal. Self-loathing can be a very realistic and morally appropriate feeling to have about yourself, but the more you can see self-tolerance as a step to self-acceptance, the more you'll learn to admire the lifelong process of moving from *realistic* in the direction of *idealistic*.

A little bit of self-loathing well wrapped in self-love will keep you moving toward the ideal your conscience has created for you. You don't have to love yourself all at once. In fact, to assume you should be able to do so would be very unrealistic, especially if your standards for others are already very high. That would indicate how deeply you've projected your idealism out onto the world we share.

You also shouldn't conclude that you're your own worst enemy because you don't pass all your own tests. You should see yourself as a highly discerning friend who wants you to get the very best results for yourself in the end. Everything you do to improve your

relationship with yourself will prove to you that you're the kind of friend you always wanted {something another trophy on the wall can't say about you.} Now is the time to use the skills you learned in how to make friends with others by applying them on yourself. Admit it. You're the BFF you've always wanted. All the rest of your best friends forever were only for practice.

Homosexuality isn't your problem unless you're afraid that self-intimacy will lead to more than masturbation, but to thoughts of sex with other men. What anyone does in the privacy of his bedroom only becomes your problem when you refuse to face the problems you have in your mind when you're alone in bed with the one man you have ambivalent feelings for. Worries about gay sex destroying the fabric of society are problems for people with penis problems. If you don't have a penis problem with the penis you have, you won't project a problem onto men who prefer sexual relationships with other men.

So now might be a good time for me to say a few words about what constitutes a penis problem. There are actually four kinds of penis problems:

1. Penis problems of function: A man may not realize that his penis is the delivery system for evil. He may use "it" to realize "its" desire to kill, rape, kidnap, violate, cheat, steal, lie or covet without him understanding the moral consequences of doing so. "it" may collude with the power in his testicles to express the rage in his heart at having to participate in reality like the rest of us. "it" may whisper what it wants, but only a man's heart may hear "it" loud and clear. Unfortunately, his conscience can't do anything about "it" until his head has been included in the conversation. Such men are in denial that morality is real.
2. Penis problems of delivery: A man may not succeed in getting his heart to collude with his desire to do good. "it" may conclude "it" doesn't have the communication skills to make "its" efforts known. "it" may think "it" isn't gifted enough in the art of persuasion. Such men can't sell themselves on themselves. They're in denial of their ability to bring goodness into the world they share with the rest of us.
3. Penis problems of form: A man's head may conclude that his penis is small, misshapen, undeveloped or soft. He may assume that what it looks like on the outside will determine how effective it will be metaphorically. Premature ejaculation falls under this category. {A gun that goes off without you being able to control the trigger is unreliable.} Such men are out of touch with their anger at God having given them a physical challenge that's so personal and intimate.
4. Penis problems of rejection: If a man doesn't want the penis he has, "it" might conclude that it's unwanted, rejected or ugly. Sometimes just the thought of having to live with a serpent in your tree leads "it" to conclude "it" would be better off had it slithered down from some other tree. There are plenty of men out there who

think it would have been a lot easier if they'd just been born female. They presume it would be easier to have a worm in their apple than a serpent in their tree. Each transsexual must decide for herself whether or not she falls into this category.

Turning man's penis into a talking snake that hangs down from a tree of knowledge was a creative way to describe the male, existential condition in a general way. And the following Biblical stories in Genesis are fascinating because they all build upon that main metaphor. For a writer to have come up with these stories 3,400 years ago without God's guidance is impossible for me to imagine. And for that writer to continue the theme in the following four books of Torah by then telling his own story through a main character who holds the same name is simply inspirational. The opportunity for a male to learn how to become a man from The Five Books of Moses is unparalleled in literature. And Jesus knew it...

A young man's ability to appreciate the challenges of having been born with the penis God gave him only arrives after he's received a foundation in learning from the school of life in the world around him. The house of worship his parents may have belonged to does not offer enough experience to encompass the meaning of life. It really isn't that difficult to help a boy master the conversations his penis is having with him if he can speak to himself metaphorically about how he operates.

This kind of control over boys used to be crudely accomplished sociologically with massive amounts of societal guilt. But that didn't go well, so nowadays we try to help young men achieve psychological insight into themselves so they can accomplish the job of self-discovery on their own. This can be best achieved through conversations that include pun, innuendo and euphemisms, which can actually turn this problem into a fun challenge.

The object of a man's desires has nothing to do with wisdom, love or moral maturation. It's not who you make love to, but how well you love yourself that turns a boy into a man. You have to witness yourself as you experience your urges, and then be proud about your choices and how you behaved in getting them realized. Self-esteem can't be bestowed upon you by others. No one can cleanse you of self-loathing or the feeling of being dirty inside. If you get a "dirt alert" from your conscience, it doesn't necessary mean it's time to get up and clean something around you or dive under the hood of your car. These inner alerts are intended to teach you to deal with guilt by scouring something inside.

A man has a penis for many reasons, the least of which is as a delivery system for bringing babies into the world. His penis is part of a delivery system for emotional lessons in life that will ultimately hold spiritual importance. Religious institutions don't want to have to talk about man's penis in public because they don't want to get into matters of the heart when it includes issues of desire. This is especially true in the case of Catholic priests

who are expected to have no experience whatsoever in using their penis for procreation while still expected to be able to give advice on wisdom of the heart even though that will always include desire. This is utterly impossible to achieve realistically without personal experience, but the religious leaders in the Catholic Church don't yet want to give priests permission to marry or women license preach. Although penis problems are particularly easy to point out in the Catholic Church when it comes to child molestation, the problem is catholic, not just Catholic.

Today many men and women believe size is what literally matters the most, but no one would be so foolish as to claim that a physically large penis is vital for a good marriage. Some men and women prefer a penis with emotional girth, while others are more attracted to one that can penetrate with spiritual depth. There are many ways for a man's penis to speak up if he's aware of the breadth and depth of the power of "its" words. What you literally see is seldom what you figuratively get.

This is a spiritual truth that, over time, leaves many men disappointed with their penis, or, indirectly, with their wife and children. They're sad about the penis they're stuck with, when the opportunity for figuratively appreciating its shape lay in their imagination all the time. A modern man who isn't thinking about his penis isn't thinking, period. God gave you what He gave you, and if you aren't looking for the best way to use what He gave you, whether that's physically, emotionally or spiritually, you're not doing your homework.

The problem with a God who created both the penis and vagina is that He uses the power of His desires in ways neither men nor women can fully account for. Because His story unfolds as history, it's up to us to excuse, forgive and exonerate Him for only having given us His plan in thirds {Tanach, New Testament and Quran}. That's not to say we should forgive and forget what others do to us. It merely means that we have to recognize that God uses men and women to our advantage and disadvantage as He so chooses. Therefore we must be vigilant in our efforts to bring more justice and mercy into the world for everyone, so we all have the opportunity to study ourselves in a gentler, safer learning environment.

Most of us think the world is in a sorry state. It's really not. Sorrow is the feeling that comes after you take personal responsibility for your mistakes. Sorrow is a mixture of sadness and guilt. Most people actually don't feel at all sorry about the way the world is. They just feel sad about it. They're sad about the environment; sad that children are being murdered in elementary schools; sad that people are hungry, cold and without work; sad that the animals are all dying. But sorry? No. Most people aren't sorry because sorrow would implicate them in a crime, and they don't want to feel guilty for the way everything is turning out. That would make them more, morally responsible than they're prepared to handle.

A man will lament, mourn and bemoan the state of the world, but he won't regret it or feel sorry about it until he regrets and is sorry about the way he's turned out. Nor will he take personal responsibility for the ignorance of his classmates until he can see he has to make up for something he hasn't learned about himself. And all this is only achieved with loss. Loss is the great equalizer.

Only with terrible fear of loss do a man's class assignments feel bestowed upon him by the Teacher. Only then do they become personally meaningful. Men don't think it's manly to help one another with intimate, class assignments. They don't want to talk about the homework the Teacher has given men that they've been postponing doing for years. This work is private, and most men want to keep it that way. They'd be more ready to regret their part in the way the world is becoming if they could first see some progress in their own world. They'd be more willing to look at other men and imagine that they, too, have a penis and an anus if they were on better terms with their own.

Original Sin isn't something that was done once in the Bible and never repeated. Original sin is hardly original... It describes the feelings of guilt that are occurring naturally in you on a daily basis that you could bring to consciousness if you wanted to feel how sorry you are for how things turned out differently from how you had hoped they would. Original sin is the natural consequence of being afraid you'd break yourself if you tampered with you in any novel way.

You were probably secretly afraid that if you tried to have sex with yourself, you'd catch the gay, when, in truth, if you've loved yourself and all you've caught is a thief who took knowledge and never acknowledged God for all that he now knows. The more you feel sorry for your mistakes, the more God will allow you to know about the good that you've done. He's withholding vital information. He's keeping you from picking certain fruits from your own tree.

Original sin isn't just a story about the guilt man needed to better himself to attain wisdom. Original sin holds within it the potential for self-love and the potential for redemption. Jesus was murdered because humanity couldn't stand the idea of a rabbi modeling self-love on Himself then, and they're none too keen on repeating the example on themselves now.

When Moses first ascended Mount Sinai, God commanded him to tell the people that if the Jews accepted His covenant God would make them a "KINGDOM OF PRIESTS AND A HOLY NATION." [Exodus 19:6] Upon hearing these words, the people responded, "ALL THAT GOD HAS SAID, WE WILL DO." [Exodus 19:8] But later, after Moses related the specifics of God's divine rules to the people the people uttered the phrase instead, "NA'ASEH V'NISHMA," {WE WILL DO AND WE WILL LISTEN.} [Exodus 24:7]

Well, this is a curious thing to say. You'd think people would *first* listen and *then* do, but the opposite is actually true. First people do, and then they listen. First they do it any way they can to get the job done in an expedient manner, and then they go back to fix what they didn't do right the first time based on new information and the experience of having done it wrong the first time.

You can't be a nation of priests and a holy nation by doing it right the first time. We wouldn't be able to relate to others if we were better than them. We, just like everybody else, have to do it wrong and then learn how to get it right. But when you've been doing it this way long enough you realize you shouldn't take all of Torah literally anymore. You should know better. There are better, figurative reasons for not mixing wool and linen than literal reasons. [Leviticus 19] There are better, poetic reasons not to behave like a pig than there are medical reasons not to eat pork. [Leviticus 11]

Life is a humbling experience when you're very young. You've got to do some things wrong for quite a while before you can realize your mistakes and fix them to get it right. You can't improve on the way you did it the first time, using your head, until you're ready to listen with your heart to the way you feel about the results you got. Once you feel sorry about the way something turned out, you can listen a little better to the self-love in your heart beckoning you to do things differently.

And if you believe in God and bring Him along as a Witness, He can help walk you through the embarrassment, shame and humiliation you didn't feel the first time you took action when you used your best thinking without including the most noble of feelings to achieve the wellbeing for everyone's greater interest.

When you use your conscience as other people's guide, your fights all become external. Every issue becomes like a religious crusade. You're constantly fighting for freedom from someone you feel is constraining you in some way, some inner parent your inner child wants to revolt against. You constantly see the need to look for a war to fight somewhere in the world instead of somewhere in your inner world. Every government becomes your oppressor, especially the American and Israeli governments, the two greatest examples of democratic rule in the history of humanity. Other men's success in living life their way will threaten your own if you don't know what you're really looking to do. You'll end up with no real, male heroes. Even comic strip characters with superhuman powers will begin to remind you of all that you can't do.

But when you use your conscience as your own guide, you discover God's participation in the little things in your life that really make a huge difference. You see yourself as a member of society fighting for interdependence with others, not dominance over them. When the forces within you cooperate in such a way so that you can see the goodness in

yourself, you become the hero you've fantasized about without the ego attachment that often accompanies heroic gestures.

The dumb brute who goes mindlessly to and from work each day without regard to the tremendous part he plays in making history actually makes matters worse on Earth for everyone, including himself. Not wanting to admit he's someone who's morally important to himself turns him into somebody's beast of burden in their eyes and his own. He becomes one more slave who feels hundreds of years have passed and Moses hasn't yet shown up. He spends his life building pyramids to other people's power that he can't take credit for.

When was the last time you heard an Egyptian thank the Jews for building their pyramids? It hasn't ever happened. You can't express gratitude to God if you can't appreciate yourself. And you can't appreciate yourself if you can't thank others.

Whether or not God really gave the world His one and only Son isn't as interesting a question as why He would need to. We want to think of God as having a heart. The idea of standing nude, naked and exposed before Him as Adam did with only a vague sense of the guilt that was running him ought to terrify us. Nobody wants to look like a fool. We need to think of God as compassionate, merciful and forgiving. We know that He knows we can't just know better. We need to learn by making mistakes until we know that we know better because we feel guilty. This is the quality of wisdom of the heart that Jesus embodied and dispersed through the Jews to the world. No other rabbi since Moses has had a more profound effect on the world because no people have wanted more to learn to do what's right than we do. And that requires feeling righteously as well.

Although modern Jews don't want to be known for *doing* and then *listening* we really don't like Monday morning, armchair umpires telling us what we did wrong. It's much more interesting and compelling to ask us what we're learning from our mistakes. When you read Jewish, Christian and Muslim history, it's pretty clear that the longer you stay in the school of life, the more you're going to learn about yourself.

The man whose mind is hypnotized by his own raw power becomes totalitarian. The man whose heart is mesmerized by his power to feel becomes promiscuous. And the man who ignores any and all conversations about his serpent becomes obsessed with conquering the world and paranoid about other people's desires. Without coming to your conscience yearning to be soulful in God's eyes, you'll become oppressive to yourself and those around you.

Every Abrahamic man, whether circumcised or baptized, is a recipient of God's promise of spiritual rewards. But he only becomes conscious of the rewards of circumcision and baptism as he brings moral meaning into his own life. You don't get rewarded just for thinking, feeling, desiring and believing, not even if you choose to believe

in God. You were born with these innate attributes. You get rewarded for taking righteous action. And you've got to stretch every day if you're going to see an increase in your moral range of motion.

Men nowadays don't spend much time consulting with our Teacher during His office hours. They wail and whine at His harsh assignments. They squabble over whether they need to worry about spot quizzes. They prepare a composition for Him without understanding that the moral components of every composition are derived from thoughts, feelings, desires and beliefs. And when men don't achieve the outcomes they expected, they lose their composure instead of looking at their test paper for the emotional, red marks that say so much about where they went wrong.

Much of this has to do with arrogance, defiance and machismo. When you're afraid to be afraid because it would expose the feminine side of yourself, you're not the man you think you are. You're still a little boy who hates girls.

Men nowadays give the Teacher long lists of things they'd like Him to do for them, but they don't say much when it comes to discussing their work habits with the Teacher. They pray for outcomes not for insights. Consequently, they see their grades go down as they graduate to higher and harder classes. They start out with straight A's in the elementary school setting of getting a job and making money, but discover they're struggling to pass their classes by middle age. Who wouldn't avoid thinking about graduation with horror if his GPA declined and his transcript wasn't stellar?

The man who hates the serpent hanging down from his tree will hate his neighbor's, too. The man who hates his own serpent will take an obsessive interest in what his neighbor is doing with his. This is commonly expressed using the negative emotions of jealousy {container} and envy {contents} or vanity {container} and conceit {contents}.

Nowhere in the Ten Commandments does it say what to do with your penis. In the 7th Commandment about adultery it states that you shouldn't make promises you can't keep. Granted, in the Book of Leviticus it states that it's an abomination for a man to sleep with a man, but that's because men in those days couldn't get a good night's sleep because their conscience was so over-occupied being everyone else's guide. Once you can get a good night's sleep with only you in bed with yourself, you can cross off this Hebraic law once and for all, along with all the others we've learned how to put behind us (like how to treat our slaves fairly).

If men would make promises to themselves they could keep, they wouldn't have to point fingers at what other, consenting adults do in the privacy of their home at night. This isn't an issue of what's between a man's legs, but about what's between his solar plexus. There's nothing sinful about sex between adults, including gay sex, if you're not breaking a promise you've made to another person. The sin is in letting your penis make all your

decisions for you and then getting stuck with your head and heart having to take all the blame for what went wrong. That only makes you defensive and reactive when it comes to making mistakes in the future. That doesn't do credit to the teachings of Moses, Jesus or the P r o p h e t Mohammed. The Creation Story doesn't only inform you about how you got into trouble. It could actually keep you out of trouble if you read it differently.

You don't have to switch religious teams and go from a Jew to a Christian to avoid the mistakes of Adam and Eve. You don't have to dismember yourself to avoid the delivery system mistakes of desire. You don't have to castrate yourself to avoid personal power problems. You don't have to become straight, look straight, act straight or pretend to be straight if you're gay. You don't have to take over the world to take control over your world. There's an easier ways of leading a righteous life than people are promoting. That way is the way of self-love, and Jesus knew it.

The life Jesus led tried to show Jewish men how to get out of their head and into their heart. Today the task is even more complex. We have to teach people how to get out of their heart and into their soul. People have become so good at thinking outside the box that they don't know what that means anymore. There are actually three boxes, and we need today's modern man to be able to think outside all three of them: head, heart and penis. There's no other way to get you into the fourth box, your conscience unless we get you to think outside the other three.

Judging yourself for what you've done to right your wrongs from within properly prepares you to come before God with a clean conscience. You aren't going to love yourself if you hate the decisions you made that deserve self-loathing. If you have good reason to loath yourself for how you look physically, that's fine. If you have a good reason to loath yourself for how confused you feel, that's a good reason, too. Just don't call yourself names. Adjectives are fine. Call yourself ugly or fat. Call yourself confused or stupid. But don't call yourself a monster or a fool. Your conscience can deal with thoughts and feelings that describe what you think of yourself or how you feel about yourself. What it can't deal with is name-calling. This becomes a moral issue that you'll never be able to win with yourself. You have a responsibility to learn to love yourself as you are no matter how hard that may be for you. If you call yourself names, what you're really saying is that you'll never be able to love yourself the way you are. That's intolerable.

When you use nouns to describe others such as the "N" word, the "B" word or the "F" word, you're not just calling people names. And you're not just insinuating that they're a monster for being who they are. You're also calling God out for having created someone that way. You're reprimanding Him for what He's done. The reason you shouldn't use His name in vain is because calling Him names angers or saddens Him just as it does other people.

Those who are truthful with themselves don't live in denial; those who are sincere in their heart aren't deceitful; and those who are forthright with their thoughts and feelings in their soul don't conspire to charm their way into positions of self-confidence. Your authenticity is made piecemeal in your head, heart and penis and then brought into your soul for assembly before it's distributed out into the world for public consumption. Therefore observe yourself at all times. Listen to what you say or insinuate about yourself. Also, watch very carefully what your arms and legs are doing while you're speaking out loud. If you witness every gesture on your face from within as you're talking you'll succeed in observing your personality from the inside. You'll become self-conscious in a good way.

The difference between self-conscious in a good way and a bad way isn't just the verbal emphasis you place on that word. It's the difference between a positive and a negative attitude toward yourselves. When you start to see all the ways you emphasize words when speaking to yourself, you'll begin to see the subtle ways in which you hold your principles righteously or profanely. You'll see yourself from within your soul.

The 7th Commandment is expressed in the negative, rebuking adultery. But what's implied is a positive position toward unifying your thoughts, feelings and desires into one unified voice so that you'll be honest, sincere and forthright. This will help you feel authentic, genuine and real. Keep your promises to yourself, and you won't have any problem in keeping them to others. Don't screw yourself over, and you won't do the same to anyone else.

But above all be frank. If you don't like the way your look, feel or what you believe in, just say so. Nobody else is going to know if you admit the truth to yourself. Don't mince words when you're talking to yourself. You can avoid name calling at one extreme while avoiding politically correct speech at the other. Just speak candidly and politely to yourself and you shouldn't be offended by your frankness.

No man will ever be able to rest in peace with only the knowledge he gleaned from the world around him. You can't just say, "I believe in Jesus" and the sword protecting the Tree of life will descend and your trees of knowledge and life will become as one. You have to believe in His message for the 21st Century and carry it every day of your life. It's too late for Jesus to carry His cross for Him. For the truth about love to become personal and real you have to demonstrate it on yourself. Carry your own cross. Jesus did, to prove that you can, too.

Time becomes more subjective the longer you live. Looking back on your past becomes something you can share with fewer and fewer people until you suddenly realize you really only have yourself and God to share your past with. Nobody else can see everything you went through in your life except you. The real inner work begins when you realize that your head holds your past with the frozen accuracy of a camera while your heart holds it

with the accuracy of a tape recorder. The purpose of thought is to produce a precise picture. The purpose of feelings is to add captions to each picture with a time stamp upon them. Every time your mind takes you back to a scene in your past, whether it's a still photo or a video of the way it once was, you can recapture that moment with a caption from your heart. You can consciously spread today's feelings about who you are now you under visual memories of who you once were.

This emerging truth about you is called self-scrutiny. {It's a good thing!} Old people talk incessantly about the past because they're applying the last few captions to their past to present the Teacher with their final observations on themselves. You can, too.

This process of remembrance is a precious process of creating albums for all the memories in your mind. The past may never again become real, but it can be wisely recorded and lovingly preserved in your memory if you've got the app. in your spiritual, operating system to do so. Your spirit isn't only helping you get through your life; it's recording your actions and feelings about those actions for posterity. You may feel like a smart phone, but you're far more spiritually sophisticated than any of your technical devices. You're spiritual software upgrading itself night after night. You're becoming smarter, funnier, more heartfelt and soulful day-by-day. You've got the exact, same hardware humanity was given tens of thousands of years ago, but your software, by comparison, is utterly amazing!

Neither the author of Torah nor the character of Moses in Torah will get you into your Israel. And Jesus won't literally reach down through the surface tension on the enormous ocean of your emotions to lift you up from the depths of your feelings into the heavens above.

You have to do all the hard, spiritual work they did, yourself. These two rabbis only showed you the steps in how to go within to find your own way to where we all want to go. And that spiritual world within has nothing to do with being gay or Jewish. Whenever anyone tells me I should convert to Christianity or change my sexuality to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, it makes me laugh out loud. My life was a tossed salad of opportunities, but I was lucky because I didn't stop with the salad and miss the main course. I've gone all the way to the dessert.

Salads:
Leavened or Unleavened Bread?

I'm still not quite ready to serve the meat and potatoes of what Jesus had to say. You're now going to be served the second of six salads before the main meal. So pace yourself. If you feel like you're losing your appetite, get up from the table and come back when you're hungry. You wouldn't want the main course to get cold. You'll enjoy the whole meal more if you don't overeat my words. Life isn't a race. It's a meander.

Food for the gods may be rich in calories, but it's poor in nutrients. Forbidden fruit and God-consciousness are just the opposite. They have to be served slowly, savored and enjoyed over time. The spiritual meal won't put a pound on your body, but it may weigh down your heart and soul significantly.

For the spiritually infantile, that which is forbidden must be stolen. A spiritual baby isn't able to ask for what it wants. He simply reaches out and grabs whatever is there. He assumes everything was put here for his sake to take. It takes quite some time for every toddler's parents to convince him he doesn't know it all and to teach him to ask for what he wants, rather than to just take whatever looks good to him. Life became much more interesting for modern man when he reaches the level of toddler, the time in life when he begins to talk and walk as though he really wants to discover what life is all about.

Then comes the spiritual child who can use please and thank you on others even if he doesn't yet understand the full importance of these words when speaking to himself. It takes even longer to reach the level of the spiritual adolescent who can show gratitude for what he's been given, although he still thinks he deserves everything he's worked for {and more}. His spiritual work ethic isn't fully developed enough to realize he's on a base salary with a spiritual commission.

It takes more time to convince the spiritually young adult to learn how to work for what he wants, and not manipulate others emotionally, like he did his parents to get his wants met. Immature adults aren't fully honest, sincere and authentic with themselves about all their motives in going to work each day. They may be still serving others for the material rewards. They may think we're really lucky to have them instead of seeing us in a mutually beneficial arrangement. Over a lifetime a man hopes to be treated fairly and even generously in the workplace. But this can only happen when he feels emotionally rewarded for his efforts. Only the spiritually mature man develops a lasting relationship with himself as the result of having given back as best he could to all others.

Every Jew is hired by God, who asks us all to sign the same contract. But each of us tries to tailor the Covenant in his own way to serve his salary needs and benefits, especially since his skills and usefulness obviously change over time. Christians create a workplace

here on Earth where they think they're hired because they're a friend of the Man who works directly with the Boss. And Muslims use the contract provided by the P r o p h e t Mohammed, who was added to upper Management when business started to pick up in the Middle East and elsewhere more than 1,400 years ago.

The business model of religion as an enterprise is a metaphor whose underlying message assumes each of the Abrahamic faiths are in competition with the others. That's now beginning to change as Muslims are discovering they can't get their way in the world by taking the material rewards given to the Christians and using them against them. We're all working for the same CEO, but there are those who still act as though it isn't so.

The spiritual fruit in the Creation Story that God so wanted to protect from being picked ended up creating the feelings of guilt in Adam and Eve that still make modern men want to act secretively at times, as though he's in competition with his brothers over approval from his Father. He even covers parts of himself from those he loves that he doesn't want them to see; he conceals himself by blending in when standing in a crowd; and he camouflages the loneliness and emptiness inside with denial instead of sharing his solitude with his entire spiritual family. Guilt is a part of the intellectual, emotional and spiritual knowledge that gives life a 3-D sense of being real, even if guilt will never be able to make life feel fully satisfying. Guilt makes us wise. But even knowledge of our guilt will never succeed in making us loving.

Making mistakes; atoning for them; and asking ever-greater questions about our purpose here on Earth develops modesty, humility and loyalty to God's plan. Guilt truly can lead to experiences that are divine, a loyalty to life commonly referred to as faith in God. But faith in Him isn't what it's all about. A man must discover a sense of devotion to himself, so he can choose whether he even wants to give himself to God. God can create a ritual like the one your parents might have observed by having your foreskin removed. But you have to decide if you're going to use your penis to deliver the good goods.

Having a relationship with God makes it possible for Jews and Muslims to capitalize the word "You" (sing.) when referring to Him. But having a relationship with Jesus makes it possible for Christians to capitalize the word "You" (pl.) when referring to God, the Father, and Jesus, His Son and the Holy Spirit.

People who are intimidated into acting religiously haven't chosen to give themselves to God out of love. They've been guilted into doing so. They're afraid of Him and often superstitious. People who've had religion shoved down their throat often end up regurgitating their faith, and that may occur in some pretty vile ways. Sometimes it's better to feel empty inside rather than full of something that doesn't sit well. Politics in America is beginning to see the horrible consequences of having force-fed Jesus on Americans.

There's nothing at all wrong with Jesus, but there is a terrible problem in the way He's being served.

In order for you to clean up your act, you ought to question what feeling you're attaching to a thought. Then you might question whether what you believe expresses what you're thinking and feeling. And it doesn't end there. After you hear your words internally and record them in your memory so you can retrieve them for future use, you could then let them escape your lips so you could hear your own words from the outside in to record them in another part of your brain where they'd create a second powerful impression on you.

People who are upset by the way their life turned out because of circumstance beyond their control {like the Jews who survived the Second World War} aren't necessarily going to embrace God's plan as tailor-made for them. Cruelty doesn't make people religious. Fear and anger at others won't move you closer to God.

Loving the Lord is much harder than it looks. The only good reason to learn to do so is because you'll respect yourself more if you do.

A parent loves all his children equally, but he doesn't necessarily respect them all equally. A parent knows he's got to help each of them individually. God loves all his children, but why would He respect everyone equally? If you feel disrespected by God, you're going to hold a resentment against Him whether you want to or not. Your heart may conspire against your head without realizing what your feelings are getting you into.

God already knows that about human nature, so don't bother to go out of your way to hide your resentment of Him from Him. In fact, I encourage you to share them with Him, especially if you've suffered a great loss or disappointment in life. In fact, it would be better for you if you expressed your rage to God {as many of the Jews in concentration camps did} than to oppress mankind with it. Believe me, God is well prepared to handle all your feelings. And He has a way of rewarding those who learn to pray from their heart.

God knows you can't give Him your love if you've only been motivated by fear or intimidation to acknowledge His presence. Dutiful regard based on fear and intimidation isn't a sign of love or intimacy with your Creator. Embarrassment can be transformed into modesty; shame can be turned into humility; and humiliation can become loyalty. But they're all just the skills of self-scrutiny needed to teach yourself how to treat you and others respectfully.

Through animal sacrifices the ancient Jews appeased an angry God who bullied, coerced and terrorized them into being faithful, they also learned to express their modesty, humility and loyalty with one another. But the times are different now. The Jews have learned a lot more about God in the past 2,000 years, and the Temple cult will forever be behind us.

No one can know to what extent you're afraid of God or truly grateful to Him. Your spiritual plate isn't sitting in front of us at His table. It's sitting in front of you. What's on it is none of our business. That's a private matter between you and your Maker. Once you destroy the temple within you so it mirrors the Jerusalem we have today, you'll give up the sacrifice of base animal instincts of fear in favor of a more humane approach to faith in God. Once your inner world catches up with the world we share, you'll be prepared to call yourself a modern man.

Everyone is literally living in the 21st Century, but, figuratively, there are those who are subjectively living in the ancient past. They don't see that their beliefs are antiquated; their feelings crude; and their thoughts vulgar. They think the spiritual food on their plate must remain there, that it would be impolite if they ate it. Like petulant children they refuse to swallow a thing.

In the past it was possible to convert ancient peoples with swords, but you can't change people's hearts and minds with guns or suicide vests and expect them to love you. Modern people are too sophisticated to respond to such crude tactics. Either you love love or you hate love. The choice is yours. The choice is personal. And the outcome of your reasons will become obvious to everyone over time.

The definition of a martyr is an innocent person who dies for a just cause. But the fact of the matter is that everyone sees himself as innocent in his own eyes. So it's easy for anyone to claim he's both a martyr and innocent of the crimes others accuse him of. It's harder to see yourself in a spiritual process in which you're guilty at times, and still grateful for what you're learning about yourself as you grow. The criminally insane will tell you they're innocent, but they haven't developed a conscience with which to measure guilt. You can't claim to be innocent unless you can also claim to be guilty. It's better to develop a conscience and first use it against yourself than not to develop one at all. If Abraham could bargain with God over what to do with total strangers who lived in Sodom and Gomorrah, far from his home, you can wrestle with Him over your issues, too. God isn't made of plaster. He isn't made of marble. He isn't going to break.

The purpose of fruits of knowledge of evil is to make mistakes, correct them and atone for all you did wrong. The purpose of fruits of knowledge of goodness is to magnify them to produce works inspired by love. But if you're just letting your serpent or worm decide what you should do, don't be surprised if you find yourself in moral debt for a life poorly lived. This world isn't a South Sea island paradise. It's a school. Act accordingly!

The purpose of your faith should be to produce just enough guilt to entice you to seek love through questions you ask yourself that are motivated by self-love. When you pose good questions concerning your moral authority, God will want to help you get them answered. He'll enter your conscience and help you see yourself as you truly are. This can

be alarming at first, but it becomes easier to bear over time. You learn to get through these episodes of self-repair without feeling shattered inside. You learn to appreciate the Hell He gives you because it's still here on Earth; it's still better than the Hell others may have to go through; and it's a Hell with a hot seat designed specifically for you.

After Moses chiseled out the second set of Commandments himself, he immediately realizes that “{GOD} PUNISHES THE CHILDREN AND THEIR CHILDREN FOR THE SIN OF THE PARENTS TO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION.” [Exodus 34:7]

This is because the evil in men's hearts is copied by three successive generations until it's been expunged. Self-loathing is being eradicated from this world, but only as quickly as you do your part in helping get it done. You could eliminate four generations of evil all by yourself if you cared to. There's no reason why you couldn't do more than your share. There are extra credit assignments offered by the Teacher every day, but most people don't want to learn any more about themselves than they absolutely have to.

God may be our Shepherd, but we're all so much more like sheep than we'd like to admit. Have you ever watched sheep? They're not at all self-conscious. They bump into one another as though they're woolly objects, not living subjects. They show little to no initiative to act on their own or to stray far from one another. Sheep have to be watched over by shepherds because they can't watch out for themselves. Sheep get lost easily. It's easy to identify with the innocence of a lamb. It gets messy, though, when you think you're a grown up lamb without realizing that that's the very definition of a sheep.

Organized religion has treated its worshipers like sheep because sheep behave predictably and en masse when frightened. Religion has also produced wolves in sheep's clothing in the clergy to manage the sheep because there will always be those who choose to abuse power.

Because the metaphor of shepherding-the-flock doesn't work well when every ram's got his own GPS device to keep him from getting lost nowadays, there's a need for shepherds of the church to find better ways of remaining relevant. Religions want your money and your vote, but they're not doing enough to gain our approval. Their shepherds are finding it harder and harder to herd their sheep because the sheep know where their shepherds are taking them. And the shepherds can't give the sheep a good enough reason anymore for the sheep to behave like sheep.

Most men are waiting for God to believe in them before they're prepared to believe any more ardently in Him than they have to. They want signs that He loves them. They want money, property and prestige to prove that they're beloved. They use God to get their desires met, not to achieve self-love. Their head and penis are with Him for the sake of power and comfort, but their heart and soul aren't on board with what He's got planned for them because the religious institutions can't elucidate His plan of universal inclusion.

The man with the good position in society; a doting wife; a couple of kids; and a two-car garage – may have no idea how his tower to power was spiritually constructed with a view to the big picture or what he needs to do to keep it from tumbling down. He may not realize that raising it was an inside job that God rewarded him for externally. He may not yet realize that his penis charmed his naïve Eve {heart} with its words. What he knows is that he has urges he indulges without giving them a second thought. His penis is only semi-consciously under his control. So far, this book has made him smile inside, not laugh out loud. The truth is rarely funny.

The good man's heart and penis are already in a conspiracy with one another that's healthy, happy and doesn't need to be put into many words. The good man's word is good, and his relationship to himself is growing by the day, whether he looks all that carefully at himself or not. The good man is already on a mission, but he doesn't have to find out what that is until it's over. He wants to be surprised.

Most good men don't want to talk about themselves in the third person singular {he}. Most good men live their love of life through metaphor, but they unconsciously use metaphors without delving into them. They have no need to analyze their life through the art of Spiritual Linguistics.

They use the metaphors of driving, winning and building to express themselves through socially acceptable channels. Their car is the vehicle they love the most, not their body. Sports provide them with the sense of the winning teams they root for, not their faith. And their career is the edifice they're constructing using a ladder of success with several stories to get them to a high position in society.

Most sheep in our Judeo-Christian society are fine sleeping outside the barns built by religious institutions. They aren't going to obey religious wolves in sheep clothing. And they aren't going to face the past rather than the future.

Most people don't realize that Jesus was a middle class Jew even though He preached to the poor. Joseph passed his trade on to Jesus, and a carpenter in those days was a skilled profession that brought in more than just money. The relatively good life of a middle class tradesman in those days gave Jesus the time He needed to study Torah. The desire to study Torah was, of course, something He developed Himself. But who had the luxury in those days, let alone now, to take off 40 days from work to contemplate the meaning of life?

When Jesus was about twelve we went with Joseph and Mary to Jerusalem, a three-day journey from Nazareth, to make their annual sacrifices at the Temple. On the first day of their trip back home, they discovered that Jesus was missing. So His parents returned to Jerusalem look for Him. He was found in the Temple discussing rabbinic law with the great scholars of the time. His mission was clearly in place at that young age. Although the concept of the Bar Mitzvah had not yet been instigated, it's apparent that His separation

from his earthly parents and connection to His Heavenly Father had just occurred. Some boys need longer than others to separate spiritually from their father and mother, just as some need longer to separate from them physically and emotionally.

Spiritual Linguistics isn't about increasing your vocabulary. You don't need more words. You need more insight into the depth of the words you already have. A secular education will only expand your wordlist numerically, and a religious education will only broaden it. Spiritual Linguistics will give you the power to see what you're capable of doing for yourself with greater depth of understanding of the vocabulary God gave you.

We should stop teaching people to tolerate those who are different. We shouldn't even teach people to accept those who are different. We should teach ourselves to admire the differences we find in one another. Everyone has some classes in the school of life that he excels at. Discover what he does best and what you could learn from him, and you'll find yourself with a new friend.

Hillel, the renowned rabbi who died about the time Jesus was born was asked to explain Torah while standing on one leg. In other words, he was asked to consolidate the wisdom of the entire Hebrew Testament into a short, concise statement. And he did so with an elegance that sums up everything Judaism stands for. "Don't do unto others that which you find abhorrent."

Hillel told us what not to do. The essence of wisdom is to avoid problems before they begin. But Jesus then came along and told us what *to* do: to embrace solutions. By putting His message in the positive, rather than the negative, Hillel figuratively stood on one leg to describe Torah, and Jesus stood on the other. Together they gave us the spiritual legs of life: negation {wisdom} and affirmation {love}. You stand tall thanks to the teachings of both rabbis, secure in the knowledge that you're learning what not to do as well as what to do.

You're not here to teach the world right from wrong. You're here to teach yourself right from wrong. The more you can use your conscience as your guide, the more you can model and affirm your standards when engaging with others. It takes courage to do what's right because you have to engage modesty, humility and loyalty to do so. It's never just about what you don't do for others because that might compromise your faith. It's about what you do, do for yourself that augments your self-esteem in your own eyes.

Give people wisdom in how to avoid mistakes {Judaism} and then give them the wisdom of the heart to do what's right {Christianity}. Lastly give them ways to magnify this process {Islam} and watch the world change exponentially with soulful regard for all. But if you first tell people what they have to think; then force them to believe what you believe, watch and see how they feel about you.

Moses said, “DO NOT BEAR A GRUDGE AGAINST ANYONE AMONG YOUR PEOPLE. BUT LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.” [Leviticus 19:18]

In other words, you should use the power of guilt {negation} on yourself not to bear a grudge against anyone. Jesus put His emphasis on the second half of the adage by using the power of love {affirmation} by loving His neighbor as He loves Himself. A Jew must show the world how not to bear a grudge against another Jew, and a Christian must show the world how to love anyone as he loves himself. What begins within your own family and tribe must then be extended beyond them.

There’s a tendency in our own crowd either to judge our own tribe more severely than we judge the stranger or less so. It’s painful when we see a member of our own family or community acting unwisely. This is a continuum that starts with the behaviors of immediate family members and moves to extended family, friends, neighbors and community, city, state, nation, ethnicity and faith until it includes the whole human race. The natural order of emotional sensitivity runs from parents to children, and then out to siblings, distant relations, friends, acquaintances and lastly, strangers. And even strangers with whom we share our nationality, race or religion usually affect us more poignantly than those strangers who don’t. Loyalty to our tribe begins at home with intense feelings, but these feelings never really end. They dissipate until we feel the desire to include everyone.

Your loyalty to yourself is, by far, the most sensitized, and your loyalty to strangers, the least so. If it feels the other way around you’ve got your work cut out for you in becoming aware of your self-love. Your greatest anger and sense of betrayal will always be with yourself. Negative feelings for strangers flare up, but they die down more quickly than the feeling that you weren’t there for yourself. It may be hard to forgive the stranger who sold you the recreational drugs, but it should be near impossible to forgive yourself for buying them.

A youth well lived will force you to change some of the ways you behave in middle age, and old age will require excusing, forgiving and exonerating yourself for how you behaved when you were young. When you see your emotions emanating out from yourself in this way, you’ll protect yourself more from yourself sooner. You’ll do a better job of being gentler on others. And you’ll experience God’s rewards for being slow, but not too slow, in getting angry at yourself. The God “WHO IS SLOW TO ANGER” is trying to tell you something... [Psalm 145]

When asked which of the commandments was the most important Jesus replied, “LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH. [Deuteronomy 6:5] THE SECOND IS THIS: LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF. [Leviticus 19:18] THERE IS NO COMMANDMENT

GREATER THAN THESE.” [Mark 12:30-31] Jesus summed up The Ten Commandments with these two quotes from Torah.

We’re fallible human beings, not because we have bad thoughts, or unresolved feelings. We’re fallible because we may not feel equally about everyone we meet, even if we’ve been taught to think that everyone should be treated equally. We desire the opportunity for equality be given to all, and yet we want the freedom to feel any way we like. It’s fair to hold a wide range of opinions about tribes of people, but those beliefs may be based on negative stereotypes built up in your heart over decades. If you question your feelings, you may discover a discrepancy between your desire for the best for everyone and negative feelings you haven’t yet rid yourself of. When your penis tells you “manga” and your heart agrees, your head will have to work overtime with your conscience to figure out what to do about it.

Most people are too weary to do repeated self-inspections of their heart. They find it so much easier to simply take up arms against those of other tribes while commending themselves for all the ways their penis and heart do hold righteous intentions {although only for those in their own tribe}.

Guilt requires that you focus your intentions on your desires. Love requires that you focus your attention on your heart. Both emotional systems {guilt and love} were, of course, created by God. Sometimes your desires are malevolent. Sometimes your desires are for the best. Sometimes your feelings are negative. Sometimes your feelings are for the best. God gives us situations in which we have to learn to do what’s right despite what we want or how we feel about it.

You’re not a 2,000 year-old Jew who was just given the Good News. You’re a modern American who has a “response ability” the Jews then didn’t enjoy then. If you don’t come from at least a good conscience {even though I recommend you strive for a good soul} you’re going to feel judged as wanting by a jury of your inner peers, to say nothing of your family, community, country and Creator. God reserves the right to use people to haunt you with moral confrontations you won’t like. But if nothing else gets accomplished, that will at least teach you to exercise your lazy conscience.

They say, “Idle hands are the ‘devil’s’ workshop.” Jews, in particular, were once known for using their hands a lot when they spoke. But you might use your hands to think out loud without realizing it. Your hands are more like your eyes than any other part of your body after your tongue. Your hands are very expressive. Watch your hands while you’re talking. You’ll be amazed at what they’re saying in addition to what’s coming out of your mouth.

To do this I recommend you watch TV without the sound on. You’ll be amazed at what people are saying in body language, and how contradictory that can be to their words. The

same is true for you. Watch your body language as you speak. You may see the same is true of you.

God gave you Ten Commandments so you could keep track of them with ten fingers. If you don't appreciate each and every one of them you're liable to break the Commandment, and that would severely constrain your ability to handle life. Sharia Law actually makes a lot more sense when applied to yourself than it does applying it to others. Imagine losing a hand for stealing, your tongue for lying or your penis for adultery. It would be fascinating to get a peek at what it looks like in Heaven to see if there are people up there missing physical parts of themselves because of how they behaved down here. It would be a shame to be given eternal life if it meant living without a part of you you've abused. It would be embarrassing if you ended up with an enormous anus in the afterlife because you behaved like a sphincter of great circumference here on Earth.

Perhaps God allows bad things to happen to good people because they're not as innocent as they try to look. And maybe good things happen to bad people because they're not as awful as we think they are. If our Teacher is trying to teach us how to improve ourselves, He must allow us the opportunity to make some big mistakes in order for us to learn how to correct them.

The biggest problem over time could be if He doesn't allow us to correct our mistakes, but rather allows us to repeat them many times over. That might mean He's building a case against us that going to be much harder for us to defend. And if He graduates others before they've had a chance to make many more mistakes, perhaps He's already quite clear on how well He expected them to do in class.

When you look at life as a school, our Teacher is always trying to push us to do more moral introspection to move us out of a languishing sense of guilt in the direction of self-love. Public opinion might have a lot less effect on you once you realize you're not going to be graded in the school of life by any other student's opinion other than your own. When you give pause to how inflated some people's opinion of themselves is and how low others think of themselves, it may become more challenging to think well of yourself.

To take the Creation Story personally requires that you spend time talking to yourself even if that idea embarrasses you or worries you about going crazy. Talking to yourself will end loneliness, emptiness and barrenness from the inside out. If you judge your thoughts, treat your feelings with heartfelt, personal regard and question your urges, you may be able to avoid perpetrating the frustration and alienation upon yourself that you see out in the world. You may stop spreading ignorance of yourself from the inside out. You won't grow into one more tree that has a hollow in its trunk.

We all want to be recognized by others. We all want to be appreciated for all we do for them. We all wish the world would stop for a moment, see us, and take a moment to give

thanks that God brought us here. But get real! If you don't give all that affirmation to yourself, what comes to you from the outside in is never going to feel like enough. If you want to win the game of life, you've got to be your own trophy.

In terms of the psychological parent/inner child model, imagine how frustrating it is having an inner child who's fascinated with life and exuberant about love if his inner parent never says a kind word to him. This is a common problem for those who profess self-love, but who don't really know how to express it. No man would want to admit he's been a bad father to his children, but how many men entertain the idea of apologizing to themselves for having been a bad father to their inner child? The deadbeat dad begins within.

Start by speaking to yourself in the first person plural {we}, and then graduate to the third person singular {he} as God demonstrated in Torah. If it's a good enough communication style for Him, you can do it, too. All God's efforts in Torah are to teach you to love yourself more deeply. If that makes you squeamish you've got a problem with a man loving a man that no gay man should have to suffer for.

The adult who thinks he has free will without having to answer to divine consequences is no different from the toddler who doesn't want to believe that the living room was childproofed before he was allowed to roam around in it. Every toddler has to learn the hard way that there are glass tabletops, sharp corners and slippery floors that he must learn to negotiate. But as he's given more and more freedom to explore his environment, he also has to learn why he should watch his step. Few of us have difficulty judging others to see them as emotional toddlers. Helping the emotional toddler in someone else to discover his way around the living room is a great way to discover new ways for the toddler in you to find inner orientation skills. Teaching is a great prerequisite to discovering whether you're open to learning through learning, and not just through teaching. The world needs more teachers who aspire to become great scholars.

Voting is the lowest common denominator when it comes to participation in our democracy. Some criminals lose the privilege of voting while other criminals take the privilege of voting away from people who have the right to vote. The spiritually spoiled sell their privilege to the highest bidder, and the spiritually naïve let it slip through their fingers. Those who conspire against voting rights, whether consciously or unconsciously, are doing the same within themselves. They're losing their inner freedoms slowly but surely. Political decisions have spiritual consequences because democracy begins within.

Jesus described His human body tactfully using the symbol of bread because the Jews of His time weren't yet able to discuss the topic of the human body openly and frankly. We, therefore, need to explore the topic of this chapter, "Leavened or Unleavened Bread" from the perspective of the ancient Jews.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, which means “house of bread.” He didn’t ask His disciples to partake in the Passover supper in memory of Him with symbolic communion of the bread and wine instead of remembering the struggle of our ancient ancestors in Egypt. He made His request in addition to our tradition. He made it after they’d completed their Passover meal. In that sense it was the “First Supper,” of Christianity, not the last supper of Jesus.

The “house of bread” isn’t just Bethlehem, the town where He was born. The house of bread is Jesus. The house of bread is you. You are the Bethlehem in your inner Israel. You are the house in a land that requires your attention. You must plant a wheat field and vineyard within. You must become a spiritual farmer or the land around you will become as barren as you are.

In the spiritual sense America is a New World Bethlehem, a house of many breads. And each recipe brought to these shores is an expression of God’s love based on history, geography, dialect, culture and familial educational styles that come from foreign lands. The various sub-cultures in America can be compared to rolls made of white, wheat, rye, rice, corn, sourdough and seven-grain varieties we offer up to one another in this incredible spiritual bakery called the United States of America. Our homeland is a unity of spiritual states of being in a new world that’s vastly different from the religious disarray we see when we travel abroad. We’re spiritually blessed with many faiths and philosophies in America.

Parents, siblings and relations, along with the unwashed public, grind down our grain with embarrassment, shame and humiliation - usually without conscious regard for the spiritual recipe of modesty, humility and loyalty we were accustomed to growing up. Disintegration of previous traditions, family unrest and the national disharmony that we’re experiencing today is the result of this milling process becoming further universalized. Societal complaints today can be summed up either by being too fine a flour or too coarse, depending on the preference of the individual and the traditions he was accustomed to growing up. This isn’t a description of a religious truth you experienced as a child. This is a spiritual truth that’s as universal as it is local.

Some “bakers” react instinctively and negatively to changes in the spiritual recipe they grew up with and are accustomed to. They can’t keep down anything that tastes spiritual different from what they’re used to. Some men want everyone eating wonder bread made from the finest, white flour that’s been ground down to dust. They don’t want to have to do the added chewing that comes with coarse grains that tend to get stuck in your teeth.

Nobody should have to swallow all the varieties of living bread found in Jesus’s bakery in America. Everyone has the right to like what he likes. Although there was a conspiracy

to dislike pumpernickel {blacks} in the past, thankfully, tastes have changed. Today San Francisco sour dough {gays} is becoming an acquired taste nationally.

Another way of saying this is that now that European-Americans are becoming a minority in this country, some white males are having trouble getting used to the idea of America as a house of many breads.

Matzo is the original recipe that Jesus was speaking of when He asked to be remembered as unleavened bread. Yeast was added to the Israelites' bread, but they didn't have time to wait for it to rise when Moses rushed them out of Egypt. They were in such a hurry to leave that they baked their bread before it had leavened. Yeast is a culture that produces air as a byproduct of its growth. When yeast multiplies it produces gas that fills the dough making it expand. This increased volume doesn't alter the weight of the loaf, but it dramatically changes its size and texture making it larger and softer.

The emotional equivalent of yeast in man is pride. A man puffs up with pride when he does something right. His emotional size increases when his righteous actions add spiritual air to his physical dough. If the loving influence of his family and environment bake him before he has time to rise up with pride, he becomes like matzo, flat and rigid.

Some men are allowed to rise with pride in their family, but then they're figuratively punched down time and again to get the pride out of them to increase their elasticity while still possible. And then there are those who don't get any yeast added to their recipe; they're never proud of themselves. There's nothing anyone can say or do to convince them they're right about anything. They're the ones who turn into salty crackers.

But even crackers have a place in a house of many breads. Irish soda crackers, biscuits and sacramental bread are forms of crackers baked plain. But there are many delicious crackers with added flavoring or seasonings such as salt, herbs, seeds or cheese. European flatbreads, Middle Eastern lavash, pita and Ethiopian injera, a sourdough flatbread with a spongy texture, prove that people raised like crackers, without pride, have a place in a house of many breads.

Self-love isn't produced out of thin air. Self-love doesn't make you proud, prideful or arrogant. The yeast that was added to your recipe can't be changed now; nor can the timing of when you were baked into the way you are. Self-love comes from seeing yourself and admiring what you are, whether you're a whole loaf of wonder bread, a Kaiser roll, a bagel with a hole in it, or a wafer that couldn't be thinner or dryer.

Some people have to prove that they're pretzels who can twist into any position they need to. Some people need to add salt and herbs to their cracker to express their wisdom and exotic appeal. Some just need to break bread with others as brothers. And some swear off bread entirely claiming to be intolerant of something within it.

Self-love comes from the wine you add to the bread, not from the bread you had no ability to choose in the first place. Being proud of the way you were made comes with the deeds you do. Feeding others and feeling for others makes you proud of who you are. Serving them humbly is the result of seeing and accepting yourself as you are, a product of a Bakery beyond belief.

If you want to be remembered by others you're going to have to first figure out what you have to be remembered for. Consider that the Apostles decided not to remember Jesus for His bread, but for His wine. We know nothing of what He literally looked like because there was no description ever given of His body. In their wisdom the Apostles realized that all breads eventually grow stale and crumble to dust.

Love of your body comes from the grain, the bran and the milling of modesty out of embarrassment. Your flour rose with pride as far as it could when you were young, and if you went through this rising and deflation process many times, you're not alone in having more than one opinion of yourself.

Then you were baked in the heat of late childhood and went through the slow cooling off process of adolescence. Today you're a done deed physically. Even your personality is what it is. Now you've got to learn to swallow yourself the way you are. And don't be surprised if you're stale, moldy or tasteless. Recreating God's recipe is harder than it looks.

Early religious teachers tried to keep men from being prideful, but the times have changed, and tastes have changed. Gay pride has helped all men see the importance of being proud of themselves for the way they look and carry themselves. Pride doesn't come before the fall: arrogance does. Gay pride isn't based on arrogance or superiority. It's based on spiritual inspiration. Our pride is a form of spirit within us that gives rise to new ideas about how society could better operate in a post-modern world. We're not going to let anyone punch down children any longer like kneaded dough, as was done to us. Those days are over.

Jesus asked His disciples to remember Him with matzo, but we should think of Him as the man of universal breads. What He added to the recipe was wonder, the magical yeast that makes the bread in a man rise with pride, the wonder that's baked right in even if the bread isn't allowed to rise. You have to wonder like a child to discover how to make life a "wonder full" experience. Without the process of wonderment you're going to spend your life believing that your life has to be hard, flat and flakey. Without wonder you become the bread of affliction {matzo} made manifest. You end up feeling as though you're eating matzo every day of your life, and that was never God's intention.

The spiritual yeast in bread that leavens us with wonder and the spiritual yeast in grape juice that inebriates us with passion for life are an additive that takes us far beyond guilt.

It's a spiritual ingredient that adds spirit to both grain and grape. It makes the dough in you rise with dignity. It turns the juice in your veins into a wine with a brilliant bouquet.

It's best to have soured a bit on yourself if you want to find life rye. Sometimes you just have to admit how coarse you can be at times. If you're crusty that's because you were made that way. Wonder isn't the spiritual essence that makes gay men more or less potentially palatable than anyone else. Like the Jews, we hold no secret recipe that makes us more enticing than anybody else. We simply add to the inventory of America's homemade, baked goods.

The process of being ground down into flour must be done in such a way that each grain in your being understands and agrees to this magical process. Children need to be taught the value of self-discipline so they can mill themselves and not feel ground down by adults. They need to learn to add the holy water to themselves and not have it poured over them until they feel they're drowning in the religiosity of others.

Eastern Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Protestantism are the three basic baking methods in the Christian cookbook. Each recipe was God created to make loving loaves of Christ's bread. But weaving these three strands of bread into their own loaf of CHALLAH hasn't been easy. Because Christians haven't tried to see themselves in this way, many today may feel discarded rather than chosen. They may be addicted to the material world because their heart and soul aren't fully able to enjoy the spiritual side of life.

The Passover SEDER commemorates the tenth plague that finally broke the hardened Egyptian heart. The SEDER {ORDER} table commemorates our ability today to still choose freedom over tyranny. The Seder table Catholics set on a daily basis called communion commemorates their liberty in choosing love over loathing. Both spiritual tables require a change in thinking and a transformation of the heart that must be coupled with the ability to discipline desires. They both require that you to transcend who you are now by always wishing to become someone even better.

The meek, poor and disenfranchised have less free time to acknowledge the wonder of life. They're often God's unleavened bread baked in haste. Remember them in God's name whether you celebrate Passover or Easter. Their Egypt lies all around them day after day; but their Israel, like yours and mine, lies within. Help them get where they, too, want to go. Help them attain the freedom and liberty to emancipate themselves. The harsh lessons you had to go through were given by God to help shape you, but you can enlighten them to the reason for their pain and suffering by helping to relieve it.

A man can't imagine how great his contribution to this world could be until he can release the hold the head of his penis has on his thinking. A young man has no idea how much more he could be of help to others if he could become more aware of how sex fills his thoughts and rules his thinking. I'm not saying he should stop thinking about sex. (I

don't.) I'm only saying he should learn to recognize the various other voices within him. Far be it for me to tell you what to do with your penis. I only want to stress the importance of you listening to every urge it utters. It could be more of a force for good in the world if you turned up the volume enough to bring your desire to do good to consciousness.

The recipe religious people profess to follow on Friday, Saturday or Sunday should be shared with everyone come Monday mornings. And the recipe the religious use to get them through each day should be spiritually nutritious enough to feed themselves many times a day with little morsels of self-appreciation that they should snack on every hour.

If you consider yourself a spiritual person and still come home from work at the end of the day exhausted, perhaps you're hungry and thirsty for something you're not giving yourself while at work. Bring your faith in yourself to work with you from home, and serve yourself what you need in front of others. Don't bother to try to feed the whole, wide world while you're still hungry yourself. Instead, try to change your world by courageously living a genuine relationship between what you think, feel, desire, believe and do. Believe me, others will see how well fed you are and cry out for what you've got. You don't have to be religious to lead a godly life.

The dietary laws given by the rabbis to the ancient Jews 500 years after Moses were a spiritual assignment from God to prepare us for a great understanding of His message. Eating kosher food may have begun as a higher standard of food preparation, but then these laws were applied to the emotional and spiritual cleanliness we're still working to live by today.

The symbols of bread and wine Jesus brought to the metaphor of Moses have added to everyone's emotional and spiritual consumption. They've given mankind a sense of cleanliness from the heart that we all strive to live by today. You no longer have to have a kosher kitchen to live a kosher life inside. The spiritual process has been internalized.

The greatest question in all of Torah is why God would not have made the 8th Commandment, not to steal, the 1st Commandment. Stealing, it would seem after reading the Creation Story, is the essence of all Jewish law. And yet God, in His infinite wisdom, chose not to put it first in His Ten Commandments.

The answer is as obvious as the question. The spiritually infantile have no choice. The spiritually childlike have little choice. The spiritually adolescent have choices but refuse to acknowledge their thefts, and the spiritually young at heart steal even though they know better. God couldn't *tell* us not to steal. He had to *wean* us off it. So integral to our creation lies the evil inclination in man.

Today many look at the poor as innocent and the rich as guilty. But they don't articulate why they judge them as such. If you began your life poor and became rich, you know how your own outer wealth developed over time. But since you started out life young and you

grew old over time, you should also be able to look at your moral development as a spiritual process. Honesty is the key to spirituality. If you're not honest with others, it could only be because you're not honest with yourself. And if you're not honest with yourself, your moral authority is diminished in God's eyes.

This world is filled with bandits and thieves, but your inner world is also filled with bandits and thieves. The more often you catch the thief in you, the more you'll insist that the thieves around you are caught and brought to justice, too. Your apathy in the world around you is the consequence of your disinterest in catching the thief within.

The hyper-religious don't believe this. They believe that they're not thieves at heart. They believe that if they steal God will forgive them. Therefore they forgive one another for stealing. They steal from the poor. They steal elections. And they steal themselves out from under God's prying eyes to do as they please despite the evidence presented to them by science. It's all but impossible to convince them that they're hypocrites, however. They merely mention the word Moses, Jesus or A L L A H, and they believe they're forgiven.

You can't turn rotten fruit back into budding blossoms. You can't stop today's serpents from going out on a limb. Your head and heart will teach you through experience to show others how to become a tree hugger, or there'll be a price to pay for your ignorance. People are only for practice. Trees are only for practice. Love them both physically, emotionally and spiritually as best you can, and then apply what you've learned from your experiences with people and trees to what you're learning about yourself.

If you see a pretty face you like, face yourself with a bright smile and an open hand. If you see a flat stomach that reminds you of a six-pack, check out your thirst for yourself and whether you're waking up in the morning with the guts you need to face a new day. If you like the poise and grace you see in others when they move or dance, watch where you're going and how you're getting there.

Don't just celebrate life at mealtimes with a full plate and a hearty appetite. You won't be in your body forever, and there are many ways to get your hungers abated and your thirsts quenched. You could be much more actively involved in planning your spiritual diet. And it's all offered free of charge. It won't cost you a dime.

Don't kill human beings unless they continuously refuse to make peace with the gay and the Jew in you. Doing otherwise is a form of stealing from God. Don't indulge in sex with others if you've made a promise of fidelity to another. That's stealing from God. Don't bring a life into this world if you don't want a child. That's stealing from Him, too. Don't spread disease or "dis ease." That's stealing as well.

All that you do will be judged using the 8th Commandment because you're old enough to know not to steal. That's why Moses put the Creation Story at the beginning of Torah and not at the end. We had to be alerted at the beginning of Torah about the moral authority

by which our life will be judged. Stealing is what God cares about teaching us in this world. Stealing is the lesson to be learned from life. Don't worry about the child that stole your heart that died. He graduated with honors. Don't worry about the bread you took when you were very poor. You're going to pay it back tenfold, I can assure you. Don't worry about all that's been stolen from you that you didn't steal in return from others. Your losses will be recorded on your transcript and you'll be well compensated for them. Worry about the moral questions that arise from every glance you steal. Use your guilt, and use it wisely. You're going to need it.

Junk food doesn't go well with a sound, physical diet. Junk sex doesn't go well with sound, emotional diet. And junk beliefs don't go well with a sound, spiritual diet. No one can legislate what people eat, but the American consumer has a lot to learn about consumption. He's stealing his own spiritual health out from under himself, or he's stealing it out from under others. We all have an unwritten contract with society not to eat like a pig at a trough in a restaurant. But who's watching when no one is watching? {You are.} Corporations that insist on *taking* liberties that are detrimental to your health not only don't deserve your business each individual in that firm will pay dearly for his contribution to their theft from you.

Jesus understood the metaphor of Moses instinctively, but He also knew that men would have to be taught how to love more deeply in the flesh to know Him in their heart. Love isn't something you can learn only from the words in the Good Book. Love requires experiences in many forms, discussion and sometimes even heated debate. Those who want to teach love with harsh language or self-serving motives haven't found the source of love in themselves. Self-love isn't something that comes from your head or heart. Self-love is the result of your conscience untangling the love triangle of forces that are fighting for control over you – your head, heart and penis. You're going to need experience with all three for your conscience to become a good guide.

To believe in God you must experience God in your flesh and bones. If Jesus had just been some rabbi with a new theory, the world would only be talking about God as though He were a theoretical force who peers from behind the natural world. Most people wouldn't be able to identify with His humanity. God is real because Israel is real. God lives because His love lived, was killed and is always being resurrected in full view of you even if you claim you can't see it.

God is being manifested universally through the feeling of love. If you don't feel the presence of something greater than you in yourself, it's because you don't feel your own love's presence deeply enough. And the cause of that lack of self-love is guilt. You've got to earn your own praise before you release more of the self-knowledge you've still got hidden away inside. When your love for you becomes real, your love for God and your awareness of His presence within you will bring more truth about you to consciousness.

But love is a process sandwiched in between guilt and generosity. Self-love isn't blind. Self-love may have to be cornered because it's shy.

Thoughts about God are more than enough for those who only want to believe in Him for social convention or as an insurance policy against misfortune. But in addition to thinking about us, God experiences our sorrows with us. He's sad when we're sad because matters of the heart were His invention. And because of that He holds other feelings about us in His heart just like any human being would without telling us what they are. His plan for us is eternal, not momentary. His plan rises above our fears, angers and sorrows to a greater view of the meaning of life. His love rises above our embarrassment, shame and humiliation of ourselves. His love is mother's milk mixed with the wild honey of wisdom. His love is real because He loves us more deeply than we love ourselves.

But His plan is greater than any man can imagine because it includes His plan for women as well. He feels for them, and when we conspire against them, whether consciously or unconsciously, it hurts Him. And so we must learn to give thought to what He's feeling as though He were like a man who loves women. When you can imagine Him in this way you'll then be able to imagine Him able to love a gay man who's also a Jew.

There must be SEDER {order} at the Passover table. But there must be forbidden fruit with living bread and eternal wine at your daily table, too. We must give humanity new reasons to break bread with everyone. In the breaking of bread with everyone, we can look within at how broken we, ourselves, are. We'll see the wonder in our spiritual yeast, and how our dough has been allowed to rise with pride. God gives us this day our daily bread to remind us that humanity is great and getting greater. Our individual part in His plan is so small, so emotionally momentary and yet divinely important to the unfolding of goodwill for all.

The joy that comes from believing in yourself as you minister to matters of your own heart will make you proud to be yourself. You won't allow anyone to shame you or denigrate the tribe(s) you belong to. You'll personify the idea of universal love, the love that shines beyond the love of men for women to the brotherhood behind all brotherhoods, a man's loving relationship within himself. You'll personify the love that dare not speak Their name, Y.H.V.H. Joshua A L L A H.

Those who've been derided and disparaged by family or community personify the forbidden fruit that struggles to ask out loud inside, "Why me?" Gay people have been historically forbidden from knowing and loving ourselves. We're one of the temptations in life most people were taught to revile. We were once forced into in a spiritual Catch-22 to love God or ourselves. And God let us win that argument. But we loved one another to death. He allowed us to learn so much from the lessons from AIDS. From it we learned to

love ourselves because we needed love from our brothers then so much more than we needed His.

Look at the following options:

Man	before	God
God	before	man

What's the principle of your life: man before God or God before man? The correct answer is man before God. If you put God before yourself, you're an ignorant fool. He didn't create His creation to adore Him. He created His creation to adore himself. Only through self-adoration can he come to adore the One who made him.

The hyper-religious go to church during pandemics. They scorn health care authorities. They believe politicians who set up society to make money at their expense. They collude with one another because they believe God comes first. Of the Six Million who died in the Holocaust, the vast majority were hyper-religious.

Enlightenment is a process by which light {intellectual illumination} heat {love} burn {spiritual cleansing}; mystery {personal insight}; smoke {prayer}; the sound of fire {awe}; and the scent of fire {intuition} – spark the embers within you that ignite your mind. Your inner radiance {generosity} is the result of the density of the spiritual wood that feeds your flame. The more spiritually enlightened you become, the more you'll see yourself radiate with all the attributes of your flame until the whole cavern in your head feels warm and filled with light.

When a Christian man takes communion I believe he experiences Him in his heart. That man capitalizes on who He was and what He stood for. A Christian's sense of self becomes spiritually elevated through this ritualized respect for Jesus. God-consciousness enters his imagination with Christ's body and blood, illuminating his head, warming his heart and radiating his love through his soul with His help. The two of them, Jesus and the Christian, He and he, become as One.

But to become as One requires understanding of similes. And in this book, we're only going to be talking about metaphors and symbols. My next book on the Quran will go into the mystery of similes.

The essence of communion can be described through Spiritual Linguistics. This is the way I've seen the Christians I've met manifest Jesus's participation in their life from the inside out. This is the spiritual process by which Christian ritual helps them transcend their experience of themselves to know our Father through His Son. This can be described in WORDS/WORDS/w o r d s because words are the essence of SEDER {ORDER} made manifest by God as what we call reality.

Judaism focuses on teaching others how not to take that which isn't theirs. Christianity focuses on teaching others how to receive that which is offered, and to use it wisely. It shouldn't be that difficult for all men to do both. Once you can stop taking from yourself, denying your truth, and stealing opportunity out from under yourself – you'll understand the mystical process by which everyone has the ability to receive from God. Once you can commune with yourself the concept of communion with Jesus should become easier to appreciate.

The problem in doing so lies in the fact that people are conditioned to focus almost entirely on the world around them without realizing that their ability to do so begins deeply within. If you think of everything that happens from your corneas out in front of you then you're only getting 50% of every experience. The other half is happening within, but your inner eye is lazy. It doesn't want to look at the source of your experiences before you react to what your other two eyes are recording.

The question posed by the title of this chapter was, "Leavened or Unleavened Bread?" The answer is both. Too many Americans leaven only physically and end up overweight. It's emotionally that you want to see yourself leaven, rising out of depression, apathy, anger, hatred and disgust of having to be you. The source of your hope and optimism should come from your inner eye and what it means to get to be with yourself for a lifetime.

Unleavened bread should remind you of the Jewish struggle for freedom that began with the Exodus as described in Torah. Leavened bread should remind you of the Christian struggle for love that began with the Crucifixion. If you can appreciate the unleavened bread you have to take with you on your journey just as it is, you'll then come to appreciate the manna you're receiving along the way. Only then will you see yourself as learning to leaven in life. Only then will you appreciate your daily bread with gratitude for satisfying your appetite to learn.

Salads:
Young or Aged Wine?

The sacred wine of Christianity is the blood of Jesus, which is symbolic of the love of God. But the Christian wine of His love isn't like the juice in the fruit that Adam and Eve ate. The juice of the forbidden fruit is guilt, the generic result of being a metaphoric tree of knowledge that *takes* knowledge without producing feelings of gratitude to God for your ability to think and then communicate your thoughts to yourself, and through yourself to others. Guilt is the juice that runs through your veins that should remind you of the absence of your love for yourself; the negative feeling that tells you that you aren't feeling something positive about your ability to communicate your feelings; that you aren't getting drunk on the passion God poured out for His creation.

You can't treat God like you would a man if you can't imagine Him having feelings just like you do. Morality begins with your duty to use the words God gave you to convey your response ability to humanity. But God could just as well be like one of your devices if the answers to morality could all be conveyed in zeros and ones. Morality must include feelings and especially feelings of compassion and forgiveness for your blind ignorance and disbelief for God to be real in your heart. You must be able to imagine Him in the abstract as something that not only knows you better than you know yourself, but also as a man who loves you more than you love yourself.

Every man's craving for power is seemingly separate from the rest of him, but it isn't really. The delivery system of man's power is connected and able to move about on his metaphoric tree like a serpent that can blend in with a branch. Man's desire to have his own way corresponds to the basest, most innate of animal instincts symbolized by the snake that delivered awareness of God's power without an ability to describe His plan in its entirety. Because a snake has no arms or legs, it must deliver power the only way it can, and that method is described using the psychological terminology called projection. A snake projects your terror back at you.

You are an ambassador of God's will, thus making you morally responsible for representing Him in the best possible light. Don't be afraid to do what's right. Don't let your penis frighten you. It is like a beguiling serpent.

God has the final say on what's good or evil, just or vengeful. A man's serpent speaks as though it were separate from his tree of knowledge, rising up of its own accord without his ability at all times to control "it." "its" desire for power isn't based on moral authority, but on moral capacity. This wily creature is well aware of the fruits that hang down from the tree around its head and other times far below its head. "it" has had a good view of these fruits from both directions. This snake knows what the juices in the fruits are meant

to produce because they pass through “its” mouth to make their way out into the world. “it” just doesn’t know the difference between taking and receiving. “it,” like all the other voices within you, has to learn right from wrong.

The fruit Eve picked was never actually mentioned by name in Torah. All we know is that it was the fruit of a tree not another form of botanical plant growing in the garden. And because we can’t ascertain the exact fruit or the juice it produced, we should therefore assume that the fruits of every man’s powers are unique to that individual. Each man represents God’s power in his own, special way.

The guilt that arises from taking knowledge of right from wrong without learning to receive it gratefully is the moral to the story that every insightful man comes away with. As he grows from a seed, to a sprout, to a sapling, and as every sapling slowly grows into a gnarled, old tree, the species of that tree becomes less important than the spiritual process of growing that’s common to them all.

Gay men are particularly good at stealing glances at men when nobody’s looking. We’ve learned to time our thefts at just those moments when we know we won’t get caught for taking a look at those parts of men’s bodies we find particularly tempting. Needless to say, we have no intention of apologizing or atoning for these appropriations of pleasure. And every other man has to decide for himself what he’s willing to feel guilty about taking, and what not. We’re all guilty. Now it’s just a matter of each of us deciding for himself just how much, when and for what he’s willing to accept guilt and live with it. Some thefts demand we all point fingers in shame at our brothers. Other thefts do not.

Don’t be petty about stealing glances. We all do it. But some men also cop a feel. Would you draw the line with gender or with touching? Loving the look of a man is nothing to be ashamed of. Touching anyone {man, woman or child} inappropriately, however, is a grievous sin. Get your priorities straight. Don’t make being straight your priority.

The blossoming uses of knowledge grow into many a sweet and bountiful harvest. As a boy grows to become a man, he discovers what the fruits of his labors are, but they’re rarely about making money. He must learn for himself about the red, hot passion that courses through his veins and inebriates his loins. The fiery substance that bubbles up in his veins is figuratively the fermentation that comes from the fruit of the vine. A man will come to see himself as a symbolic vine in addition to a metaphoric tree. He has emotions that grow separate from his thoughts. His words become wooden crates filled with grapes in adulthood. And he’s carefully taught how to display his crated grapes just by showing off his physical attributes.

The guilt for not more fully appreciating what you were taught about the Creation Story may leave you feeling banished from an inner Eden you can hardly remember - for a mistake you never knew at the time you made. Guilt leads a man to do his duty to others

and to avoid mistakes in the future. But guilt doesn't lead him to pursue a life filled with self-love. Until recently most men were only taught to look for love outside themselves in the opposite gender. Only late in life did they discover how little capacity they had to love themselves. The young are now willing to avoid the mistakes of their fathers by loving themselves right from the start.

The way back to Eden in your mind is fraught with mixed metaphors and messages that make your inner world confusing and difficult to describe. You can compare and contrast yourself to the world around you, but that doesn't always help make sense of your experiences when viewed from within. The only way for you to move through the metaphor of man-as-a-tree is to use knowledge of the world around you to develop spiritual, gardening practices within.

If you start thinking about a problem, and your minds wanders to another problem, and then yet another, you can easily come to the conclusion that you're moving underground like roots breaking through consciousness with shoots that feel intellectually distanced from where you started and where you wanted to go. This can lead to frustration, which can then lead you to conclude that you're trapped in your mind, moving in many directions but going nowhere. Escaping this mental/emotional predicament becomes hard to define without the main metaphor of Moses and symbols of Jesus as a guiding principle.

You can witness evidence for this happen around you in conversations in which people suddenly change the topic for no apparent reason. You can even see it in yourself when your mind comes back to answers you already discarded. Seeing and pulling weeds in your garden must become a way of life. There is no rest for a gardener.

Man is intellectually undisciplined because his thoughts wander like weeds that choke his ability to think. He grabs wild grains and chews them. He picks a berry from a vine, nibbles it, and then moves to another in his inner wilderness, not realizing how uncivilized his thinking and feeling patterns really are. Before he knows it, he surrounded by thistles or stuck in a briar patch, unable to get out.

Making a home for himself and the other voices inside requires commitment and hard work without wandering away from his own land. A man must learn to plough his mind to prepare it for the seeds of good ideas without seeking distractions from ancient, intellectual, farming techniques like burning fields, that have no place in a modern world.

It's so much easier for man to let others feed him what he needs to know than to grow his mind as he would a garden. There's so much menial, mental work to do and so few men who love the land within them. Any Noah can grow a vineyard for the joy of getting drunk, but to cultivate yourself like a patch of fertile soil given to you by God requires a great love for spiritual farming. Living the life of your ancestors by using modern, spiritual techniques takes year and a lot more love of your inner earth than most modern men have been trained

to handle. If you've received a good, secular education and you don't know yet what to do with it, isn't it like having been given seeds without a place to plant them? The Bible is nothing more than a spiritual farmer's almanac.

If Adam and Eve had known they were the physical product of grains God had ground down to flour, mixed with holy water and baked into loaves of living bread, and if they'd known they were the emotional result of grapes gathered, crushed and made into new wine they would never have needed to be picked separately the fruits of the Tree of knowledge. But that would be putting the cart before the horse. God had a duty to address the crime of the spiritual infant before we can now claim to see His intentions then in saying, "CURSED IS THE GROUND BECAUSE OF YOU; THROUGH PAINFUL TOIL YOU WILL EAT FOOD FROM IT ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE. IT WILL PRODUCE THORNS AND THISTLES FOR YOU, AND YOU WILL EAT THE PLANTS OF THE FIELD. BY THE SWEAT OF YOUR BROW YOU WILL EAT YOUR FOOD UNTIL YOU RETURN TO THE GROUND, SINCE FROM IT YOU WERE TAKEN; FOR DUST YOU ARE AND TO DUST YOU WILL RETURN." [Genesis 3:17-19]

The ground that was cursed was not in the world around us, but in the world within us. Thanks be to God for having taught us how to make both our worlds more comfortable and pleasant. Thanks be to Him for teaching us not to steal from ourselves. How else will we learn how to respect others if not by respecting ourselves? Therefore you must put yourself first, even before God, as painful as that might be.

The only thing that separates man from an animal is the thought of not stealing. Only a man can morally address the meaning of theft. Only when you think of a good idea as something you could steal do you create the guilt that shifts your thinking from the orchard of thinking into the vineyard of feeling. This is what we must consider before we come to the Christian concept of there once having been a rabbi who had no father, but who did have a Jewish mother, woman who could claim to be a virgin who'd been impregnated by God, not by man. As implausible an idea as that is, what man is not figuratively from such a woman?

Figuratively speaking, the flaming sword God used to protect the Tree of life could be interpreted euphemistically as His penis, the delivery system of His power, which holds all seven of the attributes of fire. But God's sword is unique in that it enters us without cutting us open or leaving a visible scar. Unlike a man's flaming sword that cuts a virgin open leaving her literally bleeding, God's sword does not. He can impregnate any of us without leaving visible evidence of us having been penetrated. I could even call the birth of my inner child a virgin birth. Every man is, after all, half woman.

In asking to be remembered symbolically for the sacrifice of His flesh and His blood, Christianity created the positive regard we have today for the human body and the perception of love rather creating new life as the reason for sexual intercourse. Ancient

Jews weren't sexually experimental or prone to mix their blood with that of strangers. Today's liberal Jewish views on sex in general and marriage outside our faith is, I presume, the long-term effect of Christianity on Jewish, spiritual life, which had been heretofore exclusive, restricted, inflexible, constrained, rigid and blinkered.

What must have happened upon the delivery of baby Jesus is also different from what happens in a normal birth. In a normal birth the father of the child opens the birth canal of his virgin bride at conception. But in Mary's case the birth canal would have still been closed since God's sword would leave no visible mark. Therefore either Jesus came out of the Virgin Mary without breaking her hymen or He broke it on His way out. Roman Catholicism purports that Mary remained a virgin before, during and after her insemination by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus represents the physical embodiment of the flaming sword that protected the Tree of life with purity from man. He became the man who personifies love who sits on the right hand side of God and pronounces judgment over the world because His own flaming sword, love, also leaves no visible wound. He's the personification of the protector of the moral importance of the love of life, not just the recreation of life without a greater purpose than repetition for the sake of repetition.

The night before His death He asked His disciples to remember His body. They didn't literally write down a description of what His body looked like, but they figuratively created the Church out of His body as it looked when it was whole before it was broken on the cross. The later fracturing of the Church into three pieces {Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism and Protestantism} broke Christ's figurative body into the pieces God has left us with today. Imagine, therefore, the body of Christ as having a head {Greek Orthodoxy}, a heart {Catholicism} and a soul {Protestantism}.

The night before His death He also asked His disciples to remember the blood He was going to shed on their behalf. His blood is a reenactment of the Cain and Abel story, but where Abel's body cried out from the ground for justice, Jesus's blood cries out from the seven seas for forgiveness of His brothers.

In Judaism the fruit of the vine is literally wine made from grapes. In Christianity the fruit of the vine is Jesus's symbolic wine. In Judaism drinking the fruit of the vine after the Sabbath prayers represents a spiritual thirst quenched with our gratitude directly to God for His love. In Christianity the fruit of the vine drunk during the Eucharist represents a spiritual thirst quenched with gratitude directly to God for His love. And in Islam, because they're forbidden from drinking wine, they approach this process in the abstract. Needless to say, it's possible for every man in the Abrahamic traditions to experience the three states of love: physical, emotional and spiritual - regardless whether he's straight or gay, Jew, Gentile or Muslim.

The increased knowledge of the self that comes with experience out in the world, combined with psychological introspection, will trigger a passion for God-consciousness. But you've got to make many connections between the world around you and the world within before you can experience God's participation in both places at once. Since one of these worlds is so public and the other so private, for some it's difficult to imagine how He can be in both places at once.

When your curiosity about your life has been stimulated sufficiently for you to question how you operate, your interest in God increases naturally. Wonder bubbles up questions that you saw only as clearly only when you were a child. With wonder comes awe, and with awe, inspiration. There's no coincidence or accident in who becomes inspired.

Most people will agree that life is a journey, but they just aren't quite prepared to take the metaphor seriously enough. They're cynically stuck in the literal meaning of words. They're not moving spiritually forward quickly because they haven't been educated in how to take the Bible figuratively. Life may be a journey and our body may be our vehicle to get us through it, but some of the most intelligent and heartfelt people on Earth are terrified of fender benders because they don't know how to do the bodywork necessary to get the spiritual dents out that make them feel like a wreck. Even if they could assure you that Jesus loves them, you can almost be sure they don't love themselves.

Cynicism is the intellectual outcome of grape juice that's turned to vinegar rather than wine. Cynicism is an inner souring process, an anger at yourself that's very destructive whether it's projected out onto others or inwardly. Many men never grow up to become like fine wine because of what happened to them in childhood or puberty. They never enjoy the bubbling effervescence that makes others pop with excitement about living their life with robust enthusiasm.

Adolescence is supposed to ferment you with a bubbling up from within that should bring greater spirit into your life. The sweetness of the grape juice that produced wonder in the child ferments in adolescence to produce new wine that intoxicates a pubescent with sex appeal and raw physicality. The activation of this spiritual fermentation is a memory never to be forgotten in the kitchen behind the banquet of a man's life. When he looks back at his teens and recalls how curiously sweet and mysteriously intoxicating his life was then, he's reliving an experience of optimism he once held intimately.

The problem with a well-developed conscience is that it tends to get focused like a flashlight in one of your two worlds more than the other. This means that your mind's eye has to learn to watch for the light of morality and where you tend to habitually shine it. Let's look first at what happens by shining your light out onto the world of politics.

The far left likes to shine their moral light on the Jews, the Israelis specifically, with criticism. The far right tends to shine their moral light on the gays, and the minorities

generally, with equal disdain. Ironically these two often become strange bedfellows as though the political spectrum were a circle and not a line. The two extremes more often stand back-to-back pointing fingers at the centrists. While the right shouts “war” and the left, “peace,” they often find themselves having to agree that war *and* peace are the most realistic political answers that must be judiciously chosen.

When you shine your moral light on yourself, your conscience is going to create bad habits without being able to acknowledge the moral imperative in doing so. Overeating, smoking and ingesting inebriants, for example, are morally sound solutions to thoughts that are immoral and spiritually harmful. By punishing yourself for bad thoughts with life threatening health issues, you’re trying to punish yourself for stinking thinking that you aren’t able to address any other way because these thoughts have been unexplored for their moral relevance. The answer to stinking thinking doesn’t lie in behavior modification only. The answer lies in talk therapy, but the kind of candid conversations you can’t have with another human being. This is a level of intimacy that must be addressed within.

For the lucky youngster who sips himself slowly and gets emotionally tipsy on what’s happening within, puberty can bring on the experience of great awareness of his personal pride and power. Puberty can be that time in his life when solving problems for himself makes the wisdom of learning from grown men’s experiences very exciting. Adolescence can signal the first time a boy suddenly realizes he has the physical and emotional power of an adult male, and therefore a reason to connect with other men, not oppose them with childish defiance.

The boy/man knows he doesn’t yet have the power that comes with experience, but his search for heroes around him doesn’t make him feel weird anymore. Teenagers who don’t have this connection with adult males become a danger to themselves and society. Their lack of heroes forces them to guzzle themselves until they’re drunk on the inebriating effects of the cheap wine within them rather than the fine wines, brandies and cognacs around them. They drink until they run out self-inebriation, still thirsty, and then they have to unconsciously hold out for a hero to enter their world to save them. Such young men want to grow up to admire themselves, but without older, wiser men to admire before they can admire themselves, it’s unlikely they’ll get far in life.

This preference for people older and more experienced in early adulthood emanates out from a part of a man that deeply wants to listen and feel seen. There are heroes sought by young men on the left and the right because they both value interdependence. They want to lead as well as follow. The world is generally becoming more liberal over time because people are becoming more willing to express a desire for heroes who portray a moral direction that can be interpreted figuratively, not just literally. It’s harder today to be wise than it once was. It’s harder to see your enemy as standing beside you rather than back-to-back. For this we will always require plagues and other acts of God to unite us.

A man is a moral edifice that's always under construction. The architectural wonders of the world are mirrors of man's moral accomplishments mirrored around him. Wisdom requires you become the keystone to your own arch. You've got to create an entrance into yourself that's both practical and attractive. This entryway is best represented in the world we share by the arch whose foundation rests upon the stone at the center whose weight pushes onto both sides, distributing the weight of the stones evenly to keep them in place.

For me, one side of that stone is gay and the other side, Jewish. I see all the faiths on the right side of me, the Jewish side. And I see the philosophies of the world as situated on my left, the gay side of me. In this way I can place myself at the center of my own archway with the whole world being evenly supported by my conservative faith in God and liberal worldview of mankind.

You don't have to have the same keystone as me, but you must have one that will evenly support your world from within and an inclusive world around us. If not, either your internal or external structure will collapse. We see this happening on the political right in this country with regard to gay issues and minority rights. We see this happening on the world stage with Muslim views that refuse to acknowledge the right of Israel to exist.

God is merciful, but your edifice to the Lord must be built to His exact instructions. Stones will come falling down as they did for Joshua #1 at Jericho. [Joshua 6] Innocent people will get hurt if you build walls for the wrong reasons and arches without secure keystones. The secret to a strong, inner temple can be found in the rooms around you.

Young, red-blooded Americans are, in some ways, more like barley wine commonly called beer. They're the fruit of the grain, not the grape. Aging emotionally isn't important to them. They're a little nutty, tangy and tart. They worry more about become sexually stale. The longer a young American male tries to remain juvenile the more that ales him.

To become inebriated more on the Bible than new beer, a young man must develop a thirst for spirituality. But many today aren't thirsty for spirits or spirituality. They yearn only to blow smoke out their nose and mouth or up your ass. Like knights pretending to fight fire-breathing dragons, they make peace with their foes for a time. For them the crusades haven't yet begun. Their fantasyland isn't yet in conflict with their inner Israel. Their quest for God is fanciful.

The story of Abraham and Lot is a curious psychological relationship portrayed in Torah. Abraham left his father, his homeland and all that he had growing up to follow God's call to him. And yet he chose to bring his young wife and nephew with him. The relationship of this one uncle to his nephew is one of the unprecedented loyalties between generations in the Bible. For this man who later refers to his wife as his sister to protect himself; a man who throws one son out of the house and almost kills the other for God's sake – Abraham's loyalties were curious indeed.

But when Lot needed his help, Abraham was there for him. Abraham saved Lot from an entanglement with the law in Sodom when Lot first moved there. And yet, when three angels later appeared in Sodom to warn Lot of God's plan to destroy the city and the three were accosted by the town folk, Lot saved them, perhaps remembering how vulnerable he'd once felt himself amongst his own neighbors. When the town folk surrounded Lot's house where he had hidden the strangers, Lot, in a moment of excessive hospitality offered the men of the town sex with his daughters rather than give up the strangers and allow his neighbors to violate the three of them any way they wanted.

Fortunately this story ends with the three angels helping Lot and his family to escape the destruction of Sodom. But unfortunately Lot's wife gets turned into a pillar of salt on the way out of town for looking back in regret at all she had to leave behind. And his daughters end up raping him when they believe they're the last women with the last man on Earth. When you give preferential treatment to strangers over regard for those closest and dearest to you, you lose more than hope. You lose your dignity. Mistakes of priority can have devastating results.

The man who uses his conscience to make moral choices under situations where the options are either bad or awful finds himself in desperate need of priorities to determine what's most important in his life. The way Lot lavished his love on strangers and stingily withheld it from his own flesh and blood is a painful reflection of how we often mistreat ourselves similarly. If you consider yourself to be a human being, then you, too, might deserve the fate of Lot for the crimes you've committed against your own humanity.

How many men feel well held by their uncle, but unfairly treated by their father? How many pour their loyalty to strangers, like from a pitcher into a glass, but treat their loved ones abominably? The outcomes of our lives depend on our actions for others, for ourselves and for God. The third dimension requires actions be taken in three ways.

The baby drinks milk, the unconditional love that comes directly to it from its mother's breasts. The child drinks from cups, fruit juices that fill him with wonder at the sweetness of life because he's gotten a handle on feeding himself. The adolescent drinks new wine or beer directly from the bottle, and is comforted in learning he can love and be beloved physically by others for the effervescent joy of being young and shapely. The aging drink in the fine wine of virtues that course through the veins of all those who make the claim that they're moral pillars of justice in society. And the old drink hard liquor kept in a decanter and served in crystal glasses, They savor the money, power and prestige that they're going to give up. Only the ancient see through it all and remember the blood of Christ as their life is nearing its end.

The world is a school where everyone has to learn how to hold his liquor in some sort of chalice, flask or glass. While the young lap up a brew of sarcasm and cynicism as though

from life's never-ending, flowing breast, the mature wisely return to the grape with silent, symbolic silence. Only the oldest inebriate themselves on the cognac of spiritual self-success with calloused disregard for propriety, pride and personal purpose.

Babies have no faith. They cry out. They sob. They whine. Children have faith, but their faith is easily lost with disappointments that sour them on their reliance on others. The spiritually adolescent use their imagination to anticipate the ecstasy of independence and the joy of loving one special someone they can call their own. Only the sober state of the true believers who move beyond cynicism to self-love will bless the way things turn out when looking at life as an inside job.

The Story of Lot is the last step a man takes without his conscience yet as his guide as God attempts to be included in his plan. The nephew of Abraham is everyman who's so projected his conscience out onto others, forgetting who it is in his life who really means the most to him. Treating strangers like respectful uncles is a recipe for disaster if you treat them better than you treat your own family. Too good is very far from good enough.

In the Jewish tradition we speak about our relationship to God as one in which we are all sitting at His table. This is called HASHULCHAN AROCH {the long table}. Spiritual sustenance is served at His table, a table that gets longer and longer as more people come to it to be spiritually fed by Him. If sitting down at this table next to a gay-Jew feels like a moral compromise or imposition, don't expect to be invited to stay for the whole meal. You should see it as an honor to be seated next to someone like me. If not, you won't be served certain dishes or you'll have to watch as some courses are removed before you're finished.

Your body is sacred bread, a container for the self that must literally be filled with food. Your body must be given physical comforts and educational tools to learn how to physically survive in this world. The bread of life is your own flesh, whether that will be satisfying or unsatisfying, pleasing or displeasing to you. Your container will leave you with an impression of being handsome or ugly, financially rich or poor, physically strong or weak.

Your blood is sacred wine, the contents of the self that you will age, hopefully with wonder for the lessons you've passed in the school of life. Your blood is the symbol of life's emotional struggle that makes living worth living. Your wine is either fulfilling or unfulfilling. The content of the wooden caskets in your heart are filled with grape juice, fine wine or vinegar. Pop the cork and see.

If you don't like the blood in your veins, your thirst for blood ought to be quenched by waging a war on yourself, not others. Your desire for fulfillment can take the form of military service if you're so inclined, but not your thirst for blood. Your thirst for blood must be quenched metaphorically or you'll pay a terrible price for your folly.

What differentiates the immature boy from the mature man is his attitude toward emotional fluidity and potency. The spiritual infant thinks of himself emotionally as milk in a bottle, and he suckles life. The spiritual child thinks of himself emotionally as juice in a cup with a handle, and he drinks up life. When he reaches spiritual adolescence he concludes his feelings have fermented into wine in a leathery flask, and he squeezes life out himself and squirts it playfully into others. It isn't until he's spiritually mature that every drop of his own love becomes as precious and worthy as a tear he wrings out of himself as though from an eyedropper.

You were given an emotional diet that figuratively ranged from milk in infancy to juice, and then to spiritual wine. But by late in life the sediments settle and even the resins added began to coalesce. As a man becomes more emotionally powerful, he also learns to become more emotionally self-sustaining. His body becomes as easy to break as bread, but his heart becomes easier for him to see and swirl around like cognac lovingly held in a snifter. When a man becomes aware of the true meaning of the bread and wine Jesus spoke of, he draws better conclusions about the value of both.

After appetizers with him God, They served a salad of Abrahamic traditions with a tangy, vinaigrette dressing. There were a variety of breads to choose from and I got to sip a glass of young spiritual wine that had been bottled up inside me for decades. But when They served salad after salad I thought the meat and potatoes would never come...

Salads:
Stones or Loaves?

“IF YOU REALLY ARE THE SON OF GOD,” SAID THE TEMPTER, COMING TO JESUS, “TELL THESE STONES TO TURN INTO LOAVES.” JESUS ANSWERED, “THE SCRIPTURE SAYS, ‘MAN SHALL NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE, BUT BY EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS FROM THE MOUTH OF GOD.’” [Matthew 4:3-4, Deuteronomy 8:3]

Each WORD that comes “FROM THE MOUTH OF GOD” is, of course, a description of God’s communication system in metaphoric form. To describe the way God utters His words lies beyond the ability of man to put into words. If your mind is like a railroad transportation system with trains of thought crisscrossing your inner landscape on tracks of feeling to get your goods to market in the form of the words that proceed from your lips, you can imagine that the communication pattern God employs is literarily beyond description. His WORDS/WORDS/w o r d s create the physical and moral laws of the universe; they don’t just describe the physical and moral laws of the universe as our words do. “IN THE BEGINNING THERE WAS THE WORD...” But what God was thinking before He uttered His first WORD, we can’t possibly fathom.

When you read the transcript of what Jesus said about Torah in the Gospels you hear His rewording of the WORDS of Moses in your head even though no sound passes through your ears. You hear His words in an inner silence. The trains of thought on which you’re moving Moses’ goods to market are trains Jesus conducted before you found your way to the locomotive to engineer yourself.

The inner train travel instigated by these two rabbis creates something greater than simply learning. It’s positively inspirational. It moves boxcars filled with Their Jewish ideas to undiscovered locations on your inner landscape. But whether you unload anything of moral importance at each station is entirely up to you. It’s happening in *your* world, not ours.

Reading is a curious and miraculous skill every child would be more eager to participate in if the process were described more concretely. Reading is really a skill by which you learn how to listen with your eyes. And although that’s an amusing way of putting it, that may be too abstract an idea for a child. Before a child is taught to listen with his eyes in the silence of his mind, he needs to be taught how to play with his trains of thought and unload boxcars filled with cases of cans of alphabet soup to get them to their intended markets. He needs to see the fun that can come from reading when it engages his imagination with spiritual promotions in the form of dreams.

It is written that Jesus said, “THE SCRIPTURE SAYS, ‘MAN SHALL NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE, BUT BY EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS FROM THE MOUTH OF GOD’. The

Gospel quotes Jesus; Jesus quotes Moses; and I quote Them. This movement of goods; unloading them from your train; warehousing them at a station; and then reloading them onto someone else's train - is the process by which Their stories have been transmitted down through the ages. Everything we have in our European-American lifestyle is the result of what came to us on those trains.

This mysterious method of conveying wisdom is mirrored in the mystery of the expression "EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS FROM THE MOUTH OF GOD." When you quote Torah, and if you believe that Torah is the first WORD of God, then as a Jew, Christian or Muslim you ought to also believe that, at the very least, the first 25 chapters of Torah are the alphabet of God's WORD expressed in the best way Moses could convey it to humanity.

Although the sounds of words reach our mind, whether we use either our eyes or ears to hear them, most people allow words to go in one ear and out the other. They aren't taught how to hold words lovingly in their heart. The word in Hebrew for "paying attention" literally translates as "putting your heart into it." Concentrating should be seen as a heartfelt experience that intensifies your ability to hear and listen, see and perceive. If you have a child who has difficulty concentrating or communicating, he may not have learned how to use his head in conjunction with his heart when he speaks. He may not even know the difference between the two.

Communication is a moral questioning process that began in your parents' home. If you were only taught right from wrong, but not taught to question using both your head and heart, you may have had to resort to begging or debating your parents to get what you wanted. Communicating is a moral application of words through which you learn to anticipate consequences *before* you take action, not afterwards. Communicating is harder than it looks because it includes a world of feelings and urges that have to be dealt with for moral reckoning.

The dubious skill of being able to read words without taking them fully to heart stems from a spiritual vulgarity necessary in modern day life. We all have to learn to listen half-heartedly in order to take in information quickly when the information is merely data that holds no emotional or moral message. Really concentrating appropriately to what you hear or read is harder than it looks because it's a skill you have to be taught to dial up or down at appropriate times. People who excel in technological or scientific skills are able to listen and learn exceptionally well with their head. But listening with their heart is a skill that's also vital if they want to communicate more fully on their job and with those at home.

Concentrating requires that you hear the words you read with your eyes; see them in your head; perceive the message they're conveying with your imagination; as well as listen to them with emotional intensity so that they make an impression in your heart that can then be perceived by your conscience. If you're especially good at using either logical

thoughts or intense feelings to learn about the world around you, you can turn that intensity around and use it to learn more about the other side of yourself to balance the way you were habituated by your own learning style.

As a child you were trained in some way to do what you were told. You rarely if ever were trained to do what you told yourself. It's only by hearing yourself speak in the silence of your mind, perceiving with your head and listening with your heart to what you've said to yourself that you can teach yourself to see where you're weaknesses in learning lie.

But this process of learning how you learn has a moral contingency. You're not going to listen to someone you don't trust or respect. You've got to go out of your way to prove to yourself that you're someone you admire. If you don't like yourself, you're not going to listen to yourself. And if you don't love yourself, you're not going to do what you tell yourself if your urges tell you otherwise. That's simply elemental. {The question isn't *whether* you have a penis problem. The question is only *how* your penis problem has been manifested.}

Those who can hear themselves think and really listen to what they tell themselves, move out of autonomy toward self-intimacy and a real sense of freedom that emanates out from within. They learn how to teach themselves by themselves. They practice what they believe might be true on others to see whether that's good enough a behavior to use on themselves. That may sound manipulative and self-serving, but life is a laboratory for learning. If you don't use the laboratory of life around you and experiment to see what you've personally learned about yourself from having been sincere or insincere to others, the conclusions you come to on how to treat yourself in your world within will disappoint you over time. To develop your conscience as a guide that you'll be able to trust using on yourself, you're going to have to do experiments that will leave you with both positive and negative experiences about how to get along with others.

You may be the last person on Earth your parents trained to take seriously. They may have trained you to listen to them and many other adults like your teachers and religious leaders. But they may have been reticent to teach you to follow your heart if they didn't know how to unlock the Bible metaphorically or symbolically.

You probably would never think to thank yourself for your own counsel, but there are appropriate moments when you deserve your own appreciation. There's a tendency to thank God when something extraordinary occurs around you. But there are plenty of examples of His help happening within you that you may not have noticed. The more you learn to communicate with yourself, the more obvious the difference will be between what you do for yourself and what He does for you. Neither of You is in charge of everything within you. Each of You has His part to play.

There are three things you probably wish you could tell yourself that you can't yet say to yourself sincerely:

1. You probably don't want to have to listen to you compliment yourself. Compliments may make you think you're insincere or self-indulgent. And if you do listen to you complimenting yourself you may doubt what you hear you saying because of low self-esteem. If you're the type of person who likes to boast to others in the hopes they'll appreciate you for you, that will only accentuate the evidence of your inability to appreciate yourself.
2. You may not want to listen when you tell yourself not to do something that's dangerous or unhealthy. You may have a little voice inside that tells you you're too old to be talked down to like a child. And in an effort to avoid a conflict within yourself, you may consistently choose to indulge the child in you instead. Until you learn how to fight fairly with the child within and win from within in a way that meets your moral needs, you may come away feeling like a loser overall.
3. You may not want to feel guilty for something you didn't do. You may not want to associate your embarrassment, shame and humiliation with lessons from God through others. You may not want to have to think about life as a moral school where you're constantly being challenged to learn more and more about yourself. Achieving wisdom of the heart is an ongoing accomplishment. Many people would prefer to morally sleepwalk through life and wake up on the other side to look back at how they behaved after it's all over. They don't want to learn how to reward themselves step by step for the very smallest of victories in managing their feelings. They'd rather leave receiving their rewards to chance. Love ends up taking a back seat to guilt. And then they choose to avoid their own guilt rather than embrace self-love.

You don't have to teach a child how to speak. They learn naturally. You don't even have to teach him to talk to himself. He learns how to do that, too. But you have to teach adults how to talk to themselves because they've forgotten how. Torah teaches you that there's a need for you to talk to yourself or you come away from its stories intellectually deadened. Torah teaches you to question, and above all to question yourself.

Jesus teaches you that there's also a need for you to listen and obey yourself. The combination of the two will make it possible for you to use the words "no" and "yes" respectfully when speaking to yourself. But *you* have to begin the conversation. You have to pose the questions. And *you* have to listen carefully as you give yourself the answers. And then you have to run those answers through your conscience and ask yourself if the answer you gave yourself is up to your moral standards. Becoming wise is harder than it

looks. That's why every person was given an anus, but not every person behaves like an asshole.

The great, mental health problem of the 21st Century is that everyone, including religious leaders and psychologists, are unschooled in thinking metaphorically, feeling symbolically, and comparing and contrasting their beliefs to others'. There's a gentleman's agreement in our society never to talk about politics or religion. And there's an unwritten agreement never to talk about anuses, only accuse others of being assholes. And yet these are precisely the three topics you should be discussing with yourselves. If you don't take self-governance and your beliefs to heart, you're going to regret the way things may unexpectedly turn out for you.

People don't want to discuss their thoughts, feelings and desires with others because they haven't learned to do so concretely with themselves. It's much easier to talk to others about the weather around them than the weather within. It's much easier to argue over whether man is the cause of the climate change around him than to admit he not only is, but he's also the cause of the scary and erratic climate changes within him. Floods, hurricanes and droughts can suddenly ruin a nice day.

It's important to learn to communicate with yourself if you want to advance communication in a healthy way with God. Prayer is a communication skill every faith advocates, but *that* they aren't well prepared to teach. Once you overcome your shyness with yourself, you'll be amazed at the doors that will open inside for you (and out). Prayer will become a common practice. Your inspirational conversations with yourself will just naturally begin to include God.

Nobody wants a stranger to jump on the hood of your convertible, reach in and grab your steering wheel to get you to go in a different direction. You've got to encourage yourself to get behind the wheel and teach yourself how to operate you from inside your vehicle. Stop yourself if you're the kind of backseat driver who rudely barks orders to you from behind. Even sitting in the passenger seat isn't good enough; you don't need you screaming and shouting inside about every move you make. You need to get in the driver's seat where you can take full, moral responsibility for all of your actions. You need to keep your hands on the wheel, your eyes on the road and your feet prepared for anything.}

Jesus quoting Moses saying, "MAN SHALL NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE, BUT BY EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS FROM THE MOUTH OF GOD." But Moses had been talking to the Israelites on the eastern side of the Jordan River when he said it, summing up his wisdom in his last words to them before he went off on his own to die. The complete quote is "(God) HUMBLING YOU, CAUSING YOU TO HUNGER AND THEN FEEDING YOU WITH MANNA, WHICH NEITHER YOU NOR YOUR FATHERS HAD KNOWN, TO TEACH YOU THAT MAN DOES NOT LIVE

ON BREAD ALONE BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT COMES FROM THE MOUTH OF THE LORD.”
[Deuteronomy 8:3]

Jesus was born and raised in Israel. He very likely took the meaning Moses gave God’s WORDS personally because He understood that his words had been conveyed to Him over more than 1,400 years by a process of compassion He could feel for a man who knew he’d never be able to utter a word in Israel itself. Moses had been forbidden from entering Israel, making his quote about living by every WORD that comes from the mouth of God a poignantly personal expression of his own fate.

Jesus couldn’t literally identify with the hardship Our ancestors had suffered as they’d wandered in the desert, hungry and thirsty, but He must have realized that the manna God had bestowed on them satisfied a hunger they’d never known previously. He must have realized from His interpretation of Torah that He was the living bread of affliction, the manna in the flesh and symbolic bread that would satisfy a spiritual hunger the whole world would learn in many ways to consume with love.

Jesus likened God’s WORD to bread, matzo and manna. *Bread* was the staff of life the Israelites ate without undo consideration to its religious significance while they were slaves in Egypt and again when they were free men in Israel. *Matzo* was the bread of affliction they baked in hopeful anticipation before their miraculous passage out of Egypt and at Passover every year thereafter. But *manna* was the miraculous bread God served only to the Israelites who were hungry and alone in the desert when they felt so dependent on Him for their survival and sustenance.

If you wish to take God’s WORD as metaphor you have to learn to extend the metaphor and then chew on it, not try to swallow His WORD whole. You have to digest its meaning slowly, allowing it to pass through you smoothly and satisfyingly. Man does not live by bread alone because he learns, over time, that he also needs matzo and manna to sustain him. {And if he’s really good at that, he’ll get challah to eat every Shabbat.} Jesus melded this metaphor given Him by Moses with symbolism, the idea that His body was a container He couldn’t figuratively fill only with bread.

Because Jesus saw Himself as God’s first symbol of love in the flesh, He became the first message wrapped in the messenger, like challah {made up of three strands } that signifies three spiritual aspects of God. Hillel is quoted as saying, “If I am not for me, who will be? If I’m only for me, what am I? And if not now, when?” The Hebrew is more succinct, literally stating, “If there’s no “I” in me, who am I? A modern rendition of Jesus’s rewording of Scripture might assert that if there’s no wine in me what’s the good of being living bread?

Love doesn’t get used up. It doesn’t dissipate, dissolve or evaporate. Love is real even if you don’t see it as something real. Love is the insubstantial substance God created for

you to collect while on your journey here. If you can't get past metaphor to symbolism to perceive this truth from within, you'll never find your reason for being. You'll never enjoy the rewards of intimacy with yourselves.

A man is more than the bread of affliction {matzo}. He's more than a gift from God {manna}. He's more than special bread baked for the Sabbath that contains several strands woven into one loaf {challah}. Man is even more than that living bread {Jesus}. He's symbolic bread filled with symbolic wine. He's a spirit going through a human condition in order to improve himself in his own eyes.

For those of my tribe at the time of Jesus whose status was high enough not to be unduly troubled by the restrictions imposed on them by the Romans, love was the last thing they wanted to talk about. Granted, the ensuing rebellion by the working class Jews at the time was something the Romans hadn't experienced elsewhere in their empire. These *poor* Jews showed the Romans that they weren't about to return to the slavery they'd experienced in ancient Egypt and Babylonia without a good fight, and a good fight they gave them.

Jesus offered His countrymen a spiritual remedy that wasn't yet well understood in His time. He focused on matters of the heart in a way Moses hadn't. But remember, Moses had been conscripted into God's service. Jesus did so of His own accord. Jesus's message was for free men who were being ill-treated by intruders in their homeland. Jesus came to Jerusalem bringing a message to *rich* Jews who were neither all that hungry for freedom, nor thirsty for answers so long as they could continue to kill animals unabated to appease God's wrath.

There was no psychological terminology in place 2,000 years ago to discuss these matters in this way then. They couldn't see the outward Jew and Roman in themselves. And they couldn't see the inner, spiritual struggle between the Judas and Jesus in themselves.

The big spiritual question on the table today is how to govern a heart with hope once you realize you've betrayed yourself and can no longer trust yourself the way you used to. How can you believe in the wisdom of Moses or Jesus when your heart is filled with feelings of self-disappointment and bitterness? This isn't exactly a penis problem. When you know you'd only use the delivery system of your desires for righteous action, but you can see that your heart isn't willing to participate in the concept of love because of cynicism, what do you do next?

The shame of self-disappointment must be addressed in the privacy of a man's inner world by himself alone. He can't always allow God into his conscience given how he feels about himself. A man sometimes feels nude, naked and exposed. Therefore a conversation this emotional can't always include his conscience. A man has to listen with his head to how his heart really feels about the issues in his life, and he has to allow his heart to express

itself and feel heard regardless of how base or violent his feelings may be. With his head overseeing this process, he'll be able to protect his conscience from taking action with lonely logic as his only tool.

This process of tinkering with yourself under the hood will give your childlike heart the opportunity to be heard by an inner parent who isn't going to squash your feelings as may have been the case in your past. It will give you the opportunity to hear yourself free from moral indignation, the "should" that often makes being ourselves so difficult to bear. Giving yourself permission to let "in" your feelings of frustration, indignation and stunned disbelief may give you a sense of liberation you never knew before. It may lead you to feel the disappointment in yourself you need to feel to know that moral success in this world is harder than it looks.

Money was the great vehicle for spiritual wellbeing at the time of Jesus. Jews then couldn't bring animals from all over the Mediterranean to Jerusalem to sacrifice at the Temple. They had to bring money instead. Moneychangers made it possible for them to atone for their sins by buying animals for sacrifice to relieve themselves of their guilt and get on with their life.

Money is still a great vehicle for reconciling with God today. When people get into debt, it's because their heart has given all it could. Obviously people today don't need all the crap they surrounded themselves with. They often discover after the fact that they'd been trying to buy their own love as well as the love of others. They sacrifice a *buck* instead of a bird or a bull.

But this has gotten people nowhere. Their inner temple is shaken to the ground just as the Second Temple was torn down. They find themselves ruled by Roman barbarian who want to uproot them. They find themselves in emotional chains being carted off to frightening places within them. The Diaspora of the Jews was a 2,000 year-long exile that you might know all too well in your own way. You don't have to *be* a Jew to *feel* Jewish.

When Jesus turned over the tables of the moneychangers He was sending a message that went very deep into the psyche of the ancient Jew. He was saying that money can't buy God's love, nor anyone else's for that matter. In fact, by today's psychologically higher standards, He was even professing that money can't buy your own love. "GODLINESS WITH CONTENTMENT IS GREAT GAIN. FOR WE BROUGHT NOTHING INTO THE WORLD, AND WE CAN TAKE NOTHING OUT OF IT. BUT IF WE HAVE FOOD AND CLOTHING, WE WILL BE CONTENT WITH THAT. THOSE WHO WANT TO GET RICH FALL INTO TEMPTATION, AND A TRAP, AND INTO MANY FOOLISH AND HARMFUL DESIRES THAT PLUNGE PEOPLE INTO RUIN AND DESTRUCTION. FOR THE LOVE OF MONEY IS A ROOT OF ALL KINDS OF EVIL."

SOME PEOPLE, EAGER FOR MONEY, HAVE WANDERED FROM THE FAITH AND PIERCED THEMSELVES WITH MANY GRIEFS.” [Timothy 6:6-10]

The love of money can bring you happiness, but not tranquility. It can bring comforts to your outer world, but not your world within. “THOUGH YOUR RICHES INCREASE, DO NOT SET YOUR HEART ON THEM” [Psalm 62:10] As a man increases his monetary wealth his tendency to fall in love with his possessions begins to possess him.

But that’s not an unsolvable problem if you can separate your bread from your wine. Comfort, beauty and convenience are gifts for the body. It’s only when you substitute bread for wine that you forget the wisdom of your heart.

More money will help you like yourself more than you now do. It may even convince you that you’re adorable. But you’ll never be able to love yourself because you have money. If you try to become a modern moneychanger to facilitate a system of prayer in exchange for bread, you’re going to discover that this was a system that didn’t work then and doesn’t work today any better. You’re going to turn into the stereotype of the cheap Jew who was set up as the poster child for every man who thinks he loves himself thanks to his ability to make money. You’ll see yourself as sweet bread on the outside but you won’t have a drop of wine within to substantiate your claim with inner wealth.

When you don’t have enough emotional wellbeing {self-love} to trust yourselves, you certainly aren’t likely to put your trust in God. You’ll do things for others as payback for bad feelings you have about yourself. You’ll make sacrifices. You’ll feel guilty for the way your heart feels about you. Your head, penis and conscience will do generous things in the world around you to make up for how lousy you feel about yourself.

There’s nothing wrong with striving for financial independence so long as your pursuit for learning about yourself {joy} remains greater than your pursuit of happiness. When people claim they only want to be happy, they’re unconsciously reinforcing being rich and adorable on the outside. But the spiritual system is rigged. You can’t take it with you. If you don’t cultivate a vineyard, all the forbidden fruit in the world or wheat fields you plant aren’t going to increase the joy {inner peace and contentment} in being you. You must have wine, not whine.

Money cuts many an emotional corner, but putting off your relationship with yourself for another day is a detour you don’t want to take. Money enough to make you happy will make it possible for you to buy yourself the material rewards you want to appease you by blackmailing you into leaving you alone. Most people gift themselves with things as a substitute for emotional promises of love and loyalty to themselves that they aren’t able to keep. Most people are ready to turn over the tables of the moneychanger in the temple in themselves. They just wish a Jew would come along and do it first. {He already did.}

Anti-Semitism is a rigged system, too. First the Jews hated themselves. Then the Christians hated the Jews. And now the Muslims hate the Christians and the Jews. There's no way out of anti-Semitism until the Muslim in your soul makes peace with the Jew in your head and the Christian in your heart. Anti-Semitism is only spreading from the world around us into the world within.

The cost for taking emotional shortcuts creates cynicism. It leaves you feeling bitter about others' motives when your own are deeply suspect. Cynicism leads to unearned self-importance, which then distances even the most ardent believers from themselves, making them wonder why they sometimes feel like an alien dropped off at the wrong planet.

In Psalm 23:4 it says that "EVEN THOUGH I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH, I FEAR NO EVIL, FOR YOU ARE WITH ME; YOUR ROD AND YOUR STAFF, THEY COMFORT ME." God gave you your own rod. It lies in your conscience to strike you when you stop moving forward. And He left a staff in your conscience for you to lean on for comfort as well.

God uses sticks and carrots on us all, but He doesn't do anything to us that He doesn't want us to learn to do for ourselves. He uses tough and tender love to teach us about His love. He may have decided to come here in the flesh to bring the message of His love because it was getting too hard for Jews to love themselves while thinking of Him sitting safe and sound in some café in Heaven while they were sweating bullets down here. If you don't get a sense that He's been through what you're going through, it may make it harder for you to take Him seriously. Whether or not Jesus is the Messiah, His story supports man's desire for his own love to be both real and ideal.

It's clear from Jesus's life that He tried to tell our ancestors that they couldn't buy their way out of guilt with animal sacrifices. God reiterated the same message soon after He died by allowing the Temple to be destroyed. Christianity had to face a similar lesson as in Judaism 1,000 years later when it tried to reduce guilt with "indulgences," monetary contributions to the church for a good place in Heaven. That caused the schism in Roman Catholicism in Western European Christianity that has produced the many Protestant faiths.

Today's emotional challenges to admit our guilt to ourselves are no different from those then; only we now have psychology to add to our arsenal of self-knowledge. Guilt doesn't magically go away by sacrificing animals to God, paying indulgences to the institutions of our faith or by becoming an atheist to avoid guilt altogether. And guilt certainly doesn't go away by assuaging our heart with food, alcohol, drugs, gifts to ourselves {staffs} or sacrifices for the sake of others {rods}.

The new and improved form of sacrifice after the destruction of the Second Temple was called, self-sacrifice. Because God knew the ancient Jews wouldn't want to embrace

a more intimate, spiritual system to deal with guilt internally, He took animal sacrifice away from them suddenly. And then the 200 year-long argument over the number of temples ended abruptly. The same resistance to change is causing consternation today as people are facing self-seeking in place of self-sacrifice. Now people don't want to give up the guilt they're so accustomed to for the uncertainties of self-love. Many still insist on putting God before man. And we can anticipate that they're going to die in droves by denying science from making that mistake.

Seven hundred years prior to the birth of Jesus, when driven out of Israel in the Babylonian exile, "BY THE RIVERS OF BABYLON, THERE WE WEPT, WHEN WE REMEMBERED ZION." [Psalm 137:1]

While some of the less educated, ancient Jews wept for their spiritual home in Zion, the smart rabbis realized that there was more to this circumstance than met the eye. They assumed that while their ancestors had been slaves in Egypt, God wasn't in Heaven twiddling His thumbs. And when they found themselves in shackles in yet a second major, world civilization, these rabbis had to have assumed that God was doing more than sitting in the rubble of the First Temple waiting for them to find their way back to Him in Jerusalem.

The smart Jews realized that He had allowed misfortune to befall them to teach them that He hadn't literally been in the Tabernacle when they thought they were carrying Him on the Exodus to Israel, and He wasn't in the ruins of the First Temple waiting for them to come home. It suddenly dawned on these rabbis that God was everywhere around them regardless of where in the world they happened to be.

The fact that God is universal was big news at that time. But the fact that He had a plan for the Jews that would include two other world faiths was impossible for them to foresee.

In retrospect history has shown the Jews that Israel would always be in our blood, regardless of where our body happened to be situated out in the world. The Temple in Jerusalem would always live in our heart, regardless of the ghetto walls constructed around our neighborhood. And the fire on the altar of our inner temple would always burn with a desire for God's will to make life a miracle in the making, a struggle with Him for knowledge in the most personal and meaningful sense of the WORD.

Judaism has been improved upon many times in history. The ancient Israelites who wandered for more than 40 years 3,400 years ago didn't just change their location in physical space. They were spiritually transformed by their journey. When my parents went to Israel in 1948 after the horrors they'd faced in the Holocaust, they had no longing to destroy animals to assuage their guilt. But they also felt no need to spiritually cleanse themselves before God with religious love in our Promised Land. They decided to move to America instead.

Abraham was an immigrant who chose to live in the countryside when he got to Israel. Lot was an immigrant who chose to live in Sodom, a city not unlike those of today. Abraham's sons, Ishmael and Isaac, were new, native-born sons in a land where the people there then had a lot to learn about God. The underlying principle of this is expressed beautifully in the Hebrew expression, "TISHANE MAKOM, TISHANE MAZAL." {CHANGE YOUR PLACE. CHANGE YOUR LUCK.} Every new addition to society brings a new message from God.

Guilt is the rod of life you may feel you've already bought and paid for. Self-love is the staff that you're now learning how to earn. If you can lean on your rod with your left hand, and your staff with your right you'll move forward with less chance of slipping and falling with every step you take.

Jesus must have realized in His own way that the bull his neighbor sacrificed at the Temple to supply him with spiritual strength was a load of *bull*. The sacrificing of an animal was never going to give the giver what he really most wanted and needed, the strength of character associated with that animal. Projecting human virtues onto the animal kingdom and then killing those animals or deifying them was done by all primitive cultures at the onset of religion, but especially by Judaism. Today only the death of humanity can be seen in the eyes of animals in the wild. Today we mirror the worst of our nature in nature.

Self-sacrifice doesn't work any longer to assuage man's guilt. The cost to the planet has been too great as the land, sea and sky has suffered while man has raped the planet fearlessly and without thought to the future. Modern man is now readying himself for the tougher challenge of self-seeking that will develop faith in himself. God's plan for man isn't really all that inscrutable. In fact it isn't very difficult at all to see. And just like the ancient Jews who had the Temple pulled out from under them, then thinking that would be the end of Judaism, modern man is now threatened with the end of life on Earth. This threat to civilization is really only the end of our previous way of feeling about ourselves, and the stinking thinking that goes with it.

Jesus was the first messenger who didn't feel separate from His message. He made Himself the scapegoat for humanity, the lamb for the Lord that Abraham had previously chosen Isaac to be without Isaac's consent. Jesus taught our ancestors about something greater than sacrificial gifts to God. And although at that time His message of love ultimately required self-sacrifice as well, today we're ready to take love to the next level. Because of the example He set you can use Him as a model to replace your guilt with the desire to learn about self-love. In the school of life, that's quite a large topic.

The importance of striving simultaneously for material and non-material rewards in life can't be overstated. You must take care of your physical needs, but you also have to allow for your emotional and spiritual needs. If you don't see your body as precious manna sent

down from Heaven by God; if don't spend your time wisely discovering the hope you have for yourself - you'll sacrifice yourself needlessly because of others' greed or defiance. You'll put your physical efforts {and probably your heart and soul as well} into something or someone, and you won't get appreciation in return. You'll feel impoverished inside, whether or not you have money.

Ironically, another Jew restated Jesus's message eloquently almost 2,000 years later in scientific rather than religious terms. Sigmund Freud, a Jewish atheist, opened man to his inner world by mapping his internal terrain. Freud entered the landscape of inner forces and raised the flag of wisdom, love, generosity of spirit, {and, of course, penis problems}. He conquered religious dogma with scientific inquiry, and in doing so unknowingly opened the door for us all into the realm of spirituality.

The ancient Jews defeated the Greeks who invaded Israel 2,400 years ago, giving the ancient Jews the luxury of using the wisdom of Torah to incorporate Greek intellectualism into their cultural milieu. Because the Romans who invaded Israel 400 years later so outmatched the Jews militarily, the ancient Jews required a different strategy to survive them. Symbolic logic from Jesus combined with the metaphor of Moses was what the Jews unknowingly used to get the barbaric Romans to carry Their messages to Europe, and from Europe to much of the world.

Needless to say, the last 2,000 years haven't exactly been easy for anyone, but Jesus's message of love has finally been taken more and more personally. Today the Western world can see the importance of loving everyone, even gays and Jews. Now that such ideas have become plausible, it should be possible for people to go to the next step - loving themselves. In the end self-love will conquer the world, and self-seeking will replace self-sacrifice as the unwritten, spiritual rule of law.

God's WORD is the rock at the root of every tree, but He allowed us to crack open that rock with the knowledge at the root of ourselves a long time ago. The rabbis began that process when they broke the WORD of God up into the spiritual stones that became the religious foundation for all future faiths. Those stones have since been broken down into the pebbles and sand which are the everyday principles that grind each of us down with faith even further. We may use words with no more thought to them than dust, but however seemingly small and insignificant a man's words are, they're as hard and real as rock.

Words and songs are the only verbal expressions we have with which to affirm our contracts with God. But the stones we throw so casually to unseen friends in the form of promises, and the boulders we set in place as treaties between nations, are the only real proof we have that man's word is good. God may be the Rock beneath every tree, but He's also the Ground the root of the grass clings to and the Stone at the root of the vine.

Only when we imbue the material world with emotional meaning do our things take on their true, spiritual meaning. Only with love for the earth/Earth does truth become personal and real. You've got to move from metaphor to symbolism and from symbolism to signs from God to find your reason for living. If you can't yet put your whole heart into your life you're going to need to want to learn how.

But let's not get too sentimental about the importance of love over money. Let's not forget about the importance of both, and help people achieve both. Wisdom of the mind leads to the appreciation of money. Wisdom of the heart leads to the appreciation of love. You're going to want to work on sharpening your brains as well as developing your emotional brawn.

The way to invest yourself in life is with genuine interest in both your head and heart. To know yourself and to love what you know about yourself will bring you both material and non-material rewards. And the rewards will come to your head and heart, thinking and feeling capacity, material and non-material world, to the degree that your conscience is willing to grapple with the moral meanings you're facing.

If it's your vocation to strive for a clean conscience to convey more clearly to yourself how each part of you {head, heart and penis} receives its revenue stream from your soul, only then will your wealth will increase substantially in all areas of your outer and inner worlds.

The problem with men worldwide is that they think a big belly demonstrates inner wealth. Body fat doesn't correlate with largess of character. Fat and jolly are meaningless associations of your container with your character. If you're not happy with either your character or your container, you need to look at that as a moral issue since you have to live with yourself for a lifetime. If your head, heart and penis are conspiring against your conscience, what sort of experience would you expect life to show you?

The problem with love in America is that some straight men think every man's testicles produce semen the same color as their skin. They act as if black men have semen that's black; Hispanic men have semen that's muddy brown; and Asian men have semen that's sickly yellow. So far as I know {from my exhaustive research on the subject}, I've had to come to the conclusion that every man's semen is white, or off white. The life-giving forces in all men are the same color. Therefore fear of the life-giving force in men of color is illogical since the juice in the fruit of every man is the same color as yours. What you see on the outside is no reflection of what a man is producing within.

Gay men of my generation had to learn the hard way {by seeing so many of our friends die from AIDS} that God probably isn't crazy about exaggerated amounts of experimentation with strangers when it comes to sexual expression. A whole host of lessons can be learned when you settle down with one person to explore self-seeking with

one precious witness to your life who wants the same thing you do: self-love. Marriage equality is affording this new generation of gay men an opportunity to contribute to the kinds of spiritual lessons that come of a committed, loving relationship recognized under the law. Surely gays will raise the class curve on the tests of marriage because we've fought so long and hard to achieve it. At last straight people can now see that our success in making marriage a greater institution than it was will have little to do with what goes on in our bedroom.

(I recommend you look up the lyrics to Willie Nelson's song, "Always on My Mind." Although he uses the word "girl" once in the first stanza, the lyrics work very well as a prayer to Jesus. I see it as a confession of a spiritual relationship with God he let slip with disregard for His feelings that he learned to regret.) Self-love can be expressed in unexpected ways in unintended directions. I'm sure God, in His infinite wisdom, is well aware that many men can only tell a woman how they feel about Him. It's a pity that we, as men, write off a prayer as love song simply because it's addressed to a woman.

The question presented in the title of this chapter was "Stones or Loaves?" "Stones" refer to the WORD of God given to Moses that was then broken up into the many words that have given us insight into His plan for humanity. In the Hebrew Testament man is described as having been made from clay, the most refined and malleable of all rocks. Each of us is spiritual clay shaped by our parents, culture and the time in which we live. None of us had any input into that molding process until after our clay was hardened and baked.

To understand man in the way the New Testament makes its claim {that he's made of spiritual bread and wine}, a man must learn to love the human body he's in as much as he loves his daily bread. His body is the only loaf he really has and all he'll someday have to lose. And when he finally "breaks bread" with his Maker, all he'll have left is the wine within him to offer up instead.

Justice doesn't have to wait for Judgment Day. You can judge yourself moment by moment. Your day of atonement doesn't have to come once a year on YOM KIPPUR {The Day of Atonement}. You can atone to yourself minute by minute. God gave us three Sabbaths each week, but people reject the other two. He gave us a Judgment Day, too {death}, but we reject that as too far in the future to make a difference now.

The stones lead us to examine the clay. The loaves lead us to examine the grain. To find the meaning of life through the Hebrew and Christian Bibles you must imagine yourself as a woman, a clay oven in which God bakes living bread. Until every man sees himself emotionally and spiritually as equal to every woman he meets, and stops looking down on her as a daughter who came from the "bone" he contributed to her creation, he's going to make major mistakes of judgment. {"GOD CAUSED THE MAN TO FALL INTO A DEEP SLEEP; AND WHILE HE WAS SLEEPING, HE TOOK ONE OF THE MAN'S RIBS AND THEN CLOSED

UP THE PLACE WITH FLESH.” [Genesis 2:22]} Until man see that he can’t see all his mistakes, and he’s not going keep an open mind to atonement.

Anti-Semitism is going to continue to move closer and closer within those who resist the wisdom of Moses. They’re going to blame every Jew on Earth for the mistakes of judgment Moses warned them of that they were too defiant to listen to. The Leaning Tower of Pisa wouldn’t lean today if 14th Century Italians had known more about the spiritual foundation that caused the Tower of Babel to come crashing down. Young men of every generation will turn their mother into their daughter emotionally if that’s what their father showed in arrogance to do. For men to look down on women is nothing new. If only Adam had thanked God for giving him Eve instead of blaming the two of Them.

Salads: The WORD of God

The depth of words is the underlying essence of life and the foundation of every faith and philosophy. Words are deeper than they look on a page. They echo off other levels of reality within when they sound in your ears. Words have more potential than the shades of gray that appear in the black-and-white thoughts in your mind. Words can create a rainbow of feelings that will give your heart a sense of hope. Words are the sign of God's presence in your heaven within. Your words, not your biceps or chest {and certainly not your penis} are what make you a man.

The importance of every WORD/WORD/w o r d that escapes your lips can't be overstated because, for all the paradoxes and puns that come with words, words hold four basic directions you can go in, like the four directions of the compass: north {thought}; south {desire}; east {feeling}; and west {belief} "Go west young man," said Horace Greeley. Don't go only north and south. After you make your way into your heart always find a way to go toward what it is you truly believe.

The problems in this world are all problems of faith and philosophy because people don't feel sincerely enough about what it is they believe. They throw the baby out with the bathwater because they don't realize that that baby is baby Jesus. If you don't believe sincerely, and sincerely believe, you'll find yourself on the road to Hell going from east to west and back again. You'll find yourself going back and forth between your feelings and your beliefs *ad nauseum*. These are the two good intentions on the road to Hell that can cripple a man from within. If you don't believe in your own sincerity and don't feel sincerely about what it is you believe, you're going to experience frustration. Frustration is physical tension that alerts you to the tug of war between these two God-given intentions {feelings and beliefs} that made you righteous from the start.

The relationship between these four forms of being {thoughts, desires, feelings and beliefs} is literally exemplified in the sign of the cross religious Christians make over the outside of their body. A Christian should learn to use his words like a compass. He should learn to use the words that escape his lips to determine his position in inner space. What's the point of going on a pilgrimage somewhere out in the world if you get lost inside and don't realize Jesus gave you a compass to guide you to Him?

When a Christian crosses himself, he's accentuating the importance of the WORD of God, not just recalling Jesus's crucifixion on the cross. The importance of Torah in His life points to the importance of Torah in his life. Being a Christian is like carrying a double major in the school of life. It's more work than it looks. But the effort will pay off when

you come to your final exam. The questions of life are so simple that we often find ourselves suffering with spiritual simplicity.

Life started out as a dictionary as a child when you learned to use words to convey meaning. It turned into a thesaurus when you realize the words you use have more than one meaning, especially when you speak them within. But life ends up as a Bible when you learn to use your words as a manual to convey the hopes and dreams you have that will build a world inside and out that mirrors the ideals we all share.

The infant stares straight ahead in search of something he can't articulate. The child looks around when he does something wrong to see if anyone else saw what he did. The adolescent looks behind him with guilt to see where he was before - in childhood. The young man looks up in the hope that God didn't happen to notice him. But the wise man looks within at his moral compass, regardless which directions his eyes may wander.

God-consciousness starts out by imagining Him in a literal place around you, like it did for the Israelites who imagined Him being carried in the Tabernacle. They carried God because they saw Him as needing to be carried, when, in fact, it was Him who was figuratively carrying them. The modern Jew knows we only go where God takes us. He doesn't try to take God where he wants Him to go. He knows he's going to have to do all the heavy lifting. God is only choosing what it is he's going to have to lift.

Putting God before man is a recipe for disaster. If you want to ingratiate yourself before your Maker, spread your deeds for man, woman, child and the planet before Him. Why would God create a creation that would adore Him? Why would He need His ego to be gratified? The man who thinks he has to appeal to God's ego will be forced to face his own.

The adult sees that his relationship to everyone develops, including his relationship to himself. He's a person, too. Then he realizes his relationship to God must also be developing. A mature, modern man looks for God within and then questions how He's manifesting Himself around him with challenges.

Those who think of God as behaving toward us exactly as He did with our ancestors don't appreciate the spiritual evolution of humanity. They still think we're babies in God's eyes, that He still holds our whole world in His hands. In truth He's given us more freedoms and liberties over the centuries in order for us to emancipate ourselves from our spiritual past. Today we actually stand by His side. We're too big for Him to carry us any further.

The two-fold process of thinking about God and then developing loving feelings for Him is essential to being a Christian. The Old Testament {justice} and the New Testament {mercy} aren't separate schools of thought. They're two schools in God's one institution of higher learning. Every true believer with Abrahamic roots needs to be trained to use the Christian Bible to access his own love for the Lord through self-love, not just an appreciation of His wisdom or generosity of spirit.

People produce offspring with the unconscious goal of externalizing the inner games they're playing with themselves. Children become mirrors that reflect their parents in ways neither may find flattering. Seeing your children as psychological mirrors to improve yourself spiritually is like going through the looking glass. It brings you into a world that may seem exaggerated, distorted and unreal. But you can get back to this side of the mirror. You can see how God gave people to you to help so you could learn to help yourself. Those who've chosen to observe themselves psychologically without having kids are in the dubious position of learning about infants, children and adolescents through their own story. Their story holds a genesis of its own.

You can give yourself the father of the year award for raising an inner child you can be proud of. But if you find yourself wolfing down food over the sink; spending money you don't have; or in bed with someone you don't know well enough to truly trust – you can be sure that the little tyke within you will find a way to get back at you for what you're doing to him that he doesn't much care for. Your inner kid may tell you what he thinks of your parenting skills and how you model your principles in ways he knows will make you suffer. In some ways he knows you better than you know yourself. It's so important to teach him wisely if you want to learn with him about self-love.

Everyone has moments when he reverts to his terrible twos. Everyone has moments when he's forced to deal with someone who's reverted to his terrible twos. Everyone plays father and son. If you don't give consideration to the Father/Son relationship set in place by Christianity, you're going to have difficulty literally being a father to a son or figuratively playing the role of father and son.

The problem in playing the role of father is that you may have to play that role for your own mother and father. You may have to honor them as they honored you. And this may be very emotionally painful for you late in their life. It may cause you to see the depth of the 5th Commandment {to honor your father and mother}. It may make you feel like a very small, little man in relationship to God. It may leave you feeling that you've been asked to grow up even more than you intended.

It's an honor to be asked to age. Many leave school at a very young time in their life. Growing old inside is a blessing, however difficult that may be.

The great gift God gives us is privacy. We have the option of facing our embarrassment, shame and humiliation with or without Him as we struggle to live with ourselves. He lets us include Him in on the discussions we have between our head and heart, but only if we want to. He even lets us develop a conscience to guide our thoughts and feelings if they're unable to agree on a course of action. But the soulful man yearns for God's presence. He wants His help in raising his inner child, especially after he's discovered how miserable a kid he can sometimes be...

Sharing this internal process with Jesus is a good idea, but only if you recognize that He was human with good reason. He understood human nature; He understood psychology even though the word “psychology” hadn’t yet been invented. He understood the inner forces that ran the Jews around Him because He understood the forces that ran Him. You probably don’t need a “friend” in Jesus. You’ve probably got enough friends. You ought to consider Jesus as the Therapist who’ll help you heal.

Those who speak about the Creator of the universe as “the universe” without giving Him a name are atheists who think of God as Whomever. They don’t have the insight yet to realize He gave us human qualities to mirror His nature. Agnostics believe in His head, but they aren’t yet willing to have a personal relationship with Him because they aren’t yet able to hold that deep a personal relationship with their own heart.

Self-intimacy doesn’t correlate with righteous behavior until you come to believe that God has a heart. People who know there is a God aren’t morally superior to those who don’t, and they also aren’t morally inferior to those who know He has one. Each is a belief that mirrors a level of self-awareness each individual has to make in his own way. The more you come to know and love yourself, the deeper your belief in God will grow.

The Jew or Muslim who doesn’t think of God as a man in every sense of the word is deceiving himself, but the Christian who only thinks of God as a man is deluded. God is “intersex” in the sense that He represents both genders. And He’s “intrasex” because He represents the gender that you embody. His plan first included dividing Himself in two to create the idea of male and female. Then He created Adam and Eve with a desire to know both halves of Him through themselves. The way a man treats a woman is therefore his prayer to God or his curse.

Your thoughts are the masculine part of you that points up to heaven like an arrowhead. Your feelings are the feminine side that points down to Earth like an arrowhead. Your desire to be a well-integrated combination of the two solders these two triangles together as they’re pointing in the opposite directions. Your father and mother are the human representations of the two. One is the “y” arrow and the other, the “x”, that make you, you. The more you engage honestly with your thoughts and sincerely with your feelings the more elegant the bond will be between the male and female sides of you that were bonded together to make you a living Star of David.

Everyone experiences frustration about how hard life is; confusion about what to do about it; and disappointment with how things are turning out. Few can give themselves credit for the source of their love. Just because you can’t literally see your own flame doesn’t mean you can’t feel the heat emanating out from it. The white at the center of your inner flame is self-intimacy, your love for you alone. It’s the only part of you hot enough to ignite you again and again.

If your outer struggles seem to extinguish all hope of you ever understanding others, remember that your inner struggles are endeavoring to bond you to yourself with wisdom from all you're learning about you. It isn't easy. I know it isn't easy. But persevere just for the sake of each hard-earned step forward you take.

Fear, like guilt, is real. And fear of guilt is also very real. It's normal to feel afraid if you've done something wrong, and it's normal to feel guilty if you feel afraid. There isn't as much room inside your chest when you notice how much space your feelings and beliefs take up. For a boy to develop hair on his chest isn't something that has to happen physically, so long as he feels it's happening emotionally and spiritually.

Experimenting with your ethical regard for others is one way to reorder your own priorities to make them more righteous. It'll illuminate you to what would be better or worse for you when you go inside yourself to prioritize your principles in the ways you wish you'd treat yourself. But forcing others to do the bidding of your conscience will never teach them how to use their conscience as their own guide. If God wanted you to do that with them, He'd have given you a Siamese twin.

Life only becomes a university of morality when you prove to yourself that your major in life is "me." Changing the world should be the consequence of changing yourself. Changing the world shouldn't be a substitute for changing yourself. Too many people are too good. They want to fix the world more than they want to fix themselves. It can't happen from the outside in. That's why everything's always turns out to be harder than people assumed it would be.

Those who still want to rip Israel away from the Jews should ask themselves what it is that God wants? Those who plot how to cheat blacks, women and gays out of equal access to the law should ask themselves if they think the Teacher is that stupid to reward them for the power they've subsumed?

God can see right through us. If you want what He has to offer, take a closer look at yourself by imagining His perspective on you from your penis. Did He enroll you here to be a class monitor who works out in the hall or a student who works quietly in class? If monitoring the other kids to get them to class is more important to you than learning about yourself, you may think yourself very cooperative, but your work habits need a great deal of improvement.

The morality of Israel's existence as a Jewish state isn't up for question. The rights of blacks in our society aren't up for question. Women must determine what's right for women, not men. And if gay rights is still a question for you, you've got a penis with an awfully big mouth.

Man live in a glass house, but he doesn't thank God for His panes. If we took life more seriously, we'd ask ourselves why bad things happen to people who are really no better or

worse than we are. God takes great pain to give each of us individualized instruction, but we rarely ask ourselves what we can do to help ourselves with His assignments in learning to love ourselves. We might get more interested in His curriculum if we saw the class as more interested in learning about themselves than we previously gave them credit for.

It shouldn't embarrass you to teach modesty. It shouldn't seem shameful to you to teach humility. And you shouldn't feel that life is humiliating you if you're asked to express your loyalty to love through good deeds and verbal expressions of sincerity for people who don't understand what you stand for. Forbidden fruit truly is sweet, but only if you share it.

Salads:

Turning the Other Cheek

God told Moses that the Israelites were a stiff-necked people. Jesus had a new message during His lifetime. He told His fellow Jews to “TURN THE OTHER CHEEK.” [Matthew 5:39] In effect He asked them to loosen their stiff necks and look and listen in new directions and in new ways. When you turn your cheek one way, away from something that displeases you, and refuse to look any other way, you get a stiff-neck. It’s only when you turn one cheek and then the other that you begin to see yourself as your greatest challenge in life and not your biggest problem.

When you listen to a man describe the worth of his container without giving thought to the worth of his words it reinforces your cynicism. The way to develop skepticism is to question, which will loosen your neck so that you can turn your head in several directions. This will develop your ability to feel mercifully doubtful about others instead of cynically repelled by them. Moses depicted the Biblical family man through a series of men with stiff necks each staring in a slightly different direction. The father knows best position in each story of Genesis from Abraham through Joseph should leave you with the opinion that it’s the son in each successive generation who always knows better. {But it’s up to you to determine which son in each story that is.}

The moral exercise is weighing Ishmael against Isaac, Esau against Jacob, and Joseph against each of his ten half-brothers and baby brother, Benjamin, takes a lot of effort. But if you don’t make that ethical effort in Genesis, you’re going to come to Exodus with the same conclusion God came to about the Israelites, when the discussion of the Israelites as a stiff-necked people came up:

1. After they Israelites forged the Golden Calf God said to Moses, “I HAVE SEEN THESE PEOPLE AND THEY ARE A STIFF-NECKED PEOPLE.” [Exodus 32:9]
2. Moses restated God’s opinion soon after saying, “LORD IF I HAVE FOUND FAVOR IN YOUR EYES, THEN LET THE LORD GO WITH US. ALTHOUGH THIS IS A STIFF-NECKED PEOPLE, FORGIVE OUR WICKEDNESS AND OUR SIN, AND TAKE US AS YOUR INHERITANCE.” [Exodus 34:9]
3. Near the end of his life Moses summarized his wisdom, saying, “AND YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT NOT BECAUSE OF YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS DOES GOD, YOUR LORD, GIVE YOU THIS GOOD LAND TO POSSESS IT, FOR YOU ARE A STIFF NECKED PEOPLE.” [Deuteronomy 9:6]
4. He added shortly thereafter, “YOU MUST CIRCUMCISE THE FORESKIN OF YOUR HEART, AND YOU MUST NOT STIFFEN YOUR NECK AGAIN.” [Deuteronomy 10:16-17]

Stubbornness is the character defect that corresponds to a physical experience of a stiff neck. Four times the issue of stubbornness came up in Torah because the Israelites had such a deeply ingrained, slave mentality. They were stubborn and defiant. A master mind is only somewhat flexible. True flexibility comes from your heart, not your head. It's only with loss that you learn what's really important to you. Circumcision reminds a man of something that was taken that he must replace another way. Circumcision corresponds to the piece of forbidden fruit Eve gave Adam that was God's loss.

Circumcision of the heart helps a man remember his thefts and losses from another place in inner space. It helps him remember desires from childhood that are no longer present in adulthood and desires in adulthood that weren't present in childhood. These losses teach him to strive for tenderness.

Forgiveness is no easier today than it was three millennia ago because we still have to learn to forgive ourselves. Learning forgiveness and teaching righteousness now that the process has become all the more internalized is a great struggle for us all. Now each of us must look at the lessons of morality brought into the world by Moses, Jesus and the Prophet Mohammed by looking for righteous ways to live with ourselves.

One such way that never goes out of style is charity. Another is helping someone less fortunate than you. The purpose of these kinds of outward giving is to find the charity in your heart to forgive yourself for how you've treated yourself. Charity and helping others should always be for moral practice. It should always be administered with hope that in so doing God will allow you to come into your inner Eden and eat from the tree that still so tempts you. And if you can look up at your tree of knowledge by turning your head in myriad directions, you won't get stuck with only the fruits you see right before your eyes. You'll be better able to choose your destiny instead of your fate.

In excusing the green ideas you bit into too soon; in forgiving those spoiled feelings that brought you such disgust; and by exonerating the rotten beliefs you held in error about others and yourself – you ignored the spiritual reality given to you by Moses. By sparing the rod and the staff on yourself, you ignored the spiritual reality given to you by Jesus. And by eating anything you wanted any time of the day or night all year long, you ignored the spiritual reality given to you by the Prophet Mohammed. Forgiving yourself is harder than it looks once your conscience becomes well developed. Suddenly the modesty, humility and grace your mother tried to instill in you as a child becomes precious again.

As you learn from your mistaken conclusions about yourself (and your mother), you find you can take others' mistaken conclusions more dispassionately. Suddenly you see how human and frail everyone is. As you see how offended you get by others' behavior, there's a better chance you'll see how secretly offended you've been by conclusions about

yourself that you didn't update for quite a while. Suddenly the baby you were throwing out with the bathwater isn't Jesus; it's you!

What others think of you isn't as important as what you think of you. (But you already know that.) It's what you think of them that's so revealing. Whether they treat themselves too richly or too poorly isn't something you can control. But how you compare yourself to them is. This is why Islam {Arabic: submission} is so important to your own spiritual growth. This is why spiritual simile had to be bestowed upon mankind. If you don't compare and contrast what others are doing to what you're doing to yourself you aren't going to benefit from anyone.

Your first, and foremost, priority in life is to learn. And your only subject in life is "you." Everything you learn about the world around you has to fill your head, heart or conscience with increasing knowledge about you that you didn't have before. Learning must always be personal or it becomes irrelevant. To learn about yourself you have to treat yourself better than you used to as the result of what you now know, and you have to see that progress daily to maintain hope in your future.

In that sense, other people's poor performance in the school of life becomes a wonderful reminder of how your ancestors once used to suffer to be themselves. Today's barbarians are reminders to us all that we will unite to fight Romans who still live on our midst. If you don't have enough stories from your own family history to make better choices, you'll have to look to Biblical stories to see how people once treated one another. Just don't throw today's Jews out with your bathwater.

You won't have to put people down even in the privacy of your own mind if you can commend yourself for knowing more than them in your head, heart or soul. Once you can see what you know that they don't, you can ask God why He brought them into your life. The most joyful feelings comes from showing off to God how much He's teaching you each day that makes you better than who you were the day before.

You don't have to avoid people to recognize that their mistakes aren't ever going to be mistakes you repeat on anyone. You can deal with them in small doses to discover what they know that you don't. People are more like olives than ice cream. You have to develop a taste for some people by taking very small bites. Sometimes you can chew on how they behave or what they say better once they're no longer staring at you like food on a plate.

What you can't ever guarantee is that their mistakes in communicating with others aren't mistakes you're making on yourself. Your humanity is always in question once your conscience has been activated with a circumcised penis and a circumcised heart. The way you treat yourself is your major in life. You can't change the way you treat others until you've changed the way you treat yourself. Your suspicion of them should teach you to suspect yourself. Always come back to the classes in your major. Always come back to

your homeroom. That's where your Teacher will give you the answers that matter to you the most.

(I recommend the song, "I Will Always Love You," lyrics by Dolly Parton. These lyrics can be interpreted as a suicide note to God. "If I should stay well, I would only be in Your way, and so I'll go, and yet I know that I'll think of You each step of my way, and I will always love You.")

When viewing self-forgiveness from the inside out it's your bittersweet feelings for yourself that make you who you are. It's your self-love that makes you more morally sound now than you were before. It's your self-love that makes you feel alive, and grateful to be alive even if the lessons of life produce great sorrow. Without loving all your feelings, including the guilt you harbor for the ways you may not yet be good enough for you, it'll be too difficult to feel a part of this world. You'll feel separate and distant from others. You'll project the guilt you don't want to own out onto them, and you'll have to live without an aspect of yourself that you can't yet live with.

Suicide is never a cry for help. It's a cry of desperation. It's the cry that says you can't help yourself. It's a cry that says not even God can help you. Suicide is the message in the cry of every infant as it's born. Those artists who can hold the infant in themselves with such acceptance and devotion are mirrors of God's love of the life he's given us all. They tell us that He's real. They tell us that there's a reason for all things as they are.

You should compare and contrast yourself to those who came before you historically; you should also compare and contrast yourself with how you treated yourself in the past. If you feel a desire for revenge against others, serve it to yourself in fantasies of revenge against them. Serve it cold. Don't serve it hot. Then turn that fantasy within into self-discipline you can use to make your outer world better for yourself. Kick yourself in the butt to move you forward on the journey of life. You're a stiff-necked Jew on a journey. The further you get on your 40-year trek in life, the more you'll see that no one can keep up with you. You're a Joshua unto yourself. You're the only one on your journey who's going to go with you from beginning to end. {Remember, your goal in life is to be a rabbi and scholar like Dolly Parton, not a hall monitor telling other people what to do. Your goal is always to stay in school and learn.}

Sometimes you need to be stiff-necked with yourself; other times it's best to turn the other cheek on how you're doing, so long as you keep in mind how you feel about what you're doing. Always look for new ways to look at yourself from your heart. Widen the lens. Get panoramic in your view of yourself. Sometimes you'll need to focus on what's right in front of you as though you were nearsighted, nearly blind. But most of the time you'll want to look as far and wide as possible to get the big picture. If you feel a hand in your back, and you aren't sure whose it is, turn around inside to make sure that hand isn't

your inner child's telling you what to do. Don't let the child in you lead. If you always make sure that he follows you, you won't spoil him, and he'll reward you for that with a bright, youthful demeanor in all things that you two do.

Critical thinking skills come from critical feeling skills. A sharp mind comes from a good heart. If you want to develop your conscience to make it a better guide, you're going to have to improve the feelings it deals with. A discerning heart develops a discerning head, which, in turn, together, develop an inner compass that will get you where you need to go.

Just because you own a dog doesn't mean you get out of having to train him to be your best friend. But in training him you get to enjoy the rewards of being his owner. Become more possessive of yourself as a dog demonstrates to its master. Guard yourselves, care for yourselves, and protect yourself as would your dog. What's the point of having a dog if you don't take the relationship personally? Having a dog shouldn't be an indulgence for your inner child to give him a best friend instead of you. It should be an ongoing lesson in how to be your own best friend, even though your inner child is so easily distracted, so defiant and dumb sometimes. There's more to having a pet than meets the eye.

Find the loyalty within you see in your dog, the independence you see in your cat and the sense of freedom you see in your pet bird. By proving to your pet that you can treat it well, you should begin to wonder whether you're treating yourself as patiently and with as much love and devotion. Your impatience with yourself is mirrored in your relationship to your best friend. Lessons in life move from the outside in until God lets you turn them inside out. He'll let you see yourself more deeply when you prove to Him that you're worthy of that knowledge. Each revelation you have about yourself is a piece of forbidden fruit God allowed you to take from your own tree. {Don't think He's so stupid that He doesn't know what you want and how to get you to do what He wants to get it.}

You have to apologize to those you've hurt and do penance around you before you're ready to take on the project of doing so within. You can't walk away from a trail of disasters and tell yourself you'll do it differently from now on. Self-love isn't a decision. It's a devotion. Clean up the mess you made in the world around you so you can see for yourself that you're ready to start work on your world within.

Pick up other people's litter if that helps humble you. Fight for the environment, and you'll have the arsenal you'll need to fight for a clean, inner world. Fight for truth, justice and the American way, and you'll become a land of opportunity in the flesh with a pond that connects you to an Old World on one side and a Pacific Ocean of emotions on the other. To be an American you have to do more than hold American citizenship. You have to contribute to America. You have to choose to live in the America of your whole, inner world. Many people have clawed their way into this country and are here illegally, but most Americans who were born here haven't done the hard work of clawing their way into the

America within themselves. They either feel they're here illegally {and don't even bother to vote} or they feel they're somewhere else entirely {and don't leave their house without a loaded gun in their pocket}.

It took my ancestors 2,000 years of wandering in the Diaspora to find their way back to Israel after the Holocaust. But when they got there, they were all there. You haven't got that much time to spend wandering around inside yourself. Choose an inner space where you want to live and make that space home. And if at all possible make it easy for yourself by making that inner space correspond to where you already are in outer place.

The metaphor of Moses is the foundation of all Western belief systems, but the story of Jesus's life is a universal second story everyone is encouraged to build upon his foundation. From the second story you can look down on yourself with self-love before attempting to love everyone unconditionally in the world we have to share with everyone. Those who don't take the steps up from the ground floor of wisdom to the upper level of self-love aren't going to be able to make their way from there up to the third story, submission of yourself to yourself. God's great gift to the world through Islam will only leave you in terror.

Learning to turn your stiff neck so that one cheek can then turn the other cheek will help you see yourself from a more righteous perspective. This will feel like butter for your daily bread. You'll stop excusing yourself. You'll apologize to yourself for being the way you are and learn to accept yourself as you are. Only then will you be able to forgive yourself for all that you didn't know about you that God is now allowing you to perceive. Once you realize you're the bread and butter of your life you'll hunger for the meat and potatoes: the WORDS of Jesus.

Meat and Potatoes: The Gospel According to Matthew

To Catch A Man

In the Gospel According to Matthew Jesus drew up a list of blessings for His followers while preaching to them on a hill overlooking the Sea of Galilee. This is the famous Sermon on the Mount. [Matthew 5-7] But in the previous chapter of Matthew He'd spoken about the first and last gifts in Heaven by saying, "YOU MUST CHANGE YOUR HEARTS - FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN HAS ARRIVED." [Matthew 4:17] Jesus had been walking at that time by the Sea of Galilee and saw two brothers, Simon {Peter} and Andrew, casting their large net into the water. They were fishermen, and Jesus said to them, "FOLLOW ME AND I WILL TEACH YOU TO CATCH MEN!" [Matthew 4:19]

To catch fish you need only to be clever. You cast your net where you believe the fish are located and take in whatever comes your way. To catch men you need to come to them in a different way, with a net they'll willingly enter. A mind that can change on a dime only makes a man clever. A transformation of the heart that brings a man awareness of his emotional nature is the only bait that's really attractive enough to catch him.

Simon and Andrew were Jewish fishermen who chose to follow Jesus because they let Him catch them. Jesus convinced them that the job of catching men would be more valuable to them than catching fish. They were Jewish men who were more than clever; they were already wise. They realized you catch fish to physically survive another day. Catching fish is a sport by comparison to catching yourself (even if you catch fish as a livelihood). Catching fish is a sport because it's only for practice. You catch fish to apply what you've learned out in the world to catch the slipperiest *fish* you'll ever meet. I'm sure even Jesus didn't bother to try to catch a man who refused to be caught. {Judas was just such a fish.}

In this day and age even the clergy in the Abrahamic traditions are beginning to realize they have to catch themselves. But there's no way even for the likes of such learned men to be clever enough to convince themselves of something they don't feel passionate about. There's no way for any man to feel better and better about himself and find himself spiritually attractive as he ages if his attitude toward himself isn't attractive to him. You may be the fish you want to catch, but you also have to be the bait. If you don't like you, you'll never love you. And then you'll never love your life, and you'll never be grateful to God for having enrolled you here to learn about His love.

Self-love makes you the fisherman, the bait and the fish. Self-love wraps you up into the message and the messenger. Whenever you're upset with someone, think of him as a Jew brought into your life by God to challenge you in a way that will develop your conscience so that your moral progress will continue.

Let's face it. Only the "A" students who love their life are able to call themselves scholars" of life. The "F" students who hate to look at themselves (especially when things go wrong for them) get the grades they deserve, whether they want to believe it or not. And everyone with a "D" to a "B" is more or less ambivalent about having to go to spiritual school 24/7. The grades they get reflect the degree of their ambivalence.

To become an "A" student in your own eyes, you're going to have to study yourself with a sincere desire to know and love you. You're going to have to be able to claim that you're the world's leading expert on you. You're going to have to make "you" your major in the university of life. And you're going to have to complete the core curriculum we all have to take before you can graduate to a higher level of self-discovery.

To describe this in a different metaphor: you have to go through the appetizers, soups and salads in your spiritual meal prior to the main course. You have to be prepared for the meat and potatoes of being the only "you" in this world. You have to put yourself before man and man before God. Only then will your priorities bring you to the miracle of self-redemption.

You can't simply look in the mirror and claim to love yourself for the way you are since you know the face you're looking at in the mirror isn't the face God first gave you. You've aged. Your face has changed dramatically over time. Nor can you face yourself by contrasting how you feel about yourself now to the way you once felt if your feelings for you have plummeted with the frustration and disappointments of life.

You're going to need to look for better and better reasons to find yourself more attractive day-by-day. {Rome wasn't built in a day. Rome was built day-by-day.} And if you don't have honesty in your head and sincerity in your heart, you're not going to see yourself as being authentic before God or genuine with all others.

You're like a fish that slips out of your own hands every night; and so you have to cleverly consider when you go to bed each night what net God will probably give you with which to catch yourself the next day. If you aren't enough of a reward for you, you aren't going to be good enough to bother catching yourself the next day. You're going to feel you missed opportunities. You're going to look at life as something that slips through your fingers.

If you're a straight man who doesn't like the worms {clitorises} you're baiting yourself with try the net Jesus gave His disciples instead. Try spending your life learning to catch one slippery and very dangerous, Moray eel {serpent/penis}. Try baiting yourself with the eel you've got rather than a bucket of worms you've got to buy.

Jesus began His Sermon on the Mount with what are called The Beatitudes. "HOW HAPPY ARE THE HUMBLE-MINDED, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS THEIRS! HOW HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO KNOW WHAT SORROW MEANS FOR

THEY WILL BE GIVEN COURAGE AND COMFORT! HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO CLAIM NOTHING, FOR THE WHOLE EARTH WILL BELONG TO THEM! HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO ARE HUNGRY AND THIRSTY FOR GOODNESS, FOR THEY WILL BE FULLY SATISFIED! HAPPY ARE THE MERCIFUL, FOR THEY WILL HAVE MERCY SHOWN TO THEM! HAPPY ARE THE UTTERLY SINCERE, FOR THEY WILL SEE GOD! HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO MAKE PEACE, FOR THEY WILL BE SONS OF GOD! HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO HAVE SUFFERED PERSECUTION FOR THE CAUSE OF GOODNESS, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS THEIRS! AND WHAT HAPPINESS WILL BE YOURS WHEN PEOPLE BLAME YOU AND ILL-TREAT YOU AND SAY ALL KINDS OF SLANDEROUS THINGS AGAINST YOU FOR MY SAKE! BE GLAD THEN, YES, BE TREMENDOUSLY GLAD - FOR YOUR REWARD IN HEAVEN IS MAGNIFICENT. THEY PERSECUTED THE PROPHETS BEFORE YOUR TIME IN EXACTLY THE SAME WAY.” [Matthew 5:2-12]

Hopefully in reading the Beatitudes here, you’re already hearing a new wisdom of the heart that you didn’t previously perceive in them. But if you began to sour a bit on His words near the end when He said, “...WHAT HAPPINESS WILL BE YOURS WHEN PEOPLE BLAME YOU AND ILL-TREAT YOU AND SAY ALL KINDS OF SLANDEROUS THINGS AGAINST YOU FOR MY SAKE” maybe Christ’s exuberance went a bit too far for you. Perhaps it led you to conclude that only a masochistic whack-a-doodle or a sadist in denial would be gleeful about being mistreated and misunderstood.

His point is that when the people who blame you cause you to question yourself, their voices become echoes you’ll use to compare and contrast yourself to who you once were. This will give you the added advantage of feeling good about protecting yourself at your source where slander and lies emanate out from, just as it does in them.

Here is a list of the results Jesus spoke of at the Sermon on the Mount. These spiritual pursuits from the heart lead to gratitude to God. The efforts you’ve made to come from your heart will make you grateful to yourself for both the tough and tender lessons of love you’ve already learned to bestow upon yourself:

- | | | | |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------|
| 1. Those who are | humble | will receive | awareness of Heaven |
| 2. Those who are | sorrowful | will receive | courage and comfort |
| 3. Those who are | unencumbered | will receive | the Earth |
| 4. Those who are | goodhearted | will receive | satisfaction |
| 5. Those who are | merciful | will receive | mercy |
| 6. Those who are | sincere | will receive | awareness of God |

7. Those who are peacemakers will receive God's blessings
8. Those who are persecuted will receive a place in Heaven

1. The HUMBLE are those who've learned to move through their shame.
2. The SORROWFUL can feel the guilt and sadness in themselves and with themselves
3. The UNENCOMBERED aren't held back by Co-dependency. They aren't putting God before themselves, making them martyrs or people willing to sacrifice themselves without giving consideration to their own best moral interests.
4. The GOODHEARTED know that their feelings for themselves are kind and loving.
5. The MERCIFUL know that their feelings for others are kind and loving.
6. The SINCERE know their feelings for themselves are free of ridicule, scorn and derision.
7. The PEACEMAKERS feel the blessings of bringing peace out from within.
8. The PERSECUTED realize they've misunderstood themselves as well as having misunderstood others.

Although it's frustrating to be both one's own student and tutor, those who persevere in these ways come to know our Teacher in ways others will eventually wish to emulate. When you come to know your own love, it's all good.

In this day and age we don't have to harken back to the AGE OF THE PROPHETS to identify with the persecution the PROPHETS underwent. We have enough of a sense of self-persecution to know that we can attain the promises the PROPHETS strived for in ourselves and from ourselves. Those who promote martyrdom today turn their back on self-seeking. Those who condemn the gays and Jews are still stuck expressing self-sacrifice.

There isn't a Jew in Israel who wants to die for his country. Not one. And yet there are martyrs throughout the Middle East in countries where the rule of law has become utterly meaningless. To have a strong country, you need strong citizens, people who'd never think of dying for their country because they're much too involved in learning about themselves. Life is too precious for them to martyr themselves meaninglessly. Don't cheapen life with a desire to die. The one who loses out when you seek to leave school before you've completed your curriculum is you.

The transformation of the heart Jesus spoke of that's necessary to CATCH A MAN must be explored through an understanding of the spiritual difference between not taking

{Judaism} and receiving {Christianity}. Our Jewish tradition is not to take without asking. This is the most obvious moral conclusion derived from the Creation Story. That, which is yours, is yours. That, which is not, you must ask for, and then wait and see if it will be given to you.

If you don't strive for a Jewish head and a Christian heart you may end up with a Christian head and a Jewish heart. I don't mean to be insulting in saying that, and I hope that made you laugh, but your laughter should lead you to see the importance of both these faiths, and the importance of bringing them together correctly.

Ancient Christians looked at what the Jews were doing and then did the opposite. Early Christians eventually questioned their tactics, and modern Christians are actually attracted to how Jews today live their lives. Jesus may have expressed sorrow for Himself in asking His Father why He had forsaken Him when He was in such terrible pain on the cross, but modern Christians do Him a disservice in concluding that feeling sorry for yourself is a feeling only worthy of ridicule.

Sadness for yourself is normal, but manipulating others with self-pity has to stop. God isn't moved by people who cause pain and suffering in an attempt to get Him to do what they want. History has shown us that martyrdom is a psychological form of manipulation that backfires. Martyrdom only creates resentment and distain for life. And because modern man is finally reacting to martyrdom with visceral abhorrence, you can imagine how God must feel about it at this stage of our spiritual development.

A man is like Rebecca, the wife of Isaac, who gave birth to fraternal, twin boys. The first out of her womb was Esau who represents man's wild heart, followed by Jacob holding onto his brother's heel {"JACOB" means "SEIZING BY THE HEEL"}. Jacob represents every young man's shrewd head who uses his brutish heart to do all the hard work of forgiving him for him. [Genesis 25:24-26] Although these boys were figuratively struggling with one another even inside Rebecca's womb, like her, this is a metaphor for the struggle between the head and heart in every man and woman.

Young, modern men are pregnant with conflicting questions about how it's all going to turn out for them. Therefore the time has come for you to let these two boys out with conscious understanding of their struggle so that you can put it into words. Rebecca ended up siding with their son Jacob, and Isaac sided with their son Esau. When you see how you side with your head in some situations and your heart in others, you'll see how difficult it is to parent yourself. Only then will you learn to deal wisely with each of them individually from your conscience.

Most men don't want to identify with women. They'd rather disassociate themselves from the "x" factor, the feminine side of themselves, even though that severely compromises their imagination. They don't want to think of their heart as their inner Eve

that they first projected out onto their first caregiver: their woman. If you can identify with that crowded feeling inside, as though there are two boys wrestling with one another inside your belly, you already can speak about Rebecca's discomfort in emotional terms that are personal to you. No man can ever know how a pregnant woman feels physically, but he can interpret her predicament in wise ways if he cares enough about the "x" factor in his own life.

The irony in the list of blessings Jesus bestowed upon His followers at the Sermon on the Mount is that His first gift for those who are HUMBLE {awareness of Heaven} and His last gift for those who are PERSECUTED {a place in Heaven} are gifts that can only be strived for but not achieved while still here on Earth. All the other riches and rewards He mentioned are intended for the here and now. Only His first and last gifts are for the hereafter.

While struggling for a humble relationship with himself in inner space a man figuratively encounters the spiritual ladder Jacob saw in his dream. [Genesis 28:13] The angels a man sees ascending and descending on that ladder are attributes of himself that God has sent into consciousness to guide him. He sees himself ascend to Heaven with each spiritual task he completes using that attribute, and he sees himself descend from Heaven with a new spiritual task in hand and another attribute to accomplish it. As he goes up and down this ladder many, many times a man begins to be given awareness of God's plan for him by which he can help himself, and through himself the world nearby.

Jacob's dream can become personal, but only if you truly want to take yourself personally more than seriously. You have to bring your feelings into this task to actualize it. It has to become metaphorically real for it to become symbolically real. Only then will you see signs around and within you that will guide you more accurately toward God's goal.

The more you observe Jacob's dream coming true for you, the more you'll watch yourself advance with self-awareness. But people who are aware of what's happening in the world around them are a dime a dozen. They're happy to tell you what everything means, especially when it comes to predicting the demise of their enemies and the glory that will be theirs.

People who are self-aware are actually rare. Don't make the mistake of looking for awareness of God's plan around you before you've seen results from your efforts in making progress from within. You'll be amazed at how little you can see of His awesome intentions and how much you have to learn about yourself before you can open your mind's eye to this world the way it really is.

As the result of watching your efforts ascend and descend with moral intentions that are supported by emotional steps as though your efforts were angels carrying messages up

and down a ladder, you'll be in awe of how interconnected you already are with Heaven and your place in God's realm. This awareness of Heaven is humbling. And every ladder you climb to and from Heaven will correspond with another part of God's heavenly abode of pure morality for the sheer joy of goodness. The more you work for the rewards that come with the attributes God gives you to express His virtues on Earth, the more you'll learn about your place in His heavenly plan. You won't need outrageous promises like eternal life or an endless supply of virgins to make you happy. The good of God will be its own reward.

This spiritual exercise, comparable to climbing a ladder, is your daily, psychological journey. It will leave you one rung higher each day as you earn the courage and comfort you'll need for the next day. You'll earn your place here on Earth with personal satisfaction, mercy, awareness of God and an indefatigable sense of His blessings just by taking the steps presented to you, and not avoiding them. Although you'll feel that your feet are more firmly planted on the ground, your imagination will raise you up by your bootstraps. You'll find yourself looking back down at the rungs you once unconsciously climbed, and you'll see each as a level of reality your ethical regard for yourself in the past showed you how to surpass.

This moral ascent over a lifetime isn't something you can cleverly calculate with the outward blessings of fame and fortune. Stealing money from the poor; land from the Jews; rights from the gays; and liberties from women – aren't going to teach you how to interpret reality. They're only going to make you cling to literalism with ever-greater tenacity.

Winning first prize in the popularity context of your corner of reality won't make you any more contented in having to spend a lifetime with yourself. Nor will filling your financial portfolio with successful stocks and bonds make you feel any richer inside. I'm speaking about a moral transcendence of the self that will leave you open and willing to accept all God's challenges as lessons in learning how to love yourself.

God's classroom is giving you an education you could never have dreamed of had you been solely in charge of your spiritual curriculum. You'll suddenly begin to see the major He's chosen for you and the awesome height you're consciously attaining as you slowly make your way Home. Happiness will become an indirect goal in life, a pursuit for the fun of it. Happiness will become the inadvertent consequence of passing the moral tests God gives you. Once you can accept the way you are with appreciation for being yourself, you'll be grateful to God for how much He's helped you learn to love being the way you are for the sake of a mysteriously unfolding future.

In this way, you'll be allowed to apply what you now know with conscious awareness to future tests in life. And, in passing them, you, too, will slowly see yourself pulling

yourself up Jacob's ladder, one rung at a time. This challenge will bring you joy and tranquility. And who knows? If you're really lucky it may even bring you fame and fortune.

Many smart people have 20/20 hindsight. Many knowledgeable people have excellent insight. But when it comes to foresight, very few can say they know how the future will unfold. Those who predicted the future in the past have lost their credibility because when we look back on their future from our present, we're simply not impressed. What makes the predictions of Moses, Jesus and the Prophet Mohammed truly divine isn't the real world calculations they made, but the surreal world extrapolations they were capable of perceiving. You need Them to help you plan your future, not some palm reader who'll look at your hand without being able to see past your wrist unless you roll up your sleeve.

You don't have to believe in Jesus's love of mankind to believe with all your heart and soul that His mother truly loved Him. You don't have to believe Jesus's message to believe that every mother and son share a unique bond that can't be put into words. Love isn't a theory. Love is a practice you can see occurring in myriad ways. Love is a force from God made manifest in flesh, a living, breathing power you can experience and acknowledge as emanating out from yourself and others like you. The greatest evidence for God lies within you because love lies within you. And to the extent that you love yourself, you might be able to imagine that God leaves little, love notes for you in your soul.

You can't know about your love to love your love. You have to love your love to know your love. Your love is the bridge between your wisdom and your generosity of spirit. If you're on that bridge stay there. If you're on one side or the other look at your love from where you're at now. The view God gave you on your love is the view He wants you to express. {This is a message of religious importance to those who question the order in which God created the Abrahamic faiths.}

Look at yourself as a clay oven with a flame inside you, despite the fact that this may also be how a pregnant woman feels inside about her and her baby. Your inner flame is enveloped in flesh. You are your baby. At the center of your flame shines a blue-white illumination of yourself that's always conscious of your being. This illumination is called wisdom. The concentric circle around that is the red-hot heat of your base feelings, the passion that radiates out called other-love. Next is the flickering tip of your flame whose purification burns, but also cleanses. This is your generosity of spirit. Then there's a mysterious glow around all that, which you experience as your persona that others only experience externally as your personality. This leaves you with the mystery of being.

The next effect of the fire within you as it radiates out into the world is your smoke, the deeds you do that rise up to inform God of your moral intentions. And the final effects of your inner fire are the sound of your flame {your calling} and the smell of your flame that you'll never be able to see {your intuition}.

Now imagine your flame as slowly baking your living bread. You began life as raw cookie dough and hopefully you'll end life as a stale dinner roll. This inner baking process will leave your body crusty, flaky and hard, almost like burned toast. Your bread is being baked over time by your inner flame. Call this fire "wine." Your inner wine is a liquid flame you feel like a tongue licking inside you. Drinking spirits magnifies the sensation of your liquid, spiritual fire. Liquor is like throwing gasoline on a fire.

These trips out of the familiar world you're accustomed to into the wild, open spaces of your imagination are an important part of the self-discovery process. They help you draw new conclusions about what you think today in contrast with what you thought previously. Emotional regard for your inner wellbeing will make it possible for you to be proud of how you're growing, as well as teach you how to appreciate and preserve your nature. Environmentalism, ecology and greening the world begins with the personal and private conservancy of your inner world. Intimacy with your interior nature will inspire you to save the exterior nature we share that's in such dire need of our help.

Judaism and Christianity hold a correspondence and intimacy within the self that I've found impossible to perceive in any other two faiths or philosophies. The unification of your integrity through awareness of the difference between your thoughts and feelings will give new meaning to your beliefs. Our Judeo-Christian, American culture holds the reason for exploring every experience you go through with a self-love that will grow like a flame being fed. God will help you express your rapture at being alive, even if He doesn't give you the gift of putting your relationship with yourself into words.

The personification of this spiritual process, brought to us by Moses and Jesus, and then magnified by the Prophet Mohammed, will raise all of humanity from his plan to His plan; readying us for greater awareness of the plan for everyman. Jews don't have to believe in Jesus to be blessed with God's love. Muslims don't have to read any more than the first 25 chapters of Torah to receive their older brothers' blessings. Hindu, Buddhists, Confucianists, Taoists, agnostics and atheists are already receiving the blessings of the Abrahamic traditions as we receive philosophic blessings from God through them. The world is only waiting for the Muslims to give up their claim to Israel. That's all it's going to take.

No manmade institution holds a monopoly on wisdom, love or generosity of spirit. Nor does any individual. Love is yours, to have and to hold, but only if you see yourself as a personification of love in the flesh. As you realize your love of yourself first, you'll see greater expressions of your love emanating out from you that will amaze you. You'll never literally be able to see the flame within you, but you'll certainly be able to perceive the rays of illumination, warmth and purification that radiate out of you.

To CATCH A MAN many of the Apostles first had to learn how to catch fish through other teachers. Fish are symbols from one of the three worlds that make up this one. We're all a little afraid of going too far in water and then drowning. But when you become the fish that navigates this emotional realm, and you also become the fisherman on the Sea of Galilee in your own Israel, you learn to net yourself. You can draw you out of the emotions that contain you. You can move into the spiritual realm.

God gave you everything He wanted you to have up until now. If you want more be sure you aren't taking it, but receiving it. Learn to ask. Learn to listen. Learn to earn. Sometimes you'll hear yourself talking to yourself and sometimes you'll hear yourself talking to God. It's important that you learn to make the distinction from within because sometimes you'll have something to say to yourself, and you'll see that you haven't yet been given permission to say it. You'll be lost for words while talking to yourself. It's a common experience we all experience.

Think of verbal emptiness inside as the holes that make Swiss cheese Swiss and not cheddar. In your inner Land of Milk and Honey the reason for every "Cheese!" should be to make you smile for the camera. Ask God for permission to go into that dark hole you see inside you. It may look so small in your imagination from afar, but it's the size of the universe within you.

If you could hold out patiently for the rewards you morally earned for yourself from yourself in your past – believing that God's blessed you then – you can hold on with hope for a better tomorrow. If you're cynical things are only getting worse, maybe you should consider writing a suicide note in your own way. There's nothing wrong with giving up and declaring your life too hard to handle. But before you go consider discussing the matter with your Teacher during His office hours. Perhaps there's something He might be able to do to lessen your load by making it more meaningful. You never know what you don't yet know about you. He's had billions of students and countless years of experience. Surely He might have an idea on how to help you learn to learn in a way that will conform to your personal need.

Jesus said, "FOLLOW ME AND I WILL TEACH YOU TO CATCH MEN!" The meat and potatoes of His teachings according to Matthew is this: Follow His instruction and you'll teach yourself to catch that one man who's eluded you for a lifetime. Follow His instruction and you'll learn patience from the inside out since there's no other way to achieve it. Follow His instruction and maybe you'll learn how to be patient with yourself. Imagine what a blessing that would be!

By knowing which end of you, you want to get out of here first,
I can then recommend to you to take your right sole out of the box last.

Meat and Potatoes: The Gospel According to Matthew

Inner Authority

The problems inherent in becoming your own authority are woven in with the problems of there being an Ultimate Authority. If you aren't learning how to achieve inner authority, you'll never learn how God's authority works in your life. Just as the Temple had to be destroyed, internalized and then disseminated into the psyche of every generation of Jews thereafter, so, too, must God's authority be internalized for you to see how He made every kind of bread using flour and water with a variety of added ingredients to similar looking baking molds.

Destruction isn't necessary, but deconstruction is. Deconstruction is an important part of reconstruction. When you realize that what you've made of yourself is flawed you have to deconstruct what you constructed to reconstruct it better than before. You've got to build a building and live in it a while before you can decide that it's gotten old, unsafe or uncomfortable over time. When parts of your edifice need to be torn down so that a more modern structure can be built in its place, you have to endure the renovations, and that's never emotionally easy.

What happened to the Temple literally {twice} has happened many times figuratively to you. You built your outer world on principles you thought were safe and secure. But your outer world was threatened because of an inner flaw or some principle you overlooked that needed to be included. You first lived with the outer consequences of your actions and then realized you needed to deconstruct your inner dwelling in order to reconstruct it differently.

Jesus came along at a time in Jewish history when the Jewish inner temple needed to be torn down yet again. They couldn't survive any longer on the principles that had become the pillars of their society. They'd been invaded, conquered and colonized on the outside, while also suffering ruination within. It wasn't Jesus who caused these problems externally or internally. It was Jesus who addressed them. Turning over the tables of the moneychangers in the Temple was just His way of saying that everything they'd come to believe as the result of projecting their guilt onto the animal kingdom to assuage their feelings had to end.

That's somewhat obvious and hardly controversial in hindsight. What's more difficult to perceive is how modern day Jews are deconstructing themselves yet again while keeping Israel righteously safe in our hands while today's Romans are trying to invade and conquer her {yet again}. As it stands today the Muslim mentality of the Middle East wouldn't flinch if members of their faith beheaded or crucified every Jew in their midst. We're already seeing some of them doing that to one another.

Describing this spiritual process of Jewish deconstruction isn't easy because it involves the whole world's deconstruction, too. Jesus began awareness and discussion of this spiritual process by internalizing the Temple in the heart of the poor Jews in the countryside, while the rich Jews in Jerusalem did the best they could to maintain the Temple cult.

Today that internalization of the Temple into everyone has not only been completed; it's been extended into the two offshoots of Judaism: Christianity and Islam. What's happening now is an internalization of the head priest in every man's inner temple, making each individual the leader of his own faith in God.

This thought may threaten some insecure, religious leaders, but it needn't worry them about losing their job or that this process is going to dilute their faith. Quite the contrary. Although the internalization in modern man of Aaron {Moses's brother and head priest of the Israelites} won't lengthen or widen the job of spiritual leaders {a job that's already become much less relevant in modern life anyway}, it will deepen it.

When a man sees himself as the master of his own *fate*, he begins to question whether he couldn't also become the master of his own *faith*. He wonders how his thought might be working against his better interests without him being able to see how that happens. If his inner world is his dwelling place with the Lord, then he must become his own head priest to be in charge of the temple practices within himself. He must light his own internal flame. He must sacrifice his own inner beasts to God. And he must make sure that there's enough spiritual wood within to keep that fire burning around the clock.

If a man doesn't become a rabbi, priest, minister or cleric unto himself, he'll become a pawn to those who hold those positions around him. He must become his own shepherd and sheep, or he may find the shepherd of the flock he's a part of sacrificing him behind his back. Trusting religious leaders can be as reckless as trusting politicians. You've got to have safeguards in place. They're only human.

When you realize how much you think about your mother with displeasure at all the little things she does that annoy you, you'll notice that she's far more present in your head than in your heart. You don't feel as many loving feelings for her on a daily basis as you may feel resentment, impatience and even a sense of being burdened by her presence. And if it's that hard to feel good about your own mother, imagine how much permission you give yourself to feel negatively about others without admitting it fully to yourself.

It may be hard to see how much you love people until they're gone and you miss them. Loss leads to a deepening of love. But that's a matter of your heart. On a daily basis, it's more likely that your head has all sorts of issues lined up inside that you're very careful not to fling at people.

God loves every fruit that emerges from every branch of every tree. If you hadn't learned that He loves everything He creates, you'd take this world for granted. When you lose people you love, it's not that they're gone from your life. It's that you experience them in a new, deeper place in inner space. You take the loss to heart and you hold those departed loved ones in your soul.

The same can be said of land you've lost. The same can be said of the sea around the land and sky around it all. Man is made in such a way that he has to construct his world consciously; deconstruct it and reconstruct it many times with pain and suffering before he learns to love what he was given in having been given life. Being alive is harder than it looks.

A man shouldn't have to lose his land to discover that he loved his land. He shouldn't have to lose his mother to discover that he loved his mother. He shouldn't have to lose his king, his religious leader or his political leader to realize that he has a desperate need to express his loyalty in diverse ways. And he shouldn't have to lose his life to know that he loved life.

Man is capable of loving simply by learning to love. He doesn't have to lose love to love, love. Personal knowledge of forbidden fruit opens the door of your heart to fields of grain and grape.

My blind friend who never saw color couldn't imagine what yellow has to do with bananas. But I tell you that you're spiritually colorblind. And I'm doing my utmost to tell you what yellow has to do with bananas. Don't be afraid to be yellow. Take it a step at a time. You can't get through yellow to green if nobody has explained to you what you're doing.

Jesus may have asked my ancestors to love Him, but His message lost credibility because of how Christians in the past interpreted it. Love was harder than it looked. Today, the average, modern Jew knows little about Torah, let alone about Jewish life 2,000 years ago. He doesn't speak classical Hebrew or Aramaic, the two languages Jesus spoke. And the arguments Jesus presented to His countrymen as recorded in His good book, whether He used religious or secular examples of His principles, are difficult to articulate today without getting emotional. Many Jews only see red when you bring up His name.

The ancient Jews were terribly afraid of the loss of their land because they were on the verge of a third loss of their freedom {Egypt, Babylonia and then Rome} that would plummet them again into slavery and humiliation. The Jews had made it from the beginning of civilization until then by the skin of their teeth. They didn't cherish the thought of being deported from their homeland one more time. If you look back on the last century to include Germany to the list of their slave masters, the Jews have a lot more to say about slavery than African-Americans. But what good is a talking head without a wailing heart? From

both their losses, we all now know a great deal more about how to turn losses into spiritual gains, beginning with the Creation Story in our sacred text and moving through to Jesus.

Forgiving your enemies as Jesus requested is a little easier to do if you understand why God created you with feelings in the first place. If this world had only been created with the intention of teaching us the moral lessons of good and evil, feelings wouldn't have been necessary. Justice would have been much easier to learn without forgiveness because morality wouldn't have become personal. People could have constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed their thoughts without a feeling of loss. The time it takes to do things over and over and over again would have simply been a cost, not a loss.

Feelings grow with intensity when you have to put more work into making some things happen than others. People therefore are more emotional on some issues than others regardless of the moral importance of an issue, objectively speaking. What we determine to be right or wrong becomes intensified and magnified by our feelings, making morality a highly emotional issue. Some people may feel very strongly about something, whether or not their issue triggers intense feelings in you.

Forgiveness has to do with acknowledging differences in intensity of emotions that must be adjudicated with shadings of moral subtlety. You ought to excuse people for not feeling exactly the same way you do about each and every moral issue. You ought to forgive them for conclusions they come to that are based on moral issues then haven't experienced personally. And you ought to exonerate them for acts of God that make up the difference. Feelings of righteousness ought to be developed like a dial. They shouldn't be turned on and off like a switch.

Jesus employed the metaphor of understanding as illumination to address this point. ““THE LAMP OF THE BODY IS THE EYE.” [Matthew 6:22] In one sense your eye is the lamp that illuminates your world. What you see gives you something to compare and contrast yourself to. In that sense the eye is the lamp of the body in the same way that your tongue is a lamp; your ears are lamps; and even the head of your penis is a lamp.

But there is an inner light in you whether or not you can literally see or are blind. This inner lamp doesn't illuminate the world around you. It illuminates you to yourself. Your body is merely your lampstand. Your eyes, ears, tongue and penis are merely external ornaments that magnify your inner flame.

Your inner world is comparable to an ancient oil lamp. Imagine today's hurricane lamp that has a base that holds oil; a wick that's regulated by a lever that increases or decreases the exposure of the wick; and a shade that diffuses your inner light.

Your head is the base that holds the oil supply. Your spiritual, oil supply is renewed by the olive trees in your garden. The planting, cultivating and harvesting of self-knowledge is the job God gave to the Jewish people.

Your heart is the emotional lever that regulates the size of your flame. Most people don't realize that this lever has to be monitored by your conscience so that your flame isn't too high or too low in relationship to the moral issue in discussion. This is the function God gave to Christianity to teach the world.

Islam is the flame that burns in your soul. Modernity is the shade that diffuses the light. If you think you've already got all that it takes and don't need any the Abrahamic faiths to show the world that you're brilliant, think again. The hardware for such a lamp is easy to manufacture; sex is just a science. It's learning to read by your own inner light that's an art.

If you can't even forgive your mother for her minor transgressions against you now that you're an adult, how are you going to forgive your father, and, by extension, siblings, friends and all those strangers who've hurt you in the past? Jesus's idea that forgiveness is a moral imperative brings up a real problem. Does God trigger emotions in us just by allowing people into our life who affect us negatively. It's as if He blows down the chimney of our inner lamp just to watch what we'll do to keep our flame lit.

The problem with inner authority is that it's easier to talk about than it is to achieve. In terms of the Creation Story allegory, if you don't know how and when to pick forbidden fruit, you're not going to harvest the raw material you need as a resource for personal growth and illumination.

If you don't know how to regulate your flame, you're going to overact or underact emotionally about moral issues. And if you don't protect your flame from the winds of change, you're going to see others try to blow it out just because they can.

There's no point in being a tree of knowledge if you don't know how to be inventive. There's so much you don't know how to do that you're going to need to forgive yourself for. Therefore you need your own forgiveness much more than you need to forgive others. If you knew more about yourself, apologized and forgave yourself more often, you'd have the practice in place to forgive others their minor failings. But if other people's need for forgiveness irritates you, that's a sign that it triggers reasons for you to forgive yourself that you aren't yet aware of.

The problem in America isn't race relations, gender issues or religious differences that divide us into "good" straights and "bad" gays. The problem is that we're all enslaved by the 20th Century way of thinking that's based on previous operating systems that no longer work as well in a modern age. We're adding individuals all the time to the world's population who are new but not spiritually much improved. This isn't an American issue. This is an issue for all of humanity.

When the next plague comes that will threaten your first born {most cherished loved one}, you'd better know something about the leg of Lamb {symbol of forgiveness} that

the ancient Israelites put on their door to avert the Angel of death. The Passover story, like the destruction of the Temple, is repeated at more and more internalized levels of awareness. It's not enough anymore to be GOOD. You have to be RIGHT. And you have to strive to do b e t t e r.

Jesus may have had to die so that the modern Christians could be reborn. But you should interpret His effort as the call to your inner child to seek an ideal world for us all. He might have had to sacrifice Himself then, but you don't need to sacrifice your inner child or inner parent now. That's not going to help anyone, especially not you. You'd do better by seeking the good He died for. You'd do better to seek the bounty of God's love and approval for what you're doing with your life by beginning the search for love within yourself rather than around you.

The love Jesus gave to the world He first had to give to Himself before He had it in hand to give it to those around Him. The whole point of God bringing Him here in the form of a man was to show men how love is made. If you don't know how to make love to yourself, you aren't going to consciously be able to make it with anyone else. The whole point of Jesus creating miracles was to demonstrate the concept of Him doing it for Himself before doing it for others.

Every individual must hold himself accountable for his actions in order to achieve the psychological sense of freedom to improve and approve of his behavior. And yet, after creating this psychological accountability to ourselves, we all then hold a sociological accountability to one another. This tension makes internal psychological governance and external sociological governments mirrors of one another. By first seeking understanding and love from ourselves, we then must seek to see our standards in our community and country. Societies are built upon the depth of each member's understanding of individuality and his moral importance to himself.

The difficulty in uniting the world around us with the world within lies in the unseen power of projection. We don't realize how many of the thoughts and the images we create in our mind are messages to ourselves, not others. Our mind speaks to us in third person dialogues and pictures we don't realize are intended for us to learn how we operate internally. We write internal plays that we stage for ourselves in our imagination without realizing we're also supposed to take a seat in the audience and watch them. Instead we're out in the foyer distracted with other things as we watch our inner performances half distracted. We don't want to take our seat and pay attention to what's going on inside, on stage. We insult ourselves with lack of self-interest, and we don't even realize it.

You've got to distance yourself emotionally from others in order to keep your emotions from becoming overly intense. You've got dial down the lever that controls the height of the wick in your lamp or you'll burn out. And replacing a wick is a major undertaking that

causes depression. I don't recommend letting your flame go out unless you absolutely have to go through depression to find a way to get your wick relit.

Once you learn to lower your flame on those issues you have no control over, you'll discover you're wasting a lot less emotional energy on other people's problems. And even though your lamp won't burn quite so bright, at least you won't feel the need to compete with others over who's more brilliant. Let other people shine. The fewer shadows, the better.

When your inner child becomes important enough for you to choose "her" over "him" you're ready to call yourself a man. Some men think they have to divorce their wives to prove to themselves that they love themselves. Others think they have to make babies and then not support them. Some develop a separate sports life from their family life just to recreate their inner cave in their own home. Some need to marry their job in order to betray the other sides of themselves. There are many ways for a man to break his own heart without literally having to suffer a heart attack.

We live in a new age of self-seeking. Self-sacrifice is behind us. But some situations only offer moral options, not moral answers. The path of self-discovery may, like the Exodus, focus more on the journey and less on how you got the way you are or where exactly you're going. The age of martyrdom has ended. The age of self-marriage has begun.

Most people don't have 20/20 hindsight. They don't appreciate what they've been through because they refuse to look in their rear view mirror once they're far away from their past.

Driving with your windshield wipers always on is very Jewish. Driving looking only in the rear view mirror is very gay. And driving with your eyes peeled to what's on your right in the side mirror is very Christian and so, of course, the Muslims only look out on the left.

Most people don't have 20/20 insight. They don't appreciate where they are because they refuse to look carefully at the dashboard to figure out how to make themselves more comfortable from within. Learning your way around your vehicle is very modern. But how many people do you know who are that modern?

Most people don't have 20/20 foresight because they don't keep their eyes on the road from every direction. They don't appreciate their windshield, wipers or mirrors. Learning how to look ahead to see all your options for getting through traffic isn't stressed enough in spiritual, driving school.

Is it any wonder that most of us feel like a wreck? We don't know where to look or when. We don't even know how to remember that our vehicle for this journey is no different from any other in many respects. If you don't learn from the other drivers on the

road, you're going to have a bad trip. And when you complain to God about how your life turned out, He's going to have to point that out to you.

The ultra-orthodox in all three of the Abrahamic faiths are the worst drivers on the road, not the best. They think they're really good, until there's an accident. But then they fall apart. They haven't got the tools to handle emergencies. They just raise their hands to God and expect Him to take care of everything. When asked why He allows accidents to happen in the first place, their answer is to always points fingers at gays and modern Jews. We're the scapegoats they always sacrifice on their altar. We're the ones they say are full of bull.

Weak men interpret changes to their belief system to be a sign of defeat rather than an expanding of perception of their inner world. They find it difficult to appreciate how experiences in the past taught them how the forces within them operate. They miss opportunities to see their spiritual education as a foundation for a better tomorrow.

Each of us must look back on the way we were within with hindsight to admit that in some ways we were conditioned to operate from the outside out rather than the inside in. With that little bit of insight into ourselves, we can look forward to a much better future.

The difference between a "homosexual" and a "gay" man is a tolerance for hypocrisy. "Gays" are organized homosexual who refuse to live their lives hypocritically any longer. There's a great deal of hypocrisy in sexual matters amongst men and between men because men have been so conditioned to ignore the internal effects of their desires. Urges and impulses are much easier to manipulate when you deny that they have emotional consequences on how you feel about yourself. Emotions can be more easily manipulated with religious dogma if you separate your feelings from your desires with threats of eternal damnation.

Gay men couldn't possibly be as brilliant as they are; they couldn't possibly shine as bright as they do; they couldn't be such flaming queens – if they weren't blessed by God for being just the way they are. Eight million Israelis couldn't keep Israel united with 22 Arab countries around them that have a population of 400 million inhabitants if God didn't approve of our Jewish light unto the nations.

You wouldn't be down here if you weren't a gift to the world in some ways, giving us a moral challenge that's good for us all. The mysterious glow around all of humanity is as great as the mysterious glow around your humble, little flame.

A gay man's conscience has been constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed through the coming out experience. He's achieved a degree of moral authority over himself through authenticity thanks to his head and heart having worked together to declare a greater truth in his conscience. The more "out" he is, and the more vulnerably he can allow himself to express his thoughts, feelings and desires for love to himself – the more genuinely he'll perceive himself.

Of course, that doesn't mean that a gay man isn't as susceptible as the next man to being overwhelmed by his inner forces at play. It only means that his tolerance for inner and outer hypocrisy is lower than any other group of men the world has ever known.

The homosexual is incapable of separating and organizing the forces he hears within himself because he can't respect himself as he is. Like God who never bothered to question the serpent, the homosexual doesn't bother to question his desires with honesty and sincerity. He'll allow his penis to talk to his heart; he'll allow his heart to talk to his head; and he'll allow his head and heart to talk to him - but he won't question his own penis. He pays a terrible price for distancing himself from the moral mission God has brought him by playing god.

Gay men who make no sexual commitment to others aren't hypocrites. They're just happy whores. It's only the gay man who seeks fidelity from others who worries about fidelity from himself. The happy whores only worry about fidelity in matters that aren't sexual.

Women are the most discriminated people on Earth, not gays or Jews. Women have taken more abuse than anyone else, Jew or Gentile, black or white, disabled, abled, gay or straight. In the last 50,000 years perhaps only the Earth itself has been more maligned by man than women.

A man's unconscious terror at standing on his own two feet makes walking away from his mother's embrace and moving in the direction of his Father's open arms the moral exercise on the spiritual journey of life most challenge him. Men trip; they fall; they step on their own toes; kick themselves by mistake; and cry out in pain and confusion at having to do it alone when they're really only doing it by themselves. Walking away from "mother" is harder than it looks. In the end you're the luckiest man alive if you can stand tall on your own two feet while remaining loyally by your mother's side.

For a man to love his mother without desiring to have sex with her doesn't require intense or undo compartmentalization of inner forces. Once our feelings and desires have been rerouted through our conscience in infancy, the problem of making sound, moral choices around this sexual taboos is easily solved. Straight men who claim gay men are a moral threat to humanity because we're going to break down every taboo in society might like to argue that we're going to force every man to have sex with his mother. Ain't that a laugh! And to extend the argument from there to assert that gay men would force anyone to sleep with his father is equally absurd.

Self-love is required to achieve satisfaction with yourself for each and every one of your moral choices. Only self-love will unite you within yourself for the little things you've done right. No other form of human love can make this claim, not even mother love. This unification within yourself will inspire you to seek your Creator's respect with soulful

regard for your ability to recreate the moral lessons of the Bible with genuine admiration for your actions.

Self-love is a grownup's reminder of his mother's heartbeat when he takes his own pulse. Self-love reverberates the memory of the missing bone in every Adam's chest that gives him an outward yearning for spiritual unity with all God's creatures. The authority a man seeks from himself teaches him to love the love he's gleaned from his own guilt. It gives him permission to see through his own hypocrisies and correct them. It frees him from being an animal and beckons him to become one more angel down here in disguise.

In the Book of Matthew Jesus addressed the importance of the "LAW." "YOU MUST NOT THINK I HAVE COME TO ABOLISH THE LAW OR THE PROPHETS; I HAVE NOT COME TO ABOLISH THEM BUT TO COMPLETE THEM. INDEED, I ASSURE YOU THAT, WHILE HEAVEN AND EARTH LAST, THE LAW WILL NOT LOSE A SINGLE DOT OR COMMA UNTIL ITS PURPOSE IS COMPLETE." [Matthew 5:17-18]

Perhaps you're now able to hear the WORDS of Jesus in a new, more insightful way - with His understanding and love for Torah. He didn't subtract or diminish from the law's importance in His life. Coming to His life from a new direction only furthered the mystery of mysteries. Allowing God-consciousness to grow in Him like grasses and vines, rather than like a tree, augments God's laws with His love. Jesus understood that mercy {love} without justice {law} would corrupt man. And yet, without a rainbow in a man's heart that he can look down and see from his head, there's no way for him to believe in his own faith in God, or His hope for our love of humanity.

There were people in your life in the past who gave you hope, asking nothing in return. But since then you began to hunger for hope from within. Now you know that you need to be able to give yourself hope, or you'll see yourself as hopeless. God anticipated this by creating a way for you to bring His love for you to life, so you could develop the courage to express His love through you even in a world this cruel. {You've now read through almost half of this book. If you read the rest and it doesn't leave you with greater hope in yourself for yourself, it will have been a complete waste of time. Your hope is the only hope that matters. You don't need cheerleaders, mascots and fans. You need a strategy that will win the game for One and all.}

The Noah in your youth who did only what he was told because he was conveniently told exactly what to do is thankfully behind you. You're not like the spiritual brats of the last century who made the claim that they were only following orders. You're liberated enough to learn about the laws of love and take them to heart. You're liberated enough to thank God for the sacrifice of Jesus 2,000 years ago and the sacrifice of six million Jews in the recent past to convey through their actions something they didn't have the luxury of saying directly to you in modern, American English.

Jesus said, “DON’T PILE UP TREASURES ON EARTH, WHERE MOTH AND RUST CAN SPOIL THEM AND THIEVES CAN BREAK IN AND STEAL. BUT KEEP YOUR TREASURE IN HEAVEN WHERE THERE IS NEITHER MOTH NOR RUST TO SPOIL IT AND NOBODY CAN BREAK IN AND STEAL. FOR WHEREVER YOUR TREASURE IS, YOU MAY BE CERTAIN THAT YOUR HEART WILL BE THERE TOO!” [Matthew 6:19-21]

Applying symbols to your life in addition to metaphors is hard to do. MOTH and RUST are symbols that must be mined for the depth of meaning Jesus intended. A moth eats garments. Rust eats armor. The garment that you’re wearing is your body. The armor that defends you is the cynicism you don in your heart that rusts you and then weakens your resolve. People who eat away at your body and the feelings you have for yourself in your heart use you for financial gain or personal pleasure. And then they walk away without a care in the world, leaving you feeling bitter and full of hate.

That bitterness is yours, not theirs. That hatred is in you, whether or not you attach their name to it. You’re stuck with it. It becomes a challenge given to you by God whether you wanted it or not. And it’s therefore up to you to learn how to separate your feelings from your thoughts, desires and beliefs if you’re going to grow from bad experiences.

When you become disheartened, you lose a little hope. You feel “holey” instead of “holy.” Moths have rented your garment and rust has ruined your armor. But putting your treasure in Heaven is easier said than done. It requires you to look down with your mind’s eye to see more clearly what’s happened in your heart and soul. It requires that you look up with a heavenly view of hope coming from Heaven that will help you heal your heart and soul while you’re still here on Earth.

To understand MOTH and RUST you must identify as moth and rust. To understand the thief that will steal your treasure, you must identify as a thief who steals because others have stolen from him. You need God’s help to deposit your treasure with Him where it will be safe. But first you need a way into Heaven. And if you can’t even admit that you’re a thief who took knowledge without asking, you’re going to find yourself standing in a very long line at Heaven’s gate waiting for St. Peter to let you in this late in the game.

Would you rather see your inner Israel run by your head, heart or soul? Would you rather see Israel run by Jews, Christians or Muslims? You decide what you look like within; you decide what part of you, you want in charge of you; and you decide how you’d like the world around you to mirror your world within.

The Judeo-Christian culture we’ve painstakingly forged in America combines head and heart, guilt and love, the spiritual knowledge of the ice {guilt} and fire {love} that emanate out from within us all. If we don’t succeed in getting past our disbelief that life is truly a spiritual test from God, we’ll see our garment eaten up by moths {physical illness} and our

armor rusted {mental illness}, leaving us with no treasure anywhere on Earth. And in a sad sort of way, that's what it takes for man to seek somewhere else to save what precious little he's got left.

You don't need Jesus to guarantee you a place in Heaven. You need Him to model for you how you can do what He did while you're still here on Earth. The Christians who killed, tortured, raped and stole in the past surely got their just reward based on the time in which they lived and the moral standard expected in those days. Forgiving them now for what they didn't know isn't our issue. Our issue is learning to forgive ourselves for the ways in which we're still abusing one another because of habitualized ways of treating ourselves that we never question.

The spiritual decay going on in every human being mirrors the physical and emotional decay we see as we age. Neither is caused by sexual liberties or disobeying God, as some would have you believe. You're going to have sex and get old whether you're good or bad. Garments get eaten if they aren't stored in mothballs, and metal rusts if you don't paint it regularly. That's just life...

The only thing God told Adam not to do was eat from the Tree of knowledge. But He didn't lecture him then, and when He did lecture the Israelites with the first Commandment, they were so hardened by slavery that they didn't even realize they'd been scolded. {I AM THE LORD, THE GOD, WHO TOOK YOU OUT OF EGYPT.}

The first Commandment wasn't a command to do anything. It was a harsh reminder. "I AM THE LORD" {not you}. "I AM YOUR GOD" {you aren't MINE}. "I TOOK YOU OUT OF EGYPT" {you didn't take ME along for the ride}.

When God intervened in the Creation Story it was because He was miffed. But by the time the Israelites made it to Mt. Sinai, He was really pissed. A silly little piece of fruit was just a little thing in His eyes; but the attitude of ingratitude of the Israelites was quite another.

Should you conclude from this that you're better than the Jews, or should you learn from this that sometimes your attitude may be judged as even worse than the crime you committed?

It became apparent when Moses smashed the first set of Commandments moments after he received them that each of us would also end up breaking them, each in his own way. And each of us then painstakingly has to carve them with our own hands to make them personal and real. But this is a truth only for Jews and Christians. Muslims are only commanded to obey some of the Ten Commandments, specifically five Commandments: numbers 2,3,6,7 and 8 [{2} Idolatry, {3} blasphemy, {6} murder, {7} adultery and {8} theft]. They aren't forbidden from {1} Acknowledging the God of the Jews; {4} keeping our Sabbath holy; {5} honoring their parents; {9} lying; and {10} coveting.

By our Judeo-Christian standards the five Commandments Muslims and the rest of the world are not obliged to live by can only be addressed through the court systems they set in place. Our higher and harder Judeo-Christian standards require us to strive to live a more righteous life so we can show the world the rewards from God that we've been given and are being given for keeping the highest moral standards the world has ever known. If others in this world want the rewards we have they need to consider the standards we've been obliged to set for ourselves. They can voluntarily choose to live by our standards.

We can only hope that exposure to our Judeo-Christian societies will attract Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and agnostics to want to adopt the spirituality found in the Ten Commandments rather than live by the spirit of the Noahide Law. Even if they have religious laws of their own in place that cover the other five Commandment, it would be nice if they could and would describe the laws that they live by, by comparing and contrasting them to our precious Ten Commandments. That would go a long way in helping us see them as our spiritual equals in God's realm, and not as inferiors.

In that spirit, we must all prove to ourselves before we make the claim to others that we live by the Judeo-Christian standards set by Moses and Jesus. If the Jews don't have to pray to Jesus, then no one has to pray to Jesus. But the standards set by a man's head and heart must live up to the standards set by society. In those societies where the standards have collapsed or were never set in place, every man is challenged to set those standards in place.

Man's heart was originally constructed like the plumbing for those old-fashioned, European, bathroom sinks that have separate taps for the hot and cold water. You had to run your hands back and forth quickly from the burning hot to the freezing cold water to create a lukewarm temperature your hands could stand. Either that, or you had to use the stopper to leave a lukewarm pool in the sink.

Most tribal societies that don't stress the importance of individuality try to create emotional pools where people share the temperature of the group. But as individualists in America, we need more personalized inner comfort than that. And as more of the world comes to yearn for our lifestyle, their societies will modernize their emotional plumbing and require one faucet with two taps, not two faucets and two taps. {It's the little things that really make all the difference.}

You're an early 21st Century American, not an early 20th Century European. You have to help the world upgrade their emotional plumbing in those societies where people still think and feel *en masse* because they don't have the strength to think and feel individually. Nobody should have to live with an antiquated, emotional flow that comes out of their heart boiling or freezing with no feelings in between. That's not emotionally comfortable for civilized people today, and yet there are plenty of societies in the Middle East and

elsewhere where they have no idea that it's possible to remodel their home internally because they dream only of remodeling their house externally.

Gays and Jews in particular have seen a lot of knee-jerk, hot and cold reactivity to the way we are. Jews are 1/10th of 1% of the world's population {0.1%}. Gay-Jews are 1/10th of that. Gay-Jews are therefore 1/100th of 1% of the world's population {0.01%}. If I had to wait for another gay-Jew to come along before I could make a group decision about what I'm supposed to think and feel, I'd have to wait longer than I'm willing to wait. I'm an especially avid lover of individuality because there isn't a group large enough for me to feel a part of. (Although I very much wanted to feel that I fitted in when I was younger, being a part of the majority doesn't look nearly as attractive to me anymore.)

You're not an animal enjoying a human experience. You're a human being enjoying an animal experience. You have to be conscious and remain conscious to what you're doing for yourself at all times. You can't switch between angel, mammal and reptile without people questioning your intentions. Stay warm-blooded at all times. You can be a member of a group in terms of your ethnicity or religion without giving up your emotional individuality. You don't have to turn into someone who's cold-blooded just because the people around you turn into a nest of vipers.

Jesus continued describing righteousness in relationship to the body by saying, "THE LAMP OF THE BODY IS THE EYE. IF YOUR EYE IS SOUND, YOUR WHOLE BODY WILL BE FULL OF LIGHT. BUT IF YOUR EYE IS EVIL, YOUR WHOLE BODY WILL BE FULL OF DARKNESS. IF ALL THE LIGHT YOU HAVE IS DARKNESS, IT IS DARK INDEED!" [Matthew 6:22-23]

A lamp is a source of light. But the illumination emitted by a lamp isn't meant to maximize the heat, purification, mystery, beauty, sound or smell of the flame, only its illumination. In this way your eyes do more than illuminate the world around you. Your eyes also reflect the attributes of the flame within you.

What we call today the "mind's eye," or the "inner eye" is the aspect of your inner flame that illuminates you to your own wisdom. IF {this inner} EYE IS SOUND, YOUR WHOLE BODY WILL BE FULL OF LIGHT. In viewing yourself symbolically rather than merely metaphorically, you have an inner eye that illuminates you to the wonder of being in a human body, a glorious lamp lit by the Lord in a one-and-only lampstand He gave just to you.

Although your two eyes literally illuminate you to the world around you, your mind's eye is the inner eye that illuminates you to yourself. If your eyes perceive your body as whole, healthy and sound, you'll see yourself casting the light of self-love out onto the world. But if you don't take good care of yourself, there won't be the kind of illumination radiating out of you for us to perceive much in the way of love for yourself. We'll only see

your angst and worry or, at best, your sense of duty and determination. But self-love we won't see. And that's the secret everyone is looking for.

"BUT IF YOUR EYE IS EVIL, YOUR WHOLE BODY WILL BE FULL OF DARKNESS." The evil Jesus is referring to is moral regard for yourselves. If your inner flame is set on "low" because the wick is turned down, the illumination within you will be dim and the light of self-love that radiates out will be weak. To increase yourself-luminosity – to move yourself out of inner shadow into inner light – obviously requires adding more oil in the base {self-knowledge} as well as turning up the wick {feelings}.

Jesus begs his own question by saying, **"IF ALL THE LIGHT YOU HAVE IS DARKNESS, IT IS DARK INDEED!"** A light that shines darkness contradicts the very definition of light. But when we return to Torah's description of **"ESH ME-OZAR"** {STRANGE FIRE} we can infer that the light that shines darkness doesn't illuminate; it darkens, It doesn't heat; it cool. It doesn't purify; it soils. It doesn't lead to mystery, but to certainty, etc.

Christ's understanding and use of Torah was unprecedented in its brilliance because He extended Moses's intentions by first increasing his luminosity before He added His own heat. By encasing the mosaic discussion of luminosity {wisdom} with heat {love}, He simultaneously made a case for the spiritual purification {generosity} of man's inner flame that Mohammed would bring to the discussion in detail 700 years later. Jesus didn't contradict Moses, and Mohammed didn't contradict either of Them. Each embellished God's intentions another way.

Those who sincerely believe in God know that although the true believer may seek the light, he often finds himself, instead, in darkness. He seeks to love, but struggles instead with hate; strives to make the world a better place for everyone, but makes mistakes along the way and loses the mystery and wonder of God's beneficent plan.

God hides from us in darkness where He hopes we will come to Him to lead us back into light. We need a God who loves His darkness and a God who loves His light. We need to remind ourselves that when **"IT IS DARK INDEED"** God will help us with moral answers that will rekindle our faith in Him. The problem isn't that man doesn't have enough answers to illuminate himself further. The problem is that he finds himself so often in the dark that he doesn't pose the right questions.

From what ancient man could see by day, he could only conclude that the sun had nothing in common with the stars since only the morning or evening star ever entered into the heavens when the sun was still in the sky. And from what he saw at night he surely had no way to figure out that the sun was still shining on the other half of the globe while all the stars were glistening in the Milky Way above his head.

Those with faith in God become astronomers, not astrologers. The night becomes a reminder to the faithful that they can pierce through intellectual darkness in both their worlds. The faithful believe they can learn about themselves just by peering into their own, inner darkness. They believe they can find answers for themselves about themselves by themselves because God is there to help them do so. Spiritual light is visible in others, but it becomes much more brilliant when you can view it from within.

The Seven Deadly Sins is a classification of vices that has been used since early Christian times to educate and instruct Christians concerning humanity's tendency to do crazy things when they lose their head. These forms of moral darkness are:

1. Wrath
2. Greed
3. Sloth
4. Pride
5. Lust
6. Envy
7. Gluttony

The animals once associated with these characteristics are:

- | | | |
|-------------|---|---------|
| 1. Wrath | = | Lion |
| 2. Greed | = | Toad |
| 3. Sloth | = | Snail |
| 4. Pride | = | Peacock |
| 5. Lust | = | Goat |
| 6. Envy | = | Snake |
| 7. Gluttony | = | Pig |

These are the animals you want to teach adolescents about. These are the animals they have locked up in the hold of their ark that they need to learn to release on the land in ways that won't be hurtful to themselves or others. When a child has been taught about these inner creatures, moving into puberty becomes far less threatening. These animal instincts make the Story of Noah and the Ark timeless and useful. When a man's heart has been prepared properly by bringing these creatures onboard consciously, he can feel hopeful because he's learned about this world from the inside out.

What the early Christians called pride, today we'd call arrogance. Our modern interpretation of pride is self-esteem based on ethical achievements that give us good reason to love ourselves. The other six sins haven't changed significantly in meaning.

Jesus proclaimed, “BELIEVE ME! I HAVE NEVER FOUND FAITH LIKE THIS, EVEN IN ISRAEL! I TELL YOU THAT MANY PEOPLE WILL COME FROM EAST AND WEST AND SIT AT MY TABLE WITH ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. BUT THOSE WHO SHOULD HAVE BELONGED TO THE KINGDOM WILL BE BANISHED TO THE DARKNESS OUTSIDE WHERE THERE WILL BE TEARS AND BITTER REGRET.” [Matthew 8:10-12]

It’s sad to think that the flame in many people is turned down very low because they don’t have enough spiritual oil {righteousness} to burn to make it any brighter inside themselves. The concept of spiritual self-illumination isn’t complex. The more deeds you do for others, the more oil you produce for your lamp. The more emotionally appropriate you can behave with others, the more you can modulate your wick. And the darker the glass of your shade, the more humbly you can shine your light out onto the world.

Those who sit at Jesus’s “TABLE WITH ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN” are those who understand that His message is timeless. God’s table is long enough for everyone to take a seat at it without having to become a Christian or needing to die to know that feelings of banishment include loneliness, emptiness and barrenness. Such people have already felt darkness all around them, and they’ve always suspected that this was an external darkness that mirrors a darkness that emanated out from within us all.

A metaphor will separate you from yourself so you can see yourself dispassionately. A symbol will reunite you within yourself so you can perceive yourself passionately. Symbols don’t just clarify; they intensify. To enter the realm of Jesus you only need to take the plunge out of your head and into your heart. His is the aspect of your inner world that you must dive into without fear. Your reflection in others’ eyes as the result of your participation in society isn’t all of the you that you know you really are.

Consider Christ using the metaphor of Jesus-as-a-lighthouse-of-love onto the world. The metaphor implies that His rays of spiritual light revolve around the world illuminating the spiritual darkness in the heart of man, making Him a beacon in the night that helps others steer clear of rocky shores to remain safely onboard their boat at sea. As a beacon of love His illumination of the wisdom of His heart must attract you to guide you, not repel you.

A Christian should see himself as a symbolic lighthouse of love in Christ’s image. He should see the metaphoric lighthouse of Israel as a light shining up at his own lighthouse. In this way Jewish wisdom illuminates Christian love. In this way Jesus’s WORDS will come across as fresh and appealing to One and all.

When you think about Jesus’s lighthouse of love beckoning you toward safe passage to the shore, you should consider the importance of shining a second, smaller light onto the

lighthouse. Illuminating the lighthouse should be the task of Judaism, not Christianity. It would be arrogant of Christians to shine their love down onto only themselves when there are so many perilously lost at sea. The light of wisdom should shine upon the lighthouse of love as love shines out into the darkness. The illumination of Judaism shining onto Christianity will teach the world individually and collectively how to navigate themselves with wisdom and love.

A lighthouse is nothing more than a very big lampstand. You are nothing more than a very little lampstand shining your love out onto the world. But if you don't also have a small tiny light beside you shining a light onto yourself, you'll feel dark inside indeed. It's imperative that you see the light that you shine out into the darkness.

Jesus saw Himself. He had to have shined His Jewish light of wisdom onto Himself to see what He was bringing to the world that hadn't been perceived in such a way before. You must see yourself as He saw Himself if you're going to love yourself. It doesn't matter if you're a green Martian or red-blooded American. The process of *making* love is the same throughout the universe.

You should be mystified by the magnitude of your spiritual process and awed by the purpose of your being. To contemplate something as magnificent as the power of WORDS/WORDS/w o r d s makes you a miracle in the flesh. God gave the world Jewish wisdom out of which the ancient Jews created a Gentile love. But that was His intention; it certainly was too great a plan for the ancient Jews to take credit for it. We can only do our best now to shine the light of wisdom onto His story to show the world the magnificence of His plan in hindsight. Only by looking back in time can we see the reason for His story having been interwoven into the history of Western civilization. There's a place for everyone in God's plan. All you have to do is look for it with wisdom, love and loyalty to life rather than envy of what others have amassed. Even looking at God's plan with the regret of hindsight in not having recognized it in the past is better than not wanting to look at it at all.

We all experience an inner cold and spiritual darkness at times. We all need to learn to look more closely within ourselves to see how we can seek the illumination from God that He wants us to shine within ourselves and then out onto others. Those who don't strive for self-warmth are truly in the darkest darkness, banished to a pitiful world where their sorrows and regrets have no meaning. Such people become angry and vindictive, and it's always women and children who ultimately pay the price for their ignorance.

No one has a license to proselytize to Jews, Christians or Muslims. Religious people should motivate themselves to change their ways, not rant and rave about yours. The mystery in every individual is a unique combination of wisdom, love and loyalty that makes him shine in his own special way. You don't have to be a Muslim to be loyal; a Christian

to be lovable; or live by every word of Torah literally to be a wise Jew. But it certainly would be helpful to you if you used Torah to reveal God's personal plan for you.

The separate spiritual skills God gave each of us through the words of Moses, Rabbi Joshua and the Prophet Mohammed are spiritual rungs on the ladders that connect your head, heart and soul that you need to learn to climb. The important first step in self-improvement is not to throw out any emotion you feel, regardless of how negatively it moves you. That doesn't mean you're obliged to accuse others of having made mistakes. It doesn't mean you're obliged *not* to accuse them of having made mistakes. It doesn't even mean you have to blame or not blame yourself. It only means you should think about why God allows you to feel the way you feel when others trigger the negative emotions that reverberate through you. There's always a way you can learn from your feelings without necessarily blaming others out loud for the way they *make* you feel. The fact that people make you feel any which way only becomes mysterious when you ask yourself why God allowed them to enter your life in the first place. Look for ways to work through your feelings patiently. At the same time, don't allow anyone to take advantage of you in the material world we have to share with one another.

There are some ignorant Muslims who'll jump at the idea of a Jew preaching that we all have to learn to share. They'll be the first to misquote me by saying that God wants the Jews to share Israel with them because He gave the outer world to us all. It's a silly argument because they have no intention of sharing the world within themselves with any of us. They can't yet share it with themselves. They're deep in denial of what I'm really talking about. They're still looking for ways to manipulate others to get Israel at any cost. They're not ready for self-seeking. They're stuck in the mentality of martyrdom because they see themselves as victims of circumstances beyond their control. The generous words that flow from me would anger them because they can't access that generosity in themselves. Their inner world is still dark indeed.

"THE LAMP OF THE BODY IS THE EYE." So keep your eye on your body and illuminate the feelings inside it before you illuminate the darkness in others. Anger at your enemies is justified. Retaliation is not. If you don't obey the law, you'll lose your ability to forgive. And if you don't forgive, you'll lose your ability to be generous. Don't spiral down into denial of God's presence in all your affairs.

Knowledge about yourself is the spiritual wood you need to bake spiritual bread. But the oil from forbidden fruit will become the fuel to burn your inner flame as though it were an ancient, oil lamp. Don't confuse the oil in the Middle East with the sacred, spiritual oil that will become the spiritual energy resource for everyone's tomorrow.

Only by making Jesus's WORDS personally meaningful will they become attractive to you. You can't tell a blind person what yellow has to do with bananas until you can see

that truth for yourself. Yellow is more than just warm like the sun and embracing. You're wasting precious time describing yellow to others until you look at a banana from your heart, not your head. Only then will you discover that the color yellow corresponds to the fear of the banana you were given of your own. Once you overcome your fear of your banana, you'll know what yellow has to do with bananas without having to stare in awe or shame at each and every banana you happen to see.

Moses gave us metaphor so we could see for ourselves the fruit of our own tree. He gave us metaphor so we could see when we were green {jealous}, when we were ripe {generous}, and when we were so rotten and spoiled {apathetic} that we thought we'd never go back to the ground where we came from. He didn't give us the metaphor in anticipation of us being felled like trees in a forest and burned like unwanted wood. He didn't give us metaphoric trees to literally nail rabbis to wooden crosses to exemplify His plan. A tree is a terrible thing to waste.

The Earth is the rock each of us clings to. The Earth is our home, our place in space, creating days in which we walk in the light of a particular faith and the nights of individual darkness and introspection.

You don't have to believe Jesus was God incarnate for His ideas to resonate as true. The spiritual laws of love He described are open for negotiation and interpretation. But you can't barter with science to place the sun, moon and stars where you will, as the Catholic Church once tried to do. You can only interpret the spiritual light of God through the lens of reality to ponder what love illuminates in you. The poetic laws of love that govern what Jesus's light brought to man are there for you to explore, not deplore.

A symbol is a terrible thing to waste because a symbol holds personal and emotional meaning. Symbols are magically imbued with self-worth. Those who are only wedded to rituals can't include their feelings in with their actions. They'll miss the big picture every Friday, Saturday and Sunday, week after week, year after year, regardless of their faith. Their rites and rituals will drain them of their precious contents, and their repetition of WORDS/WORDS/w o r d s will begin to sound hollow and forced. Like an ancient, oil lamp, they'll burn up the oil inside or run out of wick. Their flame will grow dim until it flickers and is extinguished with the least little wisp of wind.

Those who sheepishly acquiesce to the extreme dogmas of their religious institutions are hopelessly out of touch with the world God gave us today to shape into a new tomorrow. They're astrologists gambling on the stars being aligned who don't see the "Son light" shining within them. They're alchemists hoping to find a way to turn base metal into gold, when they were already given a body to have and to hold as a golden chalice. Those who turn their back on the poetry in the facts are doomed to becoming prosaic. No philosophy

of life will magically change hearts and minds. Poetic license must be blended in with the facts or a man will never learn to be awed by himself.

Every man plays god. He withholds knowledge from himself about himself, dispensing it as a reward even if his conscious mind thinks self-knowledge would only offend him. It's the new ideas we reveal to ourselves that give us power over ourselves. This forbidden fruit must be treated with the highest moral regard. Every new idea you receive about yourself should give you reason to thank yourself and God for allowing you to have earned it. The greater your awe for yourself, the greater your awe will be for God and the mysterious, marvelous ways in which He allows you to copy His mysterious ways.

“JESUS TRAVELLED THROUGH TOWNS AND VILLAGES TEACHING IN THEIR SYNAGOGUES, PROCLAIMING HIS MESSAGE, AND HEALING PEOPLE OF ILLNESS AND DISABILITY. AND AS HE LOOKED AT THE VAST CROWDS HE ATTRACTED, HE WAS DEEPLY MOVED. ‘THE HARVEST IS GREAT ENOUGH,’ HE REMARKED TO HIS DISCIPLES, ‘BUT THE REAPERS ARE FEW. SO YOU MUST PRAY TO THE LORD OF THE HARVEST TO SEND MEN OUT TO REAP IT.’” [Matthew 9:35-36-38]

It's easier to grow acres of spiritual olive trees, wheat fields and vineyards than it is to harvest them; process their contributions; and get people to sit down with you at your table to break bread together. It's easier to make a baby than it is to raise him up to become a man who loves himself.

You can't raise a child from a babe to a boy in a village of idiots. It takes teachers with attitudes of gratitude who can focus the child's inner eye on the spiritual principles that will lead him to look for mystery in life wherever he goes, inside and out. If you can't produce a nation of priests who are able to shepherd themselves, what will you fill your houses of worship with? We're running out of sheep.

Your own fields may be full of spiritual wheat ready for harvest, but you're going to have to do the hard work of gathering it. “THE REAPERS ARE FEW“ No one can turn the boy in you into a BEN-ADAM, but you. When every son of man sees himself as a metaphoric olive tree of knowledge, it will be easier for him to also see himself as a symbolic lamp filled with olive oil burning with passion for life.

“EVERYONE THEN WHO HEARS THESE WORDS OF MINE AND PUTS THEM INTO PRACTICE IS LIKE A SENSIBLE MAN WHO BUILDS HIS HOUSE ON THE ROCK. DOWN CAME THE RAIN AND UP CAME THE FLOODS, WHILE THE WINDS BLEW AND ROARED UPON THAT HOUSE - AND IT DID NOT FALL BECAUSE ITS FOUNDATIONS WERE ON THE ROCK.” [Matthew 7:24-25]

This is an extremely complex statement because Jesus isn't speaking from His heart, but from His head. He's describing a left-brain function by which a man can peer down

into his heart indirectly by perceiving right brain functions with intuition, thoughtfulness and subjectivity. This isn't an emotional response, but, instead, a reflection on feelings. If you follow through with the metaphor of the mind-being-earthen, the-heart-liquid and the spirit-airborne, then Christ's comment about a firm foundation must be perceived as a mind concerned with matters of heart and soul.

The ROCK Jesus referred to in this passage is the opposite of the ROCK Moses referred to. The ROCK is love. The ROCK is wisdom. God is the metaphoric rock beneath every tree of knowledge. A man's mind is the symbolic rock, the Israel on which he learns how to build himself a spiritual home upon the ground within him.

Man's left-brain is logical, analytical and objective. But his right-brain function is intuitive, thoughtful and subjective. Before you can learn to swim in your heart you have to peer into the reflection of the ocean of your emotions through right brain functions. You have to appreciate your feelings before you can dive in and swim in them fearlessly and joyfully.

If you want to survive your storms of anger; inner floods of disappointment when the dam bursts; and the whirlpools of frustrations within that take you round and round – you first have to exercise creativity of the mind. You've got to peer down from your head into your heart to perceive the surface tension of your feelings that reflect a mirror image of yourself back into your head.

This image you have in your mind was created and reinforced by the reflection of yourself that you see in the mirror. That picture of you isn't you. In fact, it's the exact opposite of you: a reflect of you. And the feelings that come up when you look in the mirror are triggered by this reflection, not by you. The real image of what you look like can only be accessed from within. And that's going to subjective, not objective, and, therefore, open to interpretation by only you.

If you don't see yourself as fully participating in the modernization of the world, you may not respect yourself for your contribution to your generation. But if you don't also look at your contribution to yourself, you'll miss the essence of your life.

Projection is the process by which we process the world around us without conscious awareness of what we see in our soul. Just having thoughts and feelings about external reality doesn't give us access to our most intimate beliefs about ourselves.

If you only like yourself for your money, muscles or the length of your penis, that pretty much tells you all you know about why you like yourself for now. Your money and muscles may be the result of hard work, but the length of your penis was simply a given. Some things in life you earn. Some of what you consider yours is actually a loan from God that you ought to give back through others with interest.

Unless you question yourself, you may discover that your penis entered you your anus, screwed with your heart and then lodged itself firmly in your head where it's still f--king up your thinking. If that's happened to you, you'll correctly concluded that it was you who f---ked yourself over because you never learned how to operate yourself subjectively.

Some people work effortlessly from within. They don't have to spend time figuring out how they operate because there's never anything wrong with the way they behave. These people do fine almost all the time. And when their objective world begins to shake and quake, they automatically go inside to promise themselves to shore up their inner foundation before the next inner earthquake shakes them to their core.

Whether you tend to operate yourself from the out inside or the inside out, you should be able to see by now that:

1. You're dealing with two worlds.
2. Each of these worlds requires the same skills.
3. Religion was always intended to teach you how to operate your inner world, not the world we share.
4. The world we share looks the way it does because of the various faiths and philosophies that we haven't yet learned to piece together like a puzzle.

Let's take a second look at the above quote from Jesus. "EVERYONE THEN WHO HEARS THESE WORDS OF MINE AND PUTS THEM INTO PRACTICE IS LIKE A SENSIBLE MAN WHO BUILDS HIS HOUSE ON THE ROCK. DOWN CAME THE RAIN AND UP CAME THE FLOODS, WHILE THE WINDS BLEW AND ROARED UPON THAT HOUSE - AND IT DID NOT FALL BECAUSE ITS FOUNDATIONS WERE ON THE ROCK"

Mild feelings {rain} and intense feelings {floods} as well as powerful beliefs {hurricane winds} will batter your inner dwelling and weaken it over time. If you've used self-knowledge to build your inner edifice on a firm foundation {curiosity, wonder, awe}, your relationship to God {Rock} will support you during trying times.

If you look up at the rain (sorrow) to its source in the sky or uphill to the source of the flood {grief}, you're eventually come to realize that all the water that pummels your inner abode originally comes from the sea. When you look directly at the source of the feelings that force you to repair your inner dwelling, there's never a coincidence. Whether it's your foundation {conclusions}, your walls {assumptions} or your roof {defenses}, your inner world was constructed on beliefs that have had to be deconstructed and will always need to be reconstructed.

Your opinions about others aren't necessarily morally sound, so you should infer that your opinions about yourself aren't any more lucid. Exploring right brain thinking will

allow you to think about extreme feelings without acting them out in the world. Learning how to use the forces within you is like building a beach house in your brain where you have a panoramic view of your ocean of emotion from the comfort and safety of a sandy shore. The pictures in your mind you create to assimilate the forces within you are entirely a personal decision that costs you nothing. But they'll give you insight into the opinions you've held for a lifetime that you may have projected out onto others rather than dive in and move through in yourself. Breaking through your projections begins with the courage to touch the water and watch as your feelings flutter, ripple and wave within you. Then the mirror image of you will clear, and you'll be able to see down to the bottom of your heart where there's a grounding that we're all yearning to touch.

Anyone can treat this world like a hotel that you're going to check out of some day. Anyone can see himself as a tourist just passing through. It's easy to feel like a "Stranger in a Strange Land" [1961 science fiction novel by Robert Heinlein]. {Moses fled ancient Egypt and married Zipporah: Exodus 2:22: "AND SHE BORE HIM A SON, AND HE CALLED HIS NAME GERSHOM; FOR HE SAID, 'I HAVE BEEN A STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND.'"} }

It's much harder to make a home for yourself here on Earth rather than see yourself as a guest in a hotel. Once you make yourself at home here, you become emotionally attached to reality. Then you realize you'll someday have to leave. But once you can blend Biblical and Quranic intention, there will be no house of prayer you enter that won't feel like home.

Tourists come and go from this world without a second thought to where they've been or the home they could have built while here. Only the man who's learned to love himself finds leaving here a bittersweet experience. Only he knows that this is the essence of joy. All others can't wait to check out.

Some deconstruct themselves literally with bombs strapped to their back. Others do so physically with food. Some figuratively find some other diabolical way of making themselves miserable. Only the scholar who makes himself at home at school is going to embrace Sunday school every day of the week. Only he's going to learn more about himself from every little thing he does.

The great gift we've all been given is our body. It's the one dwelling place we can't share with another living soul. It's the one place on Earth where no one else can literally go. We're all going to give up our three dimensional coordinates in space when we leave here to go Home. People who treat their body like a hotel room where they order up room service any time of day or night get a shallow experience of the forces within them. They think they're in a Hilton one minute, and they're rudely awakened when they find themselves in a flophouse the next. Those who treat their body as their home away from Home get a different experience of life altogether. The world around them becomes a

mirror of the magnificent world within. And they die with a Mona Lisa smile on their face that only some can relate to.

Your relationship to your body isn't just a question of physical health. Your body is your home mentally, emotionally and spiritually as well. The more you love your body because it houses all awareness of yourself, the more at home you're going to feel in it. This sense of inner comfort is equivalent to how you feel when you walk in the door at night after a hard day's work. Self-love is, at its most basic, a physical sensation of relief in being you rather than anyone else.

Eternal life is easy to imagine and yearn for. It's easy to talk about Heaven and the rewards you anticipate when you get there. What's hard to envision is living in a hotel room all your life where the service gets worse and worse over time, especially when you realize you pre-booked your accommodations decades in advance and can't go anywhere else. It's easy to get impatient with God and the general public for making your visit down here impersonal and even unpleasant. Many "guests" here on Earth see no reason to take responsibility for the upkeep of the grounds of their accommodation. Whether you feel like you're in a two-star hotel or a resort, life becomes harder than it looks when you see others with a home of their own.

The HOUSE Jesus is referring to in this passage is His symbol for the house in our head that we must constantly look down from if we're going to learn how to discover our feelings for ourselves in good times and bad. The HOUSE He's referring to is the Israel God gave you that envy of the Jews will constrain you from making your own. The Mediterranean seashore that touches your mind can be one of the most inspiring and beautiful of scenes on Earth; one you should share with your neighbors.

Jesus strived to remain in His body as long as He could. But when He knew His sojourn here was nearing its end, He presented His followers with symbols they could use to help them concentrate the metaphors of Moses into symbols. The foundation of His house was built upon a Rock of such personal conviction and esteem for the miracle of life that He built His church upon it. But for us to recreate His entire domicile spiritually, we have to be realistic about the foundation of our own. The foundation the Church is built upon is real. It isn't going anywhere. But God has shaken it to its foundation many times with rain, flood and winds that have ripped apart the reputation of the Church in the minds of us all.

If you can't take Jesus's parables to heart, you miss the whole point of them. And if you can't begin by looking at His heart as you would the reflection of the lake in northern Israel {The Sea of Galilee} from the shore, you're going to imagine your thoughts drowning in your feelings. You won't learn to walk on water. And you'll certainly never learn how to dive in and swim through your feelings regardless of the temperature or the

weather. To be able to stand on this lake requires knowledge of the tension at the surface of your emotions. It doesn't take strength. It takes grace.

Jesus wasn't another Moses. We didn't need another Moses. The world needed a spiritual leader who could take us on a journey of a different kind. If you can't see the point in Moses having taken the Israelites on the Exodus from Egypt to Israel, you'll never see the invisible journey from head to heart that Jesus went on, a journey just as long and arduous, but centered in a different place in inner space.

During the first 600 years after His teachings, while Christianity was taking off in Europe and Islam was under construction in Saudi Arabia, the Jews were doing something spiritually quite different in the Diaspora. Rabbis were consolidating the Talmud. The Talmud is about 6,000 pages of commentary on Judaism, especially on Torah, written by thousands of rabbis over hundreds of years.

Outwardly the Jews were forced into the Diaspora to wander from country to country as reviled strangers in other people's lands for 2,000 years. They were the most unwanted long-term guests in the history of the world, and yet they weren't allowed to go home to Israel either. They were made to feel like a lodger in someone else's house who was taken in for the meager pittance he paid that supplemented the household income. They were unwanted boarders who were never allowed to sit at the family table.

Inwardly the Jews in the Diaspora were constructing a moveable home in their heart, the kind of ark we'd call a houseboat. This was a sophisticated emotional home that had to be able to sail through adversities. It made Judaism portable and universal because it taught the Jew how to be an outsider without feeling abandoned despite the fact that he literally was banished from one place after another. This exclusion from Christian society left the Jew with time to explore the animal instincts in the hold of his boat and let them out safely one-by-one on shore without alerting his Christian neighbors to what he was doing. These medieval and Renaissance Jews couldn't worry about being allowed back in Israel. That was out of the question. So instead, they became explorers on the seven, spiritual seas of the heart where they simply reflected on their feelings rather than learn how to swim through them as Christians were being instructed to do.

The revelations in Torah that hinted at the coming of a second Joshua who'd lead a new generation across a Jordan River into another perception of Israel gave further credence to the WORD of God. But the rabbis of the last thousand years applied their skills to revealing God's wisdom, not His love.

It was actually these rabbis' wives who were living ovens baking loaves of living bread who were discovering the meaning of love through family life. While the rabbis were cementing the bricks of the spiritual laws into place to produce solid, secure houses of prayer, their wives were living the laws of love in their homes. Jewish women were turning

housekeeping into personal purification, and household repairs into “TIKKUN HAOLAM” {REPAIR OF THE WORLD}. They personalized love by making it a daily practice of living, something all women excel in doing that men have only recently learned from them.

“Woman’s work,” like baking challah for the Sabbath, became their communion of love for the Lord through family. Washing and drying wine glasses was their expression of passion made manifest through housework. Jewish women became the personification of love while Jewish men waxed poetic about the law. All women in Europe became the embodiment of Christ’s heart while their husbands were busy fighting over His body, the Church, Israel, and the one “true” faith.

While European Christian culture vilified Jews for being materialistic, Jews were learning to love God and life on Earth through the acquisition of nice things. The Jews created the concept of the middle class, a group of people in society who could both love this world materially and their hopes and dreams for a better world to come.

The European Jew became the first living example of how a human body could be a “thing” of personal value, something to be cherished with self-will rather than wasted on martyrdom. Of course European Christians did their best to try to make the Jews feel as guilty as possible for their love of stuff, and stole their stuff from them as often as they could, ostensibly to punish them for loving it.

And when 20th Century, European Christians had taken every “thing” the Jews had away that they prized, they decided that the Final Solution would be to take their bodies away from them as well. By attempting to murder every Jew on the continent, European Christians inadvertently asked the question whether the love that Jesus had introduced to the world was loving enough to overcome their own self-hate.

So when God allowed my parent’s generation to return to “ERETZ ISRAEL” {ISRAEL, THE NATION} in 1948, some Jews suddenly realized that our Land of Milk and Honey was much more than just a physical place. While precocious Christians were grounding themselves with an Israel within in the 20th Century, precocious modern Jews at the time were learning to reflect on their emotions. Such are the mysteries of God’s ways.

Jews like my mother and father who survived this spiritual, clear cutting of the Jewish forests of Europe realized that after their families had been taken from them along with all their possessions, there was nothing left for them to love about life around them. They unconsciously sought meaning in life from within. This is what I didn’t understand as a child in the 1950’s. And this is what drove me insane in my 20’s because I couldn’t put these ideas into WORDS/WORDS/w o r d s.

Symbolism slowly became the meat and potatoes of both Judaism and Christianity through women who’d learned about symbolism through their daily chores. In Judaism

symbolic logic was an unwritten rule that wasn't talked about while in Christianity it was Jesus's law made manifest consciously through, art, religion, science and technology.

But only symbolic logic makes it possible for a man to reflect on what's inside him. If there's no container, there's no possibility for there being any contents. If there's no outside there's no inside. If there's only one world and not two then other people's thoughts, feelings, desires and beliefs don't matter. Man becomes wooden in the sense of solid. His grain becomes a veneer. There's no possibility of there being maple syrup pouring out of him. He becomes an etching of a tree not a metaphor for a tree.

Judaism and Christianity were two religious institutions that were hardly on speaking terms until the late 19th Century. Only then were they unofficially reintroduced to one another in America 2,000 years after the death of Jesus when reformed Jews gave up the laws of KASHRUT {kosher laws of sanitation with regard to food} in order to eat at the same table with Christians. Only then did Christians give up their venom of the rich, ancient Jews who'd done nothing to stop the Romans from crucifying their God.

Today's separation of genders, races, religions and sexual orientations are all mirrors of the spiritual separations within each one of us that need to be acknowledged and studied with fondness. Today all God's lessons of life have become personal. To the extent that each of us can walk across his own Red Sea when it parts in adolescence and then through the desert journey to our own Promised Land over the course of the next 40 years, we can also become a fisherman on the boat in our Galilee where we can learn how to catch men, especially that one man that we most love {ourselves}.

Jews are foolish if they get frightened every time they hear the name Jesus. And Christians are hateful if they continue to interpret His WORDS without deeper reflection on the modern, metaphoric meaning of Torah. The rabbis, priests, parsons and ministers of today are more at fault for this than the rest of us because they haven't addressed one another with more sincerity in an effort to unite the faiths as pieces of God's puzzle. They left all the hard work up to pop culture and those of us at the bottom of the social pyramid.

Now it seems all the more obvious that the men who most love other men will have to teach the rest of mankind how to love themselves before each man will be able to move us further forward toward worldwide, social tranquility. We aren't afraid of our penis. And we aren't afraid of yours.

"EVEN IF I SHALL WALK IN THE VALLEYS OF THE SHADOWS OF DEATH, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID OF EVIL BECAUSE YOU ARE WITH ME; YOUR ROD AND YOUR STAFF, THEY COMFORT ME." [Psalm 23:4] Spare the rod {tough love} and spoil the child, but spare the staff {tender love} and what will a man lean on when he's emotionally exhausted from trying and trying, getting nowhere?

It's harder to be a man than most men think. Today you must use your ROD {the guilt that motivates you to be disciplined} and your STAFF {the love that motivates you to appreciate yourself as you are} to move you through the valley of shadows within you.

The title of this chapter was "Inner Authority." You can't possibly delve into God's Ultimate Authority until you understand how to achieve your own inner authority. Your conscience can't be your guide until you can see your heart from you head and reflect upon the feelings you instill in others. Those will be the same feelings you're going to later use on yourself. "AS YOU SOW SO SHALL YOU REAP." [Galatians 6:7]

Once you have your inner LAND and SEA secure, we can then move into a view of them from your soul to perceive the great "j i h a d" from the s k y. {Arabic: struggle for understanding of the ways of our Abrahamic God}.

The Other White Meat: The Gospel According to Mark

Change, Transform or Transcend?

You think with your mind. Therefore you must learn how to change your mind by exercising it more than you do. You feel with your heart. Therefore you must transform your heart by feeling more deeply than you do. And you believe in God with your soul. Therefore you must transcend your belief system with a new faith in yourself you hadn't considered before. Jesus said in the Book of Mark, "THE TIME HAS COME AT LAST - THE KINGDOM OF GOD HAS ARRIVED. YOU MUST CHANGE YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS AND BELIEVE THE GOOD NEWS." [Mark 1:14-15]

That was easier to say to poor Jews 2,000 years ago than it is to middleclass Americans who all live better than the richest of Jews in those days. It's harder to believe the good news today unless you believe that a rainbow of hope can shine within you against a backdrop of black.

In the inner sanctum of cynicism, the rainbow of promises has to appear from within for those for whom there's no hope around them. The descendants of both the rich and poor Jews during the time of Jesus handed down the various, spiritual tools we've been blessed with today. But that also includes cynicism, scorn and derision. It's now up to us to learn to use that darkness to contrast the light. Life has become physically easier than it was then, and spiritually, it's become easier, as well. There's no excuse good enough to stop you.

Noah reached land after only 40 days at sea. He let the animals out under a rainbow filled sky that might have been still a little gray. And God was obviously there with him throughout the experience. He built a vineyard under a blue sky in which the sun shined down its golden light to ripen the grapes. Then he gathered them, made wine and got drunk. He wasn't cynical. He was full of nothing but hope. But then his son Japheth saw an opportunity to take advantage of his father in that vulnerable state and he screwed him. Hope doesn't last long when you've got children...

Every man is an intellectual tree with an interest in growing branches in myriad directions to appreciate the fruits of his labor. But he has to grow a vineyard within as well to identify with the fruit of the vine.

A vine is not a tree. A vine entwines. If a man doesn't feel entwined with others he only feels like Noah, a spiritual adolescent looking only for ways of escape.

Thoughts branch out. Feelings connect us to other human beings even if those feelings seem to tighten their grip on us over time. Feelings interweave, twist and, yes, even entangle. But without gratitude for the fruit of the vine, there's no reason to be proud of what you know from having first stolen forbidden fruit from a tree.

Believing with all your heart and soul in “THE GOOD NEWS” Jesus spoke of brings up the problem of embracing the rational and irrational without cynicism. It’s easy to think you’re all grown up and that others are the only ones who act childishly. But cynicism has a way of working its way back home, leaving you with doubts about yourself. Good news is easily marred by cynicism.

In the 25th chapter of Genesis Ishmael and Isaac bury their father. But since Abraham left everything he owned to Isaac, the meeting between these Biblical brothers couldn’t have gone well. The unfair legacy Isaac received over Abraham’s many other children is what the descendants of these brothers in the Middle East are still fighting over today. Sibling rivalry may have been first described in Torah, but it exists in us all, whether or not we have brothers and sisters. Jealousy and envy are negative feelings that get stirred up in every man and then passed down generation after generation.

This chapter of Torah is the last required reading for Muslims. But the feelings of sibling rivalry don’t end here with Ishmael and Isaac. The topic continues through to the end of this chapter with “THE TWO NATIONS” in Rebecca’s womb, Jacob and Esau, who struggle with one another in their mother even before they’re born. The chapter ends with Jacob’s theft of his brother’s birthright and Esau despising everything about him.

Jesus’s disciples were, for the most part, poor Jews in a desperate situation under Roman rule. They saw Jesus’s message of hope through an ancient and very Jewish, cynical lens. None of them were what we think of as modern Christians. The Christian traditions we’re so familiar with today didn’t emerge until many centuries after Jesus’s death when ancient Greeks and Romans took over the fledgling belief system of Christianity that had previously been run entirely by Jews.

The Disciples never anticipated the venomous reaction of later Christianity towards Jews for refusing to accept Jesus’s WORDS as divine. Nor could they have anticipated the jealousy and envy of the Abrahamic faiths that have created such animosity and misunderstanding in all three.

Cynicism of God’s plan is universal because jealousy and envy of God’s gifts to other faiths and philosophies have to be personalized for you to break through your own projection of loss and abandonment. When you don’t appreciate your own container, you can’t fill it with all the contents you wish. Then you may look outside yourself sarcastically at what God allowed others to achieve.

Watch what you think. You’ll be amazed to see that some of the time you’re not even talking to yourself when you’re talking to yourself. It’s as if you’re talking to someone out in the world. Other times you know that your inner words are meant only for you. This difference is hugely important in learning to break through your projection.

“THE SABBATH,” Jesus continued, “WAS MADE FOR MAN’S SAKE; MAN WAS NOT MADE FOR THE SAKE OF THE SABBATH. THAT IS WHY THE SON OF MAN IS MASTER EVEN OF THE SABBATH.” This statement is really about the transformation of the heart that heralds in the good news that comes from examining the wisdom of Moses from a new location inside yourself. If you don’t bring Moses and Jesus with you each day, your days will look like those out there in the world who only rely on Mohammed. The trick is to rely on all three.

When Jesus said that God made the Sabbath for man’s sake it’s obvious that, on one level, He was stating that God doesn’t need physical rest, people do. Spiritually, God doesn’t need to be glorified, either. He didn’t create man to give Him a pat on the back. We don’t glorify God because He needs it. We glorify Him only if we choose to do so out of gratitude. There’s no point in glorifying Him if you don’t have good reason to do so. Fear is only enough of an emotional motivation to do so honestly. Love is only enough of an emotional motivation to do so sincerely. It’s not until you get to matters of your soul that you’ll choose to glorify God for the right reason – because He helps you help yourself to become genuine and authentic. If you aren’t motivated to do everything for you, you’ll find that your motives are hypocritical.

There’s no point in resting your body one day a week if you enjoy the work you’re doing. For those who have creative employment rest feels more like punishment. “THE SABBATH WAS MADE FOR MAN’S SAKE.” If you don’t use it to your advantage you’re missing the point entirely. Here in California we wish people a nice day. What we’re really reminding one another of us that today is your Sabbath regardless of the day of the week.

The human body needs very little physical rest, but the soul of man needs enormous amounts of free time to pursue the concept of self-love. Men work a lifetime in anticipation of retirement. But if they find they don’t know much about the pursuit of self-love when they’re finally free to pursue it, they often drop dead soon after retirement. Don’t make that mistake. Start loving yourself now and you’ll fill your golden years with a wealth of new experiences that will make your working years worth the wait.

The time out you take each week from work that you consider your 7th day becomes sacred only if you use that time to improve your feelings for yourself. Your day of rest might just as well be divided into daily segments instead of saved up for one whole day of the week. If you can work on being in good company when you’re alone, you’ll be perceived as a joy to others. It’s not the Sabbath that will bring meaning to you, but you who will give meaning to your Sabbath.

Don’t discount the importance of misery. When you’re miserable, it’s a great gift from God that most people don’t thank Him for. Misery is a sign of a test question from the

Teacher that you're finding extremely difficult to solve. Friction within comes from fractions of thoughts and feelings that don't share the same denominator. The answer you seek can only come from moral authority that questions how you're treating yourself in contrast to how you're treating others. If there isn't peace of mind in that quotient, you're going to feel miserable.

Sacred time {the Sabbath} is subjective time. Sacred time was given to man so that he'd question the difference between the other six days of the week and the seventh in order to better himself. This Mosaic contribution to time was the first gift of Torah given at the beginning of Genesis. The division of time into weekly increments was the first moral unit of time given by God to man.

Knowing when to sow and reap requires a yearly calendar for experts in the field, but having a unit of time in which to measure your own moral progress gives your life new meaning every seven days. God's created the universe in six daily increments and commended Himself at the end of each day for His efforts by including the compliment to Himself, "IT IS GOOD." His creativity should mirror your own effort to create your inner world the same way.

To believe that God literally created the world in a week misses the whole point of spirituality. To take the Creation Story literally reduces it to the level of myth. It turns Sunday school into a joke and God's moral intentions for you into meaningless babble. It insists that you leave your brain at the door when you enter your house of prayer.

You aren't blessed with enough time in your life to take time literally. Take time personally or you'll waste it.

Objective time, the six days we share with one another, teaches us to keep our promises to others. Subjective time, the Sabbath day, we should celebrate with increasingly greater acknowledgement of God's presence from within. This teaches us to keep our promises to ourselves, with God as our Witness.

God doesn't need us to promise Him anything. We need to be able to make promises to ourselves (and then to one another) that we can see ourselves living out day-by-day. Uttering your own name in vain is done when you make promises to yourself you don't keep. Don't worry about taking God's name in vain until you can make promises to yourself that mean something to you. Your word has to be good so you can admire yourself. God's admiration of you will be in doubt if you're Jewish; a foregone conclusion if you're Christian; and a presumption if you're Muslim. Don't fall into that trap.

God is like an insurance policy, a policy that insures that if you keep your word to yourself and others He'll step in to teach you how to keep your promises to Him. There's no point in promising Him anything if you see yourself breaking your word to others, and

yourself. Promises are for practice. You promise in order to learn the depth of the WORD/WORD/w o r d God gave to us all.

When Monday rolls around you should be emotionally prepared for a new week. You should feel you're out to improve yourself compared to who you were in your own eyes the week before. The Sabbath should give you a sense of renewal that makes the new week exciting and expectant. If you go to work with Monday morning blues, you're starting your week sadly. If you don't like your job, you should change your attitude about it before you start looking for another job. It's your attitude on your last job that your future employer will try to discover at your job interview. If you can't talk about that challenge, you aren't worth your weight in salt.

Whether you celebrate your Sabbath on Saturdays {head}, God's day of rest; Sundays {heart}, the first day, the day He create the heavens and Earth; or Fridays {soul}, the day He created humanity – is totally a question of your tradition and personal preference. It's not the day you celebrate that counts, but what you do in the way of self-renewal on that day that matters.

Of course, for rabbis, priests, parsons, ministers, imams and clerics who devote themselves to spiritual advancement on all three levels, head, heart and soul, this process should be continuous and contiguous. Those who devote themselves full-time to the service of God should be engaging their head and heart in their soul at all times. That's why they've chosen the work of spiritual leadership. That's why we depend on them for spiritual insight and why we're so unforgiving when their views are spiritually myopic or downright blinded by loathing or revenge. If we let them live every day as though it were the Sabbath, they'd better have something good to show for it...

Spiritual time has to be complimented with spiritual space. You've got to develop an inner world that authentically models your belief system. If your inner world is full of foolish ideas, hateful feelings or backward beliefs, there's no way you're going to develop to the next level of spiritual awareness. There's no way you're going to learn how to move through time and space with grace.

Call the combination of spiritual time and spiritual space "sacred dance." This is a common philosophic concept in Hinduism, expressed as Shiva's victorious "dance of bliss." But looking at daily life as a spiritual dance with God is not yet a common view in Western practices because most modern men are afraid of dancing by themselves. They're afraid of using up time and space in their own creative ways in the spotlight. This is what it means to be afraid of your penis.

You don't have to be a spiritual leader to give yourself permission to change your mind. You can allow yourself the liberty of transforming your heart if you've heard even a whisper within telling you that there are ways for you to feel more intimately about your

feelings. You, too, can inhale the odiferous fragrance of spending an eternity with yourself {with or without the body you now inhabit} if you make a greater investment in your soul. You can achieve the highest spiritual degree bestowed in the school of life, a Ph.D. in “thee.” All it takes is concentration on what you think, feel and believe if your desire for your own good precedes your desire to tell others how to live their life.

Most people actually look forward to death as a welcomed relief from having had to be themselves for far too long. They avoid themselves as best they can with job, family and distractions, professing great moral authority about how others should live their life, and then they die with a grimace on their face. If living with themselves gets a bit too cumbersome, they use alcohol, drugs or denial to lie to themselves about the way they really feel about themselves. They think of God as a senile, old man who’ll give them whatever they want if they make moral proclamations about what Jews and gays must do differently. What they forget is that He remembers every, little thing that *they* do, too.

A few men cry like babies when their way of life unexpectedly takes a turn in an unexpected direction, but very few actually raise their hand and wait to be called on to ask the Teacher a good question in a respectful tone of voice when that happens. For most, life is still a family experience with God as the Father and them as His children. They’re still in the kindergarten view of reality, unwilling to graduate to the first grade where they actually have to learn something about themselves while in the company of strangers. For many people it’s a great spiritual achievement just to graduate to thinking of God as their Teacher rather than their Parent and Playmate.

Thinking well of yourself and feeling good about yourself are the primary tools you have with which to look forward to waking up the next morning being you again. Believing in yourself and being able to put your faith in yourself can’t be accomplished simply with personal affirmations, general promises from your religious institution or bigger smiles with ever-whiter teeth for others to stare at. You have to do the hard work all by yourself.

Most people who casually agree that life is like a school really hated school. They didn’t figure out what it was that they really loved about school. There was something else happening at the time that they really hated about their school years, and that was growing up. Rarely did our teachers address the real challenges of growing up because they were forbidden from discussing the topic of serpents and worms.

Self-love is the only answer, but Jesus was only the first messenger to profess His love for the world, a love that He had attained with Himself and from Himself. You don’t have to be a Christian to love yourself. You don’t have to be a gay-Jew either. We only know for a fact that Jesus was Jewish. There’s no evidence He was gay. (Although my gaydar tells me He was. With abs like that, He surely would have wanted to show them off.)

It doesn't matter whether God created your body and placed your consciousness in your head, heart or soul. What matters is that you move into your heart regardless of where you hang your hat now.

Moses had to be cajoled by God into going back to the people and the place where he'd killed a man. God had to convince him he had something to offer that would be of service to others. He had to threaten him that as a murderer, he had no human recourse for forgiveness and redemption. He had to rely on Him.

But Jesus wasn't cut from the same cloth. The Jews in His time were far more sophisticated than the Children of Israel 1,400 years prior. The Jews who were born and grew up during the Exodus were no longer naïve or childishly attached to their leaders. They were defiant, belligerent and impatient. Moses got stuck with a job that no one then, or since, would envy.

And by the time Jesus came on the scene, the ancient Jews were under occupation by Roman barbarians who were far more cruel and heartless than their previous masters in Babylonia or the Egyptian slave drivers they'd known before. The Jews of 2,000 years ago were terrified at the thought of becoming slaves yet a third time in history. The poor and disenfranchised Jews at the time of Jesus were desperate for more than rainbows of promises from God. They needed to know His game plan.

A mother is supposed to teach her little boy to use his head to control his desires, but a father is supposed to teach him to control his feelings. It takes time to develop trust in your parents' plan for you because each of them has a slightly different plan. It takes language, modeling, experience and most of all patience to honor your parents even though you can't see the reasons for their harsh control. The beliefs you have now about yourself were shaped by the ways you were taught to use your head, heart and penis regardless of whether you believe your parents' tactics were humane and successful, or not. You weren't schooled to consciously try to figure out your inner forces at play when you were a child. You just did the best you could with what you faced in the moment. And the same can be said of your parents with their parents before them...

Most of us end up staring too deeply into, or staring too far away from, our parents' flames. Our parents ran a lot more hot and cold than you do, but they probably couldn't talk much about why that was so. Today we know we can give greater consideration to other people's feelings to the degree we can consider our own. But if you haven't given much thought to how your parents burned you with emotional fire and froze you out with emotional ice, you're not going to perceive the effects of those experiences on you today. And your positive influence in others' lives will be diminished.

It's no surprise everyone gets burned in life and has the scars within to prove it. It's no surprise everyone gets frostbitten, and figuratively has to live without digits or limbs. If

you look around you'll see that your life is mysteriously different from everyone else's. You've survived, if not always thrived, in a way that's unique to you. There's a mystery to your life that you can only begin to explore at those times when you're ready to step back from experiencing your life to contemplate the process. Only then can you question yourself in earnest, asking of that mysterious someone you don't know very well in your soul, "Why me?" and "Why not me?" while awaiting good answers.

These questions may seem nebulous when asked of yourself, even seemingly useless if you're not accustomed to acknowledging the fact that you give yourself answers all the time. There's an inner system of communication that you ought to first acknowledge and then practice to become proficient in using it. The more you ask tough questions of yourself the more your inner apparatus will struggle to give you the answers you need to develop faith in yourself. {Sometimes it can take days for me to spit out an answer to a really hard question I've asked of myself.} If you're a novice, look first to daydreams and fantasies for ways in which the voice in your soul is communicating with you. The emotions you're conveying to yourself in these little inner videos you make for yourself are key to the messages you're trying to give yourself.

The WORD "DAFKA" which literally means "SPITEFUL, MALICIOUS and MEAN-SPIRITED," infers a refusal to even reply rather than react to the contact you try to make with yourself. Men are naturally defiant, but often in denial of why. First they blame themselves for having been born frightened and still being scared, and then they frighten themselves into self-blame. Once they've comforted themselves with a steady supply of food, alcohol, drugs and/or sex, they begin to develop an appetite for blaming others instead.

After decades of going around in this circle like the Israelites who wandered in the desert for 39 year, something new happens. Just as a man arrives at his own interpretation of the Book of Numbers to account for all that he's been through, a rebellion is unleashed. He becomes DAFKA. He insists he can't obey another order. He's got to have it his way.

Spite isn't something you get out of your system when you're a child or adolescent. Spite never ends. God anticipated and addressed this issue by saying, "VENGEANCE IS MINE," an expression that comes down to us from Deuteronomy 32:35. But He continued, saying "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."

Well, that's all well and good if you believe every quote from God, but most of us have a hard time waiting patiently for Him to teach a lesson to those who've hurt us. A very good man will come to realize that his desire for revenge ultimately emanates out from within. He'll unconsciously choose to get back at himself if he can't hurt others, and the best way to hurt himself is to ignore his own, inner effort to communicate with himself

lovingly. Keep dialing. With enough expressions of self-love manifested externally for others, you *will* pick up.

Mel Brooks made his philosophy clear in his dark and satiric musical comedy, “The Producers” where his goal was to make us laugh at Nazism and anti-Semitism. He wanted to make the Nazis seem so petty and preposterous that no one can take such a view of humanity seriously anymore. Mel Brooks’s genius combined with your healthy sense of humor hammered the nails into the coffin of the Third Reich. But the ghost of Hitler isn’t yet dead.

What we see today isn’t just anti-Semitism. That, along with racism, homophobia and misogyny is dying, despite the efforts of the fanatics in the three Abrahamic faiths to resurrect them. What we see today are various permeations of self-hate projected out onto individuals and groups of people that we have to vigilantly extinguish. We have to drive a stake into the heart of religious extremists or they’ll suck the blood out of us for eternity.

The wars in the Middle East are examples of this spread of self-hate, love of darkness and aversion to mirrors. When you side with secular Israelis, not the ultra-orthodox religious nuts who hate their penis with a passion, then regardless which Abrahamic faith you came out of, you’re going to see the side of self-love and choose it every time.

With practice in using your thoughts {good and bad} and feelings {tender and tough} on yourself, you’ll begin to move beyond mental changes and emotional transformations. You’ll come to the third, inner space from which to listen and speak to the other two: your soul. You’ll transcend the faith you presently have in God’s plan for you to a new faith in yourself, one with a view to greater generosity toward yourself and less malice toward others. You won’t just tolerate or accept yourself as you are. You’ll come to admire yourself more vociferously for the ways you handle the challenge to make and maintain verbal contact within yourself with loving intention down to the deepest part of you.

Going from pupil to student to scholar in the school of life is a slow process, but it doesn’t have to drive you mad, as it did, me. Those who’ve known desperation know that desperation leads to cynicism, and cynicism only leads to more defiance and denial. Once a man is DAFKA, it’s much harder to convince him to try going in the other direction to explore mystery, wonder, marvel and joy. A man’s doubts and uncertainties about others may only leave him more distant from himself. It’s a catch-22 that has to be addressed slowly, like pulling a key out of a lock that should never have been put in there in the first place. Jiggle don’t jolt.

You have to stop yourself from whining like a Dorothy trying to get home from a bizarre world she never asked to land in. You have to stop yourself from complaining about the brains you don’t have; the heart you’re missing; and all the courage that went out the window when you needed it the most. You have to give up on a wizard entering your life

and fixing it all *for* you; they're all caricatures of false beliefs you have to work against. You're still in Kansas, Toto. You have to live with life the way it is. There isn't even a good witch who can get you through this one. And, girls, I'm afraid not even ruby slippers are going to help...

You're not going to be enrolled in this school forever. You're attendance in "Oz" is temporary and, although involuntary, you don't have to go back to your old habit of wandering the halls of your heartland without anything personally productive to do. You don't have to keep pretending to learn about others' idea of moral authority out on the playground rather than attend your classes, study groups and tutorials with our Teacher within.

If you've learned anything about life and the importance of loving learning about yourself, I suggest you talk to yourself until you hear yourself, can really listen and then respond. Stay in class. Concentrate, no matter how hard the lesson. Stop with all the electives that distract you from yourself and get to work on your core curriculum. Imagine every stage of life you've been through as a diploma earned that brought you this far.

Be proud of the spiritual education you've had that prepared you to make contact with the alien in inner space who's chosen to stay here on Earth to learn to walk like a human being with both feet on the ground. Forget about wondering whether there's life out in the universe. Ask yourself if there's anyone besides you devoted to loving himself on planet Earth.

You're a symbol of God's love in the flesh. Even if you're a bunch of mixed metaphors, you can still make sense. Your street smarts will serve you well once you adapt them to your need for better spiritual work habits in your spiritual classes. Go to each class every hour; do all your homework every night; and hope for at least one hard test from the Teacher each week to prove to you that you're progressing. Prepare with everything you've got, and you'll be prepared for anything that happens.

Spiritual purification is a bitch, so try to use illumination and the heat of your flame rather than get too close to yourself and suffer the burn. You usually know what the right thing to do is, and if you're not sure, look for a rabbi to ask for wisdom, a priest, pastor or minister to ask for love, and a cleric to teach you about the generosity of your spirit. If they don't try to turn you into a self-hating homophobe or anti-Semite, they've probably got something to contribute that you could use.

Learn to love yourself deeply, not just indulge your desires with pleasures of the flesh. Express loyalty to yourself, and you'll come to respect yourself with an intimate regard you never dreamed possible before. If you're someone who loved to get good grades when you were growing up, get A's today in the wisdom, love and self-philanthropy that will get you a head, heart and soul you'll be more proud of tomorrow. Tomorrow begins tonight.

Remember, even though it's always an inside job, the Teacher will give you lots of volunteer work and surprise quizzes each day to teach you that you need a cleaner conscience to succeed one more day.

He'll bring you pupils and students to tutor with cooperation and work habit issues to teach you how to effectively help your classmates. These skills, which are so easy to profess to others, will then need to be heard from the outside in by you and applied to yourself in another part of your brain. So try to remember that the direction you guide others will be where you'll eventually end up, whether or not they decide to follow your instructions.

Remind the people you love that you'll willingly refund the price they're paying for your free advice. At the price you're charging for your advice, they can't afford not to seriously consider taking it. "Such a deal!"

AVODA {WORK and WORSHIP} is its own reward. Stop waiting for anyone to appreciate you or like you. No one will ever appreciate you as much as you'd like them to, and no one will ever like you as much as you need to learn to like yourself. The whole world is starved for compliments, kudos and admiration, so start by looking for what others are doing wrong {especially since you're already so good at doing that} and then ask yourself what you can learn from them. There's no end to the good you can see in yourself from the bad examples you see all around you. And once you contrast in words what *they're* doing to what *you* would do, then ask yourself why God brought them into your life in the first place. Maybe it was just His way of instigating a conversation in you with yourself. Or maybe it was to show you that people aren't enrolled in the same classes learning the same lessons you are.

You might even see an opportunity to compliment others in your own mind for something they're doing better than you. If you learn to tell your inner child what you see around you that you'd like him to emulate, he'll eventually start to say out loud inside what he really likes about you. There's really no compliment as great as a kudo from your kid.

People either want the fame you've earned from yourself, your inner fortune or a little of both. They want to be richer as the result of having met you. Everyone likes to think his presence in this school is a blessing for everyone. Help him prove himself right, and he'll probably bless you for suddenly seeing his own importance to the class. Make a good impression wherever possible. We've all passed our class in subtraction. Now let's move forward and learn to multiply, not divide.

Jesus asked, "IS IT RIGHT TO DO GOOD ON THE SABBATH DAY, OR TO DO HARM? IS IT RIGHT TO SAVE LIFE OR TO KILL?" [Mark 3:4] Cain asked God if he was his brother's keeper. [Genesis 4:9] But Cain's question was asked rhetorically; he didn't really expect an answer. The mind {Cain} will question whether you're your brothers' keeper when it perceives a threat. Your heart {Abel} won't tell you you're your

own keeper unless the two of you, head and heart, are on good terms. Your heart will cry out from the ground of your being for having loved you and having ended up worse off for having done so.

A man doesn't have to listen to his head {Cain} or his heart {Abel}. He has to listen to both his head and heart. He has to come to himself from a conscience that helps him separate his thoughts of self-preservation from his feelings of loving everything about himself. A man's conscience has to take action as well as defend the actions he's taken. He has to strive to be like God in the Story of Cain and Abel. He has to take both sides of the argument to guide each part of himself differently.

Jesus's questions, "IS IT RIGHT TO DO GOOD ON THE SABBATH DAY, OR TO DO HARM? IS IT RIGHT TO SAVE LIFE OR TO KILL?" were also asked rhetorical, but only those at the time who were very familiar with Torah knew what he was alluding to. Any Jew then, or today, who's well-schooled in Torah would know that Torah teaches us to do only good on the Sabbath and save lives, never to do harm or kill if at all possible. Those Jews were wise enough then to have mastered the rhetorical questions Moses had posed of them, knew Jesus was only restating Torah in different words. The Jews Jesus was talking to had no doubts about the importance of doing good and saving lives from an intellectual perspective. And since there were no other peoples who celebrated the Sabbath at that time, the question was mute for neighbors who didn't yet believe in God.

But the ancient Jews who studied with Jesus knew He wasn't asking rhetorical questions without a reason. They anticipated He was leading them toward something new and different by asking the obvious. They knew He was challenging them to take an old answer and apply its wisdom to a new place in inner space. Doing good on the Sabbath and preserving life because it feels good to do so is as vital as doing so out of an intellectual duty to do so. This, a man's head and heart can agree on.

Today when someone does something wrong, we assume he either didn't know any better or he couldn't control his desires. Moses and Jesus both told the Jews that they were responsible for knowing good from evil and right from wrong as well as controlling their desire to do otherwise.

Today, however, many men feel a responsibility to defend themselves even if they know they're doing wrong by lying about it. They double down. Their heart will defend their penis and let their head suffer the consequences with lies like, I didn't know that "I AM MY BROTHER'S KEEPER." The problem for civilized and upstanding members of today's community isn't just a penis problem. It's a problem with a heart that won't admit how it really feels: terrified of getting caught!

The excuse Eve used when questioned by God, "THE SERPENT DECEIVED ME, AND I ATE." is valid, but incomplete. There's more to her side of the story than Eve was willing

to admit in front of Adam and God after he callously betrayed her by blaming it all on her and God. Modern man has a tendency not to wait for his heart to open to express all that's inside it. His heart may squeeze out a few words from time to time, but it rarely opens up about how betrayed it really feels.

There comes a point when a man realizes he's defiant and spiteful occasionally because his heart won't admit how bitter it really feels. When a man's heart opens, it should be a wonderful experience that others don't even have to witness. It's something his head should be able to listen to and his conscience admire in the privacy of inner space.

Wisdom of the heart only begins once you're ready to listen to yourself. That's when you realize you were enrolled here to learn to become soulful, not sinful. That's when you can communicate with your feelings, and you know that you're not living fulltime in your head any longer. That's when the mystery of being you begins to really become personal. That's when you've crossed your Jordan and find yourself on the other side of yourself at long last. That's when you discover that God is real because you are real. That's when you've arrive in your own land of milk and honey.

It's how you profited from the time you shared with others far back in your past that made time subjective for you then. You developed a brotherly relationship with some others, but you didn't even know then that those experiences would seem so personal in hindsight. You've been mysteriously learning about yourself right from the start, but nobody pointed out what it was exactly you were learning.

Once you can push your penis out of your heart and head, the volume increases in both, and you began to hear yourself feel and think a lot more clearly. Whether you find others attractive or not doesn't really matter once you discover you can really listen to what they're saying and look at them without needing to fantasize about f--king them.

It's at this point that you'll be able to use your inner eye to perceive all the questions you form in your mind without using words. You'll see that your answers to many questions emerge like buds on a branch, in abstract visions rather than fully formed, complete sentences. The springtime of your life reoccurs any time in subjective time when you see answers budding, blossoming and blooming. This alone brings hope. This tells you without a doubt that the fruits of your labors have a chance to reproduce and seed your world with success.

We do our best to use objective time wisely; to anticipate the weather in real time; and to reverse global warming for a better future. Meteorology is the science of space over time.

But, subjectively, time moves at its own pace. Subjectively speaking, time can even come to a complete stop depending on how you feel about yourself in the moment. Subjectively, each day can be mysterious and special if you learn how to converse with

yourself in a way that Adam never did with Eve. Don't live your life inside like $\{x\}$ and $\{y\}$. Live like $\{x + y\}$. Don't exclude or deride a part of yourself. Include yourself. You can turn a lifetime in your own company into Heaven or Hell depending on how you relate to the male and female sides of you.

The title of this chapter was "The Other White Meat." The other white meat literally is pork, the forbidden, unclean animal that Jews and Muslims are taught to abstain from eating. Pork is symbolic of gluttony, the seventh of the Seven Deadly Sins. But "the other white meat" is really you. In your effort not to become fat, whether internally or externally, you learned about restricting your diet. You learned about reducing your intake of food or avoiding some foods entirely.

Chances are you haven't wanted to pig out on someone you were dying to get to know. You've been saving you for a special occasion. But you can give yourself permission to transcend your fear of gluttony by taking a bite into forbidden fruit. The secret about forbidden fruit is that what makes it so sweet is not that it's forbidden. What makes it so sweet is that it's the fruit of your labors in being yourself.

The Other White Meat: The Gospel According to Mark

The Seeds of Love

“LISTEN!” SAID JESUS. “A MAN ONCE WENT OUT TO SOW HIS SEED AND AS HE SOWED, SOME SEED FELL BY THE ROADSIDE AND THE BIRDS CAME AND GOBBLED IT UP. SOME OF THE SEED FELL AMONG THE ROCKS WHERE THERE WAS NOT MUCH SOIL, AND SPRANG UP VERY QUICKLY BECAUSE THERE WAS NO DEPTH OF EARTH. BUT WHEN THE SUN ROSE IT WAS SCORCHED, AND BECAUSE IT HAD NO ROOT, IT WITHERED AWAY. AND SOME OF THE SEED FELL AMONG THORN BUSHES AND THE THORNS GREW UP AND CHOKED THE LIFE OUT OF IT, AND IT BORE NO CROP. AND THERE WAS SOME SEED WHICH FELL ON GOOD SOIL, AND WHEN IT GREW, PRODUCED A CROP WHICH YIELDED THIRTY OR SIXTY OR EVEN A HUNDRED TIMES AS MUCH AS THE SEED.” [Mark 4:1-8]

The SEED Jesus is referring to that a man literally sows is the “semen” that forms in his testicles. Figuratively, the seed is lust, the desire for sexual intercourse, the passionate physical regard for another person delivered with his penis and the cooperation of his entire body in achieving that end.

Emotionally the seed in man is love. But spiritually speaking, all the seeds of a man’s life given to the world come from making love mixed with desire to prove that his world is a better place for everyone thanks to his efforts.

The seeds of goodness figuratively form in a man’s right testicle in the hopes that they’ll be excreted through the delivery system of his desires instead of the seeds that figuratively form in his left testicle, the seeds of evil. These are the two choices that are called forbidden fruit in Biblical terms: good/evil; construction/destruction; love/hate; life/death. A man is only privy in a vague way to what’s coming out of him because he’s seeding the world with a combination of seeds from both his fruits. The mixture of his unique combination of good and evil produces the best of intentions. Evil mixed with goodness makes it possible for man to make mistakes; realize the error of his ways; correct for them; and come away wiser and more loving than he was before.

Self-wizening leads to greater self-love. This is the essence of the spiritual process that’s expressed through thoughts, feelings and desires. This is what teaches you to see that everything you believe depends on how and what you love about yourself. The more you like yourself the more you’ll be able to infuse yourself into positive outcomes. Failure is so disappointing because it often indicates that we didn’t like ourselves enough to find a way to succeed.

There's nothing bad about a man loving another man. You're a man, and wisdom will teach you over time to like, even love, yourself. If you don't love yourself enough to have sex only with yourself, then by all means have sex with others. But your choice of the gender you prefer to have sex with will always be a projection of the "x" or "y" in you. You'll learn who you are by the gender of your sexual choices.

A gay man is just a man who's more attracted to learning more about the "y" in himself more than his "x." Gay men are often very skilled at having deep friendships with women because they're more aware of their "x" factor. What they want to know more about is "y."

That's no better or worse than the man who's attracted to the "x" factor in himself through sex with woman. Your heart will make this choice for you. Anyone who tells you that your sexuality is a choice is out of touch with his heart. And anyone who tells you what you have to choose is out of touch with his soul.

Jesus recognized that the Jews of his time didn't perceive the emotional aspect of this spiritual process, so He broke it down into its four spiritual components. He saw from the teachings of Moses that men are spiritual trees that were planted here as seeds through sexual intercourse. He saw that semen literally produced children, but He realized that there was an emotional component to this spiritual process that produced more than romantic entanglements for the purpose of raising families and keeping men loyal to their tribes.

Each of His four examples corresponds to one of the four chambers of man's heart. All four of the seeds you plant {literal, figurative, emotional and spiritual} should make you feel you're affirming your life, work, family and friends. You should feel you're pro-life whether or not you're procreating to make life literally. As you plant seeds in others in any of these four ways, they're also planting their seeds in you.

Not all the seeds you scatter will end up taking root in fertile ground. Not all the love you disseminate will seed literally, figuratively, emotionally or spiritually. You can only do your best to choose the best seed for a particular soil, plant it, and see what comes of it. Over many years a man learns to appreciate some gardening techniques more than others. He learns to spread his seeds where they're more likely to take root.

{1} "SOME SEED FELL BY THE ROADSIDE AND THE BIRDS CAME AND GOBBLED IT UP." The physical seeds you let fall that are eaten {oral sex} don't produce any life at all, and very little in the way of physical nutrition. The lust you scatter is gobbled up, but the only thing you have to show for it is fun memories.

Scattering your seeds on pavement {business ventures} will nourish hungry birds {opportunists}, but your seeds will never take root in a significant way. The birds will gobble up what you gave them, but they'll inadvertently defecate your seeds elsewhere, and you won't know where or when. Your money will end up in their hands, and you won't be able to take credit for what they do with it since your seeds were scattered

unconsciously, not directly given by you. Your participation is anonymous and without emotion, and your best intentions may even be misused or ignored.

{2} "SOME OF THE SEED FELL AMONG THE ROCKS WHERE THERE WAS NOT MUCH SOIL, AND SPRANG UP VERY QUICKLY BECAUSE THERE WAS NO DEPTH OF EARTH. BUT WHEN THE SUN ROSE IT WAS SCORCHED, AND BECAUSE IT HAD NO ROOT, IT WITHERED AWAY." Those who happen to let their seeds fall where there's a little soil will see quick emotional results, but the results won't be deep or lasting. This process is haphazard and unintentional, but it will yield some good results. Thanks to God's intervention in allowing some soil among the rocks, some productivity is achieved. We see this with acquaintanceships that don't grow into friendships. We see this with sexual relationships that break down before strong feelings develop between the two.

{3} "AND SOME OF THE SEED FELL AMONG THORN BUSHES AND THE THORNS GREW UP AND CHOKED THE LIFE OUT OF IT, AND IT BORE NO CROP." Those seeds you haphazardly sow that happen to fall among thorn bushes do take root and grow, but they're eventually choked to death by outside circumstances. THORNS are synonymous with neuroses. Those who can't express their love in a healthy manner choke and smother those they love to death with defensive, self-centered needs. We see this in familial relationships that die after many years of shadowing one another and restricting rather than encouraging access to light. This, too, is part of God's natural process.

{4} "SOME SEED FELL ON GOOD SOIL, AND WHEN IT GREW, PRODUCED A CROP WHICH YIELDED THIRTY OR SIXTY OR EVEN A HUNDRED TIMES AS MUCH AS THE SEED." These seeds will be planted with full, conscious knowledge of what you're planting or where. These are the seeds you water; the saplings you prune; and the trees you harvest for their fruits.

You can achieve great success and still agree that spiritual horticulture is harder than it looks. To see the fruits of your labors go from seed to generous serving at your table requires a great deal of emotional experience and spiritual work.

The seeds sown at the right time and in the right place are what God wants most to germinate in you. But you have to tend your garden like a farmer who loves his land for that to happen. You have to reflect on your losses to learn how to avoid them in the future.

If you talk to yourself, you'll break up the rocks in your head; turn over the depleted soil on the surface of your mind; and plow your inner land with your fertile imagination. You then will sow seeds in your mind with questions; water them with wonder; and hoe carefully around each sprout with interest before you transplant some of them to your heart. Then you'll prune your ideas with experience, and fertilize them with the grandiosity of

your dreams. Only then will you have a potential harvest to reap in your soul. With the knife of modesty, the sheath of humility and the sickle of grace you'll bring your harvest in from the field. Lastly you'll bring the fruits of your labors to your table before you serve your ideas to others. This is the spiritual agricultural process God was speaking of when He told Adam, "THROUGH PAINFUL TOIL YOU WILL EAT ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE." [Genesis 3:17]

Over time emotional horticulture painstakingly practiced on others will lead you to see that God is always instructing you to see with greater and greater awareness in the spiritual, agricultural metaphor that began with babbling to yourself, as you did when you were an infant. For tillers of their imagination, people have only been for practice. You can see clearly in hindsight how you scattered your seeds haphazardly on the roads; foolishly among the rocks with little soil; and futilely among bushes with thorns. Now you can consume yourself with the insight needed to determine how and where best to plant your seeds of self-love. You are a farmer who wants to show God you know how to achieve a bountiful harvest, year after year, so long as you live.

God will accommodate you with a road to scatter your seeds. He'll provide you with rocks, sunshine and even gravelly soil. He'll allow you to experience thorn bushes up close to get firsthand knowledge that will choke your heart with disappointment and leave you cynical and bitter about life. He may even bestow the romantically satisfying flowers, stems and leaves of other people's love upon you.

But you'll have to apply what others produce to your relationship with yourself each time the sprout of self-love germinates from its shell and reaches up through the ground of your being in search of His light. Until you take the greater spiritual steps in fruiting yourself with your love, you'll continue to argue over who's the perpetrator and who's the victim. You'll take the side of the gay or the Jew, the Democrat or the Republican, the Israeli or the Arab, but never both. You'll never become truly independent and wise because you'll still be choosing sides around you instead of becoming illuminated to them from within.

Own your Israel and make your desert bloom. Don't wait for others to approve of your inner world, especially not the promised piece God gave to you alone. Show yourself what you can do with yourself for yourself, while watching all the while how others are learning spiritual, farming techniques of their own. Demonstrate proudly to yourself what your seeds of love look like; what fertile ground means to you; and what a beneficent harvest means to the ones you love. You have to learn to plant love in yourself and watch you grow before you can offer a bouquet from your heart to one other.

Literally speaking, a man has the right to scatter his semen wherever he likes so long as he doesn't harm anyone in the process. Figuratively a man's creativity scatters the fruits

of his labor throughout the world like seeds on the wind that land wherever they may. Emotionally he's got to learn to love others and deal with the birth and death of other-love depending on where and when it grows in his life.

But spiritually the secret to creating a meaningful life out of inanimate clay comes from breathing self-love into yourself. You have to recreate the process of breathing life into you that God performed on Adam when He gave him life. You've got to breathe love into yourself to ignite a flame that's as great as God's miracle of life. This is the spiritual breath that will bring you to love everlasting. This is the process by which you'll achieve constant contact with God of His presence here, now and possibly forever.

He's not too busy to stay in touch with you. He's not somewhere on the other side of the world dealing with an emergency. He's not reading the paper in class like teachers you once had. God is here now. It's you who are elsewhere, not Him. Discover yourself, and you'll discover Him with you by your side. If you learn anything from Torah it's that He rigged His system with guilt before He tricked you into embracing love.

If you don't love the eyes God gave you, you won't see His love. If you don't love the ears He gave you, you won't hear His call and discover your mission. And if you don't love the nose you've got, you won't sense His presence. The Jews aren't the only people God blessed with a Jewish nose. Every nose is Jewish.

Your life has been a climb from a valley up the side of a mountain. You've looked back many times to see your progress. From up here you can observe all the paths that had to cross and choices you had to make that got you where you are now. You have a ways to go. But know that God will be there waiting for you at the top, just as He was there with you in the past, ready to embrace you at the end. But if you can learn to love yourself along the way, your ascent from here to There will be so much easier and rewarding.

The Garden of Eden is the garden of infancy that didn't last, but it will always be with you as a faded memory of the peaceful valley where you were born. Your infancy banished you from the valley to the plains of childhood and from there into the orchard of opportunities around you today. The stand of trees you called your family is now below, as you make your way with others to the summit. Someday you'll get to of the alpine forest high up on the hill where the air is thin and the winds are blowing constantly. Above the tree line is where you'll want to go.

The Eden of infancy is the genesis we all share. It'll always exist as that magical world within, a place you can return to each time you earn the right of return. There you'll get to taste the sweet fruits of self-knowledge you took without asking, and for which you received such unanticipated wonder and unexpected awe of life in infancy. When you rediscover this inner garden that you've been secretly tending all your life – the inner space where you grow the modesty, humility and loyalty that seeds you with your love for

yourself – you'll love your life more than you did before. At that point you'll realize what an honor it is to be yourself.

The more you seek brotherhood with yourself, the more you'll like yourself for being your brothers' beloved keeper. But you can only keep him in your heart and embrace him with self-love. It's all an inside job that spills out onto the world we share.

The guilt the Jews are still bringing into the world for each man to face consciously in himself will always be followed by the love the Christians are revealing. It all begins personally and privately and then becomes public. It all begins as a storm in the teacup in your heart that then spills over into the saucer of your soul before it makes its way into your two hands and ten fingers.

Jesus continued, "DO YOU REALLY NOT UNDERSTAND THIS PARABLE? THEN HOW ARE YOU GOING TO UNDERSTAND ALL THE OTHER PARABLES? THE MAN WHO SOWS, SOWS THE MESSAGE. AS FOR THOSE WHO ARE BY THE ROADSIDE WHERE THE MESSAGE IS SOWN, AS SOON AS THEY HEAR IT 'SATAN' COMES AT ONCE AND TAKES AWAY WHAT HAS BEEN SOWN IN THEIR MINDS. SIMILARLY, THE SEED SOWN AMONG THE ROCKS REPRESENTS THOSE WHO HEAR THE MESSAGE WITHOUT HESITATION AND ACCEPT IT JOYFULLY. BUT THEY HAVE NO REAL ROOTS AND DO NOT LAST - WHEN TROUBLE OR PERSECUTION ARISES BECAUSE OF THE MESSAGE, THEY GIVE UP THEIR FAITH AT ONCE. THEN THERE ARE THE SEEDS WHICH WERE SOWN AMONG THORN BUSHES. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO HEAR THE MESSAGE, BUT THE WORRIES OF THIS WORLD AND THE FALSE GLAMOUR OF RICHES AND ALL SORTS OF OTHER AMBITIONS CREEP IN AND CHOKES THE LIFE OUT OF WHAT THEY HAVE HEARD, AND IT PRODUCES NO CROP IN THEIR LIVES. AS FOR THE SEED SOWN ON GOOD SOIL, THIS MEANS THE MEN WHO HEAR THE MESSAGE AND ACCEPT IT AND DO PRODUCE A CROP - THIRTY, SIXTY, EVEN A HUNDRED TIMES AS MUCH AS THEY RECEIVED." [Mark 4:13-15]

Jesus tried to explain His parable as best He could at the time to ancient Jews who didn't have the psychological underpinnings we have today. "THE MAN WHO SOWS, SOWS THE MESSAGE." Today, every man knows he sows. We're all spiritual gardeners.

"AS FOR THOSE WHO ARE BY THE ROADSIDE WHERE THE MESSAGE IS SOWN, AS SOON AS THEY HEAR IT 'SATAN' COMES AT ONCE AND TAKES AWAY WHAT HAS BEEN SOWN IN THEIR MINDS." This was stated in the pop culture of the time, which is hard for us to put into modern parlance without offending those who think they're so pure that evil could only come at them from outside themselves.

In modern wording we'd say that men screw themselves over with penis problems that they then, with exasperation in themselves, inflict upon others.

Jesus realized that the relationship between love and desire could be a force for the good if men could be encouraged to promote their desire to be good for their own sake first. If our penis could figuratively talk to us it would tell us why the feminine side of us needs to know herself, and why she must tempt the masculine side of us to know himself, too.

This shift in perspective began a loosening of sexual mores over the course of millennia until we can see now how much self-love has liberated us to do what's right for ourselves just because it feels good to do so. Nowadays we'd say that the man who sows the message reaps the meaning. Love is its own reward.

“SIMILARLY, THE SEED SOWN AMONG THE ROCKS REPRESENTS THOSE WHO HEAR THE MESSAGE WITHOUT HESITATION AND ACCEPT IT JOYFULLY. BUT THEY HAVE NO REAL ROOTS AND DO NOT LAST – WHEN TROUBLE OR PERSECUTION ARISES BECAUSE OF THE MESSAGE, THEY GIVE UP THEIR FAITH AT ONCE.” Those who haven't developed real roots from within give up their belief in the power of love. They wither and wilt emotionally. The heat of God's light weakens them because their experiences in the world lead them to believe that love can't conquer all. It's only when you plant your seeds in the fertile ground of yourself that you discover the miraculous power of God's love with which you, too, could feed multitudes.

“THEN THERE ARE THE SEEDS WHICH WERE SOWN AMONG THORN BUSHES. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO HEAR THE MESSAGE, BUT THE WORRIES OF THIS WORLD AND THE FALSE GLAMOUR OF RICHES AND ALL SORTS OF OTHER AMBITIONS CREEP IN AND CHOKE THE LIFE OUT OF WHAT THEY HAVE HEARD, AND IT PRODUCES NO CROP IN THEIR LIVES.” Those who mistake worldly power for the power of love are still given a chance to grow, to blossom and seed their expectations in material ways. But they, too, will watch as their expectations are dashed. We're not here to express power. What we're here to learn is the power of self-love that can conquer the world.

“AS FOR THE SEED SOWN ON GOOD SOIL, THIS MEANS THE MEN WHO HEAR THE MESSAGE AND ACCEPT IT AND DO PRODUCE A CROP - THIRTY, SIXTY, EVEN A HUNDRED TIMES AS MUCH AS THEY RECEIVED.” Those who hear and understand Christ's message must apply it on themselves before they can say that it works. Once you plant your love where you know the soil is rich; where you're close enough to water it when needed; prune it as it grows; and harvest the fruits of your labors

of love on yourself, then you can celebrate the reasons for God having introduced man to His love through Jesus.

You can't sow seeds in others that you haven't first harvested from yourself. Where are these seeds to come from if not from God through you? He gives you seeds to see what you'll do with them. But it's up to you to make good choices about where to plant them. Therefore plant them consciously and wisely where they'll do the most good: in you. When you bemoan the spiritual farming you must undertake to reap the rewards you desire, remember that God told Adam, "CURSED IS THE GROUND BECAUSE OF YOU; THROUGH PAINFUL TOIL YOU WILL EAT FOOD FROM IT ALL THE DAYS OF YOUR LIFE."

You do have some choice about the order in which you learn your lessons in the school of life. God gives you seeds and you get to decide where and when you're going to plant them. But many are distracted by non-spiritual matters.

Because Jesus was a man with a divine view of His masculine {y} and feminine {x} tendencies, He chose to present His four curricular options using a horticulture metaphor of planting seeds. But the seeds of His metaphor aren't only sexual. (Ancient Jews didn't need sexual instruction on how to make babies any more than modern Jews do.) The seeds are questions you plant in your mind in good soil {education} if you're going to watch ideas grow your understanding of yourself.

Thoughts don't have to be expressed in words to plant seeds in your imagination. You can garden using anything you can develop a passion for. But if you watch closely to what you're thinking, you'll see that you may have many thoughts that occur much faster than you could ever put them into words.

Encouraging yourself to put your thoughts into words is an empowering experience. It teaches you to slow yourself down to the speed of verbal communication. It teaches you to comment on what you say to yourself. It teaches you to apply your sense of humor to yourself and laugh at yourself. And it teaches you to admonish yourself when you hurt your feelings with unkind thoughts.

You don't need to depend on the "miracle grow" of abstract self-expressionism. Sometimes too fertile a soil doesn't give an idea anything to struggle through, leaving your yield weedy, scraggy and weak.

When you manage your thoughts about your feelings and desires in words rather than visualizations, you see how skilled your impulses are at conspiring behind your back. Talking to yourself makes it possible for your mind to chew on old problems in new ways. It allows you to produce answers in words that you'll be able to build on.

If you pay more attention to your ticks, itches, facial gestures and body posturing, you'll also discover that much of what you truly believe to be true about yourself is unconsciously expressed through body language at an unconscious level of self-regard. If your trains of

thought are the transportation system of ideas, then your nervous system is the highway of sensations that are carrying small amounts of data in trucks {gesture} to specific spots in your body. The more attention you give to the unplanned movements your body needs to make to scratch an itch or cover your mouth when you yawn or laugh, the more you'll discover that your body is an amazing communication machine that you, alone, can access. The "devil" isn't making you do anything you don't want to do. Self-ignorance is the culprit.

Although Jesus focused on learning about love using an extension of the pastoral metaphor in planting seeds, Torah had already insinuated that man is guilty of character defects {thefts} that inhibit his ability to perceive himself realistically. These character defects were like domesticated animals and birds in ancient Israel that were offered up as Temple sacrifices.

It's worth returning for a moment to the third Bible story, "Noah and the Ark," to reexamine some of the animal *instincts* every Noah {adolescent} brings on board unconsciously just before the flood of puberty, which he later releases into the wild in adulthood without having fully considering the spiritual consequences of such actions. The list of animals below represents some the characteristics found in man's nature that we must learn to recognize in ourselves. {I've listed those animals associated with the Seven Deadly Sins in bold type}:

Badger	Pestering
Bear	Loveable but Powerful and Dangerous
Big cat	Ferocious, Deadly and Defiant
Bird	Messenger, Sign of Spiritual Emancipation
Bull	Domineering, Headstrong
Camel	Cantankerous and Crabby
Cat	Independent, Finicky, Obsessively Clean
Chicken	Fearful
Clam	Uncommunicative
Coyote	Disloyal
Cow	Shy and Sweet, Feminine
Deer	Loveable and Shy, Graceful
Dog	Loyal
Donkey	Stubborn
Duck	Ugly

Elephant	Good Memory, Nosy, Intrusive
Fox	Shrewd
Gazelle	Fast and Graceful
Goat	{Lust}
Giraffe	Lofty Perspective
Horse	Noble and Strong
Insect	Invasive and Collaborative
Lamb	Innocent
Lion	{Wrath} Regal
Mouse	Determined, Invasive
Peacock	{Pride}
Pig	{Gluttony}
Raccoon	Thief or Bandit
Rat	Dirty and Deceptive
Rhinoceros	Aggressive, Mean
Swan	Beautiful and Graceful
Shark	Opportunistic
Shrimp	Small and Unimportant
Snail	{Sloth} Lazy, slow
Snake	{Envy} Deceptive and Evil
Toad	{Greed} Materialistic and Ugly
Vulture	Scavenging
Wolf	Impersonator and Dangerous

When you were a child and learned the names of animals, you also were also subtly indoctrinated with the human vices and virtues associated with each animal. The love you had for animals then paralleled God's purpose in telling Adam to name the animal in Eden. Like Adam you didn't find a mate through this process, but you did discover that what you were missing from your love of animals was an understanding of the various outcomes of forces in yourself.

You can see the psychological importance of having learned about animals in childhood. You can see the importance of having discovered that deep part of yourself {the bone} you relied on that was removed to create projection that suddenly made it seem that the feminine part of you isn't any more within you, but around you.

It need not be literally true that animals really hold the human characteristics mentioned above, only that we've agreed that these traits are so held, so we can refer to these traits to unite our nature with Mother Nature. The more you see of the feminine side of yourself in animals {the "x" factor}, the more you'll yearn to recover that bone God took away from you.

$$\{x + y\} = U$$

A mature man is proud to think of himself as half woman; a boy is not. Boys resist being women or like women. Boys want to be all "y" and no "x". And straight boys want to maintain the projection of their "x" onto women at all cost. They want their femininity to be externalized, not internal. They don't even want to admit that their excitement about capitalizing on Mother Nature is an example of the bone God removes from every Adam.

If a boy becomes internally oriented to the point that he can see himself reflected in the world around him, he breaks the projection of women as cows to be used for the benefit of men.

In an effort to resist this breaking of projections, fanatical Jews, Christians and Muslims others call such men "sissies" or "gays," or worse, "Jews!"

Jesus understood the "x" factor in men because he understood what it meant to be a "son of man." He understood why the Jewish men around him needed to be 100% "y". He understood the threat to Israel then that effeminacy would create, because He understood the Roman threat {y} to Judaism {x}.

The ancient Greeks never posed such a threat to the ancient Jews because the ancient Greeks were comfortable in expressing homosexual preferences. They had no fear of expressing the feminine side of themselves in some ways. Ancient Jewish boys hundreds of years before Jesus may have wrestled in the nude with their Greek friends in public. By the time Jesus preached to His followers, the feminine side of Jewish men had emerged even further. And because His understanding of women was deified as a form of purity, all future Christians would seek His understanding of women as also created in the image of God. Today the hunt for "her" has become internalized in us all.

Jesus also happened to arrive at a time when Jews needed to find a better way to pray. Sacrificing animals to God didn't rid them of their animalistic tendencies. They needed a way to break the projection of spiritual impurity to stop the urge to throw a chicken on the altar in the Temple every time they felt guilty or afraid..

The "x" side of the ancient Jews was projected out onto women, and the "y" side of themselves was projected out onto God. They needed to find a way turn their faith in God into faith in themselves with His help. And that was accomplished by internalizing the

Temple and the animal sacrifices into personal sacrifices for God's sake. This is what brought the concept of sacred love into existence.

Internalizing love has been a psychological transformation that has required millennia to accomplish. But that doesn't mean you have to choose between faith in yourself and faith in God. It doesn't even mean you have to choose between being a member of only one of the three Abrahamic faiths. And it doesn't mean you have to choose between faith and science. If you work to rein in your character defects you'll come to love yourself more, and through repair of your world, you'll repair a small part of the whole world.

Most modern men in the Western world unconsciously identify with both the WORDS of Jesus and the WORDS of Moses. They can see the importance of love and can admit that there's a necessity for feeling guilty, as well. But today's modern believer is still worried, anxious and afraid, and he can't address those feelings if they aren't coming from around him.

Wisdom of the heart is hard work. It's not for the feint hearted, regardless of the religious tradition you come from. If you feel like a bonsai or topiary whose foliage is constantly being clipped and shaped for some, unknown reason, your intuition is accurate. You may not yet be able to see exactly what you look like inside, but you're being shaped from the inside out in a project of God's making.

Everything you have has been given to you with God's tacit approval or it wouldn't be yours, whether you believe you deserve it, or not. And everything that has been taken from you has also been with His tacit consent whether you believe you deserved to lose it, or not.

You *hoed* therefore you got to *harvest*. But whether you use that harvest to anticipate the work you'll need to do in the next season becomes the next challenge you have to face. You're in the middle of a spiritual process that has moral consequences that you won't be forced to account for until a time of God's choosing. God may allow you to get away with stealing if it's in His best interest to make an example of you at a later place and time.

Global warming and pandemics aren't only Jewish problems any more than Iranian nukes are only an Israeli problem. We're all in this together. And God can make you face that reality any way He chooses.

For God to be real in your life, you have to get to know Him from your heart and soul, not just your head. You can't believe in Him because somebody else does or because somebody you love told you to. God was just a seed of knowledge once planted in your head. You transplanted that shoot to your heart as grain and grape and then cultivated it in your soul as fragrant herbs. You were blessed with myriad variations of the first faith.

You already don't believe the same way your parents believe. You're already more enlightened than them without feeling much in the way disloyalty or angst about being your own person.

By today's standards Jesus was a SABRA {literally; prickly cactus, sweet within but sharp on the outside/figuratively; a native born Israeli}. Jesus was, like every other Jew in our past and present, as valuable a member of our tribe as any other. Jews don't pray to Jews. We only pray to God. Every Jew is a prince or princesses in His kingdom, and that includes all our queens. We know that no Jew willingly sacrifices himself. Life is too precious to give up life without a fight.

Self-sacrifice is always given under duress. It's our duty to do everything in our power to protect the name of every Jewish student our Teacher ever enrolled in class whether or not they were good, bad or ugly. It's our duty to remember our ancestors, our countrymen and future generations of Jews in our heart. And that includes Jesus.

Thank God there are reminders to Jews everywhere that Jesus was a rabbi who some say willingly sacrificed Himself for the greater good. We shouldn't disapprove of His sacrifice. We should only disapprove of all sacrifices that are willing. We can see by Muslim martyrs who commit suicide combined with murder, that willing sacrifice is anathema to the meaning of life.

Neither the barbaric Romans nor the calloused, ancient, rich Jews at the time of Jesus could ever have imagined that this world would be so transformed by love, especially the love of life itself. Doubts and reservations may still plague us about God's plan for tomorrow, but we should have no doubt by now that love conquers all. And the greatest of all loves is your love for yourself. All other love emanates out of that.

Love is an evolution of your whole heart, not just any one of the four chambers of your heart that you happened to choose to explore. The man who has no interest in admiring the evolution going on within him will be blind to the evolution of those around him. Creationists, racists, homophobes and misogynists are babies in spiritual cribs who are reaching up to grasp toys they see hanging overhead just out of reach. They cry about the bars on their bed that must be kept up for their safety. They cry when they can't turn over. Don't take their vexations to heart. They'll grow up or die in spiritual infancy.

The problem with Christianity isn't Jesus. The problem with Christianity is the many institutions that haven't yet discovered the metaphors of Torah upon which the love of Jesus was founded. The problem with Christianity isn't a misunderstanding of God's plan for all of humanity. The problem with Christianity is a universal problem found in every individual who insists on knowing and loving others without desiring to get to know and love himself.

The Other White Meat: The Gospel According to Mark

Catholicism with a Small "c" – The Universal Sacred Heart

Although I believe Catholicism is the only Christian sect that apologized to the Jews for their apathy to the fate of the European Jews during the Second World War, as the child of Holocaust survivors you'd think I'd have nothing good to say about Christianity in general. But my personal experiences as an American-born Jew were very different from my half-brother, half-sister and first cousin who were children during the War. They were smuggled out of the ghetto in Kaunas by my father and placed in Catholic orphanages in Lithuania, which was what ultimately saved them from the Nazi onslaught. By comparison, as a Jew born in America after the War, I "only" lost a public school, teaching position because I was gay after having lost my foreskin because I was Jewish. My losses have been minor by comparison.

I was born into my parents' household with these three youngsters already there, all of whom doted upon me as a rainbow of hope in the flesh. And even before I could speak I remember watching them and listening carefully as they spoke to one another in several languages other than English. It's amazing what conclusions an infant comes to about life just from listening to the tone of people's voices before he can communicate with them. Family experiences growing up are more profoundly important to our disposition today than most people realize, and that's because as babies there was no separation between our head, heart and penis. We lived in a paradise. We were nude, naked and exposed, yet we didn't know it. God's stomping through our garden had not yet occurred.

My boyfriend is a new convert to Catholicism, and although I must say his church has welcomed me warmly to their parish, I'll always consider myself a guest at their Christian table. When I pray with them on Sunday mornings I feel there are two Jews in the room, Jesus and me. I endeavor to pray with them as far as I can as a Jew, without compromising my tradition. And they seem to feel my sincerity, and appreciate it.

I'm a spiritual farmer who goes to church every Sunday. I have a huge, inner estate to run, and I feel that connecting with God in a public place is helpful to my development of my inner space. I sow seeds in the fields of my mind to satisfy my humungous appetite for hope over despair and cynicism, and I reap the grain and grape I need to sustain me.

I'd rather go through inner storms and marvel at the ensuing rainbows about me than suffer through endless days of blue skies empty of rain, or cold, winter nights without rainbows around me to marvel. I love my inner plains of grain and my personal recipe for living bread, which I bake each week fresh. I love the vast vineyards of grapes I grow inside and the fine wine I've bottled up in my cellar to age. I love when God brings me *mourning* dew that forms little drops of sadness that blanket the ground of my being. The struggles

of the masses to grow free inspire me with hope to feel green and bountiful the whole day through. I'm a city kid whose heart and soul have always lived in an inner countryside. I'm the lord of my own manor thanks to good manners. I speak American, but I'm actually very English inside.

I'm a spiritual artist who paints "Made in America" pictures of life in words. I'm a self-proclaimed rabbi and citizen of the world who does his spiritual work in San Francisco, but who resides everywhere in spirit. I'm a visitor from an ancient, inner Israel so different from the bubble of urbane, Jewish life found in the café world of Tel Aviv today. I'm a spiritual sculptor. I'm my own block of granite, a piece of the Rock I'm chipping away at to create a statue of a modern David with my name on it. I'm a Nureyev and Fontaine, a couple with great balletic skill and charisma, dancing a pas de deux each day with someone we respect, even using the royal "we" to describe ourselves.

The Trinity is the basis for the spiritual sociology derived from spiritual psychology, the message that became a messenger:

1	Head	Knowledge	Father	Judaism	Wisdom
1	Heart	Feelings	Son	Christianity	Love
1	Soul	Beliefs	Holy Spirit	Islam	Generosity

The Trinity is my psychological/sociological/spiritual understanding of myself as an entity from God in animal form. The Trinity is the spiritual math at every Mass. It accounts for the universal clue to the psychological and spiritual equations that come up with the same spiritual answers:

$$1^x + 1^y = 1$$

$$1 + 1 + 1 = 1$$

Faith in God isn't a gift given to any one institution. It's a present you were given that you must work tirelessly to deserve for yourself. Faith grows when your wisdom, love and generosity grow. Those institutions that won't be able to keep up with the growth of their congregants will find their laity looking down on, not up to, its leaders. Sadly, as we see more of that happening, the less relevant and more oppositional fanatical religious sects will become.

God is real, just as Israel is real. Reality grows as your imagination grows. Reality doesn't just grow with good intentions. The problem isn't that the road to Hell is paved with good intentions, but that the people who travel it have so little curiosity, humility and grace that they can't see for themselves what their road to Hell is paved with. If you can't

use your virtues to perceive the wisdom you've gleaned from life and the love that's growing in your heart, you won't have much to say about Heaven or Hell except that they're somewhere else entirely. God created you in His image, but it's up to you to recreate His image in your imagination. And to the extent that He doesn't look exactly like you, you can see the problem that's exposed by your low self-esteem. In fact, your superiority complex that overshadows your image of God reveals your other problem.

It's hard work to grow wise and loving. If you're a tree of worldly knowledge that yearns for wisdom, you should look more deeply down at your roots. And those roots may entwine family, clan, tribe, nationality, race, gender, religion or lifestyle. You decide what roots you as though you were a tree wrapped around a Rock. Faith for a blade of grass may only require a pebble to cling to. For a vine it might take a stone. Whether you see yourself as a blade of grass that will grow up to become part of Christ's living bread; a grape in a bunch; or a majestic tree of knowledge – you should endeavor to grow to your full size.

The infant has to discover he has hands and use them. The child has to be taught that his two hands are two halves of himself that come together as a whole when he puts them together in prayer. The adolescent has to discover what to do with his hands to keep them out of mischief. Only the spiritually mature see Judaism as one hand and Christianity as the other, two hands, right and left, {not right and wrong} that were given to him to learn to shape this world. And the Muslim should entertain the idea that each and every one of the ten fingers on his hands corresponds to a force of nature given to him through us by God with good reason.

Truth, unlike philosophy, is based on unarguable facts. But truth has nothing to do with religion. Truth is a scientific system that builds upon facts in ways that achieve physical, not emotional or spiritual, comforts. To argue the truth of religion is a waste of time and energy. None of the religions are "true" in the sense of "verifiable."

Although philosophy tries to build upon truth to achieve abstract moral principles about life, philosophy can't reach high enough to achieve God-consciousness without the introduction of faith. Going any higher than truth is left to the realm of poets and prophets who emerge out of spiritual, belief systems. Poetry, not Zionism, Christian conversion with water or Islamic jihad will conquer the world.

The Jewish metaphoric understanding of God's existence is different from the Christian symbolic expression of God's love. Understanding the metaphoric impact of guilt as expressed in the story of the forbidden fruit will then lead you to appreciate the symbolism in the story of the bread and the wine. Only after these two aspects of God's WORD/WORD have been fully understood can Spiritual Linguistic help you tackle your need to appreciate God's generosity of spirit. The Islamic influence on Western faith mixed with psychology

will spread God's WORD/WORD/w o r d throughout the world. It will teach you to console yourself with poetic justice. Those who are prosaic will never lead you to inner peace.

It's a bitter irony that the religion that specializes in matters of the heart hasn't been more consciously aware of the role guilt plays in grounding man, so that the seeds of love have a place out of which to grow. You can't scatter seeds of love on paved roads or rocks and expect them to take root. You have to plant seeds of love in fertile ground that's been plowed with determination and hope. There the rocks in your head can be crushed over time and the soil aerated. That will produce the rich soil in your soul where you'll plant the seeds God gives you that will shine down and grow what you know into what you love and believe in.

The atheist has no idea where man ends and God begins. He can't tell the difference between talking to himself and talking to God. He can't see his projection of 1^x out into the world and how he covets 1^y within. He has no idea why he was banished from an inner Eden for blaming a woman for his mistakes. He thinks. He feels. He desires. He believes – but that all happens in a jumble in his head.

The atheist thinks he knows the difference between a Nazi and a Communist. What he doesn't realize is they're back to back at the extreme ends of every political spectrum bending it into a circle. The atheist's attitude is holier than thou because he would never admit his attitude is really holier than Thou.

Although I've said some things up till now that may seem a little crazy, I'm going to say something now that's really way over the top. So if you're looking for an example from my writings that I've lost my mind entirely, here is the best example I, myself, can come up with:

When someone sneezes, for instance, and says, "God bless you" the intonation of that expression really makes no sense whatsoever. What would make sense would be to say in a heartfelt way, "God, bless you!" But that's not what people want to communicate. They've omitted the comma and exclamation point, thereby changing the emphasis of their words to reflect a meaningless reply without any real effort.

It would make perfect sense to say, "God blesses you," and put the whole sentence into the third person. But people don't say that either. To say "God bless you" only makes sense if you're saying it from your heart and soul, not just your head. And here's why:

The God of the Jews is, was and always will be One. We refer to Him in the singular at all times. But "God bless you" is really a way of using the generic term for Y.H.V.H. Jesus A L L A H using the singular subject {God} with the plural verb {bless}. You'd never say, "He bless you." The only way to make this sentence work grammatically would be to think of God in the plural as though you were saying, "They bless you."

Here is another way to say the word “God” while changing the meaning only in your imagination:

Imagine adding a silent “s” to the word “God” to make it “Gods”. This will give you a sense of Him in the third person plural without using the word “They.” In an effort to separate this added “s” from the singular concept of the word “God,” imagine adding the “s” in your heart and soul while stating “God” in your head. Specifically I suggest you attach the bottom end of the “s” to your heart and the top end to your soul. In this way you’ll have a circuitous path from your heart to your soul that will remind you of the cynical path to Hell that’s always described as paved with good intentions. What this gives you is as follows:

1. You now have your own circuitous way to get from your feelings to your beliefs.
2. You now have a cynical way to connect your heart and soul, since the evidence around us leads us to believe there is no Heaven or Hell anywhere other than right here on Earth.
3. You now have the letter “s” added to the word “God” to remind that God can exist simultaneously in the singular and plural form of any noun.
4. You now have a way of continuing to say, “God bless you” while silently remembering that while you bestow His blessings on others, you’re also bestowing them on yourself for yourself in yourself.
5. Therefore, if you sneeze and someone says, “God bless you,” may I suggest you turn to him and say, “God bless you, too!”

Unlike the atheist who defiantly doesn’t believe in God and the agnostic who fearfully chooses to ignore Him, the romantic who does believe in God’s love may still not know deep down inside where his own heart ends and the object of his affections begins. The romantic man’s heart may have been broken in childhood when his parents ordered him to use the toilet instead of soil his diapers; eat with a fork instead of using his hands; drink from a cup instead of sucking from a bottle; dress himself; go to school etc. To the naturally romantic child these civilizing tasks took an emotional toll. This chip off your heart, separate from the rest of his heart, produces the projection that causes anti-Semitism, racism, misogyny, homophobia and – when psychologically scrutinized back to its source within – self-hate.

The religious dreamer suffers from none of these problems, but he often can’t tell where God ends and man begins. He loses himself in God. He’s so submerged in God’s vat of love that he doesn’t see how much of his own love is constantly spilling over the edges of His. The religious dreamer is spiritually wasteful. He doesn’t want to have to curtail his love in any way. He can’t shrink his love in size to slow down or eliminate the overflowing,

and he doesn't want to save all his love for himself. It's not that he suffers from self-hate. It's just that he doesn't want to work on self-love. He feels guilty when he reprioritizes the people in his life to put his feelings for himself first.

You may understand the predicament atheists, agnostics, romantics and true believers are in because you may have made it through what they can't see. The answer to all these dilemmas comes with self-contemplation that's magnified with prayer, the conversations you have with yourself and God. But it's only when you speak to Him that your inner eye begins to see all the abstract paths going in myriad directions and your ears hear all the dissonant voices creating the cacophony within you. It takes a nose that knows to interrupt your conversations with yourself and Your conversations with who you know God to be.

Pray for poetic justice, for earthly justice you'll never see. Pray for God to teach the world to smell His odiferous presents. For you cannot believe your eyes or the words/WORDS/w o r d s you hear in your head.

I can't get in your head; monitor your heart; hold your penis up to my ear; and observe the effect all of the forces within you are having on your conscience. I can't relate to you all that's happening inside you to you. That's what they mean when they say, "It's an inside job." If you don't think you're important enough to improve your ability to pray, that's not going to have any effect whatsoever on my grades in the school of life. If you want to spend your time on Earth talking directly to your neighbors, while whispering behind the Teacher's back; taking every test you're given, but never raising your hand to ask Him a question or comment in a helpful way – you'll get the grades you get without developing a personal relationship with Him. You'll pass through this school without giving it a second thought.

"Catholicism" with a small "c" means "universal." Jesus was catholic. Every man is catholic in some sense. Every man thinks {N}, wants {S} feels {W}, and believes {E} in accordance with universal principles that make him humane in addition to human. But the most catholic of all men are gay men and secular Jews. We don't want to see men killing one another. Paradoxically, we're the most Christ-like because our love of brotherhood goes far beyond the standards of any of any other tribe. Let the wackado hyper-religious Jews, Christians and Muslims smile in one another's faces while cursing one another under their breath. What do they know of love?

The word "catholic" exists thanks to God's plan. It was created by the Nicene Creed in 325 A.D., finalizing their separation from Judaism and beginning the running of the institution of their faith themselves. Here is the foundation of their belief:

We believe in one God,
the FATHER almighty,

maker of Heaven and Earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
begotten from the FATHER before all ages,
God from God,
Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made;
of the same essence as the FATHER.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
He came down from heaven;
He became incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,
and was made human.
He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered and was buried.
The third day He rose again, according to the SCRIPTURES.
He ascended to heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the FATHER.
He will come again with glory
to judge the living and the dead.
His kingdom will never end.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life.
He proceeds from the Father and the Son,
and with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified.
He spoke through the PROPHETS.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We affirm one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look forward to the resurrection of the dead,
and to life in the world to come.

Amen

Since then the hatred of Jews by Christians grew, and in light of the fact that Jesus was, Himself, a Jew that makes no sense to most of us today. Since the Holocaust Christianity finally learned the lesson of not killing Jews, though the Romans had given some political control to the ancient, Jews because they, unlike the other nations under Roman occupation, couldn't be managed without some autonomy. Jesus had been a troublemaker to those running the Temple *and* those running the government. But just because some of these Jerusalem Jews decided to let the Romans kill Him was not a good reason to make all the Jews suffer for 2,000 years.

Today's Muslims don't love Jews, and even though Jesus is a prophet in their eyes they don't welcome His teachings or promote His Jewish roots. They don't even love Isaac even though he and Ishmael had the same father. In fact, they haven't found a good enough reason yet to promote their love for Jews, Christians, or any other people on Earth. Meanwhile they're fighting among themselves. The only reason Muslims will ever find to love anyone is when they're ready to catch a thief. And the only way for them to do so is will be with the tools of guilt and love as they seek redemption from God.

Deep in the heart of Muslim men, they know that they can't improve their ability to pray without all the sacred feelings given to them by their older spiritual brothers. The Jews taught the world to subtract {guilt}. The Christians taught the world how to add {love}. And the Muslims are miffed with God because He's "only" given them the task of teaching the world to multiply His teachings. With an attitude like that, I don't think they have a good enough case to make...

When Muslims approach the Creation Story as a nursery school lesson in the school of life, they discover why Jews are so wedded to our tales, to nature and to the main metaphor of Moses for psychological insight into how and why God created man. Then they slowly become interested in going to "kindergarten" {German: a child's garden} to learn the lessons about the importance of being your brother's keeper as presented in the negative in the Story of Cain and Abel. Some even get curious about the 40-day "cruise" Noah took with God that mirrors their own adolescence with animal urges in the hull of their boat that bellow and bawl to be let out.

A small number of Muslims spend their spiritual, elementary school years making their way to the age of 40 to discover the personal meaning in of middle age through the Story of Ishmael and his link to the rest of Genesis. One or two will devote himself to the junior high, middle age years learning about the Exodus that forced the ancient Israelites to put a leg of lamb on their door and shelter inside from the Angel of Death.

And one in a million will spend his spiritual, high school years on Earth completing the rest of Torah until he arrives at the age of 80. A great Muslim leader will religiously prepare himself for ALLAH by continuing on for a college degree in Christianity, and then decide if he wants to take a deeper look at the possibility of a post graduate degree in the school of life to see the Quran's connection to the rest of God's plan in 114 chapters. And, like Moses, such a special Muslim will do all that in 120 years, or, if he's very precocious, like Jesus in about 33. That's catholic!

Many of the universal principles of Torah may be operating more at a subconscious level in you if you haven't had a religious education, and so you have to remind yourself from time to time how catholic you really need to be to become a citizen of the world. There's nothing about the way Jesus felt that's any different from the way any other man

feels. He felt like every good guy feels: mostly angry or sad; occasionally happy, relieved from time to time when people listen to him; and occasionally frightened out of his wits at the way people behave so insensitively toward others.

Love is easy if you're wise by nature. Love is harder if you're generous by nature. But love is often overlooked entirely if you were created loving by nature. In that sense Jesus was right in saying, "NO ONE CAN COME TO ME UNLESS MY FATHER PUTS IT INTO HIS HEART TO COME." [John 6:64-65] And that, of course, includes Catholics.

The Other White Meat: The Gospel According to Mark

The Truth Will Out

Then Jesus said to them, “IS A LAMP BROUGHT INTO THE ROOM TO BE PUT UNDER A BUCKET OR UNDERNEATH THE BED? SURELY ITS PLACE IS ON THE LAMPSTAND! THERE IS NOTHING HIDDEN WHICH IS NOT MEANT TO BE MADE PERFECTLY PLAIN ONE DAY, AND THERE ARE NO SECRETS WHICH ARE NOT MEANT ONE DAY TO BE COMMON KNOWLEDGE. IF A MAN HAS EARS HE SHOULD USE THEM!” [Mark 4:21-23]

The symbols used in this parable are {1} lamp, {2} room {3} bucket {4} bed, and {5} lampstand. What makes this parable even more difficult to unravel with an emotional perspective by applying the tools of symbolic logic is that these visual clues are concluded with the admonition, “IF A MAN HAS EARS HE SHOULD USE THEM!” Surely one would think that Jesus should have said that if a man has “eyes” he should use them.

It makes no sense to place a lamp under a bucket. It makes equally no sense to place it under a bed. People hide things of importance, but actions reveal more about people than they realize. Adam and Eve hid their genitals from one another, and then hid from God amongst the trees. Men hide embarrassment of their body with clothes. They hide their shameful behavior by making it appear that they blend in with everyone else.

The lamp that’s brought into a room and placed under a bucket won’t illuminate the water in the bucket. If you think of your feelings as liquids sloshing around inside you, the way to illuminate your feelings isn’t by placing a lamp under them. You’d want to shine a light down into the bucket to illuminate the water within it.

Narcissus died by confusing his own face with a stranger’s when he peered at his reflection in a lake. Every man stares down from his head into his heart, but he doesn’t see his own face in his imagination. He sees thousands of other faces, many of which he recognizes and can even identify by name. But because he’s really facing himself as he stares at each reflection of himself in his heart, he has to reach down inside and figuratively touch those reflections with feelings to perceive that they’re all masks reflecting disguises his own mind has made.

These faces created in man’s imagination aren’t easily questioned by his mind. They’re often created in the image of a Jew or gay man that he then struggles with inside to tolerate or deny. Rarely does he admire such outsiders within. At best what these masqueraders tell him, he believes as true about others. He rarely bothers to question these reflections to discover what they’re really trying to tell him about himself. It can take too many decades for a grown man to feel differently about himself because the lamp that illuminates him in that mysterious room inside has been placed under the bucket instead of over it. All it takes

is finding a way to move the lamp within to a morally higher location, and it will illuminate you to what Jesus wanted you to see in yourself.

The lamp set under the bed is equally, impractically situated. A lamp placed under a bed isn't going to illuminate you to what's happening to you in bed. Your bed is where you express your passions to your mate. Your bed is a symbol for where you achieve all that you desire. To try to enlighten you in the ways of sexual expression is a fool's mission if attempted with a light shining up from under your bed. You'd want to look down with romantic, indirect mood lighting onto yourself to observe how best to view your feelings and passions for your mate, and then use that luminosity and warmth to convey how you feel about holding you in your own arms.

A lamp placed under a bucket won't illuminate you to your feelings, and a lamp placed under your bed won't illuminate you to your desires. If you aspire to illuminate you to yourself, you're going to want to shine the lamp of your inner eye from the ceiling in your inner room down onto the contents of that space.

Once your head can illuminate your feelings and desires to your conscience, your actions can then be transmitted to others consciously and authentically. "SURELY {the lamp's} PLACE IS ON THE LAMPSTAND!" Surely, the light of your inner eye should be kept in your head supported by your neck, not under your heart (bucket) or under your penis {bed}.

Perhaps now you can guess why Jesus told His followers to use their ears, not their eyes to understand Him. Their eyes were shut tight. They were terrified of looking at themselves as He saw them. And He, with great tenderness and compassion, therefore only asked them to open their ears. He was willing to let them keep their eyes closed, so long as they were willing to open their ears to Him and listen.

"THERE IS NOTHING HIDDEN WHICH IS NOT MEANT TO BE MADE PERFECTLY PLAIN ONE DAY." Jesus knew that He was speaking the truth because His eyes were open. But the only way He could communicate with His countrymen whose eyes were tightly shut was through His spoken WORDS. This is why His WORDS are so important to all men of faith. And this is why He asked people to use their ears to listen not their eyes to see.

"THERE ARE NO SECRETS WHICH ARE NOT MEANT ONE DAY TO BE COMMON KNOWLEDGE. IF A MAN HAS EARS HE SHOULD USE THEM" When you use your imagination to perceive the room Jesus described, you realize it's the site of secrets in you that one day will become common knowledge. To discover His secrets today requires you to open your ears. Your eyes will deceive you if you don't listen for new ways to interpret old ideas.

If you don't use your heart to listen to what's in your own best interest to help solve your own problems, you're not going to be very successful in solving the world's problems. If you don't learn to look at new situations using symbolic logic you're not going to solve your problem from the inside out. Solving problems from the outside in is just a polite way of saying, treating symptoms.

When Jesus said, "THERE ARE NO SECRETS WHICH ARE NOT MEANT ONE DAY TO BE COMMON KNOWLEDGE..." I'm reminded of the symbolism in the Christian Testament that Jesus hadn't yet revealed to His followers at that time, namely Himself as sacred bread and wine. His Jewish disciples had no trouble literally following Him or figuratively following his thoughts, but they couldn't quite plummet the depths of His message until His last supper when He gave them the keys that would unlock His symbolic view of God from those who play god.

Jesus is more alive today for those who achieve increasingly illuminating insight into themselves. To apply what He said to your life, you need only build upon the main metaphor of Moses. The water that nourishes the tree is the love that nourishes the Christian. And the love that nourishes the Christian is the reason for redemption that motivates the Muslim.

We've had two millennia to plummet the depths of Jesus's WORDS, but we still don't live in a world watered by love. God's plan is seemingly incomplete. The, as yet, undisclosed secret to love isn't a Catholic problem, but a catholic question. If gay men are the only men sufficiently attracted to the serpent in man not to want to kill men, then this world is doomed. The rest of you are going to have to get in and offer your own ways to bring Christ's love to life. Our way won't suffice. Lust may not open the door to love. Who can say?

If Christians can sport so many opinions about the Hebrew Testament, surely there's no reason why this gay-Jew can't weigh in on Jesus's WORDS. It was, after all, Torah, the first book on spiritual secrets, from which Jesus drew His conclusions. And it will be gay-Jews, gay-Christians and gay-Muslims who'll be marching and twirling our batons as we carry His message of love at the beginning of the New Age parade. We're the boys in the band who follow those girls. The straight men who led us in the past have squandered their place at the front of the parade. They've been relegated to seats on the floats where they merely wave to the adoring masses.

The problem with love is that people try to destroy the containers of hate, not transform and transcend the contents of their containers. Bad ideas can't be changed with logic alone. It requires positive regard for the outcomes of us all to achieve hope for a future filled with joy. Only then will good ideas transcend bad ideas, leaving a place for the tender shoots of love to grow.

The answer to the myriad differences of opinion in the Middle East isn't war against Israel. The answers lie in debate with Israel. But most of the Muslims in the Middle East are terrified of the notion of arguing with Jews. They'd rather kill Jews instead.

Jesus then explicated what He'd said previously, saying, "BE CAREFUL HOW YOU LISTEN. WHATEVER MEASURE YOU USE WILL BE USED TOWARDS YOU, AND EVEN MORE THAN THAT. FOR THE MAN WHO HAS SOMETHING WILL RECEIVE MORE. AS FOR THE MAN WHO HAS NOTHING, EVEN HIS NOTHING WILL BE TAKEN AWAY." [Mark 4:24-25]

Man was literally made in God's image as a giver. That's why he has a penis. Men receive without the physical benefit of a vagina with which to enjoy the physical sensation of receiving. Most men first choose to give using their tongue to convince the other person that their penis is the right tool to deliver the *goods*. This, men are very adept at doing. A young man's relationship to his tongue is as intimate, and as unconscious, as his relationship to his penis.

Men don't *think* like women because men aren't adept at receiving physically, and consequently they have trouble receiving emotionally and spiritually. So, when Jesus stated that the "MEASURE YOU USE WILL BE USED TOWARDS YOU," He inferred that boys-will-be-boys, men will behave like men, but males will rarely try to think like females. "THE MAN WHO HAS SOMETHING WILL RECEIVE MORE" from God because the man who has learned to receive will be greatly rewarded for having done so. This doesn't literally have to be done with your anus. But doing so is a Hell of a lot better than becoming an asshole.

Although a man's body from the waist down indicates that he was biologically made to give, his face reveals that he's a taker. Most of the information he gets he takes in through the sense organs on his face. Only when viewed from behind does it become apparent that man is also a creature who gives back. And yet he only gives back from behind where he can't literally see what it is he's giving back to the world.

A man without a vivid imagination is dangerous because he can't perceive himself in new ways. He sees only what his mother taught him to see when he was a very small boy. But little boys quickly choose to prove that they're like men. And there's very little fully-grown men know about giving back that they want to share with one another. A man with no imagination has no idea what he's giving back to mankind. But a man with too vivid an imagination will cringe at what he's gives back to the world from within.

That's why I'm a strong believer that women should run the world. Woman was made in God's image as a receiver. A woman has no penis with which to literally give, but she's developed quite a reputation as a giver despite "only" having a vagina. Women have

learned to give in myriad, abstract ways precisely because giving and receiving aren't visually limited by the shape of their genitals.

In truth, no man can live his life without receiving, and no woman can live hers without giving. Giving and receiving are physical, emotional and spiritual processes that shouldn't be legislated by laws based on the shape of our genitals. The dogmatic insistence some have when it comes to traditional ways of giving and receiving is based on their limited imagination, not their intelligence. Giving and receiving are deeply intrinsic concepts that emerge out of inner, interdependent relationships between a man's head, heart and soul.

When men learn to be proud of their ability to receive, they'll let women decide for themselves whether they want to receive new life, or not. They won't insist that receiving a child is too great a decision for a woman to make for herself. Men will realize that abortion is an example of an issue in men that's been complicated by projection.

Imagine that God had a secret that looked like a pizza pie. Now imagine that He divided that pie into six slices {Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism}. But before He could have done that He'd have to have divided the pizza first in half. These two halves are male and female. The males who understand this part of His mystery the most deeply are gay men. And the females who understand it the best are lesbians. If you think straight men and women have learned to share their secrets with one another you're not yet experienced enough in matters of other-love to approach self-love with an open mind.

Jesus improved upon the Jewish concept of divine reciprocation developed from the Hammurabi code of conduct from Babylonia that dates back to 1750 B.C.E. called, "an eye for an eye." It surmised that if a person were hurt, either the injured person or his relatives could exact physical retribution from the perpetrator. Prior to Babylonia law, if the injured party was blinded he was permitted to kill the guilty party. Babylonian law put a limit on such actions, restricting the retribution to be no worse than the crime, i.e. an eye for an eye.

In modern accordance with the advancement of this ancient law, today's victim of a minor crime gets financial compensation for the injury instead of being given permission to exact physical retribution on the perpetrator. We've even gone so far as to create no-fault insurance where each person is monetarily compensated for damages without exacting retribution of any kind from either party.

Jesus presents an even more clever argument with regard to justice. He viewed justice as coming from the heart. He implied that the men of His time were accountable to God for much more than their thoughts and actions; they were accountable for their unspoken feelings and desires as well. And thanks to the P r o p h e t Mohammed every man now believes that he's also accountable to God for the morality of his belief system, which is the product of his thoughts, feelings and desires. All faiths agree that those who don't use

their conscience in tandem with all the inner forces God gave them will suffer retribution either here on Earth, in the world to come, or both.

To the degree that we don't want others to have to wait to get their just desserts, we're doing the best we can to raise the legal standards of justice for one and all using our courts to try us for our high crimes and misdemeanors. Although vengeance may be the Lord's, we're learning to bring people to justice through fair trials and just sentences. Two thousand years after Jesus's teaching, we're now learning to ponder the idea of an eye for an eye for an eye, where the third eye is your inner eye which overlooks the other two. When a man has been blinded spiritually, his other two eyes can only function biologically. He can't reflect on his actions with moral regard. It's this perspective that Jesus is coming from. It's His great imagination even more than His timeless WORDS that we must ponder for insight into His Father's plan.

"THE MAN WHO HAS SOMETHING WILL RECEIVE MORE." The bounty of the man who has learned to receive knowledge and love from himself increases naturally over time. His lessons in the school of life grow as his stature grows in the eyes of our Teacher. He comes to see why it is that every act of tender love given to another man creates a tough love response from God. For your conscience to make more room inside for your head and heart, you're going to experience growing pains. To learn about God's love, we always have to suffer. But the excruciatingly intimate moments with Him are well worth the price.

Believers in God should discuss their reasons for anticipating His rewards through prayer on a daily basis. They should take every feeling they go through each day as nudges from the outside for their heart to convince their soul of something that their soul can then use to change their own mind.

Those who have little or nothing in the material sense are common. Those who are spiritually destitute, however, have been told, *ad nauseum*, about the blessings in giving to others, but not about the rewards in receiving from themselves. Those who are growing in wisdom, love and generosity are anything but poor, but even they may find it difficult to put their rewards into words.

Those of us who are good receive so much more than we give, and yet we have such a poor opinion of receiving. We confuse receiving with taking, and then we guilt ourselves into giving back without ever discovering the blessings of receiving. To learn to receive, a man must wonder what it's like to be a woman. He must learn to give with an eye to learning from how he's being received.

"AS FOR THE MAN WHO HAS NOTHING, EVEN HIS NOTHING WILL BE TAKEN AWAY." The man who literally has nothing in the material sense may have quite a bit emotionally and spiritually that he doesn't realize he might lose. People with a great deal in their heart and soul who take actions that are heroic are seldom acknowledged for

their bounty. We may even denounce them for their lack of self-protection. Muslim terrorists are a good example of men who care a great deal about morality, but who don't use their head to achieve righteous results. This is why the terrorists always lose, and why Israel is always getting stronger. A man may only have a body with which to give of himself, but in that body are divine forces that must be understood.

The martyr thinks only with his heart and soul. He can't trust what his thoughts and deepest desires tell him because he's overwhelmed by his feelings and deeply held beliefs. That's not a good recipe for righteous action. A martyr only wants to die. He acts in a suicidal manner in an effort to turn off the overwhelmingly powerful feelings and beliefs he holds, so that his thoughts and desires can be expressed like normal people out in the world we share. Death is his only evidence that there is a God. That's no way to live with hope.

Good people don't want their NOTHING to be taken away. They don't want to lose their ears in the afterlife because they didn't learn to listen down here on Earth. They don't want to lose their eyes because they looked around all their life with their eyes tightly shut. They don't want to lose their penis because they didn't listen to their desire to fondle with their feelings. They don't want to lose all of their fingers in the afterlife because they defied the Ten Commandments. Good people don't want to lose any of the things they take for granted in this world because good people know that the world to come will mirror what they did with the gift in this world they were given. They know that their body will be the measure of all their moral outcomes.

Terrorists behead their enemies in envy of the thoughts in their own head they wish would ground them. You'd think they'd dismember and castrate their enemies and show off the fruits of their labor and the snake in their midst. But they don't want to admit to themselves how the forces within them have turned them into monsters. Nor do they want to cut out and display the heart of their enemies because the feelings in their own heart are so precious and rare. The Muslim terrorist model's every man's crusade with himself. He's in the ultimate projection of inner forces engaged with outer world. But his insanity, unlike ours, is out of control.

Man has to learn to first receive from himself in the emotional sense. He has to learn to trust himself, care for himself and like himself before he can learn to receive these attributes from others. He has to learn to communicate with himself to discover what he has and what he's missing. He has to commend himself for bringing his curiosity about life from the outside in.

It's easier for men to literally trade goods with others than to be good until they try to trade goodness using the various forces at their command. It's easier for men to build societies based on the exchange of goods and services than on their own, individual need

for giving and receiving from themselves. And that's not because they aren't good at giving or receiving from others, but because they aren't good at giving and receiving with themselves.

So for Jesus to say, "AS FOR THE MAN WHO HAS NOTHING, EVEN HIS NOTHING WILL BE TAKEN AWAY" He must have had a great understanding of the mind of the martyr. He must have realized that deconstruction is the negation of negation. This will lead a man to God, although without any experience in reconstruction to rely on when he meets his Maker.

The way you feel will affect the way you believe, and the way you believe will affect what you think, so it behooves you to give thought to more than what you desire. Militant Islam wants to destroy the world in order to reconstruct it using the ideals of *their* faith alone. This is, in principle, no different than what Christianity once wanted. The only difference is that Christianity had to make peace with the Jews to discover the depth of their unique gifts from God. And the Muslims aren't yet ready to do so.

If behooves you to give thought to how your feelings are being affected by every person you meet. Physical pain and emotional suffering are lessons that teach us all to look at ourselves more deeply. But the injustices we suffer at the hands of others are particularly challenging in making sense of God's plan for us each day. Nothing that happens to you is punishment for previous crimes against your humanity. Every bit of misfortune you suffer now is a way for God to teach you something new about yourself that you didn't know about yourself before. Only that will make you better prepared for tomorrow. Put your lamp {head} on the lampstand {neck} and not under the bucket {heart} or the bed {bottom}, and the whole room will look brighter.

It couldn't have been easy for our American forefathers to grant us the "pursuit of happiness" as a right in the Declaration of Independence. But it isn't any easier to pursue happiness today knowing that it's a fleeting emotion that never lasts. Democracy makes it possible for us to exchange goods and services without undo spiritual effort. But there's more to wealth than money. You've got to know how and where to pursue happiness. And by the gluttony, drug addiction, violence and discourteous disposition so evident in our society today, it's clear we're in pursuit of some *thing* we don't fully understand.

The paradox of wisdom of the heart is that the emotionally rich get richer, while those who have emotionally little or nothing drive themselves into even greater emotional debt all the time. It becomes the AVODA {work/worship} of the enlightened to teach those who aren't emotional millionaires how to avoid bankruptcy, insolvency and impoverishment. It's up to us to teach tranquility as the inner path to peace.

Most of us are spiritually working class; we're working our way through life, doing our best to live somewhere between spiritual riches and ruin before we're physically liquidated

from life. We like to think we seek justice and mercy for all, but we can see that we don't always feel that way about anyone. We'd like to learn more about ourselves with as little pain and suffering as possible, but such wisdom only comes to those who are primarily self-taught.

The Serenity Prayer by the American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr [1892–1971] can help in this regard. I've added a few changes in punctuation to elucidate the Spiritual Linguistic inspirations I see in this prayer:

God,
give me grace to accept with serenity
the things that cannot be changed;
courage to change the things
which should be changed;
and the wisdom to distinguish
the one from the other.
Living one day at a time;
enjoying one moment at a time;
accepting hardship as a pathway to peace;
taking, as Jesus did,
this sinful world as it is –
not as I would have it –
trusting that You will make all things right
if I surrender to Your will
so that I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with You forever in the next.

It's not all that difficult to be serene if someone tells you how. But if you can't find your way to your heart to discover your own yearning for the feeling of serenity, that feeling will elude you. {Obviously your penis knows nothing about serenity and peace of mind. But your heart does.}

It's easy to pray for and receive what you want directly from God. But it's hard to face the world if you're by nature a giver. This is why He asks man to learn to receive. It's harder to give yourself good questions each day and receive the answers from yourself in due time while letting God surprise you with added gifts of His own. Giving and receiving both begin within. If you can't give and receive from yourself, you'll project your longing for justice on others. Serenity will elude you.

Every fruit that clings long enough to its stem on the branch of a tree eventually goes through the process described as rotting. Old people look down on the young and often call them rotten to the core. The aged often judge the younger generation as decayed.

These are fallacies because young people are actually green, not rotten. The young usually know they're in the process of ripening. They can see that they're stretching their head {skin}, heart {meat} and soul {core} as they ripen. Young people of this generation are growing just as they should, and just as they have in every, previous generation.

Those who are rotten to the core are the old people, and we should do everything we can to learn from them, for they will soon separate from their stem and fall from the Tree of life. Seniors show us what bruised, sore, damaged, wounded, hurt, battered and black-and-blue look like when you think of human beings as fruit reaching the end of their natural cycle.

There are, of course, people who move too fast from green to rotten without ever ripening. They go bad, get mealy, woody and even mushy. They never sweeten. And there are plenty of people who, like fruit, are knocked to the ground while green before they ever got the chance to ripen on the tree.

If you want to watch modern, Christian, mother love in overtime watch an American mother pushing a stroller with a baby in it with one hand; holding the hand of another child with her other hand; with a dog on a leash attached to the stroller. This is an example of the spiritual attitude every man should take about the forces inside him.

When you think about the inner infant cradled in your moveable heart; the inner child in your head that you hold securely in your hand, and the dog between your legs - you should give yourself credit for holding on to all these spiritual tasks at once. Guiding a dog, training an infant and instructing a child all while teaching yourself to keep your eyes open for signs from God is the job of a genius.

Mother Mary wasn't just the Jewish woman God chose to give birth to Jesus. She became a symbol of every mother God chooses to bring new life into the world. The man who treats his mother well gets a sense of how every mother wants to be treated. But to do so he has to identify with her determination, and maybe even her tactics. The man who sees every Jewish mother as a spiritual legacy of the ultimate, Jewish mother {Mary} will hold all women with greater regard.

Jesus was the most famous martyr to die for His beliefs, but martyrdom began long before Jesus gave Himself for the sake of the world. Although Jews no longer intentionally die for our beliefs, the feelings of martyrdom persist in us to this day. We call our modern urge to die for a good cause, the Jewish mother and son relationship. Both mother and child are resurrected on a daily basis, but not without a fanfare of posturing and protestations about how great a sacrifice each of us is making for the other.

The best example of martyrdom before the Common Era occurred when the Maccabees revolted against the Greeks who wouldn't allow them to pray their own way in Israel about 160 B.C.E. Martyrdom was again glorified by the Jews after Jesus in the year 73 A.D at

the siege of Masada when more than 900 Jewish, resistance fighters, women and children committed mass suicide rather than submit to slavery by the Romans. And although the Jews gave up giving up our life through martyrdom in favor of simply trying to peacefully survive with our neighbors, there have been countless examples of martyrdom in Christianity in the past and in Islam even today.

The real challenge for modern man is to worry about the effects of martyring himself to himself, not to God. As self-sacrifice is become less and less fashionable to our modern sensibilities, martyrdom is also seen as a lot less admirable. Today, civilized men are choosing not to martyr themselves, but, instead, to marry themselves. If a man cares that much about his relationship to God, he might as well prove it by committing himself to a marriage with the one person who really cares for him unconditionally, himself. If you love your finger, put a ring on it.

Addressing martyrdom from within requires setting emotional boundaries from the inside out, and this is where your conscience is required. Much of the time you don't deserve the way you treat yourself. You're simply too nice a person to have to take what you do to yourself. But if you deny the guilt for how you treat yourself, you may not develop the tough love needed to change anything about yourself. You've got to perceive the problem of being you as an emotional problem before you can deal with it spiritually.

Until you can believe that honesty, sincerity and authenticity make you more genuine, you're not going to bother to become more real. You're going to buy yourself off with desires easily fulfilled that will shut you up. You'll bribe yourself into turning a blind eye. And if bribery doesn't work, you'll use extortion.

Self-coercion can come in the form of accidents that happen when you don't keep your eye on the ball. Decisions you make may run amok because you didn't anticipate something you should have seen coming. Denial comes at a high price. You'll never learn to trust yourself if you don't change the way you treat yourself.

Gamblers are doing something right that the rest of us should acknowledge and embellish in our inner world. Luck is a game you play with God out in the world. The fact that gamblers don't consider luck a form of prayer doesn't mean it couldn't be. If you discussed your luck with each figurative draw of a card or spin of the roulette wheel, you'd learn a lot more about your relationship to God and your feelings about yourself. Every little thing that happens in your life that you interpret to be lucky or unlucky is God's way of contacting you. How often have you returned His calls?

You should always look for the tinge of guilt deep down inside as a clue to the way things have turned out. And instead of feeling embarrassed by your body; ashamed of your character; and humiliated by your lack of achievements – I suggest you make a concerted effort to see yourself as good and getting better rather than bad and getting worse.

You'll be amazed at all the good reasons you have for all your bad habits. Smoking has taught you to see how you're fuming about someone you don't want to be with all day every day. Overeating is a form of spiritual consumption you've diverted to food instead of quality learning with yourself before God. Gambling is a form of prayer you haven't articulated to yourself in full sentences and don't wish to reply to God about. Drugs are like going as far as your front door when you hear the knock, without having the courage to open it to let God in. Your wants and desires tempt you with forbidden things you haven't yet found a way to sanction and work on using the power of self-love.

I'm not suggesting you should give in to your temptations if you don't absolutely have to. I'm just saying they're very slowly bringing you to the starting line at which point you'll be able to begin your race with yourself from within.

Fantasies are created when your penis and heart whisper to one another and allow you to overhear their conversation. Dreams are created when your heart and soul converse, and you overhear what they're talking about. But if you're not aware of the "x" factor {the feminine side of yourself}, you're going to misinterpret or ignore what's going on inside of you. You're not going to use your head {Adam} to learn from your heart's {Eve's} conversations with your serpent or your conscience.

Getting your dreams to come true is harder than it looks. First of all you need to be able to separate your fantasies from your dreams. Then you need to connect with your conscience. And lastly you need to make sure that God's calls to you are being answered so that He can evolve your conscience into a soul. To get your dreams to come true, you have to have a very powerful head, heart and soul. And you also need a very powerful relationship with God.

Liking yourself is extremely important in this regard. The most egotistical, maniacal and diabolical people all claim to like themselves. But that's a lie. God is bringing all sorts of people into your life to teach you precisely what to like about yourself and what to improve in yourself.

Once put that into words internally spoken only to yourself, you can respond to new ideas with good questions about the efficacy of your feelings and beliefs. You should find that you're far more likable than you ever imagined, especially if you use the standards you've set for others on yourself.

Additionally, the tragedy, misfortune, bad luck and irritation in the world around you could be turned around to give you a more realistic appraisal of your inner wealth. If you become poetic, and give up your insistence on being prosaic, you'll find this world can be justified. You'll find there's hope and power within you to actualize your dreams regardless of your age or stage of life. You may not get all your fantasies and dreams realized in the

world around you, but those you can't realize around you, you'll definitely be able to profit from within.

Working the land literally by planting and harvesting is extremely physically taxing. It's no shame if your ancestors wanted to get off the land, climb the ladder of success and enjoy a way of living life that wouldn't overly exert or exhaust them. If you've been motivated by money, not honey {wisdom} and milking {lusting over} many cows rather than getting one to call your own {monogamy}, you don't have to continue only in that direction. You could pursue money and wisdom, lust and love in one. You could have it all if you evolved your conscience by considering the long-term emotional rewards of pursuing fantasies and dreams.

Most people today want the benefits of life in Israel without all the perils. They want the freedom and patriotism the Israelis enjoy that unifies them. But they don't want to suffer all the condemnation Israelis have to live with out in the rest of the world. They want to be as rich as a Jew in their head without all the guilt heaped upon gay men in their heart.

You don't have to covet the Jewish life style or our land to get what the gay-Jews have {in theory}. The cows that provide the milk and the bees that produce the honey weren't given only to gay-Jews. As a gay-Jew who once turned his back on his parents and God, I can tell you that it's possible to turn back around to face Them. God gave me my parents to tutor me, not to teach me. God teaches. My parents tutored me for His tests as best they could. But They helped me a great deal with my spiritual assignments when I observed them carefully to discern wise from foolish actions.

Your parents are just people to everyone other than you. They're wise in some ways and foolish in others. They're not perfect. And they tutored you consciously and unconsciously to be like them. In every way you copy their love of life, you'll act wisely, and in every way you copy their wisdom you'll get lucky in love. This will lead to the generosity of spirit we see in Americans and Israelis. This will help the Muslims grasp the legacy A L L A H. is giving us to hand over to them.

Most people have had enough spiritual training in symbolic logic to understand that their soul is really the lamp of enlightenment that Jesus accused the ancient Jews of shining under their bucket of feelings instead of down into it. Most modern and civilized human beings can accept the idea that they once kept the light of their desires under their bed where they could see nothing about what was triggering their urges. When you're looking under your bed for illumination, don't be surprised if all that you find are dust bunnies. Illumination to all that you want out of life has to shine down from above, or all you'll end up doing is pointing fingers at others and calling them dirty.

Today most modern men know that their soul can do more good in a lampstand where it can shine its glorious light over the bucket and bed. They see that where they're coming

from inside was a puzzle they couldn't unravel without the help of Jews like Moses and Jesus and ordinary men like you and me. The challenge to love yourself doesn't depend on your political persuasion, religious or national ancestry. The challenge to love yourself rests on your opinions of yourself.

Anyone can come to understand Jesus's symbolism intellectually and abstractly and then tell others how to apply it to their heart. But telling people how to live their life just doesn't feel rewarding. Humble yourself to question why every person is brought into your life. You'll be amazed at how differently you'll approach each situation when you see that your name has been added to that study group assigned by our Teacher. You might as well learn to tutor, and give up teaching. You might as well see if you can add your loyalty to your tribe to your challenge in each new group God has momentarily created for you.

The foolish priest preaches to the choir. The clever priest preaches to himself out loud in front of the choir, listening to himself as he speaks to them. Pain is the rod and suffering is the staff God uses to teach us to preach to ourselves, rather than hypocritically tell only others what's right and wrong. You should eavesdrop on everything you say. If you're not nosy and don't want to listen in to what you're telling yourself in the privacy of your own mind, you're missing the whole point of opening your mouth altogether.

Even religious leaders have their container poked and their contents prodded by God to teach them to take the Bible more personally. The child-abuse scandals in the Catholic Church are only the tip of the spiritual iceberg when it comes to priests learning about where they've had their noses where they don't belong. A Catholic nose can smell just as well as a Jewish nose. The question both need to improve upon is learning how to use their noses to get a whiff of what it smells like inside themselves.

Those who refuse to use wisdom, love and generosity on themselves and for themselves will use their lamp to shine its light under the bucket, illuminating nothing of what's in it. They'll place their lamp under other men's beds, and they'll watch as their light gets absorbed by the dust ruffle acting as a lamp shade. But their lamp will shed very little in the way of light onto their own bed where they need to learn to sleep in peace with themselves with God as their Witness.

The Other White Meat: The Gospel According to Mark

Cleanliness

There's holiness inherent in cleanliness of the body. But what's the good of having clean skin if your head, heart and soul are still dirty? There are men whose skin is as black as coal who are as white as snow inside. Eyes are useless unless you can compare what you see to how you feel about it.

The rabbis reinterpreted Torah 500 years before Jesus entered the world stage, giving the ancient Jews laws of dietary cleanliness that they were to apply to all areas of their life, beginning, but not ending with, what they ate. Thankfully Torah had already taught those Jews to clean their homes of all crumbs of leavened bread before Passover. [Exodus 12:15] It was this level of cleanliness for a Jewish home that saved their progeny in greater proportion during the plagues of Europe that peaked in the 14th Century in Europe, killing an estimated 75-200 million. Who knew then that rats don't like to live in houses people treat like a home where cleanliness is strictly observed. The next plague will surely separate those whose head, heart and soul are cleanly separated from their serpent.

It's not kosher to mix milk and meat. God told the Israelites three times in Torah not to cook the calf in the milk of its mother. [Exodus 23:19 and 34:26, Deuteronomy 14:21] In the poetic sense we should strive to separate the milk of human kindness in our heart from our beefs with others. We should separate our tender feelings from tough love with clear thinking so that we can make sound, moral decisions based on the rule of law.

After 1,900 years of animosity between Christians and Jews, 19th Century Jews decided to scrap the dietary restrictions in favor of eating with their Christian counterparts on the job and in their shared neighborhoods. Perhaps this was done for financial reasons; perhaps it was social. In either case, these *reformed* Jews decided that sitting together with their Christian brothers at the same table was an expression of the spiritual sanitation they'd achieved which trumped any previous dietary duty to God.

Today we have the luxury of applying the laws of kashrut and the edicts of Torah more liberally and progressively, as well as more personally. With the cleansing of our soul at "Yom Kippur" {Day of Atonement}, we try to clear the air between God and us. But what about all that hot air within that leaks out when we try to give back to others but which originates from our sick relationship with ourselves?

Physical cleanliness as endorsed and disseminated by the laws of kashrut isn't alone in being next to godliness. Emotional cleanliness has taken us in the direction of spiritual godliness. Cleanliness of the body is an outer exercise in atoning that must be performed with an effort to achieve inner wellbeing as well. If not, you end up like the Nazis, with a very clean shirt and a very dirty soul.

Today neatness, cleanliness and repair reflect the improvements of man's head, heart and soul, not just his body, car and domicile. Cleanliness today must reflect the entire life you live on the outside as well as within. The extension of the laws of kashrut literally led humanity in the direction of the public sanitation we enjoy today, but these laws figuratively led Western civilization toward a psychological and spiritual cleanse of man's emotional and religious motives that's equally timely and holy.

Jesus addressed cleanliness in the Book of Mark. He was approached by the Pharisees and scribes who'd come from Jerusalem and who noticed that His disciples ate their meals with COMMON HANDS, meaning that they hadn't gone through the ceremonial washing of hands that religious Jews still do today before a meal. The Pharisees, and indeed Jews at every strata of society at that time, knew they'd been commanded by God to ceremonially wash their hands before they ate. [Leviticus 15:11-14] So the Pharisees and scribes put the question to Jesus, "WHY DO YOUR DISCIPLES REFUSE TO FOLLOW THE ANCIENT TRADITION, AND EAT THEIR BREAD WITH 'COMMON' HANDS?" [Mark 7:1-5]

Jesus replied, "YOU HYPOCRITES, ISAIAH DESCRIBED YOU BEAUTIFULLY WHEN HE WROTE – 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR FROM ME, AND IN VAIN THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN'. "YOU ARE SO BUSY HOLDING ON TO THE TRADITIONS OF MEN THAT YOU LET GO THE COMMANDMENT OF GOD!" [Mark 7:6-8, Isaiah 29:13] Jesus addressed the importance of a man cleaning up his act from within, his relationship with himself as witnessed in every moment by God. Putting the spiritual process above the ritual of washing hands made it possible to turn hand washing into a personal pleasure rather than a religious duty. Such is the mystery of God's delightful ways.

In the past so much attention was placed on the purity of men's sexual relationships with women that men overlooked the fact that their hands were physically dirtied just from touching themselves and one another in the course of a day. They had no idea about germs or how diseases are spread. The best Jesus could do at the time was to expand the topic of cleanliness by provoking scandal. The emotional irreverence of His congregation was seen as disrespectful of God because they chose to move in the direction of washing for joy rather than washing out of obligation.

Today restaurants require that employees wash their hands after going to the bathroom, but there's no sign on the bathroom wall in a restaurant saying that the employees thoughts and feelings ought to also be cleansed frequently because they associate with theirs desires. We determine after the meal whether we feel our server has done the job with a clean heart when we add our tip to the bill.

A man has to touch his own penis several times a day to urinate, so when he hears about men who gladly touch one another's penis out of sexual attraction, it brings up issues Jesus raised about the natural strength of our desires and the natural naiveté of our emotions.

Whether a modern man's negative opinion of gay men is the result of his own dirty hands as the result of guilt he, himself, suffers just from having to touch his own penis so often every day. But that isn't anyone's spiritual issue other than his own. By further extension, when any man's unclean thoughts and feelings engage with his desires, that, too, should remain a personal cleansing process in his conscience, one that doesn't involve others. Forcing gay men to take a spiritual "white glove" test is unnecessary in light of the direction Jesus was taking the "puritan police" in His day who were stunned at eating with unwashed hands.

The concept of clean hands that Jesus described refers to:

1. Literally washing your hands
2. Personally touching yourself and not being dirtied in the process
3. Socially engaging with others ethically through clean business practices
4. Spiritually washing your thoughts and feelings as though they were two hands held over the sink in your conscience, hands that are frequently dirtied by contact with your desires, which may or may not be pure

This fourth level of cleansing can only be done in your soul with conscious awareness of your reason for wishing to come before God with clean hands. Washing your hands spiritually reminds you that you're soulfully employed with yourself for the pleasure of being clean in God's presence at all times. Cleansing your thoughts and feelings with the holy water that rains down from the sky in your soul is a recreation of inner purification using nature as our model. The moral agent of change, transformation and transcendence is water, the love-giving property of life that sanitizes you when you know and feel you're dirty inside.

The modern renditions of the laws of cleanliness from Leviticus that we follow today are the same as those Jesus promoted:

1. Cleanliness of the body
2. Cleanliness in sexual practices, and by extension in romantic relationships and between family and friends
3. Cleanliness in business practices
4. Cleanliness within yourself before God

It's ironic that those who care so much about other people's clean hands in sexual matters do everything they can to end governmental regulation in business and, instead,

care as little as they can for the needy who have no access to the amenities of physical cleanliness that *they* take for granted. It's ironic they don't even believe in global warming when they claim to be in favor of purity, chastity and spiritual transparency. When your actions are duplicitous and dirty because your relationship with your own penis is defiled, you come to some pretty strange and hypocritical conclusions about the world around you.

Torah isn't an historical document that became outmoded with the writing of the Gospels. They both live in you if you live in America, regardless of your faith or philosophy. Torah breathed life into the Gospels. Therefore the Gospels will always model the behavior of every son who loves his father, despite the difference in their ages and experiences.

It's not too much to ask Jews and Christians to live their faith with greater respect for each other's Testaments since they were created as separate documents in the outer world intended for spiritual overlap within. It's not too much to ask the man who loves his mother who was handpicked for him by God to love himself. It's not too much to ask him to love his father even if there's a certain distance between them. The man who loves both his parents differently, but fully, will love his country, culture and community. It's not too much to ask such a man to love the planet and all the creatures great and small that God put on it for us to steward wisely, lovingly and magnanimously.

Islam is, in an historical sense, the love child God created who is our spiritual brother. It's up to us to raise our illegitimate brother with respect for his spiritual elders because God willed him into being. Now that he's going through his spiritual adolescence and is finding it hard to agree with anyone on anything, it behooves us all the more to tutor him in the spiritual lessons of life he's missed out on. Parents can learn from their children before children learn from their parents, and older brothers can emulate good parents. It's never a happy home if the kids resist honoring and respecting one another.

If a gay-Jew can see it and say it, you can do so, too. It isn't too much to ask for you to respect the Jews who still wash their hands ritualistically before eating. It isn't too much to ask of you to appreciate the Christians who don't in an effort to open us to emotional opportunities for individuality. And it isn't too much to give thought to why Muslims put so much attention to washing their feet instead. The more you understand the need for mental, emotional and spiritual cleanliness, the faster God will give science ways to eradicate disease and come up with new sources of external power. We'll be able to anoint ourselves with oil rather than combust it in engines and release it into our atmosphere.

You don't have to die to experience your eternal rewards. Jews who survived the Second World War witnessed a miracle with the creation of the State of Israel. Gays who survived the AIDS epidemic of the 1980's and 90's witnessed a miracle with the legalization of gay marriage in America today. The joy of choosing the right side of every

issue will lead to greater joy in life and greater hope for your place in this world and the world to come.

Anyone who thinks someone who's left-handed is controlled by the "devil" isn't thinking right. Anyone who thinks gays don't deserve the blessings God bestows on straights isn't feeling good. And anyone who thinks the Jews don't deserve one tiny little country of their own aren't true believers. God's plan doesn't exclude lefties, gays or Jews.

After the Holocaust many of my parents' generation of Jews realized that washing their hands of other people's moral responsibilities was what had, in part, created the conditions for the Second World War. They realized then that we, Jews, could never again afford to allow the world to rely only on Christian love or Muslim generosity of spirit. Without us continuing to strive for greater wisdom of God's plan, the world would be doomed. And yet, without melding our spiritual brothers' gifts from God in with our own, there'd be no hope for humanity evolving further.

You can't love your neighbor as much as you love yourself if you don't know how to love yourself. The only One you can go to, to tell it like it is, is God {Y.H.V.H. Jesus A L L A H.}. He knows what you really want, but He'll only help you express yourself to the degree that you earn self-love. The spiritual game is rigged in favor of the Christians emotionally, and the Jews and Muslims will have to learn to acknowledge that, "Love Makes the World Go Round." [song by Bob Merrill for the 1961 musical "Carnival"]

Throw a wake for yourself each day to help you awaken. Tears should come to your eyes when you think about how hard you're trying and how gentle a man you're becoming. If you can't wrap yourself in your own arms with tears of joy, you're wasting the gift of having been given arms. Love yourself for everything you have, and if God has taken away something or someone important to you, your losses should be viewed as blessings in disguise that were given to you to help you find your way to self-love.

The Israelites knew they'd be doomed when they got to the Red Sea long before they arrived if God didn't help them in their time of need. The path to the other side of the sea was there all along. Extremists on the left and right who rise up like walls of water that are repelled by His mighty hands don't realize that they're just making it easier for the rest of us to make our way through.

Jesus quoted Isaiah because Isaiah was allowed to speak for God. Jesus quoted Isaiah when He said, "THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR FROM ME. AND IN VAIN THEY WORSHIP ME TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN." The difference between today's religious scholars and the ancient Jewish PROPHETS is that some of the PROPHETS were allowed to speak for God or about their personal experience with Him. Jesus never spoke

for God or about His experiences with Him, only about His heavenly relationship with Him.

Jesus wasn't a p r o p h e t in the strictest sense of the word, as the Muslims claim. The AGE OF PROPHECY was over when the rabbis said it was over. But with the life of Jesus the Age of Spiritual Scholarship had begun. Jesus was His Father's first tutor in the school of life. Mohammed may have been a p r o p h e t, but he wasn't a Jewish PROPHET or the MESSIAH. He was a star pupil in the school Moses started with God and tutored by Jesus. The P r o p h e t Mohammed was anointed by God for a third great, spiritual lesson given through him to humanity.

The edict from Leviticus 19:18, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." in Hebrew is וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כָּמוֹךָ "VEAHAVTA L'REYACHA KAMOCHA." "REYACHA" is incorrectly translated as "neighbor." It should be translated as "COMPANION." You should love every one of your companions as you love yourself because you are your primary companion.

This principle was brought into discussion previously in this passage of Leviticus with, "YOU SHALL NOT HATE YOUR BROTHER IN YOUR HEART. YOU SHALL NOT TAKE REVENGE OR FEEL RESENTMENT AGAINST THE CHILDREN OF YOUR PEOPLE." Only then does it state, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR COMPANION AS YOURSELF." This law begins with your "BROTHER" {i.e. FAMILY} and moves out to the "CHILDREN OF YOUR PEOPLE" {i.e. MEMBERS OF YOUR TRIBE}. Then the law continues further afield to encompass your companions. Your companions include every other human being on the face of the Earth while you're here because everyone accompanies the Jews on the road of life, whether they're family members, other Jews or non-Jews. We are everyone's companions in the spiritual sense. Our goal is to live in peace with our neighbors like companions because we are learning how to accompany ourselves.

This sort of moral extension of Biblical law is a common style of argumentation in Torah. It moves Jews in the direction of righteousness starting with an edict that's easy and self-understood {such as loving our brothers}; to extensions of the law that are more difficult to live by {such as loving all our family members}; ending with statutes that are extremely difficult to follow {such as loving every human being on Earth to the same degree that you love yourself}. This is the trick by which Torah gets Jews and Christians to buy into God's slippery slope morality. Muslims are expected to watch from a distance, approve, and agree with reservations based on even higher moral principles that they can prove by surpassing our own, not by cutting spiritual corners.

Nowadays your neighbors aren't necessarily members of your tribe, and if your tribe insinuated that you should only look for companions who are members of your tribe, it's going to be difficult for you to love your neighbors and companions as you do yourself because they're not members of your tribe.

So far, Muslims have Jewish neighbors, but refuse to become their companions because we're not members of the same tribe. Even though Muslims should love everyone whether or not they're Muslim, the idea of becoming companions with everyone in the world is only a concept presently of interest to gay-Muslims, gay-Christians and gay-Jews. Most Muslims in the Middle East can't even love those neighbors and companions who are members of their own faith, let alone their own tribe! They have a lot to learn about God before they cry out A L L A H as they kill one another in His name.

In the Christian community there's still much too much discussion about whether gay-Christians are worthy of Christ's love. Straight Christians shouldn't worry that their penis will fall off and their testicles will ascend back up into their body cavity if they make a little effort to like a man who thinks, loves or believes differently from the way they do.

What makes every penis so beguiling is that yours will worm its way into your heart; it will screw with your head; and it will stuff up your butt, so that you'll be left so full of shit that you won't even realize what's happening to you. Your penis may not have any legs, and yet it knows how to get around better than any other part of you. It has no arms, but it can grasp the power of right and wrong better than your conscience because of its proximity to your fruits of good and evil. It may not have any ears with which to listen, but yet it can talk up a storm. And still most men deny its effect on them becoming a man. Most men are hopelessly prosaic! It's no wonder so many men are afraid to dance.

God reprimanded Adam and Eve, but He didn't have a word to say to the serpent. He only spoke to them about their individual relationships to it. And, although you can talk about how righteous you are till you're blue in the face, that little serpent of yours down there is never going to want everything you want. You're always going to have to tell it what to want and what not to want. But because it has such a little head, it can't remember much about what it wants from one day to the next.

Talking about this part of yourself will never be easy. Your serpent will always claim to be the lowest of the low, the martyr among all the victims. It will always claim that it has to defend itself from everybody. It will always say someone was just about to step on it {which is, of course, a ridiculous exaggeration}. Your serpent may make a good impression when you've got the night all planned, but it's the consummate victim and liar by day. If ever there were a part of you begging you to give your life to a cause, it's your penis, not your head, heart and soul. Therefore you should approach every mission in your life with some skepticism.

Like the "wicked witch of the West" most men today are deathly afraid of shrinkage. They want to look long and lean, stand erect and be able to call themselves a "swinger." Well, God gives you what he gives you, but it's up to you to do what you can with what you've got. Your preference in penises should have nothing to do with what it looks like,

but what kind of person it's attached to. With or without a hoody makes no moral difference in the least. What makes a man attractive isn't what you find between his legs, but between his nipples. {If a woman hasn't taught you that by now, it's about time you heard it from a man.}

A companion is someone you seek to be with, someone you trust and wish to come to love. A companion holds an emotional bond with you, and you with him. To look at everyone in the world as your companion is far different from looking at him as a neighbor. Your companion may be quite different from you, but he's someone you choose to grow close to. This is a level of love that gay men are trying to tutor straight men without freaking them out about their anus getting violated in the process. {Ironically, straight men are more worried about getting screwed by other straight men than gay men ever are in the company of other gay men.} More often than not, when we get screwed by one of our own, we've asked for it. And that's a big part of what changes the way we look at life.

In English, the noun "companion" comes from the verb "to accompany." You can't accompany anyone on the road of life until you've learned how to accompany yourself. It's your ability to become your own companion that will relieve your existential loneliness. Becoming your own companion teaches you to observe and integrate the positive forces within you and excuse, forgive and exonerate yourself for all the rest. It gives you the opportunity to love the intimacy that arises from growing closer to the one you're learning to love who never leaves your side.

Peace can't be achieved out in the world. Peace has to be struggled for within. You have to know and love the peace you achieve with yourself to promote peace with others and make peace with your Maker. If gay-Jews and gay-Muslims can love one another, there's no reason in the world why straight Jews and straight Muslims can't work out their differences, too. (Check out the lyrics to Paul Simon's 1972 song, "Duncan" to see how he explores the transition from romantic love to spiritual awakening. Look at how he uses the words "fisherman," "woods," "befriended" and even "fingers" to suggest undiscovered relationships to Scripture.)

Many foreigners in America complain that our culture is anti-intellectual, that Americans are childish and unwilling to grow up. I disagree. What makes America the greatest nation in the history of humanity is our heart, not our head. The problems we have in this country come from teaching by rote, not by root. If we advocated for a more heartfelt public education for our children instead of the fact-driven schooling that turns them into either parrots or peacocks, our children would leave the nest better prepared for the poetic justice that makes life surreal. Those who want more of the facts will always find ways to fulfill their desire for data. Let's worry less about them and more about all those who are hungry for deep, positive feelings for themselves.

Today we can move toward a better future intellectually and emotionally if we explore spiritual integration more personally. Hand washing before eating is certainly desirable from a sanitary point of view. But it's less medically imperative because hygienic conditions have been raised over centuries to much higher levels. After all, we're not often confronted with epidemics.

While some Jews today hold to the tradition of eating in the Jewish style of ceremoniously washing their hands, most have broken rank with this tradition to enjoy the spiritual rewards of befriending our companions at the table with a simple squirt from a hand sanitizer before each meal. Letting every individual learn how to enjoy the cleanliness of his hands for himself is the preferred way to go. Once we understand the purpose of the traditions our peoples developed in the past, we'll succeed with less negative, social pressure and more laughs. We'll get everyone to come to the spiritual table with clean enough hands and a much purer heart.

Self-scrutiny is the key. Each Jew has a duty to explore separation and unification from within to formulate a lifestyle that works to bring cleanliness closer to godliness in his own Jewish way. And by extension the other faiths have rituals of purification that can also teach spiritual cleanliness without excluding anyone from their table.

“OH, ARE YOU AS DULL AS THEY ARE?” JESUS ASKED. “CAN’T YOU SEE THAT ANYTHING THAT GOES INTO A MAN FROM OUTSIDE CANNOT MAKE HIM ‘COMMON’ OR UNCLEAR? YOU SEE, IT DOESN’T GO INTO HIS HEART, BUT INTO HIS STOMACH, AND PASSES OUT OF THE BODY ALTOGETHER, SO THAT ALL FOOD IS CLEAN ENOUGH. BUT, WHATEVER COMES OUT OF A MAN THAT IS WHAT MAKES A MAN ‘COMMON’ OR UNCLEAR. FOR IT IS FROM INSIDE, FROM MEN’S HEARTS AND MINDS, THAT EVIL THOUGHTS ARISE - LUST, THEFT, MURDER, ADULTERY, GREED, WICKEDNESS, DECEIT, SENSUALITY, ENVY, SLANDER, ARROGANCE AND FOLLY! ALL THESE EVIL THINGS COME FROM INSIDE A MAN AND MAKE HIM UNCLEAR!” [Mark 7:18-23]

This message also requires linguistic unpacking to understand how God’s greatest tutor of love diverged from the metaphor of Moses to draw His radical conclusion that evil occurs in this world from the inside out, not from the outside in, from man’s heart and mind, not from the world he sees with his eyes, but with what he sees with his mind’s eye as influenced by his desires.

Moses focused on man’s first error of judgment: his belief in his separation from God which ensues when his penis tempts him to learn about the secret of the milk of life that’s produced in his testicles. This separation creates the feeling of guilt that causes him to conclude he’s doing something bad. Every Adam tends to lash out in anger at God and the

woman he loves the most {his mother} when questioned about his curiosity to explore this holy aspect of how he was made.

Since most men have been religiously trained not to make the same mistake Adam made, they lash out at other men in frustration instead of at God and women. And because gay men don't want to lash out at other men – or women for that matter – with physical violence, we're forced to ask ourselves what we can really do to grow, question and hope for God's blessings.

It took the ancient Jews about 700 years after they'd made their way from Egypt to Israel to realize that God had been as much with them in their second enslavement in Babylonia as He'd been with them before that in Egypt. It took them another 500 years to admit He was everywhere they were because He was everywhere in the world, whether they were there, or not. The ancient Jews weren't too swift...

Jesus suspected the Jews at His time didn't even need to fight one another over the number of temples they wanted to build because God lives in each one of us as well as around us. As dogmatic, ancient, Jewish traditions started to break down thanks to greater insight into God's nature, the messages of Judaism and Christianity seemed to conflict with one another. The only thing stopping us now from connecting the Old and New Testaments are people who, like petrified wood, care more about appearances than metaphors, symbols and similes. The prosaic are so wedded to the literal meanings of words that they can't appreciate WORDS/WORDS/w o r d s for their figurative meanings.

It's no wonder Muslims living in the West are so frustrated with Democracy. It's religious thinking, not our political system, that's got them tied up in knots. How can they hold hope of adding a third point of view to God's plan when we haven't yet consciously integrated the other two? With so many secular Jews and Christians calling for the destruction of the Jewish State, why wouldn't Muslims want that, too?

By now in the reading of this book you should be able to perceive God in both outer place and inner space. He can be in a place and a space at once. He can be simultaneously beneath your quivering feet as you experience an earthquake, while simultaneously being your faithful heart and serene soul. He's truly universal, which doesn't mean He's against you just because He allows you to suffer along with other people's insanity.

You're not here to learn to love God. You're here to learn to love yourself, with His help. Fear of the Lord is a bad reason to be compliant and obedient to other men. Gratitude for everything He gives you is the only way to appreciate yourself. Giving up the pretense of sanity is the only way to heal yourself of your brand of insanity.

Jesus's revelations about God emanated out from His heart. But that's a difficult idea to convey to anyone who's feels angry, insulted, wronged or betrayed. And if you suffer from Bible abuse, you're going to be even more wary of discussions of Scripture.

It becomes harder to play the victim when you realize God allowed you to get to the conclusions that you've come to in your head. Once you see He's trying to get you to identify as the forbidden fruit taken without permission, you'll begin to appreciate His intentions with greater insight. You'll begin to see God-consciousness as something that begins in your head that you first have to swallow before it can permeate your whole being.

People who are sane enough to admit they identify as the fruit in the Creation Story will then ask themselves why God would allow them to be picked for pain and suffering when there are so many other fruits on the Tree of life who are so much more spoiled and rotten than they are. Such a question requires that your head be screwed on tight. Such a question allows you to move into your heart and soul without giving up your sanity for dogma or conspiracy theories.

There are so many lost souls whose inner eye is peering down through their intestines at the light at the end of the tunnel {their asshole}. {As a gay man I can tell you we've thoroughly explored that tunnel from the outside in, and you don't want to look for God where the sun don't shine.}

God made man so cantankerous, so contrary, obstinate, stiff-necked and DAFKA {spiteful} by nature that there's no way nations are going to get along with nations so long as tribes, institutions and families cling with ignorance to the assertion that their ancestors ways are still the only way. Cooperation in the school of life is graded, just as is your work habits. You may think you deserve to be in all the gifted classes in the school of life, but that won't happen until you include matters of your heart and soul to your curriculum.

I'd like to return to a topic I brought up some time ago, namely the difference between real people you converse with and the images in your mind that resemble those individuals. Talking to yourself about others is like being in a house of mirrors. Each image in your mind you're discussing with yourself is a veiled aspect of you. The conclusions you come to about these reflections of yourself express your opinions about yourself, not just the other person involved. If you invariably treat other people better or worse than you treat yourself, look closer at how you think and what you think. You'll discover that your unstated opinions of others are only affecting you. The other person isn't suffering because of your opinion of him. Only you are.

The more you talk to yourself about your opinions, the more God will help you understand your behaviors. But you've got to start the work internally by discussing your moral conclusions in light of your desired actions. Be surreal with yourself. While exercising physically let your hair down and tell yourself what you'd really like to do to others. Get out your frustrations using your head and heart in conjunction with your whole body. Then get intimate with your feelings and desires through dance, not destruction.

The more kindly you can relate to others, the prouder you'll feel about yourself. And if the images in your mind continue to haunt you, use them to further your education with yourself.

The more the boy in you needs to seek revenge, the more obvious that opportunity will be for you to strive to become a man in your own eyes. Once you've achieved manhood through self-integration, the more God will use you at higher rungs on His ladder.

My father slapped me across the face while I was sleeping as a child because he'd told me not to suck my thumb. That trauma followed me unconsciously my whole life. Many gay boys are thrown out of their parents' house when they reach adolescence and their attraction to the same sex becomes obvious. Others who come from religious households where they thought they were safe are rudely awakened to their parents' hypocrisies when parents accuse children of being in league with the "devil" if they oppose their parents in any way.

What's the Teacher to do if you don't want to grow in wisdom, love and generosity of spirit? What's He supposed to teach you if you want to love everyone other than yourself? What's He supposed to do if you put everyone you disagree with opposite you with "satan"? Not everyone who claims to be one of the Teacher's pets is going to pass His classes. Some are just going to school to find ways to take control.

Because God is within us as well as around us we have the autonomy to go any direction we want. And thanks to the Old and New Testaments, we can learn to grow up to be our own shepherd and little lamb. Using Scripture to lay blame is not what it's intended for.

Most people pretend to be a shepherd and pretend that other people are their sheep. They take their opinions, desires and beliefs and hit people over the head with them like a rod to try to make them move the way they want them to. The whole point of being alive is to discover the miracle of being with yourself, not telling others what to do.

You'll be amazed when you find out that your mind has a mind of its own. Half the things you say to yourself in jest aren't at all funny. And half the things you say to yourself about other people aren't funny either. When it's all said and done you won't be able to tell God you're joking when you treat yourself and others unkindly. If you think He created all those other people for you to herd, you're missing the point. If you don't learn to be a shepherd and a sheep unto yourself, you'll never discover God's plan for you.

God created religion because He knew He'd want to tap us on the inside at His discretion, as well from without. These inner taps are guilt. And He uses three sorts of taps when you reflect upon the meaning of the Hebrew Testament: "twigs" {embarrassment}, "sticks" {shame} and "logs" {humiliation} to hit us over the head. You'd think that any tree of knowledge could identify with a system as simple as that...

God's greatest tutor, Jesus, explored reality and came up with a very cogent explanation for why guilt is needed. "IT IS FROM INSIDE, FROM MEN'S HEARTS AND MINDS, THAT EVIL THOUGHTS ARISE." In other words, the mind thinks, but it doesn't think about what it thinks about unless you learn how to train it to do so. The heart also thinks, but it thinks rationally, not logically. Both the head and heart grow, one with ideas that generate conclusions, some positive, others negative; the other with feelings that generate another form of growth that range from love to hate. Until you know this about your head and heart, you won't be able to develop your conscience where you can weigh your thoughts against your feelings. You'll be walking like a blind man with hands outstretched. You'll be in the dark.

You can't train yourself to think about what you're thinking about unless you care deeply for yourself. And you can't care for yourself unless you believe that life is a miracle that holds the potential for hope. Because of the complexity of all these forces at play inside you, you'll find that you really have to pay a lot more attention to yourself a lot more of the time than you might have previously concluded. Focusing on the wellbeing of others without using that evidence to advance yourself, will leave you in doubt. You won't believe what I'm saying because you won't have experienced it for yourself.

Seeing isn't believing. Believing is seeing. Now, I know that sounds a lot like a wackado religious extremist, but they happen to be right about that. What they're wrong about is their moral failure to use science and technology to advance the cause of mankind. What they're wrong about is their apathy to the importance to God of every living thing on the planet.

Paranoia, unlike fear, is no longer as frightening as it once was. Projecting your irrational fears onto scapegoats is one way to deal with hateful feelings your conscience decides not to own. But God will give you harsh lessons to unlearn that bad habit. People have become so accustomed to fear nowadays that they don't ask themselves whether what they're feeling is realistic, paranoid or somewhere in between. {Christian Nazism and radical Islam are examples of paranoia projected onto others in the form of racism. homophobia, xenophobia and misogyny. All of these horrible habits are the product of self-hate. All are the consequence of self-ignorance and ignorance of God's plan for man.

But thinking about what you're thinking about will bring these negative feelings to the surface where your conscience can interject its higher opinion of such bad thoughts and unkind feelings. Therefore, face your fantasies and you'll see the crap you're trying to sell yourself.

In today's modern world with all its psychological insight, we can see that Jesus was right all along: man's head and heart are the problem. As a man learns to use his conscience to tap his own head and heart with his own moral rod, he can lead himself through negative

thoughts and hateful feelings – and even commend himself with his staff for positive thoughts and loving feelings. He can become his own shepherd and sheep. He can become a man who wants to behave as God behaved in Torah and as God behaved in the Gospels, using the tough and tender love appropriate to each circumstance. He can learn to play god in a good way. Isn't being a good father what every father wishes his son to be? Our Father wishes you to become a good father, too. With improved, moral guidance systems from everyone, humanity will be able to do more to show God we can be humane.

Stop worrying about unborn babies, and start worrying about the babe in your own arms! Stop worrying about men sucking penises, and start worrying about the penis sick men project out onto guns! (Guns don't kill people. Sick people who confuse their penis with guns kill people.) Stop worrying about women taking away the power men have held for thousands of years, and start worrying about "x" factor in you!

The roles of the Abrahamic religions were perfectly created for the modern era to perform three specific tasks:

1. Judaism should concern itself with matters of theft. The world has to be taught not to steal from ourselves or from one another. When people are no longer as afraid of material losses, we'll all breathe a sigh of relief and spend more time pursuing God with a clean conscience.
2. Christianity should concern itself with matters of warfare. The world has to be taught not to kill ourselves or one another. When people no longer want to own guns to practice how to use their penis, we'll all breathe a sigh of relief knowing we've got our penis problems and anal issues under control.
3. Islam should concern itself with matters of environmental healing. The world has to be taught to treat the planet magnanimously because that's how God treats us. When Arabs put as much care into anointing themselves with sacred oil instead of promoting the sale of gasoline, they'll be healed of their guilt in adding to the world's environmental crises. When they help make this world safe and secure for all life on Earth, we'll all breathe a sigh of relief and come before Y.H.V.H. Joshua A L L A H. with a smile in our heart and good deeds in our hands.

Physically, men and women are organized like a donut. We have one long hole going through us from mouth to anus with a very thick ring of bread {flesh} around it. You could also imagine us as an éclair before you infuse the cream into it. The individual who thinks only in terms of putting food in at one end of the hole that later comes out the other end sees eating as his main exercise in life. Survival depends on eating. But the exercise of survival should alert us to the emotional and spiritual exercises in life that mirror eating.

Jesus asked to be remembered through eating and drinking because He was well aware of the spiritual, organizing principle behind the creation of man as given by Moses. He saw consumption as a metaphor for morality and created symbolic logic to prove His worth.

Man is born a spiritually empty *éclair*. The cream he must fill himself with is self-love. But the creation of that cream filling is elusive because it takes such wisdom to perceive that he must practice *making* love for a very long time by filling others with his cream before he's allowed the luxury of filling himself.

“WHATEVER COMES OUT OF A MAN THAT IS WHAT MAKES A MAN COMMON OR UNCLEAR.” In other words, there are aspects of man's spiritual system that produce more than just visible, physical results. Man produces intellectual, emotional and spiritual waste after he's absorbed the best for himself that makes him common {normal} or unclear {sick}. The production of these wastes {other-love} is common to all men, but it becomes unhealthy for a society when these wastes aren't managed consciously. When men become meticulous, demanding, finicky, fastidious, difficult, pedantic and persnickety, they become overly judgmental of other men's waste and unaware of their own. Instead of seeing everything they give to others as spiritual waste that they didn't need for themselves, they try to overcome intellectual, emotional and spiritual constipation using guilt laden words like “should.” They “should” on others instead of themselves.

The most guilty of this are the hyper-religious. They're constantly “shoulding” on us because we won't live their way. We won't put God before man. And they refuse to try to understand that God would never want us to put Him before ourselves. They put the CART/CART/c a r t before the horse.

Spiritual, toilet training will tutor a spiritual child of God to give back to the world in appropriate inner spaces and at appropriate, subjective times. It's good to give back to yourself. It's a great sign of your love. It feels like a cleaning out inside. It makes you yearn for a spring-cleaning, Yom Kippur, Easter and Ramadan every day. It leaves you feeling free and liberated from the inside out. And if you do so wisely, lovingly and liberally, God will commend you in wonderful ways for doing your “duty...”

When viewed from the heart, however, parents could make the opposite argument. Every baby is born a jelly donut already filled with a luscious center that makes it irresistible to its mother and father. When you see parents pretending to swallow their baby's hands and feet or gobble up their belly you know there must be something in that smelly, ugly infant that they can see that you can't.

But as their baby grows up into a boy or girl, you can see the child develop a hollowness, a hunger, an emptiness inside that his teachers at school have to try to fill for him and her. And by the time children are through with public school, you can see how

ravenous they've become, that the hole has only gotten bigger and their ability to feed themselves can't keep up with their own appetite.

Ultimately youngsters feel abandoned, betrayed and conspired against by the world, but only because everyone is trying to quench one another's thirst with their own empty cup. They're all going through the motions. There's nothing inside them to give. They have no sense of the cream their parents saw in them when they were babies. They're burned out. They're empty inside. The fire has gone out of them leaving only a little smoke and smell where there once was a flame.

Jesus saw that the first stage of self-love had to be a separation of head from heart; stomach from spirituality; food from drink; bread from wine. He told the ancient Jews of His time to remember Him in two ways because He knew that would start this spiritual division in everyone. What the ancient Jews thought they knew was that lust, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, hyper-sexuality, envy, slander, arrogance and folly were the evil consequences of their head. And I'm sure they naively agreed to follow Jesus's instructions because who doesn't think that other people's evil intentions are cleverly thought out in their head.

But what Jesus was really getting at was that the ignorance of man for himself was what really needed to be addressed. What He was delicately suggesting was that the problems of a bad heart lie in each one of us – not because we're Jewish – but because we're human; not because we're gay, but because we're men who all have a penis.

He implied that the school of life was a self-study program where you work with the Teacher independently in addition to the study groups He puts you in each day. You have to graduate from your head to your heart and then to your soul before you graduate from school to get the kind of grades you need to enter the world to come. If you don't allow people to complete their spiritual education in any way your grades will suffer for it. And if you use your penis to interfere with their education, you will be given harsh lessons to teach you what you're doing wrong.

The inner self-discipline that leads to merciful acts of kindness toward yourself only comes after jealousy and envy have been conquered. A man has to rap himself with a twig of embarrassment to get himself to move his body in a better direction. He has to tap himself with a stick of shame to get himself to behave differently toward others. And sometimes he even has to hit himself over the head with his own log of humiliation to make himself treat himself with greater loyalty and self-love.

We should all be able to agree that we had to suffer through mistakes in relationships with others before we were ready to seek a more intimate relationship with ourselves. Only after practicing on others, and failing, are we ready to address jealousy over the body we weren't given and envy over all the talents we've never had.

God didn't give us what we wanted. He gave us what we needed. And we're never going to get some of the gifts we yearn for that He gave others. Only with a pragmatic approach to living do we realize we have to earn what we will need, given what we have.

You have to get through your fantasies to seek your dreams. But eventually you'll have to get through your dreams to seek your visions. It's harder to know what you will need than it looks.

But if you don't listen to experts in every field, you can be assured of failure. And if you insist on being spiteful, dogmatic and defiant, you can be sure that your grades will be terribly, no matter how much time our Teacher gives you to improve them.

If you were born a jelly donut already filled and over time you turned into an éclair that you had to learn to fill for yourself, that raises a good question about God's plan for you? Clearly the pain and suffering you've endured were part of His plan. Clearly you had no choice in the physical body and talents you were given. If He's had such big plans for you why aren't they more evident to you? Why aren't you rich and famous? Why do we all feel like we're in a box and the instructions on how to open the box are written on the outside?

Helping one another learn to read ourselves requires a sharp mind, a big heart and a deep soul. It also takes a huge yearning to go inside as often as possible. Don't be so spiritually claustrophobic that you never go inside.

The further gay people come out, the less they're afraid of going back inside. A princess whose mother is still alive may not be able to go as far back in until her mother dies and she becomes a queen. Her "x" factor may be entwined with her mom. In this way, the loss of your mother leaves you with space to become regal in some way you couldn't become until there was more room for you to grow inside.

People sometimes may want to see you graduate sooner than you'd naturally achieve your diploma if they don't approve of your curriculum and grades. But enemies can be turned into friends if you overcome your own fear of outcomes. "THE SON OF MAN WILL GO JUST AS IT IS WRITTEN ABOUT HIM. BUT WOE TO THAT MAN WHO BETRAYS THE SON OF MAN! IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR HIM IF HE HAD NOT BEEN BORN" [Matthew 26:24].

Judas is the first New Testament personification of man's left testicle: desire for monetary outcomes that go against God: evil in man's flesh. He was the personification of the delivery system of evil perpetrated against God in the New Testament.

In The Passion Play, Judas presents us with an example of what *not* to do to someone we don't like or agree with. Judas is every man {not every Jew} before or since who seeks revenge. We must learn to give thanks to God for all that we're given, whether we like the outcome, or not. Everything in life is a gift from God, including our losses. And that's a lesson that's very hard to accept.

Today we ought to reconcile ourselves with the living Judas with us on a daily basis. If we don't avoid personal mistakes that have been now elevated to the height of Biblical reckoning, we aren't going to profit personally from the New Testament. Don't point fingers at gays and Jews for differences of interpretation that don't constitute a high crime, but a misdemeanor. Judge not misdemeanors, lest ye be judged.

Today most modern men believe that rigorous physical cleanliness of the body, sanitation, clean air, clean water and exercise are paramount to the principles of a healthy individual and a healthy nation. And most modern Americans would add that mental exercise, emotional cleanliness and spiritual sanitation are equally important in achieving that end. We don't want Americans to turn into jelly donuts, literally stuffed with sugar that has no nutritional value.

Jesus was trying to get the Jews of His time to become more intellectually just, while at the same time less emotionally self-indulgent. He was trying to get them to look within themselves for insight into self-governance. But here we are 2,000 years later, and it looks like the virtues He promoted are just beginning to make their way into the mainstream.

If you don't recreate the Christian Passion Play in yourself you're not going to identify with evil personified. You're not going to see yourself as Jesus and Judas. You're going to compartmentalize good and evil in broad ways that do harm to others.

You're no longer a toddler given a toy just for the fun of breaking it. You're no longer a child given a watch to take apart to see how it runs. You're no longer an adolescent fantasizing about sex for the first time. You're an adult, and you have to learn to act like one. And that means you have to honor what God gave you between your legs. And that's a lot harder than it looks.

Purification of your soul is the spiritual process of cleansing your head and heart using your conscience as your guide. Moses advocated for cleanliness through good thoughts. Jesus advocated for cleanliness through loving feelings. The Prophet Mohammed did virtually the same thing from his soul. Now we must bring these three spiritual systems together so every man can scrutinize his thoughts and feelings for insight into God's plan for everyone, but especially for himself. Everyone has a claim to be made for his spiritual birthright to an inner land of milk and honey. Everyone has a claim to be made for his spiritual birthright to the pursuit of love and wisdom. But these gifts must be earned not taken. And they must be given to yourself to be received.

Advocating that everyone find some form of emotional cleansing practice that will scrub his feelings of jealousy and envy is no longer a Christian imperative. We all need to do it. But if you rub your heart the wrong way it will only lead to xenophobia, anti-Semitism, bigotry, homophobia and misogyny. Cleansing your heart and mind, like the

oceans and the land, is harder than it looks once you've polluted them. If you don't clean up your inner environment, your inner world will become unlivable, like the planet.

The Gospel According to Matthew is one of the eyewitness accounts of "The Feeding of the 4,000." "JESUS WALKED ALONG THE SHORE OF THE LAKE OF GALILEE, THEN CLIMBED THE HILL AND SAT DOWN. AND GREAT CROWDS CAME TO HIM, BRINGING WITH THEM PEOPLE WHO WERE LAME, CRIPPLED, BLIND, UNABLE TO SPEAK, AS WELL AS MANY OTHERS. THEY SIMPLY PUT THEM DOWN AT HIS FEET AND HE HEALED THEM. THE RESULT WAS THAT THE PEOPLE WERE ASTONISHED AT SEEING DUMB MEN SPEAK, CRIPPLED MEN HEALED, LAME MEN WALKING ABOUT AND BLIND MEN HAVING RECOVERED THEIR SIGHT. AND THEY PRAISED THE GOD OF ISRAEL." [Matthew 15:29-31]

"WHERE A LARGE CROWD HAD COLLECTED, AND HAD NOTHING TO EAT, JESUS CALLED THE DISCIPLES OVER TO HIM AND SAID, 'MY HEART GOES OUT TO THIS CROWD; THEY HAVE BEEN WITH ME THREE DAYS NOW AND THEY HAVE NO FOOD LEFT. IF I SEND THEM OFF HOME WITHOUT ANYTHING THEY WILL COLLAPSE ON THE WAY - AND SOME OF THEM HAVE COME FROM A DISTANCE.'" [Matthew 15:32]

His disciples replied, "'WHERE COULD ANYONE FIND THE FOOD TO FEED THEM HERE IN THIS DESERTED SPOT?' 'HOW MANY LOAVES HAVE YOU GOT?' JESUS ASKED THEM. 'SEVEN,' THEY REPLIED. SO JESUS TOLD THE CROWD TO SETTLE THEMSELVES ON THE GROUND. THEN HE TOOK THE SEVEN LOAVES IN HIS HANDS, AND WITH A PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING BROKE THEM, AND GAVE THEM TO THE DISCIPLES TO DISTRIBUTE TO THE PEOPLE; WHICH THEY DID. THEY HAD A FEW SMALL FISH AS WELL, AND AFTER BLESSING THEM JESUS TOLD THE DISCIPLES TO ALSO GIVE THEM TO THE PEOPLE. THEY ALL ATE AND WERE SATISFIED. HE SENT THE 4,000 HOME, AND THEN HE BOARDED THE BOAT WITH HIS DISCIPLES AND WENT ON.'" [Matthew 15:33-39]

The miracles described in Torah in getting the Israelites out of Egypt had been actions God expressed through Moses despite the cynical expectations of Egyptians and the skepticism of some Israelites. But when Moses forgot to anticipate how he'd get the Israelites across the Red Sea it was God who took matters into His own hands. Moses managed to get the Israelites *to* the Red Sea; but God got them *across* it.

Your faith in God should never be contingent upon Him working miracles to make up for something you forgot to anticipate. Plan to do as much as you can, using justice and

mercy on everyone's behalf. Fall back on the necessity of prayer for a miracle from God only when you're really cornered between the "devil" and the deep *Red* Sea.

God always acts to awaken each of us to himself. Man is still tribal, but he's more distinct, discreet and particular than he ever was in the past. Those who fear they're going to lose loyalty to their tribe should first ask themselves how many tribes they actually belong to. Loyalty to religious affiliation, country, political persuasion, community, family, loved ones and gender may make your loyalties look a little thin. Until you look at loyalty from the inside out, you're not going to look at your rewards from God with grace and self-composure.

Whether Jesus was God or only a messenger with a part of His plan won't matter when you start to live His words. The difference between being a messenger of the Lord and the Messiah won't matter if you personalize His message. Whether you believe Jesus was the Messiah or not, that should have no effect on your message if you've been well schooled in wisdom of the heart.

If your head isn't aligned with your conscience, your heart and penis are always going to take you to the wrong side of right. You'll make decisions you'll either regret or find yourself in situations you didn't anticipate. If you place a bet on Moses, Jesus or the Prophet Mohammed without fully understanding how the messages of the three of Them build one upon the other, you're betting on an outcome that will only cause you pain and suffering.

These religious messages were, at first, divided because God wanted experts in each spiritual field. But today's curriculum is different from our spiritual ancestors. We see that in the generation of the Second World War in Europe and America who were schooled in other-love. Today's curriculum is moving the world in the direction of self-love. Because the Teacher changes His syllabus from time to time, it's up to us to look more deeply into His textbooks for new meaning.

In the end, you will be humiliated by God with death, even though you'll probably swear to Him you never played god. I can guarantee that you won't get through life without going through death. Not even Jesus did. So the humiliation of having to die is a spiritual given. The question is only whether you're prepared for death with enough stores of wisdom, love, generosity of spirit, cooperation and tranquility to make the Teacher's last, humiliating lesson meaningful.

The greatest miracles in life occur only after we discover how deep a debt of gratitude we owe to those who raised us, the government of our country, the loves in our life and our lifelong loyalty to ourselves. The Jews proved this after the Holocaust when they didn't turn their backs on the tremendous gifts from Christian culture, but created a country in the Middle East where Christ's love and Muslim hospitality could flourish despite the way the

other two Abrahamic faiths had treated us. Nowhere else in the world can that be said. Nowhere in the Arab world can a gay-Jew walk free.

For Jesus to have fed 4,000 people on seven loaves of bread and a few, small fish isn't up for discussion. Nobody today knows whether this is a myth, truth or metaphor. We can only examine the WORDS of His disciples with spiritual intent to discover what message we should take to heart from it. What matters is what you learn about faith from miracles, not what you learn about the rational possibilities presented to your mind by science. Religion isn't a mental exercise.

Moses and Jesus may have been vastly different in temperament and intention, but God used miracles to show that He was behind them both. If you need Him to demonstrate that He's behind you, try using your desires to better mankind as They did, and give up your urge to get back at all those who've treated you badly. If you feel like forbidden fruit wanted one minute and forgotten the next, know that that's the way everybody feels.

Feelings influence opinions. Feelings influence moral reasons for taking righteous actions. You're welcome to have your opinions as long as you recognize that they've been influenced by your heart and that your opinions are also influenced by your desires. Your opinions can even convince your head that there's logic to support your outlook. But unless you spool your views through your conscience, you can't be sure that they're going to succeed in becoming a part of the ultimate outcome of God's plan.

The goodness of your spiritual, delivery system {head, heart and soul} are meant to work together with your desires to give life meaning, not to use your opinions to get back at God for enrolling you in school despite the opposition we hear in every newborn's first cry out loud.

When you think about your parents, you're not looking at real people or talking to real people who can literally reply to you. You're babbling to yourself in your imagination using images your mind creates to debate the struggle between your thoughts and feelings. This internal conflict is a shaping process that mirrors sculpture. It's an internal training process like the saddle strapped onto a colt. But the colt stops bucking in minutes, and it might take a lifetime to get you to settle yourself down.

Adult babbling is informative if you listen to it with interest and allow your thoughts, feelings and desires to go where they want, while making comments to yourself to elucidate where it's taking your opinions. God is participating in this process. In fact, He's shaping you on the outside as you're learning to shape yourself from within. When it's all over, you'll be amazed at the masterpiece the two of You have created.

If your conscience tries to stop you from experiencing this process, it's only because it can't handle the feeling of not being alone. You're never alone. It's only when people deny

the forces within them or misrepresent themselves to themselves that they act out against others or feel isolated.

The best way to develop a strong conscience is by using it on yourself by honestly, sincerely and authentically expressing your opinions of you to yourself regardless of how immoral you might judge yourself. You're still a work in progress. There's still time for you to create that masterpiece you dream of.

By allowing your head, heart and penis to babble before you as you listen in your conscience, you'll be amazed at what you'll be able to conclude from these conversations in your court of your opinion with you as the judge.

Adult babbling is the mind's way of informing you of the various aspects of yourself that you've projected out onto others. Once you can pierce your opinions of yourself, your view of the world around you will change dramatically. Transforming your opinions of you in your heart is like adjusting the focus on a projector. Suddenly you'll see everything around you more clearly.

The Trinity may be three aspects of God in one, but your mind can only visualize one of these three, and that's Jesus. The other Two have no visual representation your mind can create to deal with Them. God doesn't look like an old man, and the Holy Spirit doesn't look like a ghost. What makes the imagination of Christians so vital and different from how Jews and Muslims think about the Lord is that they can put a face on God. It opens their imagination in ways we'd never think of. Jesus makes their creativity and innovation a precious part of God's plan.

Daydreams are psychological exercises, homework you're given to work out your thoughts, feelings and desires so that your conscience can record the strength and direction of your inner forces. Turning daydreaming into a psychological exercise will create self-intimacy and insight. You've always got someone to talk to {your head} and something {your penis} to talk about. Carrying on these conversations with yourself will improve your ability to connect with your heart in psychologically sound ways.

Explorations of yourself are aspects of play time you set up at regular intervals when you know you'll be alone. Because you're morally as astute as you are, these times are opportunities to get to know yourself without anyone else around to judge you. By exploring your reveries with more conscious regard, you'll not only discover parts of yourself you don't ordinarily notice. You'll discover how great a debt of gratitude you owe to guilt in driving you to love yourself a little more each day.

You don't have to break in and interrupt these stories on the stage in your inner auditorium. You can simply walk in, sit down, watch and listen. You don't necessarily have to question the characters you create in your imagination directly as though you were

on stage with them. You can simply comment to yourself at your shock, dismay or delight at what you're discovering about yourself from these self-made images you see.

Most people suffer from self-consciousness in social situations. They're acutely aware of the people around them and the effect they want to have on them. But few people are yet aware how self-conscious they could be if they worked on their shyness from within. Being self-conscious makes you feel guilty about being conscious. But being self-conscious also makes you feel glad about being aware of yourself.

Once you discover that a lot of your fears were of "them" and not "Them," you'll also realize that a lot of your prayers in the past were actually addressed to "him" and not "Him." Becoming self-conscious will free you to talk to God about the forces within you in a way that treats the two of You like adults who share insights to the same problem.

The Jews before Jesus had already developed a mind that could process thoughts better than their enemies. They needed that edge to survive the ancient world, a place that was more cruel and unforgiving than even the Middle East of today. But even with their advanced minds, the ancient Jews who heard about the feeding of the 4,000 wouldn't have been so stupid as to have asked themselves how the seven loaves and a few fish had been *divided* among so many people. They would have wondered how they were *multiplied*.

The mind divides. Only the heart knows how to multiply. If you don't learn to come from your heart, you aren't going to learn to see how you can use symbolic logic to your advantage. You're going to become spiritually poorer regardless of what your portfolio looks like. You'll always feel that your glass is half empty regardless of the evidence. To "BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY" refers to a heartfelt way of relating to life. It has nothing to do with making babies.

Our ancestors thought men created life because men created semen. They couldn't see a woman's contribution to the biological process. They realized that semen comes from testicles, so they castrated some men to insure that they wouldn't make babies with "their" women. The mentality of man to maintain control over women didn't end in the modern era. Just imagine how men would react if women got to vote on whether men are allowed to get vasectomies.

It's against the law to kill another person unless that person is inside a woman. A lot of men want to make it illegal to kill babies before they're born. This issue is very similar to the issue of gay relations. Both are moral questions that are held within religious arguments. Some believe that if God doesn't like what these women do, They can work that out between Themselves. And the same is true about gay relationships. If God doesn't like what we're doing, We'll work that out without any help from the straight world. Blaming hurricanes in the South and epidemics in Africa on abortion and gay rights issues is far-fetched.

If you listen to the sound of your voice as you're reading my words you'll learn to discern the difference between my thoughts and your feelings just from the way you're speaking silently out loud inside as you read my words. Recreating my words in your head {reading} is having an effect on your heart and soul that you should be observing without judgment. You'll be amazed at what you might learn about yourself just from listening to yourself as you read the words of someone you may not agree with. It will open you to your heart and soul, feelings and beliefs. You'll discover that each inner force really does emanate out of another place in inner space within you. You'll discover that you could be much more involved in being yourself than controlling others.

The loaves and fish Jesus blessed and multiplied into a feast can only hold symbolic meaning to us today since we weren't there to see it happen for ourselves. Our mind doesn't have to question whether the miracle really happened or not. The point now is how to get out of your head and into your heart to achieve the feelings of multiplication, inspiration and wonder at the thought of you being able to create miracles for yourself.

The rapturous experience of feeling so beloved by yourself that you have a hard time expressing it in words is a powerful but rare event. You can't just haul yourself up like fish in a net, expose yourself to the light of love, and expect to enjoy the experience. You'd suffer an intellectual disorientation, an emotional breakdown and a spiritual crisis at how different the world of spirit is from what you expected to find. Rapture without good reason can be terrifying and even cruel.

You don't have to reject the world just because you want to literally live another way. God created many possibilities. He created many species and subspecies of trees. He loves diversity because He wants you to have options. Just because you reject some options doesn't mean those options have to be eradicated from the realm of possibilities. People are old enough to make decisions you don't agree with. They don't need your approval. You don't hold the Good Housekeeping Seal of Religious Approval. You're not the author of God's books. You're just another reader perusing them.

In many ways mental illness is a terrifying, spiritual event that leaves people so disoriented and confused that they don't have words to describe what they're going through. And the words they do use only apply rationally to a small part of their inner experience. It's very easy to have spiritual experiences when going through a mental disorder, but there's no way to process those experiences to tap the powers you're a witness to unless you have inner orientation skills.

Mental illness and drug abuse are as much emotional and spiritual illnesses as they are physical. So curing them with medicine and talk therapy isn't nearly good enough. Self-intimacy is the problem, so self-intimacy has to be part of the solution.

In a desperate effort to experience love, man succumbs to sin: actions taken based on opinion rather than faith. {Example: Sarai suggesting Abram have a baby with Hagar.} Man makes mistakes of judgment that ultimately leave him deeply cynical, less charitable, and more mean-spirited than he ever intended to be. And to those around him most deserving of his respect {like Ishmael and Isaac}, he hides himself with smiles before strangers that thinly veil his disdain and contempt of outcomes at home.

If you don't see a reason to identify as a spiritual loaf of bread and small fish that could feed hundreds or even thousands in your own special way, what difference does it make what Jesus could do with a few of each? His miracles aren't going to be your miracles unless you take them personally. If you don't feel like a productive member of the human race, you'll never come to believe in the Jewish jog, the Christian sprint or the Muslim marathon.

Jesus was a man who put His feelings to the test, not the facts. He was someone who explored living His life from His heart, not His head. He opened the Jews of the time to right brain thinking. And those ancient Jews who weren't distracted by money and power responded to His message. They intuitively knew where He was coming from.

LOAVES OF BREAD are men who understand spiritual symbolism. A FEW FISH are people who live comfortably submerged in their heart where they can move around and see everything from an emotional perspective. For you to become a recipient of this kind of meal, you need only think symbolically and feel sincerely.

When you look at life through a psychological lens, death has a much different effect on your interpretation of life. We call the death of metaphoric and symbolic thinking denial. When a person refuses to accept the intellectual and emotional truth of how he thinks and feels he becomes:

1. Figuratively blind to the concept of self-love:
Mentally ill
2. Figuratively deaf to the entreaties of those who are in pain and suffering:
Emotionally ill
3. Dead inside to his own need for affection and intimacy from himself:
Spiritually ill

This third psychological death is the final straw. Those who've been reborn from psychological death {denial} can truly speak about the miracle of rebirth, for they've experience this miracle for themselves. They know resurrection in their own life because they've been given a second chance to live for self-love. And they often attribute this miracle to God because the feeling is so miraculous.

The left side of the brain is more logical, analytical and objective. And the right side is more intuitive, thoughtful and subjective. You could say that Jesus was the first person to realize that His brain had a second hemispheres. If God awakened Moses to left-brain awareness of God's presence, then God awakened Jesus to right brain function. In that sense the Judeo-Christian world in America is a laboratory for humanity in how to wake up the brain completely. The potential of man's spiritual evolution might be limitless.

If Jesus is still alive somewhere, I'm going to assume that the rest of my tribe from the last 3,400 years is there with Him, too. But that's of no real concern to me. I leave the dead in the past. I don't speak to them directly in my prayers. I speak only to God when I pray. The dead are lost. I must live with those losses.

A fish has eyes on either side of its head so it can see almost 360 degrees. Those who live with great awareness of the liquid level of spirit {emotions} become very visually sensitized to their environment in heartfelt ways. They may take the spiritual realm that figuratively lies over their head for granted, but they take God's emotional world very much to heart. They live, breathe and swim through the emotional waters of this aspect of this world, paying great attention to feelings.

But this kind of knowledge should elucidate you to your feelings for yourself if feelings are ever going to fully matter to you. Every baby is born with the skill of being able to swim through his feelings. Like an ancient ancestor of land animals, the toddler comes ashore and his emotional fins turn into arms and legs. He learns to perceive his own evolution personally. He grows wings and becomes one of the many angels here in disguise.

You only have to use your imagination to see this world from a fish's point of view, as any small child can easily do. By learning to put your feelings into words you may even develop a language of your own to express your feelings in a deeply meaningful way. Your way of expressing feelings is your unique form of poetic insight even if you don't have anyone to share your communication system with. While your thoughts are more like prose that we must all learn to read, the poetry that emanates from your heart only has to be true for you. Expressing your feelings is a mystical and magical form of relating to yourself that only God can truly share with you. But it's worth making the attempt to pray to him using your poetry as well as our prose.

Jesus's dive out of the grounded world of Judaism into the watery world of emotions opened the world to another form of discourse with ourselves and God. He brought us into a way of seeing God and ourselves in images that are metaphorically, symbolically and analogously linked. It produced a subjective view of Them that has made every one of us more sensitive to ourselves as a living contribution to nature.

Musicians speak using a musical instrument as the source of their song. Artists turn paint into poetry and canvas into their page to present their words with colorful emotions. Sculptors use their hands to shape clay, while politicians use charisma to shape communities. Businessmen are busy bees that turn money into honey that can be bartered for things. Man is a spiritual entity who's a part of a living machine; a spiritual device that communicates in many, mysterious ways. All you have to do is find the language God has intended to be your mother tongue.

Don't be afraid of your fear {yellow}, anger {red} or sorrow {blue}. Don't be afraid of your jealousy and envy {green}. Jealous and envy are emotions that alert you to other people's use of color, container and contents to show you how different they can be from yours. Possessiveness isn't really a desire for possessions. Possessiveness is really a desire to kiss yourself in the middle of your back rather than stick a knife in it. Once you green your inner world, you'll do everything you can to help save the trees around you and the animal instincts that live in your woods.

We all feed dozens, hundreds or even thousands of people each day on the one loaf of bread {body} we were given and through the eyes of a single fish {emotions}. We're all taken for granted to some extent by others. We're all unwanted, even attacked when it comes to our unique interpretation of life through our heart. If we don't come to recognize our own goodness, we'll miss the joy of being a unique contribution God created for this world just for today. People are miraculous, spiritual loaves {bodies} and fishes {feelings} 2,000 years after the great rabbi, Jesus, demonstrated the symbolic importance of learning how to feed the world in a whole, new way. The feeding of the 4,000 is the appetizer to feeding yourself. Then you, too, will discover how to feed multitudes.

People in other countries often say Americans are extremely friendly, open and warm. What they're really trying to say is that we give the impression that we're comfortable in our own skin. And although we're as neurotic as anyone else in this world (or more), we may come across as more confident than the rest of humanity. The real difference between us, and them, is spiritual and can be simply stated best using punctuation:

We look at humanity as:	[us and them]
Others still see:	[us] and [them]

This may be the result of our shared history, language and culture created by immigrants from every land. But I think it's also our spiritual legacy. I believe there's a spiritual component that makes America the greatest place on Earth if you want to discover yourself.

Imagine, for a moment, that you don't have as much confidence in yourself as you'd like, and imagine that instead of asking God for confidence, you decided to try to develop confidence on your own. But without the seeds of confidence how could you grow more

confident? And if you are confident in some ways, how could you replant the seeds of that confidence in other fields in your heart and soul where the fields are now fallow?

Many will read my words and conclude I'm just a clever wordsmith, but I'm more than that, and Spiritual Linguistics is more than a turn of a phrase. I can see something in puns that you may not yet be able to appreciate. Each word has a literal, objective meaning you keep in your head and an emotional, subjective meaning you keep in your heart. When you speak, these two meanings come together in your conscience, giving each and every word you utter a potential depth of expression that has personal meaning to you and cultural meaning to others.

A pun is a word that shines an intellectual, emotional and moral outlook on truth that can enlighten you to something uniquely beautiful about yourself and the way you view life. Imagine sitting at the side of a lake and literally seeing words pouring down from the sky like rays of light with some of those rays reflecting back their meaning from the surface of the lake back toward the sky in a reflection of language toward the heavens above. But other words are rays of light that shine through the surface of the water to illuminate the underwater world you see from the shore. Puns alert you to more than one ray. Puns paint pictures with words that take you in new directions.

God has been working in mysterious ways for quite a while. He had been working with the Jews for 1,400 years before Jesus came on the scene, and He continued after Jesus by worked with us for 700 years while the rabbis compiled Talmud and Christianity got off the ground in Europe. He's been working with us for the past 1,400 years since the P r o p h e t Mohammed walked the Earth, and He's still working with us in mysterious ways. If our Abrahamic brothers think they know more about His plan than we do, let's discuss it. But let's not throw history along with God's previous plans out the window in the process.

Does it look to you like God has forgotten the Jews? Does it look to you like He has no plan to include gays in His plan? And if He does have a plan, wouldn't the best question you could ask yourself be, "How can I be a part of it?"

Jesus was the epitome of hope. Harvey Milk was another such Jewish man cut from a similar cloth. But the hope these two men inspired in Jews and gays is the same hope you have within to inspire yourself. If you can't give yourself hope, you can't inspire anyone else with hope either.

There comes a point when a man is morally cornered by his conscience. At such a time he can no longer vacillate between his thoughts and feelings about how to get his desires met. He finds himself forced to make a moral choice between his opinions about the meaning of his life and his beliefs about God. Sometimes he has to change his belief about God because it turns out that it was just an opinion.

When a man has learned to be honest about what he thinks, sincere about what he feels and authentic about what he believes to be true, he becomes genuine. He even becomes a genius. But how can you know if a man is a genuine genius except by what comes out of his mouth? What comes out of his anus looks the same as what comes out of everyone else's anus.

The answer is that he's more than frank. He's guileless, candid and forthright. He's more than blunt and outspoken. He's aboveboard. When a man is aboveboard with you, you don't feel threatened by his opinions. He's left his heart. He's now in his soul. He's motivated by his own redemption.

Moses was honest. Jesus was frank. The Prophet Muhammad was authentic. If you plan to be genuine, you'd better become a genius who's found his way through his head and heart to his soul. You'd better read all three of God's Scriptures: The Old Testament, New Testament and Quran.

The more hopeful you are, the more frank you'll be about your own opinions. Good mental health should begin with the pursuit of hope because that will bring you to the greater pursuit of self-love. What separates those who are sane from those who are crazy is that crazy people are desperately in need of hope, while sane people are already in pursuit of self-love. You wouldn't have read this far in this book if you were all that sane. Admit that you could use a little more hope and you'll be well on your way to greater sanity.

As a self-ordained rabbi, I say to every man, "Go back to the words of Moses." He'll show you how to be a boy becoming a man. But to women I say, "Go to Jesus." He'll show you how to become living bread and wine in God's presence. Moses holds the secret to manliness. Jesus holds the secret to equality between the sexes.

Every action has an equal and opposite reaction. We see that to be true in the natural world. And it is equally true in the emotional and spiritual worlds. You don't have to believe in gravity, a force you can't see, hear, smell or taste, to know what will happen if you step off the roof of a building. Only children are in danger of being hurt by gravity because they tend to forget that there are forces around them that they can't see. Adults have the same problem, but with the invisible forces within themselves. The consequences of your emotional and spiritual reality are equally powerful and real if you remember to learn from them. This world is so much more obvious and apparent than most people choose to believe. Most people simply don't have the sanity to see what's right in front of their nose. They're in denial about something, and don't know what. Sanity is something you earn in life. Sanity isn't a given.

People gamble against goodness being good enough to get the job done. Cynicism is therefore the great clue to the areas where you're in denial. We all enjoy the thrill of beating the odds once in a while. But God uses both carrots and sticks, and He has the option of

using them from the outside in and/or the inside out. You never know where your rewards and punishments are going to come from. If you think you can wash away with the figurative meaning of words to make your point literally, you're only deluding yourself and wasting tax money that could be used to send Sesame Street and Cirque de Soleil where they're really needed – war zones around the world where they could do the AVODA weapons never will.

The 2nd Commandment is “THOU SHALL NOT HAVE ANY OTHER GODS BEFORE ME.” And, of course, the way that Christianity gets around that is to have their God, Jesus, after Him, not before Him. For 2,000 years God has made it quite clear that He has had no problem with that Jew being the first to follow after Him and the Christians following after that, and the Muslims after that.

The problem with Jesus is predominantly a Jewish/Muslim/atheist problem. The Jews refuse to acknowledge their connection to one of their own. The Muslims refuse to acknowledge the Jew who brought even greater meaning to God's plan than the rest of the Jews could do. And the atheists want none of any of it.

Jesus created the line from here to There by getting in line after God. He created the line every Christian wants to be in. He turned the circle the Jews were in into a line of moral comparisons. But today you should only compare you to yourself. You should get in the circle and hold hands with the Jews to pray their way. And you should get in line after that one, special Jew to create a line with God. Until the Jews and the Muslims accept Jesus as the Jew who changed His Story for the better, they won't appreciate how Mohammed was able to change His story for the best.

The room Jesus described with the bucket and the bed gets smaller and smaller over time. The walls shrink. The corners come toward you until you feel like you're in a shoebox. Even the ways to escape through distraction and denial narrow and dwindle as you age. You can't get out of that tiny room within. You can only illuminate yourself to what's inside of it. And if your lamp isn't on the lampstand where it belongs, to shine its light down onto the bucket and the bed, it will get DARK INDEED.

You can't just snap your fingers and find yourself with a hall pass in hand to get out of God's classroom when Jesus is assisting the Prof. You've got to interact with the Teacher and His star pupil wherever you find yourself. Love will seek you out wherever you go. (I recommend you look up the lyrics to Cat Steven's song, “Father and Son.” This song brilliantly evokes the psychological and spiritual tension between “father and son” and “Father and Son.”)

When you're a child, every adult looks like a giant. When you were three feet tall your perspective on the world was different from the way it is today if, for no other reason, because you'd probably grown considerably, physically taller. And yet many people who

claim to be much bigger than their dad in many ways still hold on to one or another of the perspectives they held of him when they were a child. Your physical height is irrelevant to your emotional and spiritual perspective. To grow up spiritually you have to do three things at once:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------|
| 1. Live and let live | Head |
| 2. Love and let love | Heart |
| 3. Be | Soul |

In the symbolic sense we're all miraculously receiving the same living bread and fish Jesus fed the 4,000. To be given the emotional and spiritual nourishment those ancient Jews got on that one special day, and to appreciate it, they had to have given it away. It was a gift they shared with our whole tribe, who then shared it with the whole world. Although the Jews don't know it, we're now spiritually feeding about seven billion daily. But we're not doing it without the help of Christians and Muslims.

You have to be willing to learn from a Jew to understand spiritual life. If you're a man who loves mankind, you should focus on the teachings of Moses. And if you're a man who loves women and gay men you'll glean a great deal more from the teachings of Jesus. The Muslim who isn't willing to learn from a man because he's either Jewish or gay is going to find himself in the back row in the school of life with the bozos. And the man who isn't willing to learn from women is virtually hopeless. You might as well throw him in with the atheists. They're both so lost and confused I don't know what to tell 'em.

Fishing in the Sea of Galilee was a livelihood then, but it's still a livelihood for a few today. God took His Son fishing, and the rest is His story. Now we're all fishermen's friends. Either you see something in the father/son bond that you can relate to, or you can't. Male love begins with this bond. Abraham claimed to love God very dearly, but he obviously didn't believe in the bond between fathers and sons as evidenced by his relationship to his sons. {But Abraham's relationship was with EL SHADDAI {the breasts of God}. And that made all the difference.

The man who thinks his mother was chosen by God to bring him into this world isn't as rare an experience as it sounds. Every man who has any self-esteem to speak of will feel about his mother in this way. He'll identify with the Christian story personally. He'll see himself as his Father's son.

But that means, in effect, that there are many men who are spiritually torn inside between His Son and His son. They want to grow up psychologically as described in Torah, independent of their father. But they also want to grow up sociologically as described in the Gospels, deeply devoted to their mom. A man wants success in both worlds, the world around him {New Testament} and the world within {Old Testament}.

The miracles of the Hebrew Testament brought the Israelites awareness of the wisdom of God's plan. The miraculous understanding of the human condition in Jesus's WORDS gave the ancient Israelis awareness of the love in His plan. He bequeathed a little strip of land on Earth just for us long before we could ever have imagined the reason why.

A father can't love his sons as much as their mother if none of the family can apply the lessons of the LAND to the issues of the SEA and s k y. God gave the Jews Israel to help the Abrahamic traditions discover a whole world within that He bequeathed to us all.

When Palestinian fathers will want to learn to love their children, and not use them as human shields, they'll come to the Israelis and Americans with their heads bowed before *our* Father graciously ready to acknowledge that His magnanimous plan was brought to the P r o p h e t Mohammed, but it was built upon Jewish wisdom and Christian love. This bliss comes only to those who deserve it, but it's an ecstasy that can be earned.

I could wax poetic about the miracles of everyday life that will wake you up to the awe and wonder you had when you were a child. I could write a sonnet about the Abrahamic journey that makes Mother Nature a mirror of man's nature and a reflection of Heaven here on Earth. But there are those in class who still need to learn that climate change isn't caused by gay marriage or abortion. If you're a leader who thinks you can depend on people remaining paranoid forever, you're afraid of something very, very real that you may not get to face until the day you die – when you're last words will be "if only." I recommend you face that very real fear sooner than later while you still have a face you can call your own.

If you think about all the men that men have killed down through the ages, it should leave you speechless at the thought of accusing women of being murderers for killing unborn kids. If you gave thought to all the tons of semen poured out of men in a desire to pleasure themselves rather than bring life into the world, it would humble you to give your life-giving milk as a gift to a woman, and not as an investment in a cow. If straight men would stop telling gay men where to put their penis and stop telling women what they can and can't do with the gifts they've been given by men, this world would turn with a different tilt on the value of knowledge as a tool for spiritual improvement. It would bring spiritual seasons back into the world of men who still live like cavemen in an ice age.

Needless to say, the P r o p h e t Mohammed never said anything in opposition to Zionism or Christianity. He was speaking about a spiritual, purification process that has since become catholic with a small "c." He was speaking about a philanthropy you should now be able to see as separating "us" from "them" from within ourselves. When we create inner unity in ourselves, we'll let down our quotation marks ["us" and "them"] and raise our parentheses (us and them). Our sanity as nations in a spiritual state depends on it.

The Other White Meat: The Gospel According to Mark

Seeing Is Believing

“JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES ARRIVED AT BETHSAIDA WHERE A BLIND MAN WAS BROUGHT TO HIM, WITH THE EARNEST REQUEST THAT HE SHOULD TOUCH HIM. JESUS TOOK THE BLIND MAN’S HAND AND LED HIM OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE. THEN HE MOISTENED HIS EYES WITH SALIVA AND PUTTING HIS HANDS ON HIM, ASKED, ‘CAN YOU SEE AT ALL?’ THE MAN LOOKED UP AND SAID, ‘I CAN SEE PEOPLE. THEY LOOK LIKE TREES - ONLY THEY ARE WALKING ABOUT.’ THEN JESUS PUT HIS HANDS ON HIS EYES ONCE MORE AND HIS SIGHT CAME INTO FOCUS. AND HE RECOVERED AND SAW EVERYTHING SHARP AND CLEAR.” [Mark 8:22-26]

The response of the blind man when he was asked what he could see is very telling once you have the main metaphor of Moses with which to analyze this story. Every Jew, Muslim and disbeliever who discounts the spiritual enhancement Christianity brings to the world is like the blind man who looked at people and saw only trees. People are spiritual trees with metaphoric meaning that grows over time.

The challenge every spiritually blind man has in seeing the light of God’s promises being fulfilled, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly, begins with the metaphor of man-as-a-tree. If you can’t thank the Jews for holding on to this view of mankind for 3,400 years, you’ll never be able to lift your head to see any further than the horizon at the edge of your own little world. You’ll remain small. You won’t grow to see the tree of life at night when every star in the sky is a piece of fruit hanging down to tempt you to be good – an ornament on a Christmas tree with you as the present. You’ll come back down to the fields of grain and fruit of the vine, but they won’t make any spiritual sense. You’ll be a grass or grape, but never a star.

We all need the spiritual wood from metaphoric trees to build a boat to carry us across our heart. We need the same tree to build a spiritual ladder to ascend in understanding about where Heaven lies. What we don’t need is spiritual lumber by felling another 6,000,000 Jews.

We don’t need to chip away at men until they’re metaphoric sawdust that must then be glued together into sub-tribes before we can appreciate the grain of the holy wood of individuality. If the Asians can respect their place in society collectively, and themselves, individually, Abrahamic man can learn to do so, too.

If you don’t believe in the Old Testament idea that God created man in His imagination to become something greater than he appears to be literally, the whole concept of monotheistic belief falls apart in your hands. You end up kvetching like a blind man to

Jesus about how little you can see, instead of praising God for how much you've already been shown.

A Jew believes in God, but he doesn't believe that Jesus is God. A Christian believes in God {Jesus} who is a part of God. A Muslim believes in another name for the Hebrew God who came after the Christian God. A L L A H. is his God. Like Jews and Christians, Muslims don't believe in gods. Nor should they put their faith in petty people who like to play god. But these three, monotheistic believers should at least agree that they're all performing parts in a three-act play.

The response Jesus had for the blind man wasn't given in words, but in deeds. Although Jesus cured him with a laying on of His hands, today the field of optometry has separated spiritual insight from scientific purview. Today we depend on solving the physical nature of our problems using medical treatments and cures.

But that doesn't mean that our illnesses don't have emotional and spiritual roots that must also be addressed. To cure an illness on all three levels of dis-ease the patient must become a doctor until himself. Every blind man must peer into the darkness to look for the light within.

To see yourself clearly requires hindsight, insight and foresight. And a mirror won't help you get a better look at yourself as you truly are if you're trying to see yourself from afar. Unless you can envision yourself as more than a spiritual 2x4 {two-by-four} cut into a usable shape by society, you're not going to realize the potential for your heart to help you realize your potential. [It's ironic that there are some two-by-fours {hyper-religious nuts} that would denigrate me for being a bundle of sticks {faggot}.]

God sees where you've been and where you want to go. But if you don't have a sense of your own big picture, you may be disappointed if you pray only for stuff or circumstances that will change your luck. What makes life much more mysterious and interesting is to thank yourself for thinking about you; to appreciate yourself for caring about you; and to be grateful to yourself for believing in you. If you do all that, your prayers will become more like raising your hand with a question for the Teacher than asking Him to let you leave class in the middle of a lesson with an excuse you have to be somewhere else.

Remember, you're never interrupting God's lessons by asking Him questions that may arise while you're doing things with others. You should be involved with your spiritual education while doing everything else. You should be watching your performance while in class with others and asking the Teacher questions at the same time; not saving up your questions for one day a week to ask them rhetorically in a house of prayer.

You're always in a house of prayer. Going to religious services one day a week is an externalization of an internal process. If you feel concerned whether the other students in

class are judging you, you're no longer fully on task. Worry about the impression you're making on the Teacher. Don't worry about the impression you're making on the class.

The modern American male is like a spiritual tree growing on a spiritual mountain he shares with all other men on Earth. But he may sometimes feel he's beyond the tree line, alone. He may feel he's on a rocky, craggy cliff high up in the clouds. He may feel surrounded by a white blanket of perfection with only the wind present blowing all around him. He may feel he's at an elevation where a tree must struggle to grow in a rarified air and cold. But a man's nature reflects our male nature. We're all in the forest together.

If you've ever paid close attention to those few trees that can literally grow above the tree line in nature, you may have noticed that they're stunted, with the last trees forming low, densely matted bushes before there's nothing more than rock, wind and snow from there to the top of the crag. In the natural world the trees deformed by wind, cold and lack of oxygen are known by the scientific term, "krummholz formation," from the German for "twisted wood."

Queer and spiritually oddly shaped Americans are permanently living at the edge of a spiritual summit like these trees. They look the way they do because of a spiritual krummholz formation. They're the twisted wood that society has rejected as spiritual burl. Many of them don't want to admit how high up the mountain they are, how thin the air there is, and how well adapted they are to the spiritual altitude and harsh conditions that shaped them in oddly looking ways. San Francisco is the face of one such spiritual summit. Ironically, Jerusalem is another. But wherever you live there is such a mountain within for you to perceive.

Those who think of gays or Jews as sick and twisted, or that we're going to destroy the moral fiber of the world are afraid of the spiritually, differently formed. They can't yet see the great spiritual gifts we bring to the world or how far beyond the ordinary, forest canopy God sometimes plants His seeds. Many still look at physical deformities, intellectual differences, emotional preferences and spiritual peculiarities as trees that should be felled, useless wood that can't be turned into timber. They see such burl as knots without any productive value.

But people such as us are powerful in unique ways. Our wood may be twisted with a spiritual intent that has God's hand in it. We're the physically, emotionally or spiritually differently formed. We're metaphoric trees that are the result of environmental stresses delivered by God at high, spiritual elevations that give a distinct beauty to His world. Our rare woods should be prized for their distinctive, spiritual patterns. Our veneer should be appreciated for its uniqueness. We should be valued by those with a spiritually artistic, inner eye.

You won't appreciate others as God's gifts to humanity if you aren't prepared to accept His unusual gifts that make you one of a kind. Your mind is distinctive; your emotions are personal; and your soul is individually shaped. You are, like every other human being in the process of becoming, a work in progress. You may not yet be fully formed spiritually, but you can elevate your view of yourself in your own eyes. You can observe the spiritual, krummholz formation that's a distinct part of the landscape of your soul, too.

Nobody really knows where we came from or where we're going. It's all hearsay. You have to experience reality and then decide for yourself what you want to believe about your reason for being. You have to find your truth, but you also have a responsibility to share yourself with the world around you in ways that won't injure others or the planet. This reshapes you from the inside at the same time that you help reshape the world from the outside.

Nobody can say exactly where God lives because He seems to want us to seek Him out. Some seek Him at the edge of the universe through physics and astronomy. Others seek him in their home through family and friends. The only way to answer the question "Where's God?" is to look for Him within and compare what you see inside yourself at any particular moment to what you saw there before. You'll find there can be an extraordinarily meaningful correlation between what was and is now in you that will drive you toward self-love. Once you're pursuing your own love, you'll discover God's. We're all in love with Him together.

Although we can see so many scientific achievements that have made life more comfortable for us than it was for our ancestors, the real progress we've made has been in moving from without, within. History is really a collective map describing the journey to self-discovery. The horror of fighting for our lives against powerful animals that wanted to eat us in the distant past has brought us to a time when only our inner demons consume us.

Man's inventions may have started with the plow and the wheel, but what we've accomplished historically has been a mirror of our successes and failures in coming to know and love ourselves. Man, not this world, is the mystery of life. This world is filled with clues to how and why he was created.

We shouldn't take the horrific struggles of our ancestors for granted. Nor should we belittle the spiritual hardships they went through to make this world more personal and precious for us all. But we shouldn't take our own struggle for granted either. It's a far bigger job being "you" than anyone else can imagine. If you don't acknowledge your own struggle to know and love yourself, you'll never be able to appreciate anyone else's struggle. The less you know about self-love, the more the world will continue to be divided with one half denouncing gays and the other half denouncing Jews. Both prejudices only point to self-loathing.

What I think most men would prefer is a casual reintroduction to themselves spiritually from someone who understands their dilemma in getting to know and love themselves - nothing formal. Men have no difficulty using their imagination liberally when it comes to sex, but they often find it a little daunting to use their imagination to conceive of themselves as a spiritual tree branching out with knowledge, while simultaneously hiding amongst other trees in a forest to blend in. To imagine yourself identifying first as one of those smaller trees high on the hill where they've been affected by the krummholz formation would make it possible for you to look down on the forest from some distance away. It would give you a perspective on the Creation Story that wouldn't be emotionally overwhelming at the thought of God reprimanding the first man so severely.

A tree of self-knowledge with moral regard for humanity knows that every tree is a terrible thing to waste, regardless of where and when God planted it. What makes a man's desires so special is his potential for loving the serpent in his tree. Every guy can make up for being unfruitful in some ways without having to prove himself just by sporting wood... What "it" conspires to achieve with the woman in his heart could be miraculous and loving if he simply watches more carefully what he allows in and what comes out the other end.

Symbolic suicide is the greatest enemy of man today. While most people deplore terrorists who literally blow themselves up, making chipper trash of themselves, they don't realize how symbolically they cut themselves down all the time. And I'm not just talking about overeating, smoking, drugs and alcohol. I'm referring to the suicidal attitude of giving up hope on a world where people will learn to live together in peace. Symbolic suicide is always a cry for hope.

Because the lessons of life can be so frustratingly small and seemingly insignificant, many men don't realize how great their contribution could be if they took more of a moral position on the little things they let themselves get away with. It's not just the rain forests we're losing. Men are cutting one another down in an effort to make space inside themselves to plant the spiritual crops they yearn for. They're hungry for a rich land that will support their spiritual needs, but they're paying a high price to satisfy their appetites.

There are many forms of sadness. One form of sadness is disappointment about something you didn't do. Another is regret, wishing you had done something. Remorse is sadness at something you did that you shouldn't have done. Grief is a mixture of sadness and pain. And sorrow is sadness mixed with guilt. "Sorry," indeed, "seems to be the hardest word." {Elton John lyrics to his song by the same name.} People just don't want to have to feel sorry. They're afraid of the guilt that will come up if they do.

To live a spiritual life in the modern era, you have to recognize and overcome the hopelessness that emanates out from your jealousy of others. This is best expressed as the

“spiritual sibling rivalry” we have with all our spiritual brothers and sisters because we were unconsciously taught to compete with them for the attention of our Father.

Most people think their life would be so much better if they’d been created physically looking different than they are. They’re either ashamed of their genetic roots or simply worried about the twists in their physical trunk and all the ways external factors have forced them to branch out physically in unexpected directions. This is usually expressed literally as a fat deposit where they don’t want it or lack of girth where they do. They look at themselves as fruit hanging from the Tree of life, get depressed at how unappetizing they see themselves, and then conclude that our Father must love them less than others for making them less good looking. This brings up anger that they then divert at scapegoats. But their reasons for getting so angry at people who’ve done so little wrong really mask jealousy.

And of those who are satisfied with the way they look on the outside, many don’t feel good about themselves on the inside. You can look ripe and still feel rotten. Envy of other people’s contents makes some people anxious about their ability to measure their spiritual progress against themselves, not others. They don’t feel they can get a handle on their spiritual grades because they’re more concerned about what’s on other people’s report cards. When your work habits center you on your own life lessons you know there’s no reason for envy or jealousy. Then you know you’re succeeding in terms of wisdom of the heart.

Most people are sour {angry} or bitter {disappointed}. They can’t get to sweet-and-sour or bittersweet because they don’t have anything sweet {loving} to offer themselves from within.

Jesus hit the nail on the head. Love is the answer. Love is the sweetener you’re hoping for you wish you could sprinkle over the inside and outside of yourself to make you more appealing to you. If you don’t learn how to sweeten yourself, you’ll only turn out bitter and soured when you see how you’ve treated yourself for a lifetime. But you must also add a dash of salt {wisdom} in your heart or you won’t have what’s needed to love yourself wisely.

“Spiritual photosynthesis” is the Hebraic process by which a metaphoric tree turns the light of Torah into wise energy. To green your inner world you need only experience the activation of the wise ways in which God interfaced with the characters in Torah. This will reveal the source of the spiritual energy you possess to power yourself. This will make the four seasons personal.

You can be a metaphoric tree that learns about yourself with the same depth of illumination and interface that the sun’s energy releases chemical energy in a leaf. You can metaphorically fuel your mind with wisdom. Then you can use Jesus’s message to produce

self-love {inner energy}. His love is equivalent to the maple syrup found in the trunk of some trees. The sap is a different energy source from what the leaves of a tree produce. The Son's energy is no different from the sun's energy. Learning both will help you feel natural. Once you can see what you're already spiritually producing for yourself, you'll be able to praise the process.

God said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE," but people misquote Him saying instead, "Vengeance is mine." You'd have to be blind not to see how men play god and still reach out arrogantly insisting on the right to a heavenly reward.

Revenge is very different from vengeance. Revenge is a negative feeling everyone unconsciously wants, a feeling founded upon jealousy and envy of our spiritual brothers and sisters. We want to even the score, either from within by hurting ourselves or by getting back at our Father's other children. Vengeance is a positive desire motivated by justice. God seeks vengeance while some men only seek revenge.

Fantasies of exacting violence against others could even be useful and productive if you could respond to these inner urges with a way of applying your desire to punish others to yourself, without causing you any pain or suffering in the process. It's such a shame to get so vindictive and vengeful of others in your mind without a way to turn that revenge into vengeance. The goals of the CIA, FBI and police are to do just that.

The best way to get revenge is by living well [Calvin Tomkins]. But the best way to achieve vengeance is to look for evidence of poetic justice from God from every outcome in your life. You'll learn to pay better attention to what's happening to you if you see yourself as the parent of a frequently disobedient, inner child. If you want to contribute to brotherhood in the family of man, start by training your inner child to be a better boy with his dad. Becoming your own parent is an act of vengeance. It'll turn around all that your parents did to you and for you in a poetically just way, without adding another mouth to feed on the planet.

Only Christianity promotes the holy relationship between Father and Son and mother and Son. Only Christianity brings God out of the heavens and into the heart of man by giving Him a face to face. From the metaphor of man-as-a-child-of-God, Jesus becomes your older, spiritual Brother sent by our Father to teach you the meaning of brotherhood. The paternalism of Judaism and childlike quality of Islam have their place. But until you train, instruct and educate your inner child to be a better son to his father, you aren't going to be able to speak to Jesus like a brother sitting on the right hand side of our Father. (If you're Jewish or Muslim and can't pray to Jesus, you're going to have discover the brotherhood of man as I do, by emulating the individual Christians God brings into your life.)

The spiritual perspective of Abrahamic man as a family can be observed religiously and historically, but it should also be observed through the lens of spiritual sociologically. If God is your Father and you are the parent of your inner child, then God is the Grandfather to your inner child. God the Father will teach you to become a good father like Him. Then you'll find you have more in common with His Son {Jesus} as your Brother even if you don't pray to Him directly. Learning from the same Father how to be a father to yourself will make becoming a man a socially pleasurable experience. It'll raise you from boyhood to manhood by teaching you to become a brother to every other male on the planet {including gays and Jews}.

From a gay perspective there's more to God's plan than the promotion of family values. If anything, we can see the erosion of family values since some European Christians chose to decimate the Jewish, metaphoric forests of Europe {The Holocaust}. Here in America we never had a spiritual conflagration, but slavery was a figurative clear-cutting of family values that we're all suffering from today.

The metaphor of man in a familial-relationship-with-God {a grove of trees} comes out of Judaism, but it's spiritually elucidated for Christians in their Brotherhood with Jesus {a great forest that covers the Earth}. If we thought our relatives could cut down blacks; set Jewish life on fire; and turn gays into chipper trash – without finding ourselves in an ethical predicament with our own self-esteem – we're going to have to rethink our thinking. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

The Other White Meat: The Gospel According to Mark

The Essence of Self-Love

Jesus called His disciples and the people around Him, and said to them, “IF ANYONE WANTS TO FOLLOW IN MY FOOTSTEPS, HE MUST GIVE UP ALL RIGHT TO HIMSELF, TAKE UP HIS CROSS AND FOLLOW ME. THE MAN WHO TRIES TO SAVE HIS LIFE WILL LOSE IT; IT IS THE MAN WHO LOSES HIS LIFE FOR MY SAKE AND THE GOSPEL’S WHO WILL SAVE IT. WHAT GOOD CAN IT DO A MAN TO GAIN THE WHOLE WORLD AT THE PRICE OF HIS OWN SOUL? WHAT CAN A MAN OFFER TO BUY BACK HIS SOUL ONCE HE HAS LOST IT? IF ANYONE IS ASHAMED OF ME AND MY WORDS IN THIS UNFAITHFUL AND SINFUL GENERATION, THE SON OF MAN WILL BE ASHAMED OF HIM WHEN HE COMES IN THE FATHER’S GLORY WITH THE HOLY ANGELS AROUND HIM.” [Mark 8:34-38]

From this passage it’s hardly difficult to see why so many of the ancient Jews were dismissive of Christ’s WORDS, and why later Jews were even repelled by His Self-serving attitude. His frankness may have been a bit too much to bear at one time. And yet, ironically, it looks historically that many Jews followed His teachings anyway while many Christians wandered around emotionally in their effort to make their love real.

Today you’d think we Jews would be more proud of the fact that He was one of our own and look for ways to appreciate how His WORDS so spiritually complement our traditions. It stands to reason that when you’re forced to take up your own cross against a world that insists on *your* guilt and *their* innocence, you’d want to recall that you’re not the first who needed to strike up a belligerent tone.

It’s nice to think of there being at least one Jew by God’s side to advocate on behalf of the rest of the Jews... If we think of Jesus as the personification of self-love at a time in our past when love for those outside our tribe was a new concept, it shouldn’t be difficult for us to revisit our position about Jesus’s positive influence in today’s world.

There’s an expression the rabbis are fond of reminding us of, that no good deed ever goes unpunished. [Clare Boothe Luce] Beneficial actions often go unappreciated or are met with outright hostility.} The only possible explanation I can find for this is because God anticipates we’re going to react to other people’s good deeds with a mild reaction of jealousy and envy. Therefore He wants us to witness our own competitive desire for His approval.

We tend to forget that God created the serpent found in every tree. Slapping down our serpent for raising its head before Him is a way of punishing us for our good deeds.

“BLESSED ARE YOU WHEN THEY REVILE AND PERSECUTE YOU AND SAY ALL KINDS OF EVIL AGAINST YOU FALSELY FOR MY SAKE.” [Matthew 5:11]

Here Jesus is blessing the best students in class because they understand how DAFKA {spiteful} human beings can be by competing for God’s love rather than sharing it. Some men will do almost anything to get in the way of the best students doing well in class. {The assassinations of President John Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. are good examples of that.} Bozos from the back of the room conclude that their own, good grades depend on keeping the class curve low so they don’t look like failures.

“We’re in a world, our very own, sharing a love that only few have ever known” [“Speak Softly Love” lyrics by Larry Kusik] It’s taken 2,000 years for the West to see everyone on the planet as a personification of some aspects of God’s love. It’s taken this long for the whole world to have the communication tools to conclude that it’s the God within who doeth the work with you, thus giving God a very personal relationship with of us as He teaches us to love ourselves.

This new age makes it possible for Jesus’s message of love to be taken more personally and universally than ever before. You no longer need to be Christian to believe in the power of God’s love since His love was for Himself. It then emanated out from there for all others. We’re all learning about love in the flesh, trying to do for ourselves, and others, what Jesus modeled and professed. That shouldn’t be an impossible idea for Jews, Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Confucianists and Taoists to learn to live with. Even atheists ought to be able to rethink their opinion of Jesus in light of their desire to love themselves. Symbolic love personalizes the process of *making* love.

The presumptive attitude by which Jesus told His followers to give up their life for His sake is never going to attract anyone other than Christians, but we can certainly apply Christian love to Jewish wisdom and Islamic philanthropy in a personal way that doesn’t require us to pray to Him. Today the world can finally look at Christianity without their dogma to see what it stands for that’s catholic. Symbol logic built upon metaphoric thinking makes it possible for us all to learn to love ourselves.

Moses was the Jew who got us into Israel, but Jesus was the Jew to imply He could get us out of Israel and back to God. His message should never be seen as boastful or immodest. It should never seem standard or leave you concluding that love is only earthly and therefore spiritually banal. Each of us is struggling within and with God for a figurative, small piece of the land He gave only to the Jews. But everyone has to have faith that he’ll be given his spiritual inheritance in the world to come. We can’t all squeeze into the holiest place here on Earth. We have to remake that holy place in inner space. Jews must still literally fight for Israel. Christians must figuratively struggle in their heart for Israel. And Muslims must give up the jihad on Jews, Christians and other Muslims for a spiritual

submission in their soul to the inheritance God has planned for them in paradise {Hebrew: PARDES: orchard}.

Every man knows with every misfortune that comes his way how it feels to be an “ISHMAEL” {MAN OF GOD} who believes he’s been abandoned by God. Every man knows how it feels to be thrown out of his father’s house just by growing up and finding a younger brother under the same roof. And every man knows what it feels like to have two mothers, one who’s either forlorn {Hagar} or vacillating between being angry {Sarai} at you one minute and taking the position of *noblesse oblige* {Sarah} the next.

Giving that little strip of land to the Jews was just the tip of God’s spiritual iceberg. The Jews must now hold onto it even if earthquakes in the form of global warming, pandemics, financial ruin and death are needed to teach men to appreciate the ground under their feet. The Christians must dive into the ocean of emotion within and learn to become better swimmers. And the Muslims must look down from the skies above it all to believe in the way God is allowing this world to turn out – for our own good. The more you can see from the LAND, SEA and s k y in Scripture, the more power He’ll make you in becoming a significant part of His story.

The mystery behind your highest aspirations is as magical as the love in your heart. But you must put your wishes into words that you can hear inside if you have any desire for your wishes to come true. Even your impulses must be filtered through your conscience with verbal intention. Then you will ask yourself if your means justify your ends. If you can’t justify your means before yourself, how will you justify them before God?

Words can’t branch out into new ideas; unfurl with leaves of hope; blossom with beautiful intentions; and bloom with fruitful changes in your life – if don’t water your words and watch them grow. If your heart listens carefully to all that it hears you saying to yourself, your conscience will also have to listen.

You will repeat many of the mistakes you read about in the Bible. The only question is whether you’ll deal with them better than those in the stories. There are so many unwise examples given to us in literature and life, and so many who refuse to question their actions because they simply adore their intentions.

What’s the point in witnessing mistakes made by others in class if you don’t speak up, or, at the very least, learn from them? Take everything personally, but decide for yourself how you can grow from what you know. If there is a Heaven and a Hell, you’re going to need to know which way you’re going.

Everyone is willing to spread guilt like soft butter on bread when it comes to telling others how to live their life. I haven’t met a single soul who doesn’t like sipping self-adoration like fine wine for having done so. Man has spent millennia teaching others to perfect their speech and feats. But today it’s important to take all the Abrahamic faiths

personally so that you can learn to speak frankly to yourself. Love yourself wisely for what you're accomplishing in learning about you, and you'll become generous of spirit with yourself and philanthropic toward others. If you come to the table to discuss life on Earth with Moses and Jesus, as did the P r o p h e t Mohammed, you, too, could claim to be a Guest at Their Table.

“IF ANYONE WANTS TO FOLLOW IN MY FOOTSTEPS, HE MUST GIVE UP ALL RIGHT TO HIMSELF, TAKE UP HIS CROSS AND FOLLOW ME.” What Jesus did literally God has given us the job of doing metaphorically and symbolically. We must grow our spiritual tree of self-knowledge; fashion the lumber from it into a cross; and use the forces within which God gave us to better ourselves with self-love from the inside out. Pain and suffering aren't always necessary for you to take up your cross. You could pick up your cross with one hand if you lifted it with your heart and not your head.

Jesus may have said, “IT IS THE MAN WHO LOSES HIS LIFE FOR MY SAKE AND THE GOSPEL'S WHO WILL SAVE IT,” but you don't literally have to die to make His words personally meaningful. To spiritually give up your life for Jesus's sake you ought to begin by discovering what His WORDS mean to you personally, rather than dogmatically. You should explore them for psychological, not sociological importance. You should explore them for insight into the ultimate humiliation, your eventual death. {You're going to lose your life whether you do what Jesus said or not. Yes, He may have been a bit intense, but have you ever met a Jew who wasn't?}

Gay men may have had to come out of the closet to prove our spiritual strength, but every one of us will need to find the strength to come out of his body at the end of his life. Coming out of the closet is just for practice if you're gay. We bring out the best in mankind by coming out before leaving our spiritual vehicle at the end of our journey. Most other people come out when they get out. It may feel exhilarating to be reborn in the Christian sense, but I doubt it's very different from the rapture of coming out sexually. Coming out stories are all deeply spiritual if you're aware enough to appreciate them as spiritual exercises in dying to be reborn.

Sexual honesty with yourself is harder than it looks. Sexual sincerity with others is harder than it looks. And sexual authenticity before the God is harder than it looks. So don't tell me what to do in bed and who to do it with. Who do you think you are? And if you think you're sitting on the right hand side of God, I've got news for you. There's already Someone sitting on that seat. If you're going to quote the God of Moses, God of the New Testament and God of the Quran, you'd better have read all three.

When you witness yourself bent and twisted within, gnarled and knobby from pain or crooked and contorted with age, you see the krummholz effect on you. You may already be knotted up inside with embarrassment, twisted with shame or contorted with

humiliation. But remember that you may be higher up the hill than you realize. Look back down, but don't pine for the forest. Where you are holds a panoramic view others may not yet be able to appreciate. You earned the guilt that got you that high. The question now is what you're going to do up there besides pontificate.

Life cuts everyone down in one way or another. Who doesn't sometimes feel like a stump in a meadow surrounded by majestic trees? Who doesn't feel emotionally crooked in some way, gnarled by lost love? Who doesn't feel judged to be a knobby, bump-on-a-log in someone else's eyes? Despite your hollowed trunk, barren branches, lost leaves and fallen fruit your roots will forever remain unseen by the rest of us. This is what they can dig for in you, but never uproot. The conflagrations may never stop coming. People may even try to fell or burn you to the ground in many little ways every day, but they can never reach your roots if you've got them wrapped around the Rock.

There are so many kind and considerate atheists who are firmly planted in this world, and they have no desire to be replanted. They want to be surprised. They don't want to face any deeper disappointment than they have to by having to use their imagination to conceive of God right here, right now. Don't try to dig them out of the ground and transplant them where you think they ought to grow. Their roots are none of your concern. They can enjoy the light, be fruitful and multiply without conscious awareness of the source of their nourishment. Let every tree be.

People who are literally deaf won't have any difficulty reading this book, but the blind and the illiterate will. I suggest that if you read to the blind you touch their shoulder when you read the word "He" or "Him." For words I intentionally misspell in a sentence, like "mettle" in place of "metal" I suggest you touch their hand. So many subtle messages come to us through our eyes. For a difference in font, I suggest you touch their leg. Reading to the blind will help you appreciate your vision in many more ways. You are my hero or heroine.

"IF ANYONE WANTS TO FOLLOW IN MY FOOTSTEPS, HE MUST GIVE UP ALL RIGHT TO HIMSELF..." The rights of the Jews at the time of Jesus make little sense when compared to our rights in America today. The religious rights of the Jews at His time were being violated by the ancient Romans, and the Jews were searching for a collective way to respond to that violation. Jesus saw rights as something we need to earn from God.

The differences between then and now are easily understood when viewed sociologically and psychologically. Sociologically a man has rights that are unalienable, including the right to pray to God in the manner and tradition of his ancestors. But a baker who refuses to sell a wedding cake to a gay couple on the grounds of religious freedom is bringing his religion out of his house of prayer and into his business. He's selling Christ's holy bread, and it isn't his to sell. He can have his cake and eat it, too, when he's at church,

but he can't discriminate against people on religious grounds if he's in business with people of other faiths or people who believe differently. The separation of church and state must keep every house of prayer out of our businesses. Otherwise we'll be on a slippery slope that will take us back to Temple worship where money changers ran the Temple like a business. You must bring forth the spirit of your faith, not your personal religious obligations. Keep your religion out of everyone's business. Mind your own business if you have a tendency to use money rather than societal needs that meet everyone's needs to force people to live your way.

Following in Jesus's footsteps {or the P r o p h e t Mohammed's} requires that you understand Torah before you try to make sense of the Gospels or the Quran. The prohibition against sleeping with a man in Leviticus, for instance, was given for married men, not single men. Leviticus 18 begins with the prohibition of every man from sleeping with his mother and his sisters, half-sisters and stepsisters. But by further extension of the law, every man is forbidden from having sex with his aunts, in-laws and more than one person at a time if any of them are related by blood. Then, by further extension of the law, it's forbidden to have sex with your neighbor's wife whether or not you're married, whether or not she's related to you, simply because she's married.

The details presented in Leviticus 18 makes it clear that Moses understood men's propensity to think with their penis, so he started the bar at its lowest with sexual intercourse between a man and his mother and got him to buy into the obvious before he forced him to make more difficult, moral choices that concern his desires. The furthest extension of the law applies to sex with other men and animals. But it's at this distant point in the argument that we have to go back to the original premise to understand who God is speaking to in this passage. He's not speaking to all men. He's speaking to married men.

In ancient times boys must have been considered men as soon as they reached their first orgasm. That would have been the visible sign that a boy had become a man. The ancient Jews weren't sophisticated enough to consider any other than this biological factor. Such factors as his intellectual readiness, financial strength, psychological and spiritual development were aspects of growing up that we only recognize today. Therefore Torah had to prohibit some sexual relations only because adulthood may only have been measured in terms of physical pubescence. Emotional and spiritual pubescence were concepts of a man's personal evolution that weren't yet well understood or elucidated into law.

The abovementioned prohibitions of abstaining from sex with neighboring, married women also applied by extension to other married men. The spirit of the law was that all men would be prohibited from sex with family members, but only married men would be prohibited from sex with other people {male and female} as well as animals. A single man {a male capable of orgasm} was free to have sex with any single adult who was also able to have orgasm or any animal that attracted him. {Parents have always been careful to keep

their unmarried daughters chaste until they could marry them off because there was no law prohibiting sexual relations between unmarried individuals.}

By today's standards it's an unwritten rule not to sleep with family members. By extension it shouldn't be necessary to tell anyone not to engage in bestiality. But it shouldn't be necessary not to tell men not to engage in necrophilia either. The purpose of this edict in Leviticus 18 was to cover all the bases they could think of then to make young men realize that God was well aware of the beguiling penis He gave him.

If you're a man married to another man today, your matrimonial vows of fidelity are as morally and spiritually viable as the vows of a man married to a woman because it's not the gender of the person you're married to that the Book of Leviticus is addressing, but the depth of commitment you make when you use your word to create a vow. A vow is a sacred promise you make to yourself, not just the other person. If you're not ready to take a vow, you're not ready for marriage, whether that union is with God {as is the case for a nun who's married to Jesus} or another human being.

If you choose to walk in the footsteps of Jesus your vows to Him are just as important as the vows taken by a Muslim or a Jew. Your promises are binding whether they come from your head, heart or conscience. If you choose to fulfill your vows out of love rather than duty, your word is what you'll be judged by in either case. And if you don't want to keep your vows because you've found a moral excuse to break your word – whether you end the relationship out of a duty to yourself or love for yourself – you'll be judged by the dignity with which you do so in an effort to avoid hurting others. The generosity of spirit by which you meet the needs of all involved are paramount to how you'll judge yourself for your actions. Your self-love will depend on the vows you've made to others and how you fulfilled them.

Those who aren't bound by the Ten Commandments have nothing to keep them from lying, exaggerating, denying the spirituality of reality or living in denial within themselves. The Noahide laws aren't as strict because Muslims are expected to learn from their older brothers and apply what they learn to their own societies. It's assumed that Jews have moral duties and Christians have righteous desires that together will help our younger Islamic brothers make decisions that are spiritually informed. It's assumed Muslims will love their older brothers enough to want to figure that out. Muslims know A L L A H. will judge them by the way they use the w o r d s He gave them.

“IF ANYONE IS ASHAMED OF ME AND MY WORDS IN THIS UNFAITHFUL AND SINFUL GENERATION, THE SON OF MAN WILL BE ASHAMED OF HIM WHEN HE COMES IN THE FATHER’S GLORY WITH THE HOLY ANGELS AROUND HIM.” Most Jews today have no reason to be ashamed of Jesus or His WORDS because they're motivated by duty and love. Those who read the WORDS OF Jesus and

find fault with them are still ashamed of themselves for having broken their own word. The spirit of doing what's right could be done using only generosity of spirit if men were morally strong enough to end the constant struggles between their head, heart and penis.

Just because your mind is adroit enough to extend a metaphor doesn't mean your conscience is good enough to take that meaning personally. Words never hit home until we reduce the many defenses we set up inside to protect us from our own guilt. The only way to give up your guilt is to earn your way out of it with good deeds that will leave you feeling loving and magnanimous. You have to earn your own respect with good deeds for others to reduce the guilt you feel toward yourself. Only then can your conscience become more refined. Otherwise, you're just spouting opinions, but not living up to them.

This is the problem of the hyper-religious Orthodox Jews who have very strong opinions about men having sex with men, but they also have very strong opinions about them not having to enlist in the Israeli military. What do you tell the man who's got his penis firmly lodged up his own anus. The only thing you can say to him is that he sees himself as an asshole. And the only thing you can do is shrug your shoulders and agree.

If you don't want to think about Jesus having been a man with all the physical attributes of a male, you're going to be in deep spiritual denial when it comes to His message. If you're embarrassed about talking about His body from the waist down, just imagine how ashamed you'll be when it comes to talking about His character. Imagine how you'd blush if you met Him physically nude, emotional naked and spiritually exposed if you hadn't learned about modesty, humility and loyalty to yourself. God made Jesus human with good reason, to imagine all of Him as a man. How would you feel about Jesus if you discovered He was gay in addition to being Jewish? What if all of Christianity were founded upon the teachings of a gay-Jew? What would that do to the dogmas of the ultra-Orthodox Jews, rightwing Christians and Muslim terrorists?

Putting your faith in God, is actually just for practice. There will come a point in time when you'll have to decide whether you're going to temple, church or mosque for the sake of Y.H.V.H., Jesus, A L L A H. or for yourself. Only once you're doing it for you can you ask any of Them to listen as you speak to yourself in Their presence. Put your world at the center of this world. If you don't center yourself in this way you'll spin right off your own axis, making the world around you all a little more chaotic and precarious for the rest of us.

See Food: The Gospel According to Luke

Promotion or Attraction?

“JESUS RETURNED FROM THE JORDAN RIVER FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HE WAS CALLED TO SPEND FORTY DAYS IN THE DESERT WHERE HE WAS TEMPTED BY THE ‘DEVIL.’ HE ATE NOTHING DURING THAT TIME AND AFTERWARDS HE FELT VERY HUNGRY. ‘IF YOU REALLY ARE THE SON OF GOD,’ THE ‘DEVIL’ SAID TO HIM, ‘TELL THIS STONE TO TURN INTO A LOAF.’ JESUS ANSWERED, ‘THE SCRIPTURE SAYS, ‘MAN SHALL NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE, BUT BY EVERY WORD OF GOD.’” [Deuteronomy 8:2-3] [Luke 4:1-4]

I’ve explained how the concept of “satan” is really a personification of man’s desires, first described as the embodiment of the שָׂטָן {NACHASH: SERPENT} that tempted Eve. The serpent in this story tempted Jesus to fill his body literally rather than fill Himself with Self-knowledge and Self-love.

“satan” is the quintessence of a snake because “he” doesn’t need arms or legs to do his worst. Evil can figuratively worm its way into your heart or silently slip into your pants when you’re not looking to convince your head and heart to do as “it” pleases. Unlike God who let Adam and Eve know when He was approaching them in the garden, a snake will silently sneak up and bite you when you least expect it.

“satan” challenged Jesus to turn a stone into a loaf of bread. The only stones that can be turned into living bread are, of course, the testicles. In asking Him to do so “it” challenged Jesus to reveal whether He knew the secret of life; whether he could turn something inanimate like testicles into something that produces life; and whether He would. In this interpretation of stones and loaves “satan,” Jesus’s penis, figuratively tempted Him to make babies rather than reveal the spiritual power God had revealed in His stones. Of course, the power of love lies in man’s heart, not his testicles. But tell a man who’s ignorant of how he operates, and watch how he behaves, not whether he agrees with you.

When Jesus presented this parable to His congregation, many of them probably caught the sexual connotation in His message. His reply from Torah {MAN DOES NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE} amusingly inferred that hunger and satisfaction come to men in many other ways other than through their belly. Jesus added to that assertion by claiming that there’s also a thirst in man’s heart that arouses him in ways that surpass the arousal of his penis. This thirst drives him to drink in God’s love, and the satisfaction of this urge leaves him with a feeling of unspeakable joy, a sense of being quenched for all eternity.

Jesus inferred that hunger for God’s wisdom should inspire us to consume the WORD of God, but thirst for His love should inspire us to drink in His WORDS. The sating of our

physical appetite for sex may produce the sensation of orgasm, but satisfying our spiritual hunger for wisdom produces rapture and our thirst for love, ecstasy. Rapture and ecstasy are the spiritual rewards for studying Scripture that surpass the pleasure of sexual intercourse and the momentary rewards of sexual gratification.

Although the words enjoyment, delight, satisfaction, rapture and ecstasy speak euphemistically about the experience of orgasm, the physicality of achieving orgasm is actually quite impossible to put into words. The child understands descriptors of spiritual bliss without being able to associate them with God's rewards on the physical plane of reality to entice us to go further. Only a post-pubescent male at that time could have discerned what Jesus was really talking about.

Surely Jesus was well aware of all levels of reality through His study of Torah and experiences among people. He could move mellifluously between matters of the male body and love in the spiritual realm. There's no way He'd have become so renowned at that time if He hadn't been able to add a little spice to His speech when speaking to the poor and uneducated Jews around the country. He was surely anything but inexperienced or holier than thou since He was also the epitome of frankness. He had to have been earthy to have been so unpretentious.

If we interpret the "devil" Jesus spoke to as the voice of His penis tempting Him to masturbate or have sexual intercourse, it wouldn't have been a conversation worthy of being written down. He clearly understood the depth of His own struggle in becoming a man among men, and He presented it to others in a colorful way that offered multiple interpretations.

The separation of wisdom {rapture} from love {ecstasy} is a deeply personal and important distinction, but no man needs another man telling him where these boundaries lie. No society has the right to impose religious imperatives on the sexual, personal or spiritual mores of its citizenry. Sex is a physical experience that leads to orgasm; but it mirrors the emotional experience of love between two people; and their love for each other mirrors a spiritual expression of love with one's self before God. Loving others holds physical and emotional instruction about life that leads to a greater, universal, appreciation of why we're here. Self-love becomes the great clue to the meaning of your life, making the love of learning about yourself the ultimate climax of life.

Love is an experience of ecstasy at the highest level of communion with yourself. Communion with God is the ecstatic consequence of self-love, not other-love. You've got to climb up the mountain of self-love from the valley of other-love to get to the summit before you can reach up from there to achieve your spiritual climax to Heaven {death}. Self-love is the pinnacle where the love of God first touches down in this world. Therefore understanding *how* to use your penis, and *when*, are two very distinctly different questions.

Although the ancient Jews viewed the penis as the delivery system for bringing physical life into this world, the internal, biological process that literally brings a man's penis to life with an erection would have been beguiling to the Jews of those days. They had no idea that blood flow contributes to a complex set of triggers that cause an erection. The awe and amazement at the ability of males to achieve an erection never gets old. Reactions range from embarrassment to utter amazement and even jokes about it being magic.

"Turning stones into a loaf of 'bread'" is a euphemistic way of saying testicles create babies. But the idea that one stone is good and the other stone, evil, may have been a clever way of ancient Jews describing nature verses nurture.

I leave the world of bread making to my esteemed, male colleagues who have an interest in using their stones to bake little loaves of living bread. At the risk of mixing metaphors, I see women as good books I enjoy reading for spiritual insight, not ovens I care to bake bread in. The bread men bring to life with their stones isn't the only creative way of making meaning out of our time here on Earth.

"SO HE HUMBLING YOU, ALLOWED YOU TO HUNGER, AND FED YOU WITH MANNA WHICH YOU DID NOT KNOW NOR DID YOUR FATHERS KNOW, THAT HE MIGHT MAKE YOU KNOW THAT MAN SHALL NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE; BUT MAN LIVES BY EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS FROM THE MOUTH OF THE LORD." [Deuteronomy 8:3]

People with education and imagination are in a more spiritually elevated, inner space. They can use their inner forces in conjunction with the forces around them to produce interesting ways of elevating their self-awareness and esteem. Bringing life figuratively into this world can be just as satisfying and personally rewarding as doing so literally. And as we reach maximum population for the planet, having children is fast becoming a detriment to the planet as a whole.

I'm sure most of the Jews at the time of Jesus were too prudish to delve into Torah to appreciate sexual innuendo. It's possible that a few who heard Jesus speak were aware of the double entendres in His message. But that would only have made Him more controversial and risqué to the common man. {The ancient Jews of Jerusalem were uptight, like the majority of the Jews there today. Tel Aviv is where it's at.}

I imagine the ancient Romans in Israel might have picked up the sexual innuendos Jesus used, since sex and domination were probably the only things on their mind. But His allusions to Torah would have gone over their heads. That may even have been, unconsciously, what so disturbed them about His popularity with the masses. Today we're so accustomed to ideas being promoted with sexual innuendo, especially in gay circles, that sexual analogies are used more as a bonding tool than as a way to flex intellectual muscle or a sense of moral superiority.

If you're going through life with a sneaking suspicion that you're doing something wrong; missing the punch line; or people are talking over your head – it'll only make you more curious about the self-knowledge you're missing. Eating a lot of matzo won't teach you about the rapture and drinking copious amounts of wine won't teach you how to achieve ecstasy. Even those who aren't interested in turning stones into bread will always want to improve their technique when it comes to achieving orgasm.

We know the only thing that sharpens the mind of young men is a good education. But when sex is euphemistically linked to the education Jesus seemed to know about, young men learn a lot more, a lot faster. The young man who wishes to apply his knowledge in making love sexually to higher forms of lovemaking is going to have to become schooled in using words to their maximum effect.

People who only go through the motions of having sexual intercourse because of the guilt caused by the prohibitions of their faith are more likely to make moral misjudgments about others because they can't appreciate the subtleties of communication that come with innuendo. Sex isn't evil if it's consensual. Murder, rape, kidnapping, stealing, lying, cheating and the feelings jealousy and envy are evil. But sex isn't bad unless you're doing it unskillfully, i.e. with guilt that inhibits your performance. People who aren't good at sex because of the guilt it brings up for them have a bad attitude about a whole host of other things that have more to do with social intercourse, like feeding the poor and helping the disenfranchised.

Working toward a better sex life would make them more liberal in bed, which would, in turn, make them more progressive politically. Conservatism begins within, with your relationship to yourself. But it has its first deleterious effects in the bedroom.

Gay marriage is a godsend to straight people who've become bored by unadventurous views on sex that are geared only toward making babies. Gay marriage offers sensual and social insights into what makes a marriage meaningful. Gay sex offers abstract views of sexuality that straight couples can learn from to overcome the hang-ups and embarrassments that keep them from enriching their sex life with their partner.

The "devil" that tempted Jesus surely began as a discussion with His congregation in linking the physical aspect of manliness with the emotional levels of evolving into a better person, a topic we're spiritually very familiar with today. The "devil" within was nothing more than the inhibitions in the ancient Jews that made it difficult for some of them to overcome their guilt about enjoying sex in an ancient world where sex by their neighbors included idol worship.

Getting through guilt was a necessary step in understanding Christ's message of love then, a feat it seemed the poor, ancient Jews were more successful in achieving than the rich Jews. Sex became a fundamental aspect of a greater discussion of the spiritual

importance of sensations and feelings in God's plan, something most Jews and Christians today celebrate, but about which most Muslims are still lagging far behind.

Physical dismemberment or castration certainly won't rid a man of his sexuality and sensuality. Nor will laws ever legislate men to love sex with their mate. You can't love anyone else if you can't love all the parts of yourself. Regardless who you partner in bed, you're always going to be having sex with yourself in the process. So it behooves you to improve your technique in making love by addressing "it" at its source.

The spiritual trick that most young men have been asking themselves since the dawn of time is how to avoid the embarrassment, shame and humiliation that get in the way of a good time in bed. But the answer to that question requires more emotional and spiritual insight than it does biological data points.

The tool that makes sex memorable lies between your ears, not between your legs. Whether gay or straight, until a man gets his head out of his butt, he isn't going to become a sensuous lover. In other words, it's wisdom of the heart, that teaches a man how to understand his feelings and sensations. Self-knowledge makes a man good in bed and frees him from the guilt that inhibits him from enjoying life's sensuous pleasures.

If you're a man, you can't love sex until you love God for having given you male genitalia. God made you a man for a reason, to love one man in your life: you. If you can love that one penis God gave you, you can give your love to all men, and you can do so to any degree you wish, provided you obey the spirit of the law presented in Leviticus. But if you make your penis my guide, "it" will ultimately interfere with your life or your sex life.

Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit, the aspect of God-consciousness that leads us to do wonderful things. "It" {the Holy Spirit} led Him to spend 40 days in the desert. There in the desert "it" {"satan"} tempted Him, but the spirit of God is with you through every experience you encounter, whether you can determine if your experiences are motivated by "It" {the Holy Spirit that hold dominion over your positive desires} or "it" {the delivery device of your negative desires}. Only those as dedicated as Moses, Jesus and the Prophet Mohammed unraveled the mystery of God in learning to differentiate "It" from "it." Only those who love life and laughter discover that "God" is a generic term that's really short for "good."

Jesus overcame "it," the inclination to follow His bases desires. He chose, instead, to promote "It," the Holy Spirit that spreads goodness throughout both your worlds. He discussed His evil inclinations and described why "It," was His only guide, not "it" the inner voice of His temptations {serpent/penis}. That's what ordinary men want, too, even if they can't put all their desires into such careful WORDS.

Jesus said, "CURE YOURSELF, DOCTOR!" THEN HE ADDED, "I ASSURE YOU THAT NO PROPHET IS EVER WELCOMED IN HIS OWN COUNTRY." [Luke 4:23-27]

The problem with the Hebrew PROPHETS who came before Jesus was that they so upset the fabric of society by speaking for God that the rabbis finally had to declare that the AGE OF PROPHECY had ended. That was what Jesus was referring to when He said, "I ASSURE YOU THAT NO PROPHET IS EVER WELCOMED IN HIS OWN COUNTRY."

The resistance He felt from others to His preaching wasn't due to sexual innuendo or because He spoke for God. He wasn't welcome because He gave the Jews the ultimatum that the only way to God was through Him. His message was misunderstood because they didn't understand the subtle difference between praying to God from your head and from your heart. They didn't understand what He symbolized.

Those who can't use their head to control their heart never realize how their prayers are misplaced until they learn how to coordinate their head with their heart in their conscience. Unless you know how to recognize and communicate with each and every part of yourself, your prayers will bring inexact results. Accuracy in communicating with the Lord through prayer requires familiarity with your spiritual, operating system and a great deal of practice.

The modern American male is often disgruntled about his container and its contents. This is why some days he feels half-empty; other days, half-full. He doesn't even realize that what it means to feel half-empty is guilt ridden, and what it means to feel half-full is self-loving.

When you combat low self-esteem and self-disregard with curiosity and wonder at how God made you, you'll see that God has always been working to get you to move through your black-and-white thoughts into the colorful world beneath your collarbones. Yes, there may be a few thunderstorms within when you realize how little you cared about yourself in the past, but the rainbow of feelings you'll discover for yourself in your heart will soon thrill you with awe mixed with sorrow at the way you were made. *This* is sheer bliss.

Israel, that tiny strip of land on the Mediterranean, isn't what people are really fighting about. And they're not fighting over different faiths that all believe in the same God. Israel is a metaphor, symbol and sign of the personal property you need to take charge of in yourself, not real estate you need to fight over. Once men learn how to operate themselves from the inside in, they'll receive the spiritual grounding they've been yearning for.

The man who's been taught foresight from his mother will look ahead with hope. The man who's been taught hindsight from his father can look behind with pride at his parentage and ancestry. But insight is something he has to teach himself. He'll be better able to love himself if he has insight, the inner illumination that will allow awareness of his inner flame that will make him feel brilliant.

You should want your life to be long, free and happy in the sociological sense. But you should also want it to be swift, disciplined and meaningful psychologically. The way in which you achieve harmony in your inner world is by developing your persona. The way in which you achieve harmony in your outer world is by developing your personality. The combination of your persona and personality makes you an interesting character in God's personal retelling of His tale through you.

But you're not just a player on the world stage. You're the main character in your own unfolding mystery. If you don't just read the lines others hand you, the actors within you will contribute in their own, special ways to writing a good script and giving you a performance you'll be proud of.

By making you the most fascinating person in your life, you'll discover greater curiosity and interest in others. The Bible will become a spiritual work of art that affects every aspect of your life. The message of Moses will promote your ability to apologize for your mistakes. The message of Jesus will attract you to loving others, which will teach you to love yourself. And the more you use the messages of promotion and attraction on yourself, the more happiness will pursue you and joy will envelop you. Your generosity of spirit may even surprise you from time to time when it suddenly spurs you to become philanthropic. This will open your soul and the Quran.

See Food: The Gospel According to Luke

Follow Others or Persevere on Your Own?

“ONE DAY THE PEOPLE WERE CROWDING CLOSELY ROUND JESUS TO HEAR GOD’S MESSAGE AS HE STOOD ON THE SHORE OF LAKE KINNERET {SEA OF GALILEE}. JESUS NOTICED TWO BOATS DRAWN UP ON THE BEACH, FOR THE FISHERMEN HAD LEFT THEM THERE WHILE THEY WERE CLEANING THEIR NETS. HE WENT ABOARD ONE OF THE BOATS, WHICH BELONGED TO SIMON, AND ASKED HIM TO PUSH OUT A LITTLE FROM THE SHORE. THEN HE SAT DOWN AND CONTINUED HIS TEACHING OF THE CROWDS FROM THE BOAT. WHEN HE HAD FINISHED SPEAKING, HE SAID TO SIMON, ‘PUSH OUT NOW INTO DEEP WATER AND LET DOWN YOUR NETS FOR A CATCH.’ SIMON REPLIED, ‘MASTER! WE’VE WORKED ALL NIGHT AND NEVER CAUGHT A THING, BUT IF YOU SAY SO, I’LL LET THE NETS DOWN.’ AND WHEN THEY HAD DONE THIS, THEY CAUGHT AN ENORMOUS SHOAL OF FISH - SO BIG THAT THE NETS BEGAN TO TEAR. SO THEY SIGNALLED TO THEIR FRIENDS IN THE OTHER BOATS TO COME AND HELP THEM. THEY CAME AND FILLED BOTH THE BOATS TO SINKING POINT. WHEN SIMON PETER SAW THIS, HE FELL ON HIS KNEES BEFORE JESUS AND SAID, ‘KEEP AWAY FROM ME, LORD, FOR I’M ONLY A SINFUL MAN!’ FOR HE AND HIS COMPANIONS WERE STAGGERED AT THE HAUL OF FISH THAT THEY HAD MADE. JESUS SAID TO SIMON, ‘DON’T BE AFRAID, SIMON. FROM NOW ON YOUR CATCH WILL BE MEN.’ SO THEY BROUGHT THE BOATS ASHORE, LEFT EVERYTHING AND FOLLOWED HIM.” [Luke 5:1-11]

To catch fish you have to learn how to think like a fish. To catch men you have to learn how to think like a man who knows how to catch fish. But to catch God you have to learn to think for yourself, and then watch as He catches you.

You’re as slippery as a fish. You flop about when pulled out of your comfort zone, terrified at what the world of spirit will do to you. You yearn for greater familiarity of the power of your heart as you swim casually through life, seemingly without a care in the world. But you’re really a soul preparing for a great flight.

Those who are truly evil are too smart to let themselves get caught up with the sentimentality of flying high. Only when they become too big to escape the net do they get hauled out. It’s better to get caught when you’re still a sardine, and not wait until you feel like a grounded whale gasping for every breath.

Don’t ask a fish what water is; it hasn’t a clue. A fish is wet inside and out, but it doesn’t know it. A fish has to be netted, dragged into the boat and then released, frightened and

confused for it to appreciate the comfort of where it was. A fish likes to live in an underwater world of vanity squabbling with others in schools, without having to think about the opaque ceiling above its head that it could so easily pierce if it tried.

To catch God working in your life to catch you, you have to catch yourself off guard. You have to watch yourself as though you were looking down on yourself from in a glass-bottom boat. You may have to hook and fight with yourself if you're ever going to haul yourself on board. Then you'll watch as you flop about in terror as you decide whether to focus to see yourself outside your familiar realm. If you want to improve yourself you have to "PUSH OUT NOW INTO DEEP WATER AND LET DOWN YOUR NETS FOR A CATCH."

If you look at the emotional waters in your heart that God has recreated for you, you should be able to tell yourself whether they're calm or frothy and foamy. You should be able to look at the surface of the waters mirrored in your left brain that prepare you each time you're ready to take the plunge into right brain thinking. As you become more familiar with the warm, inner, emotional currents, tides and surges, you'll become more adept at catching yourself off guard, and you'll be able to admit just how much you enjoy the feeling of being submerged in your warm, watery feelings when they're calm and serene.

God rarely works alone anymore, even though He did throughout Genesis. He works with people and through people nowadays. He took Moses on a tour of His universe, teaching him to see himself as no man had ever done before. He taught baby Jesus to crawl and then stand on His mother's lap and look out on the world at little boys who thought themselves fully-grown men. And now you can teach yourself to do the same.

You're now ready to resume your cynicism of other men. Leave this familiar world with me. Go with me to the moon, your mind, and look back with me at our planet. You have images in your mind to make that possible. You can use your cynicism to reject the world of utter emptiness: the vacuum of darkness in your imagination. You have the power to instantaneously create a force field around yourself with cynicism to and breathe in the atmosphere within it. You can live in this barren, cratered world we're on. And you can come with me to the dark side where no man can hear or see you; there where, at times, the dark side of you is facing the sun. {Consider looking up the lyrics to Pink Floyd's song "Eclipse" from their album "The Dark Side of the Moon." It will help you understand Islam from a spiritual perspective.)

There, on the far side of the moon, when the moon hangs between the Earth and the sun, you can see the utter illumination of God's light without any shadows. You can feel safe and protected from a planet of people who won't let you pray your own way. There on the bright side, you can find the illumination, warmth and purity you seek. There nobody on Earth will see you. There so far away from the world we share, you can say to yourself,

“GOD CALLED THE LIGHT ‘DAY,’ AND THE DARKNESS HE CALLED ‘NIGHT.’ AND THERE WAS EVENING, AND THERE WAS MORNING—THE FIRST DAY.” [Genesis 1:5] There you can enjoy all the cynicism you want.

It took two Jews to reshape the behavior of ancient Jews in such a way as to inspire the world to strive to live in a more heartfelt way. It really doesn't matter how many examples of evil and apathy you attribute to religion. What matters is how well you can dream of proof that God is aware you're alive. You can only forgive Him for your suffering if you understand what it is you've learned from Him having allowed it. It will take more than wisdom for you to believe everything you know about yourself. It will take love, generosity of spirit, cooperation, tranquility and awe in the mystery of your own being.

The man who's overwhelmed by his penis hears himself say the same thing over and over again inside. He hears himself trying to convince himself that what he thinks he wants is what he really wants. But beware. That inner voice is beguiling.

Nobody other than the Jews really wants Israel. What everyone wants is a STRUGGLE WITH GOD that's easy to understand. This means that Israel must be democratized and shared with the world as a message, not blown up into little pieces. Everyone must be given a piece of her in his head, heart and soul. This means you must discover that God has promised you an Israel all for yourself. If you can't have all of Israel, why bother to share what you could get with anyone. It's only those who have it all who share it all.

When you can move from your left brain to your right; when you can see the surface of the waters of your heart reflecting back a mirror image of yourself; when you can dive in and swim down to the very bottom of your feelings – only then will you find the place where the Prophet Mohammed entered into the heavenly world of spirit, where you, too, will find yourself sitting with Moses and Jesus at Their table discussing the plans of our one God.

This picture I paint may feel disorienting. But when you find yourself swimming in an ocean of frightening emotions, alone and seemingly friendless, threatened by death, you're going to need some sort of guiding principle, a tool to help you see through such utter and awful darkness. This tool can be described as spiritual sonar. Spiritual sonar echoes through you at all times. It's called intuition. God gave us the mammals of the oceans to better relate to personally than the fish in the seas. But without a developed mind that can tune in to your intuition, it's unlikely you'll be able to navigate through the darkness, cold and pressure of the terror in having to be you.

Jesus was the first deep-sea diver of His time. And even though He preached while literally onboard a boat, He intuitively knew the location of that enormous shoal of fish in the Sea of Galilee. The bountiful catch that day was only a surprise to the fishermen. Jesus

was the Jewish fisherman's friend who was there to catch Jewish fishermen, so He could teach them how to catch themselves.

The ancestors of today's Jew once lived in a spiritual desert, an inner world that mirrored the topography of Israel. But because of the challenges God gave the ancient Jews, they had to learn how to feel with uncommon breadth and depth. Jesus chose just such men to tell His story. We call them Apostles, but they were just everyday working-class Jews whose lives were filled with wonder at the miracle of being alive. And then God took those ordinary Jews on a journey called the Diaspora. And the rest is history.

What made the miracle of self-discovery so extraordinary for Simon was that it occurred so frequently that he perceived it as commonplace. To have made his living at fishing and to have seen none of the spiritual ramifications inherent in his job made Simon at first feel afraid. For him to say, "KEEP AWAY FROM ME, LORD, FOR I'M ONLY A SINFUL MAN!" he must have been an unusually humble person, someone so afraid of himself that he warns others of the danger in him not knowing who he was.

When you set the table habitually for every meal and then eat only to fill your belly, you aren't preparing for communion with God at the same time. When you routinely buy fruit at the supermarket and consume it without thought to its Biblical significance, you're not reminding yourself of the responsibility in being free to liberate yourself. When you get up in the morning and make your bed without self-reflection, you aren't considering the sensuality of just being alive to watch your serpent crawl over the branches of your intellectual tree. You shun the power and desire to learn how to emancipate you from yourself.

Therefore there's a good chance you're going to go to go to bed one more night with the same disposition you had that morning. And when that happens day after day, you slowly lose the hope you had as a child. (Please look up the lyrics to "Daniel" by Elton John.)

Meditation will dust your mind of the thoughts that build up like a film on your imagination. Contemplation will filter the muddy waters in your heart that make you feel doubtful. But to scrutinize your soul, you must see through the habitual to perceive the hazy mirage that is the miraculous. Teach a man to swim like a fish and he'll want to fly like a bird.

Modern, American-Jewish men make great fishermen, but we're also a great catch. For American-Christians Jesus has to become more personal than He was for their ancestors in Europe. Only then will His message come clear.

A modern American male who wants to explore his spiritual world has to become a Magellan with the courage to circumnavigate his seven seas. He has to work together with his mates to teach humanity how to sail across their feelings with conscious regard and

respect for what's happening below the surface of themselves. Seventy percent of the world is salty water. Seventy percent of you is emotion mixed with wisdom. A man has to learn to see his own oceans of emotions and immensely majestic seas. He has to come to fathom his own incredible potential. He has to probe his own beauty as mirrored in every placid lake. Love is the one and only answer that holds hope, and sailing past your habitual horizons will become much easier for you now that your hope is so real.

Here are the four questions every Christian should now be able to answer:

1. What was the net Jesus planned to catch man in? {Love}
2. Why were the Apostles just for practice? {Jesus had to catch others with His idea of self-love in order to learn from the process how to catch Himself.}
3. How could Simon still see through his own frightened eyes to live through the feeling of being a danger to Jesus? {Fear of yourself is the modest, first step on the road to loving yourself and others.}
4. How did Judas slip out of this net? {He never learned to approach love from the inside out. He associated love with money.}
5. And here is a bonus question you already know the answer to, too: What feeling did Jesus express when He besmirched God for having forsaken Him? {Regret for humanity in not being able to achieve His hope in His lifetime.}

You should start every challenge in your mind by acknowledging your fears. You should allow your thoughts to wander through the ensuing anger and frustration at what you have to do morally for yourself until you arrive at sorrow for all you don't know yet about yourself that this new experience is going to teach you. Every emotional experience will bring you back to the Egypt of bondage within you. There, you'll relive the Exodus with you as Moses and your inner voices as 600,000 children of God that you're going to take across a desert of struggles to the shores of your Jordan.

This is the journey you're going to go on many times until God is ready to bring you across your Jordan with conscious awareness of your self-love. Only then will you see the importance of your fears, angers and sorrows in constructing a rainbow for yourself out of yellow {fear}, red {anger} and blue {sorrow}. Once you're consciously situated in your inner state of Israel, you'll receive your marching orders and your next mission will begin.

A man ought to be taught to look at this world as both a window and a mirror. He should peer out and see within. He may unconsciously feel frightened {yellow} and angry {red} at what he has to do to bring love into the world without realizing that the combination of these two feelings creates anxiety {orange}.

Most men are in a perpetual state of orange angst in their effort to achieve their own rainbow of self-love. This is easily ameliorated with sorrow {blue} for all you don't know

about yourself, which will become the springboard to guilt that will allow you to dive into your desperation to green your world with jealousy and envy at what others know that you haven't yet been taught.

To see what others are doing wrong around you is easy. To see your own tough and tender love for yourself and your best of intentions for everyone, including yourself, is actually not that hard. Swim through your anxiety. It's a little turbulent, but you've got plenty of strength from years of practice. You'll probably make your way to tomorrow.

The future of Judaism, Christianity and Islam lie in your hands. Rabbis, priests and clerics aspire to become great leaders, but they must be groomed for inspiration from their devotees. Inspire them.

Rabbis should be teaching their congregations table manners before they ever sit down themselves. Priests should teach their parishioners how to set the table for everyone around them. And clerics should engage their worshippers in building longer tables to assure everyone a seat.

Men of great faith have not yet perceived the full truth about the spiritual meal God is serving us. They've told you only what they were told, and what they know. They've listened to their Father without listening to themselves. You must help them by bringing your spiritual bounty home to be added to our meal.

Imagine you're building a skyscraper, and every story you complete is raising you to a higher and higher, panoramic, penthouse view. Imagine God as your Landlord who hears everything you hear in your head, not just what you say out loud in your living room or whisper while in bed.

Since He chose your neighbors with your spiritual challenges in mind, it's easier than you think to work out your differences with them if you "SAM LEV" {literally: PUT YOUR HEART INTO IT; figuratively: PAY ATTENTION}. Your feelings of alienation and disdain of others always occur when you're on the dark side of your moon thinking about the Earth from a great distance away. The stars in the night sky we share are signs to each one of us that we're very far away from God. But since He's so big and so far away, you need that distance while alone just to perceive Him.

Use the word AMEN {I believe} to end your conversations with God. Don't try to force Him to converse with you. Just as you really don't want to talk to Him, He has good reason not to want to talk to you. Find a way to communicate with Him through your faith in yourself. It probably won't be easy. But the more you end your questions with AMEN, the more you will tempt God to begin a new conversation with you about something else.

Watch as your cynicism continues to create an even stronger force field around you. Marvel at the defense you're developing, the iron dome for your own Israel. Bounce around in the inky, black space filled with your own loving spirit. Defy the gravity of the situation.

Go to the other side of darkness and emptiness where you can see and hear everyone on Earth from afar. Know! Know! Know! You are never alone!

In the Book of Deuteronomy God commanded Jewish parents to stone their children if they disobey them. [Deuteronomy 21:18-21] But if God is our Rock we must use His stones wisely to create meaningful change in the way our children think about themselves. We must stone our children with wise words, not violent deeds. The pebbles of sarcasm and sands of mockery are better than the boulders of yore. Cover your children with dusty delight at everything they do wrong to impress upon them the necessity of learning how to clean up their act.

Scorning Torah for being out of step with today's world isn't hard to do; quoting Torah and calling it simplistic is easy; but using it lovingly, as Jesus did, is an art. When you get out of your head, through your heart and into your soul, the secrets of Torah open with ease. You won't need more than 25 chapters to know where you're going. Besides, you already know how it ends. Spoiler alert: he dies.

Slavery has been abolished in the Western world because we were finally able to internalize our slaves and masters, and raise our consciousness to abolish slavery around us altogether. Thanks to our desire to serve and be of service, we've elevated humanity to a higher level of awareness where serving the Lord isn't viewed as an abomination by any man. Because it's possible to both serve your best interests and still be a slave to your own urges you'll always need input from yourself to maintain your spiritual, continuing, adult education. Moses may have graduated where and when he did, but you haven't yet.

You've got to get across the Jordan River into Israel while you still can. And to do so, you're going to have to reinvent yourself as Joshua. Whether you use Joshua #1 from the Old Testament or Joshua #2 {Jesus} from the New, you must get in. And if you're Muslim, you must look to the Quran for the wisdom, love and redemption you need to make your way across that awesome stream.

When Torah is interpreted metaphorically, it becomes spiritually meaningful and personal. But when it's taken literally, its effects always end up being oppressive. If you deceive someone you made a vow of fidelity to, you'll have to admit to yourself you're untrustworthy before you can move on from that mistake. If you cheat another person financially, you won't be able to believe a word anyone says to you until you make amends. Nor will you be able to look at your achievements honestly or believe that your feelings for yourself are sincere until God decides that you've done enough on each assignment to deserve to be promoted to the next. If your whole world only exists outside yourself, your conscience will only be used as other people's guide, and you may feel somewhat inauthentic. (When you have money in your pocket and walk into a store imagining the

sales personnel are worried you'll steal something, you know you're going to have to catch a thief even if you don't literally steal.)

We fought a Civil War in America over whether to take Torah literally or figuratively, and we're fighting a culture war today over the same issue. God will steal the life out from under someone you love if you're a thief. That's a much more painful lesson than just robbing you of your life.

If Torah is perceived as the Jewish "to do" list, there are many items on that list we've been able to cross off and give to other faiths to then perfect or eradicate through their institutions of higher learning and judicial systems.

The WORD of God will always have to be made manifest personally to be manifested universally. You can't defeat wisdom and love any more than you can turn your back on God's generosity of spirit. But you also can't convince people where they're coming from inside themselves or whether they're moving toward self-love or self-loathing. From my own experience, however, I can only tell you that nobody knows better than a gay-Jew what it's like to feel screwed... (Look up "Bitty Boppy Betty" by the group "Pink Martini." They say it a lot better than me.)

When the rushing rapids of the raging river of youth finally reach the sea in middle age the water suddenly becomes much calmer and deeper; the incessant noise abates; and silence, at last, fills the emptiness within. The rocks you rushed over so merrily in childhood recede at the mouth of the river in retirement, and you find yourself afloat in a newfound freedom you never could have dreamt of when you started out as a trickle up there at the summit. Life may be a climb intellectually, but emotionally it's a constant descent. Don't worry about making it to the end in time. Don't worry about getting There late.

Giving your body rest is important, but different from giving it the kind of sustenance that comes with spiritual relaxation. Work, as well as pleasure, requires effort and even, at times, a modicum of anxiety. Spiritual relaxation does not. Spiritual relaxation comes from the soul, bringing with it a different state of mindfulness. Spiritual relaxation brings the rewards of meditation, contemplation and self-study. These inner activities aren't forms of either work or pleasure. They're states of being that bring life new meaning. Call this state the spiritually creative state that comes with God-consciousness. It's free from the constant struggle between thoughts and feelings that leaves you full of opinions. Call this state SHABBAT {the Sabbath} and honor it.

If you think time is money, you have a pragmatic sense of time. If you think time is important because it allows you to be with those you love, you have an idealistic sense of time. But if you think time is precious because it lets you be with yourself, only then do you receive the full sense of the value of time. You have to use your head to understand

time. Your heart and soul inform you of their own impressions of the meaning of time in the subjective sense, but you have to become realistic, able to see the inner/outer, subjective/objective combination of impressions that give you a sense of what time means to you. When you think good thoughts you breathe easier.

God separated the light from the darkness at the beginning of His first week and gave us the Sabbath at the other so we could become masters over time. But that must be accomplished subjectively before we'll be able to work on that problem objectively. The gentle man masters the Sabbath by using his time to discover himself in God's presence, regardless of the day of the week or the edifice in which that happens to happen. The rough individualist uses time to make money. And all those in between strive to use time to enjoy the ones they're learning to love.

When Catholics finally get their first, female pope, there are a few edicts I'd like to suggest she enacts. The first has to do with the Last Supper. That Passover meal was the communion Jesus took His congregation through while in His literal presence. But in the spirit of the events of the following day, it should be viewed as the First Supper, not the last. The presumption of every communion since that meal has been that Jesus still presides over His meal by continuing to turn symbolism into faith that can enter into you. The encounters with Him by some of His disciples after His resurrection confirm that symbolic logic goes down than man's mind.

The second suggestion I'd make is that there have been many tears over the vision of Christ as depicted by the 15th Century gay genius, Michelangelo, in his sculpture "The Pieta." It's about time someone depicts Mary's awakening in Heaven in her Son's arms. The Catholic Church could add more hope to their message if they used a mother's joy to motivate their message.

The problem that's more acute than the need for greater financial remuneration for the working class is conscious awareness of their spiritual remuneration. They separate the workweek from the Sabbath rather than bringing the Sabbath with them all week long. They work for the rewards that come from the outside in, but they don't have a picture in their mind of the rewards inherent in doing things the other way around. Creativity and the joy of service are sometimes missing from their job because they're missing in their imagination. They haven't found a way to put their heart into everything they're doing because they don't have a clear enough vision of what they're going for. They aren't doing their AVODA from the inside out. They're only going to work. They aren't going to worship. They're not quite Jewish enough for Jesus.

Those who work without joy will have their work taken away from them. And those who do work for joy will be burdened with more work than they can manage. Such are the

poetic outcomes that people struggle to understand. The prosaic see no continuum between these two extremes.

The problem with the leisure class is just as vacuous for the same reason. Those who live to work or work to live miss the point of God having created time and space. To appreciate space you only need a container. To appreciate time, you need contents.

Jesus never claimed to be the father of time. He never said He created outer space. In fact, He never said He was God. He merely suggested that every gentle man {BEN ADAM: son of a man} has the potential of becoming a master over the Sabbath. Every man can become a master of inner space and subjective time.

Jesus was figuratively correct in saying that no one could get to the Father except through Him because we must all go through inner time and space to discover God's opinion of us. It's too easy to go to a house of worship one day a week and call yourself a child of God. Jesus's provocative claims were meant to turn everyday life into a spiritual school that's in session 24/7, and yet most people are still playing hooky or attending only part time. Some prefer only to go to night school, getting up in the middle of the night to raid the refrigerator to commune with darkness and silence. Or they just toss and turn in an effort to get something out without soiling the sheets. Many are in spiritual, special ed., thinking they can loath others and love themselves without repercussions. And then there are the artistic types who only enroll themselves in charm school to get the rest of us to admire them. {If you see yourself as a chameleon and a mocking bird, you're a graduate of charm school.}

Most Christians today can earn a living, manage co-workers and raise a family. They understand the importance of their duty to society and the law of the land. They completed Sunday school classes from the inside out with the Teacher, His assistant and the Holy Spirit who guided them to do what's right.

Most Christians love Jesus, but they loathe themselves. That's hardly the spirit of His message. But that's because they haven't graduated Hebrew school yet. They haven't even reached the emotional age when they're ready for a Bar Mitzvah. {This spiritual rite of passage in Judaism happens at the age of thirteen when your genitals suddenly wake up to a whole other aspect of the meaning of life.}

If Jesus does sit at the right-hand side of God, the good Jews will surely come before Him when they come before God because they certainly aren't headed the wrong way. The good Christians will know they should take their seat at Their table without being asked, and the good Muslims will submit to an invitation because the P r o p h e t Mohammed will be There, too. The question for good people of the Abrahamic faiths is only whether they come hungry and thirsty for what They're serving. Or whether they come gasping as though they'd lived their whole life on one breath of air.

If you think you can ridicule gays and kill Jews and receive an invitation to this feast you're crazy. You're severely insane. You need medical help, counseling and religious intervention. If you don't think the Chosen People were chosen to have a positive effect on this world, you don't think very much of yourself. And if you don't think that queens will be there beside the King, girlfriend, even your nuts are nuts.

It's important to remember the metaphor of God-as-our-Father and, thereby, us as in a family with spiritual brothers and sisters. If you're a Christian, you believe in Jesus as the one and only Son of the Father. This idea isn't in conflict with rest of us being His sons and daughters, too. Jesus may be the only Son of God, but He's not the only son of God. What you personally see and hear as the result of your growing awareness of God's plan is essential to your spiritual development. Sometimes the only difference you can hear in the same word repeated comes from its intonation. What use would Spiritual Linguistics be if it didn't include changes in intonation?

Moses only hesitantly agreed to God's plan for him. After 80 years of running away from his own guilt ridden past, God had to twist his arm to serve Him. There was no holy roller with a Bible in his hand crying over a loudspeaker to convince Moses to go back to Egypt. He had to decide for himself whether to work with God to overcome his guilt at what he'd done in his past or turn his back on Him, and be relegated to anonymity in history. Even during the Exodus Moses had frequent discussions with God, and still he disobeyed Him on a number of occasions. But at least Moses documented his own mistakes for us to learn from. Can you say as much?

Jesus was, by contrast, the world's greatest example of an avid follower of God. The Prophet Mohammed submitted to God's command. Moses LED. Jesus FOLLOWED. Mohammed submitted.

First you must agree to lead others. Then you must follow God. Lastly, when your faith is fully formed, you'll be ready to submit to what will be. Your fate is always in God's hands. Although few people know what will kill them, nobody can pinpoint where he goes next when he leaves here. Once Heaven was assumed to be literally on the other side of the clouds just above the blue skies. Today each of us has to search for Heaven in another space, since its physical location has either changed or the concept wasn't realistically fleshed out to begin with.

If you don't learn to embrace the entire Abrahamic traditions as a personal process, you'll find yourself not only at war with yourself, but possibly advocating wars with Jews and gays that could be solved with greater spiritual insight instead. It's better to have a WORD/WORD/world with someone than to fight with him.

God planted the Jewish seed, and we've learned to embrace Him with 3,400-year old roots like a tree grips the ground. Then He took one seed from our tree to plant a second

sacred seed in our land that grew into Christianity. That was His choice, not ours. He did the same with Islam, only with Islam, He used a Judeo-Christian sprout instead of a Jewish seed, and He planted it in Mecca. Those who discount the legitimacy of Judaism, Christianity or Islam as God-given faiths are living like atheists. Blind faith that can see no value in other faiths is a sign of little faith.

You don't have to be Muslim to face the ultimate submission to God's will. Go to any hospice and you'll see people in the process of learning spiritual submission. Go to any place in the world suffering from an epidemic, and you'll see the same. Go to a cemetery and you'll see those who passed their final exam in spiritual humiliation.

Each of us must learn to submit emotionally and spiritually to God's bell that tells us to leave the playground of life and come to class. But many plan to walk off campus when they graduate without picking up their diploma on the way out. Such people think they can postpone their final exam until after they've graduated, and that simply not realistic. We're here to learn. We're here being tested. And we're going to have to account for what we do here until the moment we leave. If you don't like the idea of graduating and receiving a kindergarten diploma, you'd better get to work.

If you don't seek spiritual reasons for your pain and suffering that include lessons in wisdom, love and generosity you'll end up blasé to your spiritual education, and you won't graduate with the degree you probably think you deserve. Why go through all the tough love you think you ought to impose on others if you're just going to graduate with an elementary school, spiritual education when you leave? Why not enjoy the joy of giving away your tender love while you still can?

Agnostics want God to prove to them He exists. They don't want to have to take the moral, high road without a guarantee. They don't want to have to put in the extra effort without promises they can believe in, when the only promises anyone can believe in come from one's self. If your WORD/WORD/w o r d isn't good enough, whose is?

I'm not advocating that you surrender to injustice. Nor am I advocating a rejection of your feelings of victimization and need for martyrdom. The more you see yourself as a victim, the more powerful you'll become as you change yourself. That which you survive may make you stronger, but that which you survive with gratitude to God will make you sweeter. And whatever has turned you into a martyr should be blessed if you turn the jihad in on yourself. Any reason you can give yourself for loving yourself will make you feel immortal. Just don't bust the balls of the gays and Jews. You don't know what's in 'em.

As a man comes to realize there's an eternal rainbow of hope high in his inner sky, he slowly comes to see that life is far more beautiful than he ever thought it could be when he was a child. As each generation is taught to perceive life more wisely, hope arches ever higher and wider in all the brilliant colors of love, ending at the other end of the rainbow

with a great splash of generosity of spirit into a pot of pure rapture, the living gold you can earn the right to dip into right here and now.

The rapture of a setting sun over the sea as seen from the shore is a soulful Muslim view of the sky over a Christian ocean as seen from the Jewish sands beneath your feet. God paints these pictures for us every day, but there are too few spiritual art critics to describe the majesty of His brush strokes using spiritual terminology we can all understand.

Billionaires who buy politicians and elections will leave their money here just like the rest of us. You can't take "it" with you. The only thing you have is your love or loathing of yourself. The rich are between a Rock and a hard place because they have to put so much money where their mouth is.

Some choose to pay for their personal message to the world with their life; others have to pay with their children's or parents' lives; some only with their money. But the whole planet is now learning that we have to pay for our tuition and bad grades. Even though there's a condemnation of gays on the far right of the political spectrum and of Jews on the far left, at the center of the political spectrum lies the middle class that sits between the wealthy and impoverished. It's middle class values that are being overlooked because we haven't yet fully enunciated them to ourselves.

You're not innocent until proven guilty in the spiritual sense of the WORD/WORD/w o r d. Every member of the Abrahamic faiths is guilty of stealing right from the start. The only thing you can do now is to repent for that as responsibly as is humanly possible with apologies for all that you don't know and thank You for all that you do.

Jesus said, "I SAY TO ALL OF YOU WHO WILL LISTEN TO ME: LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, DO GOOD TO THOSE WHO HATE YOU, BLESS THOSE WHO CURSE YOU, AND PRAY FOR THOSE WHO TREAT YOU BADLY." [Luke 6:27-28]

He couldn't have been more correct and more incorrect. He understood the dilemma of every age, not just the age of the Jews at the time in which He lived. Our problems today are no different from the problems Jesus spoke of then. Everyone is in an Israel of his own making even if his body is located elsewhere on the planet. Everyone is facing Roman invaders every day even if he doesn't speak Aramaic or Hebrew.

But the w o r d s of the P r o p h e t Muhammad complete the message of loving your enemy {yourself}. Do good to those you hate {your head, heart or soul}. Bless those who curse you {your serpent or worm}. And pray for those who treat you badly {...that God will illuminate you to the reason why}.

If you look at yourself closely, you'll see that you should never need to be dafka {spiteful} toward yourself. You may express your defiance of being you by being accident prone; losing your keys just as you're ready to leave the house; forgetting your wallet in the car; not bringing along an umbrella, etc. But it would make far more sense to speak

harshly to yourself for what you put yourself through than accept your self-disregard in silence. Although nobody wants to be lectured to, lecturing yourself would be the kindest means of self-control.

Waiting for our Father to take away your privileges is an effective way to get Him to motivate you to grow up, but it'd be wiser if you put in more effort on your own behalf. It's normal for your inner child to strike out at your inner parent from time to time to let you know he's not happy with your authority. But that doesn't make it healthy. Nobody said raising children is easy. But raising your inner child is where good, parenting skills have to start.

If you smoke, are overweight, take drugs or suffer from financial mismanagement, who do you have to blame? If you can't admit that you're your own worst enemy, then you've found plenty of scapegoats to surround yourself with instead.

Let's invade our enemies' lands with poets, painters, priests and prima donnas to teach our enemies how to behave toward themselves, rather than tell them how to behave toward us. We have cheerleaders who could describe so much better with batons, than soldiers with guns, what an interesting game life can be. We have dancers who could convey more about time and space with their feet than generals could ever express with bombs.

People don't think about charming their enemies into submission because they don't know how to charm themselves into submission. A bright future for gays and secular Jews is almost assured if we bank on the contrary, spiteful and defiant sides of man to control himself for us. A few, good men like us, who love themselves, could do more to teach all the rest to like one another than all the armies of the world put together.

What's the point in believing in God and living a devout life if you don't "LOVE YOUR ENEMIES, DO GOOD TO THOSE WHO HATE YOU, BLESS THOSE WHO CURSE YOU, AND PRAY FOR THOSE WHO TREAT YOU BADLY." What's the point of believing in Jesus if you don't bring His WORDS into the 21st Century with a new view toward loving enemies, blessing adversaries and praying for foes?

Jesus continued in the Gospel According to Luke, "IF YOU LOVE ONLY THOSE WHO LOVE YOU, WHAT CREDIT IS THAT TO YOU? EVEN SINNERS LOVE THOSE WHO LOVE THEM! AND IF YOU DO GOOD ONLY TO THOSE WHO DO GOOD TO YOU, WHAT CREDIT IS THAT TO YOU? EVEN SINNERS DO THAT. AND IF YOU LEND ONLY TO THOSE FROM WHOM YOU HOPE TO GET YOUR MONEY BACK, WHAT CREDIT IS THAT TO YOU? EVEN SINNERS LEND TO SINNERS AND EXPECT TO GET THEIR MONEY BACK. NO, YOU ARE TO LOVE YOUR ENEMIES AND DO GOOD AND LEND WITHOUT HOPE OF RETURN. YOUR REWARD WILL BE WONDERFUL AND YOU WILL BE SONS OF THE

MOST HIGH. FOR HE IS KIND TO THE UNGRATEFUL AND THE WICKED!” [Luke 6:32-33]

That God is kind to the ungrateful and wicked is easy to see. But that He’s harsh to the grateful and goodhearted is hard to accept. If you were an English teacher correcting essays, would you spend more time on the “A” students paper or the “F’s”?

There are branches of every man’s tree that he’s never climbed, let alone that he holds any hope of seeing blossom and bloom one day. There’s no way to pick your fruits of self-knowledge if they don’t yet hang from your tree. Most people are so habituated by the boughs of the tree they see that they never think to watch as new branches and twigs grow within them that could grow fruit in the future that will be bathed in a different light.

The reward in holding your enemies with greater emotional regard brings greater emotional regard to the way you hold yourself. God already knows where He planted you, and why He planted you there. He helped you germinate from your spiritual shell. He assisted you in driving your first root around the rock of your family. He motivated you to shoot up like a sprout in childhood, away from the ground you came from and up toward the sky where He resides. He watered you with His life-affirming ways when you made mistakes and shined down upon you with righteousness. He’s done all this so you could see the importance of doing the same for yourself.

Becoming a tree hugger is a spiritual exercise that begins from the inside out, but it should be extended to the outside in and then reviewed from the inside in. At every tree you look at around you, you should see yourself. At every marriage you’re invited to witness, eat and dance at, you should reaffirm your marriage to yourself instead of turning around inside, saying rhetorically, “Would you marry me?”

If you don’t mourn yourself at every funeral you go to, how deep could your loss really be? You won’t be you here forever. If you don’t feel sorry for yourself, who will? If you don’t regret the challenges you’ve been given, how will you surmount them? The depth of your emotions will determine the height of your advances.

The first two thirds of this book may have been intellectually challenging, but the rest should now feel easier. After climbing the Everest of ideas I presented you with up until now, you’re now ready to leave the summit with a new view of you and descend to the other side. Now the gravity of your own situation will work in your favor.

See Food: The Gospel According to Luke

Sawdust or Wooden Planks?

Jesus continued by asking, “WHY DO YOU LOOK AT THE SPECK OF SAWDUST IN YOUR BROTHER’S EYE AND FAIL TO NOTICE THE PLANK IN YOUR OWN? HOW CAN YOU SAY TO YOUR BROTHER, ‘LET ME TAKE THE SPECK OUT OF YOUR EYE WHEN YOU CANNOT SEE THE PLANK IN YOUR OWN?’ YOU FRAUD! TAKE THE PLANK OUT OF YOUR OWN EYE FIRST AND THEN YOU CAN SEE CLEARLY ENOUGH TO REMOVE YOUR BROTHER’S SPECK.” [Luke 6:41-42]

SAWDUST and PLANKS are extensions of the metaphor of man as a tree of self-knowledge for the purpose of moral inquiry. Life is divided into roles and tasks of social expertise, like a tree is cut into planks. Life has planed your rough edges and then polished your discourteous ways like a carpenter sands wood. But there comes a point in time when every man finds himself with a pile of what looks like wasted information, so small that it seems meaningless in the greater scheme of things. These specks of wood in your brother’s eye are sawdust that causes him a great deal of irritation even though they don’t impede your vision in the slightest.

Jesus makes His point by contrasting these specs of sawdust that are so easy to see in others to the planks we take for granted that we don’t realize impede our own vision, making us very irritable. It’s easy to see these little ways in which we’ve all been ground down over a lifetime with facts we take for granted that we think amount to nothing overall. It’s hard to see this sawdust you find so irritating in others that it makes your eyes water that obscures your own ability to see. So many are right there ready to get in their brother’s face, and so few are able to help themselves see.

Charity for others isn’t a privilege until you see giving it to yourself as a curse. Many are called to give to themselves indirectly through others; few are chosen to avoid having to do so. You, too, will feel chosen once you’ve removed a plank or two from your own eye.

Once you’ve improved your own inner vision you’ll see new opportunities for helping others improve their situation with cleverness and creativity, not guile and deceit. To the degree that you help yourself see your own impediments, you’ll be allowed to help others remove the dust from their eye just by telling them how you got the plank out of your own.

“IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR A GOOD TREE TO PRODUCE BAD FRUIT - AS IMPOSSIBLE AS IT IS FOR A BAD TREE TO PRODUCE GOOD FRUIT. DO NOT MEN KNOW WHAT A TREE IS BY ITS FRUIT? YOU CANNOT PICK FIGS FROM BRIARS, OR GATHER A BUNCH OF GRAPES FROM A BLACKBERRY BUSH. A

GOOD MAN PRODUCES GOOD THINGS FROM THE GOOD STORED UP IN HIS HEART, AND A BAD MAN PRODUCE EVIL THINGS FROM HIS OWN STORES OF EVIL. FOR A MAN'S WORDS WILL ALWAYS EXPRESS WHAT HAS BEEN TREASURED IN HIS HEART." [Luke 6:43-45]

Let's begin with the last sentence first. "FOR A MAN'S WORDS WILL ALWAYS EXPRESS WHAT HAS BEEN TREASURED IN HIS HEART." What each of us treasures in our heart has been individually inspired by God and therefore should prompt moral debate and comparison. Feelings are, as Jesus inferred, highly influential in the moral decisions we make. People feel many things. Some are financially very comfortable, but they're jealous of other people's looks and envious of the inner wealth of others. Some are filled with the love of service and a sense of duty to mankind.

But when we make the claim that some people have good hearts and others' hearts are bad, we have to ask ourselves what it is people treasure by the way they behave, and why. Sometimes what a man holds dear is the Palestine he once had, not the Israel that is. Teach him what it means to live in a land of milk {love} and honey {wisdom}, and he'll learn to treasure his own land, his own milk and his own honey. But teach him to treasure what you have with his hands, and he'll steal from you. Therefore you must teach him to treasure with his heart, for only then will he love you.

Let the rich learn how to thread a needle with a camel. Help them decide before they reach their deathbed whether being forced to pay their workers a living wage is the record on which they want to meet their Maker. Let them decide for themselves if they've leaving behind enough money for their children by sacrificing all their wisdom, love and opportunity for redemption.

Granted Jesus's argument begins with the statement that "IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR A GOOD TREE TO PRODUCE BAD FRUIT." But a good tree can be small. It may even have very few branches. A good tree will always produce sweet fruit, but will it necessarily produce much fruit? A bad tree may produce great quantity of fruit that's wooden and not particularly tasty.

If you judge every tree by its fruit, you'll overlook its other attributes. Nature produces a range of physical attributes that determine which botanical species are going to be chosen to merely survive, and which are going to thrive. The same evolutionary process that has been scientifically proven in nature can be observed morally mirrored in man. Natural selection of the finest is occurring in us. The wood of the sugar maple is hard, strong, close-grained, and tough, with a fine, satiny surface. It's in great demand for flooring, veneer, interior finish and furniture, and it's great for burning in fireplaces. But the winter buds are sharp-pointed cones, a dull shade of brown that aren't particularly pretty. And the fruit of

the sugar maple grow with wings that carry it far and wide, but the fruit isn't edible. If you judge the sugar maple by its fruit, you'll miss all the sweetness inside the tree.

The Jews have been helping Christians for the past 2,000 years come out of the watery, emotional world they were created in. We've coaxed them spiritually onto dry land in the same way that evolution has coaxed physical life out of the sea and onto the land and into the sky. I suspect some Christians and Muslims choose not to believe in spiritual evolution because they don't want to have to compare the origin of the species to the positive influence Jews have historically had on them.

But Christianity has repaid us by bringing the Jews back to the sea. We're like warm-blooded, air-breathing whales, seals and dolphins. Many Jews are clumsy on land. And Muslims are going to teach both of us how to fly like bats and flying squirrels. The physical evolution of the species is a hint to the spiritual evolution of the faiths. We're all earning our fins and wings.

Jesus's argument doesn't end with good and bad trees. He continued by describing the expectation of the kind of fruit we get from various botanical species. "YOU CANNOT PICK FIGS FROM BRIARS, OR GATHER A BUNCH OF GRAPES FROM A BLACKBERRY BUSH" A fig comes from a tree. You can't pick figs from a plant that has a thorny stem. Grapes come from vines. They aren't found on bushes or trees. In other words, people are inherently different. They fruit this world in unique ways. You can't expect them to produce what you produce, or be like you. "A GOOD MAN PRODUCES GOOD THINGS FROM THE GOOD STORED UP IN HIS HEART, AND A BAD MAN PRODUCE EVIL THINGS FROM HIS OWN STORES OF EVIL" There are many kinds of men with good hearts, and the harvest from each man's heart may be very different from his brother's. Let's spend less time trying to change people, and more time teaching them how to change, transform and transcend themselves.

Each of us produces the fruits of the vine {passion for the spirit of man} and the grain {passion for the body of man}. Each of us is capable of wisdom and love if we use our knowledge to pursue the love of one man before all others {our own}. Jesus augmented the overriding metaphor of Torah {man as a Tree of knowledge of good and evil} with symbolic logic to prove to man that because he loves himself, he can then see that God has good reason to love Him, too.

And yet, too many people are voted into positions of authority because they can claim to adore themselves. Self-adoration is a form of idolatry. It's nothing like self-love. Don't try to eat a rose or a thistle. They'll only make you bleed.

Not every man's heart is laden with the fruit of the grape and grain: self-love. Some spiritual farmers produce only green or rotten fruit: hatred, jealousy and a desire for revenge mixed with a love for blood. And yet the timber they produce may be of good

quality. But what can be done with the fruits of their labors? We must teach people to question the reasons for the pain and suffering each of us goes through.

Too many people want to look holy, not happy. They want to give the impression that they're seated at the front of the classroom where the Teacher stands, closer to Him than the rest of us. Those of us who can see the Teacher and the board just fine where we are within don't see the need to sit in the front row for the sake of looking good to Him. In fact, it's a little off putting to watch as the Teacher's pets claw at one another for His attentions.

God forced the Jews to carry Christ's message to Europe when they were enslaved by the Romans and banished from Israel. Then the European Christians took over and replanted His seeds around world themselves. The seeds of Christ's love are Jewish seeds God wanted grown in some places of the world, but not others. A variation was took root in Mecca with an Islamic graft from the Judeo-Christian shoot. The seeds of Islamic fruit took root in North Africa and some places in the Far East. These spiritual differences are variations not deviations. They're all God's intention.

The secret to future, successful, spiritual gardening isn't going to happen unconsciously, as it did in the past. In the future Jews, Christians and Muslims will consciously learn to value each other's seeds by planting wisdom, love and the tenets of philanthropy in their children, with gratitude to everyone on Earth for his individual contribution. Jealousy, envy, revenge, hatred and apathy worked well in the past to separate one variety from another in developing the unique diversity we enjoy today.

But because men have always been so dafka about learning about the spiritual process we're all going through, they often refuse to plant an assortment of seeds in themselves for the future unless they're motivated by spite. They're going to need to search their soul carefully to determine why they're doing what they're doing. And they're going to have to morally weed their garden themselves. If any one of the Abrahamic faiths think it has a monopoly or an advantage over the others and wants to gamble on gaining the lion's share of the spiritual market, as was done in the past, the pain and suffering will increase exponentially in ways no one can yet anticipate. Just imagine what global warming or a pandemic would do to humanity?

Not introducing the seeds of gay life into your community or discriminating against women who refuse to become mothers after they're pregnant is a moral choice you make, and those religious institutions that wish to continue to weed their garden of those plants they insist are out of place are going to have to face public scrutiny, as well as their own eternal, moral scrutiny. Ultimately people are going to have to adjust to the English garden we aspire to in America, a lot that's a little wild, somewhat exotic and pretty unkempt.

Your feelings of hatred and revenge against those who make moral choices that don't affect you should be shared with God, not the rest of us. It's better to tell the Teacher that you've got a moral question about some of your thoughts and feelings than to keep them a secret from Him. Otherwise you'll simply be tested in ways you'll find very difficult to associate with your own moral lessons. It's in our Teacher's best interest to help you improve yourself, not only for your sake, but for everyone else's sake, as well. If you don't want Him to adjust your curriculum with pain and suffering, go to Him voluntarily for help adjusting your attitude. He'll be more than glad to help you learn about His love for the people you don't seem to like.

Jews have contributed for 3,400 years to the development of man's mind, and we've shared the fruits of our spiritual labors with everyone freely. Christians have been contributing to the development of our heart for 2,000 years, and they've taken their harvest to market, and have done well for themselves, too. Muslims have been contributing to the development of our soul for 1,400 years, and have planted their seeds in this world, as well, although getting others to buy into their idea of a paradise here on Earth has become a marketing nightmare of late.

People are much more complex than they used to be, even in our grandparents' generation. Radio, television, telephone, computers, Internet, smart phones and the online social media have blurred not just technical boundaries, but also the spiritual lines that Moshe RABENU {our rabbi}, Rabbi Joshua {Jesus} and the P r o p h e t Mohammed originally drew. You can't use a device to figure out what someone believes. You have to use yourself.

Imagine your mind as a lever that can take you out of one gear of wisdom into another; your heart as a pedal that will move you forward depending on how much emotional weight you press to the metal; and your soul as a switch that will regulate the temperature of the spiritual air you let in. It's your job to adjust all three to determine the ways in which you get from here to There. There's no insurance for driving a spiritual vehicle. There's little opportunity for going back to the way it once was. While some are still burning an oily guilt that blackens their inner sky and chokes the life out of everyone they meet, others have the luxury of enjoying a battery-charged, spiritual, operating system refueled by love. What are you driving, and what does it run on?

As the leaves of a good man turn from green to red, to crimson brown; while they're drying out and curling before they fall; as his branches begin to show the bare wood where the leaves once were, reminding him of all previous winters – he's given a spiritual luxury and privilege a bad man will never know. The good man can look back on his life with pensive self-regard and utter amazement. He can thank God for the gift of having been planted in His garden without even having known it. The good man is grateful for every plank he was privileged to remove from his eyes and was able to tell others how he did so.

He may live until his dying day with a few, unfulfilled dreams, but at least he'll know he did his homework, passed his tests and came to class faithfully day after day.

The good man is disconnected from his mother's umbilical cord and is resigned to the deeply emotional scar he has to show for it on his belly. He later unconsciously crawled out of her arms and onto the floor, but he'll never forget the day he literally walked out of her house. He's taken baby steps his whole life toward his Father's arms ever since, each step far more lugubrious and cumbersome than he could possibly express in words. But he got as far as he did with integrity, and that's all that now matters.

"A MAN'S WORDS WILL ALWAYS EXPRESS WHAT HAS BEEN TREASURED IN HIS HEART." But we know that what a good man most treasures in his heart is his mother, for she was the first projection of his love. She was the Eve who tempted him to pick life and love it. She was the one who gave him his first taste of guilt, and that, too, made such a difference. **"YOU CANNOT PICK FIGS FROM BRIARS, OR GATHER A BUNCH OF GRAPES FROM A BLACKBERRY BUSH"** Although you were fashioned into the kind of person you are by forces you had no control over, you are a good man who is thankful for the way you are because of the parents God gave you. You are this way with good reason. Stop wrestling with what kind of fruit you could have produced, and start seeding the world with conscious awareness of what your parents gave you that will help you make yourself into who you always wanted to be.

Your relationship with your mother was the most profoundly important experience of your life, even if you never had the privilege of meeting her. The cutting of "her" umbilical cord was the first and foremost experience of loneliness and separation you ever experienced. That act was the final act of birth that separated you from her body, moving you in the direction of God. If you deny the power and importance of this first spiritual act of life, how will you find a way to identify with the other experiences you share with every other human being on the planet?

You conceal your genitals, as Adam did with Eve. You can hide amongst others in your tribe and sub-tribes just as Adam and Eve hid from God in the groves and stands of trees in Eden. And yet you stand alone before Him in a unique container, handmade by Him, filled with a contents manmade within thanks to you. You may be unique, but you're not any more unique than the rest of us.

The humiliation you've felt that made you turn your back on yourself and renounce your own moral imperative to love yourself has since distanced you from everyone. But you can still turn your opinion of them around. To face God at the end of life will be easier if you first face yourself, and even that you can't do without His help.

You can't leave your container when you pray to God, but you can pray for Him to separate you from your container cautiously and carefully when you have to leave it to go

up into His arms. The more you understand how and why Jesus chose to be remembered with bread and wine, and what was happening at the time, the easier it will be to understand how to separate the meaning of your bread {body} and wine {blood} from one another.

Jesus is God, given to us for practice. Face Him as an exercise in facing yourselves. It's no coincidence God gave Him to us to learn to see an outstanding example of His love in the flesh. Your feelings will awaken you to God's presence if you learn to pay more attention to His message of love in the flesh.

The question presented in this chapter was "Sawdust or Wooden Planks?" The wooden plank you remove from your own eye will give you insight. The wooden plank isn't another tree blocking your view. It's a branch of your own tree. The wooden plank obstructing your view in you is knowledge that you haven't yet accounted to God for having taken without asking.

When you get lost in self-doubts and disparaging opinions about yourself you're in the process of identifying with this plank, not sawdust. Every 2x4 you find in your eye was put there for you to focus more intently on yourself and to initiate construction of a house of prayer with God within you. Each plank will teach you to see yourself differently once you can appreciate it's uncomfortable and irritating placement where it lies.

If you're annoyed by the sawdust in others' eyes, adjust to their imperfections. You aren't going to help them see what's obstructing their view. If anything, let it be a lesson to see the 2x4 in your own eye.

See Food: The Gospel According to Luke

Everybody or Everyone?

There's a spiritual difference between "everybody" and "everyone." And Jesus would have probably been very interested in having had that difference explained to Him, for in Hebrew there's no word for everybody, only everyone. Everybody is a Western view of looking at people as bodies without emotional and spiritual forces within them. It's a view of mankind from the head, not the heart. The inner aspects of the human body include man's organs and biological systems. But none of that can account for his feelings, desires and beliefs. The medical doctor is the world's expert in matters of healing your body, but he can't explain to you how your inner dynamics combine to create a sense of oneness within.

Those of us who are true believers look at our body as a reflection of God's nature struggling to survive in Mother Nature. He made us in His image, and so every aspect of our body biologically reflects an aspect of Him. The one God, the God whose image we're all made in is only evident when contemplating both your physical container and spiritual contents.

If your doctor has to open you up, it reveals that your body is pretty much the same inside as everybody else's. It's only when you spiritually dissect a Jew, Christian, Muslim, Hindu or Buddhist that you discover how deeply everyone's inner forces have been affected differently by our tribal experiences with God over millennia. Awareness and appreciation of your individuality as a God-given gift to you and all humanity make it possible for you to delve further to discover how carefully He made every *one* of us.

When you look at people like snow, icicles, sleet, slush, hail, ice, blizzards, flurries and flakes, you see nations and tribes. But when you look down into the individual, you see the magnificence of a single snowflake. Just as God carves every snowflake with a unique pattern, so He carved you with a unique pattern.

To appreciate and be one with every "you," you have to become soulful. You have to come from that place inside you where you can appreciate the differences in peoples, not judge them for their differences. This requires that you see yourself as part of the problem before you insist you're a part of the solution.

God didn't make gay-Jews by mistake. We aren't rejects from His assembly line He didn't know what to do with, so He discarded them on Earth for people to abuse. He didn't create Buddhists for Christians to convert. He didn't make blacks to live as separate citizens among whites. Even though we're all in a one-room, spiritual schoolhouse, you can't determine whether your classmates are enrolled in the graduate course you say you're in just by their gender or the gender of their spouse.

Every true believer should look at everybody in search of some one. He should see the oneness in you; your unique specialness; the composite of individual attributes that make you God-given to the rest of us as a tutor in His educational plan. For the true believer to see himself as a spiritual educator, an angel disclosed, he must see himself metaphorically as a tree of knowledge planted by God with self-consciousness that grows with understanding, joy and fulfillment by making good use of the spirit God breathed into him.

No true believer can see everyone with symbolic spiritual purpose until he sees himself in this way: a container in the process of being filled with spiritual contents; spiritual bread absorbing more and more spiritual wine.

God didn't give you a serpent that would go up and down obediently with all the other forces in your spiritual system. It hangs separate from your tree of knowledge. It has a mind of its own. Forget about its size, girth or excitability. Thank God for the individuality of your serpent. Without "it" you'd be more like a spiritual machine, not a human experiencing being. It's up to you to learn how to live with that particular snake in your tree.

An investigation of the word "it" is fraught with innuendo, guilt and sheepish grins. The word "it" is situated below the waist of everybody, while the faiths would tell you "it" has no place in any spiritual discussion about everyone. But "it" is the first *thing* Adam chose to cover from Eve's purview. And "it" was the first sign of his guilt in having done something he knew was wrong. Until you begin to listen to your thoughts and contemplate with your conscience what you hear your heart saying, you won't discover how "it" is influencing you at all times. Knowing yourself is a science that will teach you to appreciate everybody, while loving yourself is an art that will teach you to appreciate everyone.

"Gimme" prayers aren't going to teach you about yourself. Contemplative prayer, the inner discussions of what you think, feel, desire and believe, will, on the other hand, help you witness the depth of your capabilities. Once you can have a candid discussion about what "it" is promoting in the privacy of your mind, you'll be ready for office hours with the Teacher to discover how you feel about yourself.

Your opinion of you is based on feelings and desires. Low self-esteem isn't caused by not getting what you want. Not getting what you want is caused by moral consternation that you're not good enough to be given what you want. When you acknowledge how you really feel about not getting what you want, you discover why life is a school and not a game of winners and losers. Then you'll see for yourself how God's educational plan can change your curriculum depending on how you perform in class. The meat and potatoes of Jesus's meal isn't about getting what you want without having to ask for it. It's about learning to talk to God by learning to communicate with yourself.

The contemplative man sees his relationship to his mother mirrored in every woman in the Bible. He looks back at his childhood as an Abram whose relationship with Sarah was first like a brother to a sister. But it's Abraham who held a special place in his heart for God. And that's what makes everyone in the Abraham faiths special.

In Isaac, modern man sees the studious side of himself, and his relationship to Sarah as a devoted son whose mother waited her whole life for him to finally appear.

In Rebecca, Isaac's wife, a man sees his playmate and best friend, someone who was handpicked to be his companion.

As a Jacob, the modern man whose motivated to do well out in the world sees Rebecca in his own mother who conspired with him against the family because he was her favorite.

In Rachel, the wife of Jacob, he sees his own mother as well, a woman who his father waited for and loved more dearly than any other woman on Earth.

As a Joseph the artistic young man's mother sees him as the dreamer she adores.

As a Joseph he sees in his wife, Aseneth, the stranger whose cultural was so different from his own.

As a Moses he sees in his mother, Joshebed, the woman who abandoned him. And he sees in his sister {Miriam} the mother he never had.

Only in seeing your mother in all the women of the Old Testament can you cross over your Jordan to see Mother Mary as the ideal mother, handpicked by God for you. Only then can you raise your heart to God and cry out, "My Father!" The man who loves his mother in all women is the man who's allowed in to his Israel within.

Jewish prayer is like mapping. Christian prayer is like sonar. Muslim prayer is like radar. You can ask God to give you anything you want, but He's probably only going to give you the tools you need. You're going to have to map, locate, trace, detect, pinpoint and find yourself, yourself.

When you come to view yourself as a miracle maker you've had your first supper. This spiritual meal won't be your last. It only has to be the last time you look at yourself through the metaphor of life-as-a-game, and you as a confused loser who can't figure out how to win. With this change of metaphor you become ready to embrace spiritual symbolism and signs from above.

You're wired to work with God even if there's a force in you called desire that wants to have it always "its" way. Don't pray to "it" or with "it." Pray for "it." Pray for understanding of how your desires can be modified to adjust to His desire to educate you about yourself. You can have all your dreams come true, but you may not get every *thing* you want. But, then again, you can't take anything with you when you leave here, either. Your desires may have to come true metaphorically, symbolically or comparatively, but

you can always learn to see the results of your life as signs from above that you've been doing some of your homework correctly and getting some of the answers right on your tests.

You began to take in knowledge without asking beginning the day you were born. You've used knowledge to your advantage ever since; and so you have no choice but to accept God's terms for repaying Him for it. Whether or not you like the way it is, it is the way it is. I can only suggest that if you dedicate yourself to learning everything you can about yourself as you suffer through now, you'll be ready for just about anything to come. And if you dedicate your life to learning about yourself, I can think of no better way to make your life meaningful. In fact, I don't believe there's a better way of repaying God than by learning to appreciate the way you were made one of a kind.

But if you conceal your guilt from yourself, expect to suffer embarrassment at the state of your body's, eventual decay. If you hide like a tree in a forest, expect to suffer shame at the mismanaged state of your character. And if you argue, defy, retort or quibble instead of seek answers from yourself, anticipate apprehension and humiliation in your future.

The poor state of your relationship with yourself is what led to your self-doubts, denial and many of your disparaging opinions about others, even if it hasn't affected your relationship with God. Come clean. Start listening to yourself, and then comment to yourself on what you hear. So long as you do it silently you have nothing to fear from being judged crazy. You'll be amazed at how your relationship with yourself will grow in intensity if you use your conscience on yourself, and leave other people alone for all their minor infractions that don't morally affect you personally.

If you judge people only by what they're costing you financially, you're like an ancient Jew doing business in the Temple. We Jews took money out of our synagogues altogether on Shabbat to remind us not to be like our ancient, money-changing ancestors. There are better ways of judging people than with dollars. Judge people using good sense.

Religious traditions were God-given in a certain order for a spiritual purpose and with moral reason. Awareness of the sanctity of all life isn't only logical. It's also the result of the wisdom Jesus lectured about from His heart; theories everyone in the civilized world holds dear 2,000 years later. Life on Earth is only as precious as your life is precious. The more you love your life the more alive you'll feel. And the more alive you feel the more your conscience will want to leave this world a better place as the result of you having been here.

Our government only works to the extent that each of us demonstrates responsible, inner governance. Relaxation of the laws presently in place for corporations that bring in tax revenue as well as relaxing control on governmental agencies that were put in place to maintain quality control standards isn't ever what we need. We need an intensification of

the spiritual importance of our laws in order to bring more morally minded people into the running of government. We need people to take the law literally externally as well as personally internally. This is the promise of our Founding Fathers when viewed from the inside out. This is the essence of the progressive and conservative agendas for those who vote in place their own inner governor.

If you think the Bible has one and only one meaning, you're not evolving. You're petrified, spiritual wood. There are people who are called faggots because they are perceived as a bundle of spiritual sticks collected from many trees but without roots, and so it's assumed they can't grow. This is a terribly derogatory and judgmental way of looking at any man. Every man is rooted in self-knowledge that will germinate with moral intentions. Every man's roots are wrapped around our Rock. His contributions to God's plan are not for anyone to judge.

The unification of church and state will only happen inside each one of us if we live our life in harmony with our cherished beliefs. Outside, God's plan will always lead humanity toward greater appreciation of the gifts of all three of the Abrahamic traditions and Eastern philosophies as we discover how they're shaping us all internally.

Those who collude with one another for the unification of church and state around them will see a deterioration of their inner world, a rotting and withering that may lead to problems when they stand before God. The time when people prayed from their head, heart or soul and then went out and killed one another because that's what they had an urge to do is coming to an end. Man's overwhelming desire to live in peace with himself will, in the end, spell the death of prejudice and discrimination worldwide.

It's not the shape of your spiritual wood; whether you feel like a tall tree; a burning bush; or a plank - that matters, but whether you're burning inside with a passion for life. Our prisons and mental institutions are filled with leftover logs and broken branches. Even a bundle of sticks can see that such people must be handled with care and compassion.

There are Jews who see themselves as the embodiment of a Star of David, the intersection of two triangles, father {pointing up to Heaven} and mother {pointing down to earth}, and yet they may not honor their own parents. There are Christians who see themselves as the embodiment of the Cross, the intersection of two pieces of timber, father {up and down} and mother {side to side}. And yet they may not honor their parents. There are Muslims who see themselves as the embodiment of the Crescent and Star, the intersection of two heavenly bodies, moon {mind} and star {heavenly body}, and yet they may not honor their parents.

In Torah God didn't just ask us to remember the orphans. He asked us to remember the widows as well, warning us that He'd hear their cries, just as He heard Abel's cry from the ground and Hagar's cry in the wilderness. [Exodus 22:21-23, Genesis 4:10, 21:16] He

asked us to remember not only those who never learned about love {orphans}, but also those who felt loved and lost love {widows}. Those who can't honor their parents, regardless of their faith, can't honor themselves. The world is filled with billions of orphans and widows, and God hears all their cries.

The shepherd keeps his flock safe, not by beating them into submission for their sake, but by tapping them gently to keep them in line. Be a shepherd unto yourself, but also know that you're your only sheep. Lead you. Follow you. Tell yourself what's best for you, and then question your motives in the privacy of your mind. Stop treating other people like sheep that need you to shepherd them. Answers to the questions of self-love in your life will then miraculously become apparent.

"TZEDAKAH," the term for helping the poor, is often translated as "charity." However, the root "TZEDEK" is more closely translated as "JUSTICE" or "FAIRNESS." "TZEDAKAH" is an obligation, while charity is typically understood as a spontaneous act of goodwill and marker of generosity. Your personal discernment of what constitutes justice verses charity occurs within, but you'll never discover that relationship for yourself in yourself without learning what's just for you. Charity, in the broad sense of the term, is an act of kindness based on forgiveness. Charity is always unjust and unfair by definition. It is an unbalanced relationship that you choose to create for both your sakes.

You have to decide when you choose to act justly, and when you choose to act charitably. These, too, are lessons your Teacher is giving you while watching your answers closely.

The beauty of God's forgiveness is that regardless of what you think, feel, desire, believe, and then take action on by doing, He has a place for you in this world where you can be of use. The man who cuts you off while driving; the nurse who misses the vein and has to give you a second shot in the arm; the repair man who fixes your washer but scratches your hardwood floor; the cashier who rings up your order using the wrong price – they're all hand selected by God just for you to learn from. You may not appreciate their personal importance in your life, and they may not appreciate yours in theirs, but that doesn't mean that these relationships are any less spiritually powerful. It just means you may be asleep to how you behave in the hopes that your assignments from the Teacher will go unnoticed. It's only when you wake yourself up that the school of life begins to become meaningful and interesting, even if you can't say that it's pleasurable.

The opposite of love is hate. But Christians and Jews don't want to have to hate anymore. So many in Judeo-Christian society have turned off their hatred in favor of apathy. Your parents may have been apathetic to many moral issues in life that you've learned from others to appreciate. Teach your parents to care about the things they refused to care about when you were little. This will honor you for honoring them. This will make

it possible for you to cry when you watch the news, and not sit there like spiritual driftwood washed onto a windy beach.

The strangest people God created aren't orphans and widows. The strangest person He ever created was you. The orphans and widows only mirror that stranger in the flesh that you find so difficult sometimes to love from within.

An orphan is anyone who's never known love. You're the orphan whose love for you has to be ignited for you to love all children. You may still be apathetic to yourself. And a widow is anyone who's known love and lost it. You should identify as a widow who's lost your love for you. You'll never be able to fully love anyone if you can't love the orphan and widow in you.

Jesus told His disciples that the only way to our Father was through Him. But since then many have learned to set the spark in themselves aflame. You don't have to believe that He was the Messiah to believe that what He did had never been done before. It only takes one lit candle to light others.

Too many men would much rather fight over the legitimacy of the messenger than the love in His message. What difference could it possibly make now if Jesus wasn't the Son of God, or not? Christianity will never be proved wrong. And if you think you're the only one who could possibly hold the correct opinion on that topic, your problem isn't with the facts. Your problem is with your own shame.

What happens to all the victims of suicides? Since they personify the world's worst perpetrators and victims rolled into one, suicide is highly frowned upon. What if you're one of those who's killing yourself slowly with food, alcohol, drugs, gambling, sex or other forms of reckless and irresponsible behavior? What if you're strangulating yourself with denial of your spiritual importance to this world? Multiply that premise by three or four billion, and you have a planet of people who don't have a clue what they're doing to themselves. Is it any wonder this world looks as it does?

Most people's problem is that they have a head full of the Hebrew Testament Jesus studied, without a clue to the Hebrew language which was His mother tongue. How can you hope to follow the intentions of a man if you can't speak his language? At least learn a few words of Hebrew, beginning with the word AMEN. How can you say you believe without even knowing how Jesus said it? He said, "AMEN" {I BELIEVE}. You may be using a word He took very seriously.

God is capable of overlooking, excusing, forgiving and exonerating you. He can overlook your fragile body. He can excuse your stinking thinking; forgive your apathy; and exonerate your inaccurate beliefs. But should you, and for how long?

It's your intimacy with yourself that will lead to greater intimacy with God. You'll feel more befriended in Heaven if you befriend yourself while here on Earth. God will reward

you for your just and merciful behavior toward others in miraculous ways, but only if you choose to learn a little more about yourself each day. He'll show you gifts that have been sitting unwrapped inside you since the day you were born. He's come back to you many times bearing more gifts. But you may not have yet opened them.

He's willing to show you where the borders of your land of milk and honey meets Israel's STRUGGLES WITH GOD. And He's probably eager to allow you to cross over and enter in to your Israel if you put down your sword and pick up a plowshare. In His house your love of you will rule, or you won't be allowed to enter it.

See Food: The Gospel According to Luke

A Self-Loving Attitude Toward Your Life

“TREAT MEN EXACTLY AS YOU WOULD LIKE THEM TO TREAT YOU.”
[Luke 6:31]

This is the essence of self-love even if Jesus didn't say it in my modern rendition of His message. Jesus realized that until you treat others as you wish you treated yourself, you won't see improvement in the way you treat yourself. And your time with yourself will be less than satisfying.

Whether or not you can tell if others are treating you better or worse than they treat themselves doesn't matter. What matters is that God brought them into your life for some reason that could improve your intimacy with yourself.

You can't measure anything that happens around you without a spiritual wooden ruler within. Each gradation on your ruler has to be a mark you've made on yourself that's helping you measure everything that happens to you with great, moral accuracy, albeit a subjective measurement, not an objective one. When you see people acting mindlessly en masse or not taking any action at all, know that both are caused by using their inner ruler only as a straight edge. They're not using the subdivisions as a measuring stick by which to judge themselves. Many love to rule. But few have the ruler to do so.

Don't waste everyone's time kvetching about the same old things over and over again. Your Teacher is giving you the same assignment because you haven't yet passed the test. Try looking for the bigger question in with your problems, and you'll get different answers. Repeating old test results isn't going to do you any good at all in new situations.

Today's questions require answers built on the wisdom, love and generosity you've achieved from your past, not by repeating your past. If you aced your past lessons, have no fear of the future. If you just barely passed your past, seek tutors who know more than you. Don't be attracted to people who complain like you do. Be attracted to people who solved the problems you're complaining about. Life is an open book test. It could be a lot easier than you're making it.

You can stop scorn at its source, but not by observing that disapproving finger you have wagging at others. By looking at the other three fingers of guilt in the palm of your hand pointed back toward yourself. If you do, the behavioral patterns you held when you were going through your terrible twos will suddenly reappear in adulthood. And you can then address them as would any parent with a child. Then you can stop your disappointment with yourself at its source by reminding yourself that training your inner child today will move you toward a better tomorrow, literally as soon as tomorrow. Just apologize to

yourself and God for the way you acted when you were a kid and assure yourself that you won't consciously repeat your mistakes of youth in the future.

It becomes easier as you age to trust yourself to play more gently with yourself after you witness the ways you played with others in your past going all the way back to infancy. Bullying and being bullied began within. But you can't use ignorance of yourself as an excuse anymore. While the child in you probably gets along pretty well with others, the toddler inside you is another authentic part of yourself that God will bring up for you to witness whenever He chooses (usually when you're between a rock and hard place). {That's when the terrible two's generally reappear.} God doesn't mind stooping so low as to blackmail you into cleaning up your act. He gave you the liberty to be dafka because He wanted you to face your jealousy and envy. But it's your choice whether you want to choose self-love. If you don't commend yourself for the littlest of things you do right, you'll never learn how to use your power on yourself.

Indulging yourself, or others, is, as we all know, a far cry from love. We confuse love with sugar. We literally sweeten ourselves with fattening foods and sweet drinks. {I was once told that even cigarettes have sugar in them.} People sweeten themselves with big-ticket items like new cars, designer clothing, sex, sugary resolutions to improve, exaggerated vows of faith in God and pledges to others that they will never realistically be able to fulfill. And then they can't respect themselves when they see that artificial sweeteners are no substitute for self-love.

We also sour us on ourselves over time. You may love the body God gave you, but over time your opinion of it may decline without you consciously being aware of it. Many start out feeling like Johnny Weissmuller {Tarzan} and end up feeling as though you've been crippled. They disable themselves psychologically rather than face the disappointment of how it's all turning out. And unless God allows them physical symptoms of illness to reflect upon what they're doing to themselves, they never realize how bitter and soured they've become on the inside. And since they can't literally swallow their tongue to taste themselves, they've got to use their imagination to determine just how sweet and sour or bittersweet they've become after decades in their own company.

You don't have to literally become disabled to turn yourself into a cripple. Your imagination is much more powerful than you may think. If you don't give consideration to the nightmares others are going through, you may not discover how to avoid their nightmares while trying to make your dreams come true.

When you were a child you had to compartmentalize your feelings, setting them apart from your thoughts in order to protect yourself emotionally from some of your parents' training techniques. You may have felt misunderstood as a toddler when you got into trouble, or worse, danger. But that was because you were so eager to learn and yet so

inexperienced. Your parents stopped you from hurting yourself the only way they could, whether or not their parenting skills enhanced your persona.

You were so curious when you were a toddler that learning was the luxury of life you woke up to eagerly each day. Even though you were left much of the time on your own to manipulate the world around you with toys, you basically taught yourself how to coordinate your eyes and ears with your hands to investigate all sorts of containers and their contents. But today you're the container filling yourself with contents. Today, you're a toddler, just a toddler learning how to handle a very sophisticated, spiritual toy: yourself.

What was so easy to fill in youth becomes more and more of a challenge as we age. You can teach an old dog new tricks, but you've first got to get him to understand that he's a dog and he's old. Once reality sets in, his imagination becomes much more facile.

The moral ruler of life you created when you were young turned into the scale on which you learned to balance your thoughts against your feelings. Then you had to learn to submerge all the holy contents within you to measure yourself by volume. But what makes it so difficult to teach old dogs new tricks is that they don't realize how dense they are. Density equals mass divided by its volume. Once you can submerge your feelings in with your other spiritual contents {despite the irregularity of your internal shape}, then you're in a position to determine your own density.

Although we insult people by calling them dense, what we're really saying is that they don't realize how dense they really are. Paradoxically, once you know exactly how dense you are, you're in a much better position to communicate effectively with yourself, and others.

God taught the Jews how to morally measure themselves. He taught Christians how to socially measure themselves. And He taught the Muslims how to individually measure themselves before Him. But we need each other's spiritual tools to construct a spiritual home for ourselves while here at boarding school.

When you're attracted to somebody, it's their cover, not their book that entices you. As you check out each lover like a cover, and return him to the library of learning for another, you discover in the process that you're only able to read as deeply into each other as each of you can read into yourself. Once you become spiritually literate, opening another man like a good book is easy, and perusing him with or without sexual attraction is equally facile. You don't have to literally dismember or castrate him to figure out how his power is delivered to his head, heart and soul.

If you don't find a man curious and interesting from an educational perspective, close him with the respect you'd give a good book, and move on. You don't have to read everything on every shelf. Some books are just too dense to penetrate. Just remember that every book is brought to you for a reason. Do your best to scan a man if you don't have

time to study him. First impressions may only tell you how he mirrors you, but the more deeply you have the time to peruse him, the more flaws you'll find in him that will elucidate you to your own. A critical nature, internalized, will lead you to redemption.

God took you off His shelf and republished you in His school library with the title and cover you now hold. You shouldn't judge yourself by your contents or your cover. You're a WORD/WORD/w o r d God inscribed with His pen, and with a special mission in mind. The pen and ink He uses is the same for us all, but the moral of your story is unique. It could end up being a cautionary tale or a model of literary perfection.

You're not here to write my script for how I should live my life. You're not my Author. You don't direct the performance of my play. Nor are you my Producer. You're here to learn about your life and contribute to your enjoyment of your life your way. Don't tell me what to read, what to watch, who to listen to or what to do. My impressions of my life are my own. Help by making a concerted effort with me to stick to the 6th through 10th Commandments, but leave the first five for me to fulfill my own way. They were put on separate tablets with good reason.

Jesus suggested you treat others as you would like them to treat you, but that presents you with a very powerful and personal challenge to treat yourself as you would like you to treat you. If you treat yourself with the wisdom you offer others; the humility you express for others; the love you feel people expressing for one another; and the generosity you believe will make everyone's dreams come true - you'll be too content with yourself to force anyone to do as you do. You'll set a good example and leave your good grades in the Teacher's role book rather than show off to the class how great THOU/THOU/t h o u art.

The opposite of love is indifference. When Jesus told His followers to "TURN THE OTHER CHEEK" He was describing the best possible way not to react to lack of love with hatred. Don't try to teach people. Don't concern yourself with their grades. Don't worry about their report card, and don't fret over their transcript. Tutor people by demonstrating what you know, even if you have to describe your relationship with yourself. Concern yourself with the grades you're getting on your tests each week and how your report card at the end of each year is going to look on your transcript. Review your curriculum frequently to make sure you're taking all the classes you need to graduate with the degree you've chosen to major in. And if you find yourself suddenly elected to take an elective, put as much into it as you would a class in your course of concentration.

God gives you what you need, not necessarily what you want. The more you give yourself what you need the more likely you'll be satisfied with the outcome. But the more you have what you want, the more you have to strive for what you still need. So try looking at self-discipline as a carrot and not as a stick. Stop making everything a class struggle with half the class wanting to discipline the poor and the other half wanting to discipline the

rich. The middle class doesn't get the same homework as the rest of the class. We could all learn to discipline ourselves instead of one another.

Many of the problems you have are probably champagne problems. Once you've compared your problems to other people's, then compare them to the problems you had in the past. And then thank God for the assignments He's giving you now. They're perfect for you, and if you can't see why, just ask Him. The answer will come in seconds. If it takes more than a minute or two to get the answer from Him, discuss your slow virtual connection with Him, too. That may be because you're not raising your hand and just blurting out in class. If you can wait to be called on, you shouldn't have to wait more than a second or two.

My ancestors carried God for 40 years in the "ARON," the "TABERNACLE," which resembled a huge, closeted tent. But when they got to Jerusalem they thought they had Him locked away in the Temple. Today on the ruins of the Second Temple the Al Aqsa Mosque sits as a reminder to us that the externalization of God's domicile is a foolish part of our past.

Building a metaphoric temple to carry God within us was a much more sophisticated idea whose time did eventually come. It democratized God by putting a little piece of Him {like a spark} in everyone. We live in a world of such wisdom and loving intentions that all we have left to fight over is our generosity of spirit. (Check out the lyrics to Cat Steven's song, "Miles From Nowhere." It describes so well what the Israelites may have felt as they wandered on their way home. It's paradoxical that he was a Christian who became a Muslim when he speaks so clearly to the experience of being like an ancient Jew.)

"I AM THE VINE, YOU ARE THE BRANCHES" [John 15:5]

If you can't imagine yourself as a tree of knowledge that was created to be fruitful you'll never understand what it means to be the vine that provides the wine. You'll be jealous of the Jew and envious of the Christian. You'll never succeed in thanking Jesus for His gift to humanity if you can't empathize with His bread they squeezed and His wine they spilled.

You must begin with the Hebrew blessing over bread:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמּוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.
{BARUCH ATAH ADONAI ELOHEINU MELECH HA'OLAM HAMOTZEE LECHEM MEEN HAARETZ}
BLESSED ARE YOU,
LORD OUR GOD,
KING OF THE UNIVERSE
WHO BRINGS FORTH BREAD FROM THE EARTH.

You must begin with the Hebrew blessing over the wine:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן.
{BARUCH ATAH ADONAI, ELOHEINU MELECH HA'OLAM BORAY PRI HAGAFEN}
BLESSED ARE YOU,
LORD OUR GOD,
KING OF THE UNIVERSE,
WHO CREATES THE FRUIT OF THE VINE.

If you can't take these Hebrew blessings to heart, you'll never be able to build upon them to appreciate the bread and wine Jesus offered humanity.

From one stalk come many grains. The flesh of sinew, muscle and bone are just three of the many breads that make your body a virtual bakery.

And from one vine come many grapes. The grapes that your caregivers crushed in your heart when you were a toddler had to ferment into the wine that runs now through your veins. The feelings of love, excitement, wonder and marvel at God's world make your heart a virtual wine cellar of potent emotions. But when you add the even more potent emotions of sarcasm, cynicism, scorn and derision, you have a virtual liquor store inside you.

Governments, corporations, institutions, organizations, foundations, societies, cultures, families and friends are like plantations, ranches, homesteads, farms, fields, plots, gardens, window boxes and pots that bring you the spiritual produce you need for spiritual survival.

But none of these sociological groupings can succeed without tended vineyards. If you don't bring your spiritual work with you to work, you're going to hate your job and end up doing it badly. If you don't bless the fruit of the vine you're growing within, your financial efforts are going to leave you thirsty for something that money can't buy.

You can't live on the second story {Christianity} of a building and make your way up to the third {Islam} if you don't give consideration to the foundation {Judaism} upon which your personal story is constructed. If you scorn the neighbors living above or below you, don't expect those on the ground floor to look up at their ceiling in appreciation of the noise you're making. Don't insult your neighbors below by claiming that from your penthouse you get the only good view.

Marvel instead at the incredible edifice you're in. Love your neighbor as if you lived in an apartment building, and stop imagining him on the other side of a fence in the suburbs. It's the 21st Century for God's sake, and most people in the city live in a high rise not a single-family dwelling.

Nowhere in history was there a more progressive or liberal-minded Jew than Jesus. If we use the wisdom of our heart that we were inspired to explore thanks to the bounty of Christianity, we'll come to know and love the philanthropy in the Muslim's gift to

humanity {however much they try to hide it from us}. If our Abrahamic brothers want to teach the world about what God has to give us we're going to have to make this world safe for gay-Jews.

(I suggest you watch the sitcom "Modern Family." But instead of laughing at the jokes try to imagine that every one of the characters is deadly serious. Then imagine yourself as each one of the characters trying to make sense of family life. Then imagine you're the team of writers. The less you can find funny about this show and keep yourself from laughing out loud, the more you'll see how that speaks volumes to an aspect of yourself you're unconsciously swallowing with laughter and tears.)

Think of Jesus's next quote in terms of sincerity. "CAN ONE BLIND MAN BE A GUIDE TO ANOTHER BLIND MAN? SURELY THEY WILL BOTH FALL INTO THE DITCH TOGETHER. A DISCIPLE IS NOT ABOVE HIS TEACHER, BUT WHEN HE IS FULLY TRAINED, HE WILL BE LIKE HIS TEACHER." [Luke 6:39-40]

I added emphasis to the word His to suggest that as a disciple becomes fully trained, he becomes more like Jesus's Teacher. Jesus saw Himself as His Father's great disciple sent here to enlighten people to a greater truth, so He spoke about Himself as the yardstick by which His students would learn to measure themselves after His departure. But what's the point of being a ruler over others if you don't have a spiritual yardstick with which to accurately measure your own moral proximity to God?

"CAN ONE BLIND MAN BE A GUIDE TO ANOTHER BLIND MAN? SURELY THEY WILL BOTH FALL INTO THE DITCH TOGETHER." Judaism and Christianity are like two blind men who lean on one another. The blind often find themselves leading the blind. A disciple can never learn more than his teacher can teach him intellectually, but a disciple certainly can feel superior to his teacher. This will lead both of them into a ditch. This is why your head and heart are so often leading you astray, and why you must make your conscience your guide.

Jewish tradition holds that the Age of Prophecy ended with the PROPHET MALACHI {my king}. This ended the era of God speaking to the Jews directly through certain inspired men called PROPHETS. Maimonides [1138-1204 AD] said that Moses was superior to all other PROPHETS, that Moses attained the highest possible human level of spiritual interface ever. He saw Moses as having perceived God to a degree that surpassed every human who had ever existed.

Maimonides felt that Moses alone didn't need any intermediary before Him. But Moses was the first of the PROPHETS, not the last. Adam was in a lip-lock with God when he received His spirit. But God said about Moses, "MOUTH TO MOUTH, I WILL SPEAK TO HIM." [Numbers 12:8] The PROPHETS were, by comparison, in a figurative face-to-face regard of Him.

God didn't have to speak with Jesus as though They were facing or kissing. A father and son can hold a relationship that goes beyond gestures to feelings that can be expressed in more sophisticated ways. Once Jesus demonstrated how Father and Son could communicate from the heart, the P r o p h e t Mohammed could then replicate Their relationship from the third place in inner space: his own soul. The P r o p h e t Mohammed made it possible for God to enter every man through His third and last name, A L L A H.

“ONCE UPON A TIME, THERE WERE TWO MEN IN DEBT TO THE SAME MONEY-LENDER. ONE OWED HIM FIFTY POUNDS AND THE OTHER FIVE. AND SINCE THEY WERE UNABLE TO PAY, HE GENEROUSLY CANCELLED BOTH OF THEIR DEBTS. NOW, WHICH ONE OF THEM DO YOU SUPPOSE WILL LOVE HIM MORE?’ JESUS ASKED SIMON. ‘WELL,’ RETURNED SIMON, ‘I SUPPOSE IT WILL BE THE ONE WHO HAS BEEN MORE GENEROUSLY TREATED,’” [Luke 7:41-47]

If you come from your soul and look at your head and heart, as did the two men in debt to the same moneylender, then your conscience can cancel both of their debts. If you take the parable personally, you can see that your head owes your conscience five pounds, and your heart owes it 50 pounds. And if you ask yourself which one of them you suppose will appreciate your generosity more, you could see Jesus's point about the importance of wisdom of the heart over knowledge. Your head will respect you for the generosity of spirit it perceives that it receives from your soul, and your heart will love you for it.

Perhaps now you're beginning to see that God has this spiritual system rigged. The more generously you treat yourself spiritually, the more you'll love yourself for it. And the more you love yourself, the more you'll love Him for the way He created you. This might sound like just a mental exercise, but I assure you it's real.

A man afraid of his own feelings is like two men in debt to the same moneylender. He's afraid, and he finds reasons to maintain that feeling. And if he thinks he can ignore the ensuing disappointment in himself for feeling afraid of himself, he'll drive himself crazy trying to understand what's going on inside him. Disappointment goes away when you try to love yourself as deeply as you've loved others.

The more you discover how to excuse, forgive and exonerate yourself for all you didn't do for yourself in the past, the easier it will be to ignore the little things in others. And the more you see yourself treating others more lovingly, the more you'll love yourself for doing so. The more you clean out your past with moral acknowledgement for the way it had to turn out, the more you can make room for a better future.

But it all begins with your relationship to your parents. You must look for excuses they could use before God to exonerate themselves for the way they treated you. If your head

and heart aren't ready for this task, your conscience will remain skewed. You'll be unable to determine where *your* guilt ends and *another* person's guilt begins.

God is man's Psychologist because He knows us so well. He had three questions for Adam. He had only one for Eve. He didn't bother to question the serpent at all. And there was nothing left of the forbidden fruit for Him to address. His attentions seem to be always on the wellbeing of people.

Perhaps in defiance of how God made man's testicles so sensitive to pain, we have a tendency to make alliances with other men to protect one another from anybody kicking us in the balls {getting revenge}. But who among us knows anything about God's relationship with women? Can an anaconda identify with an earthworm?

Even though God never bothered to question the serpent, you'd think "it" would have said something in its own defense. Perhaps because "it" didn't bother to offer to start a conversation with Him, He wasn't interested in "its" side of the story. When asked, Eve blamed the serpent for having beguiled her. But Adam never even mentioned "it" as having any part in the problem. Adam may not have known what the serpent had to do with the way it had all turned out.

Men may have to touch their penis several times a day, but they rarely use their imagination to consider its spiritual importance in the way they were made. Only those who are truly curious and motivated to explore themselves spiritually are going to question the way they look on the outside and the way it makes them react to what's going on within.

If you want power around you, it would make sense to explore power in the abstract. And since you shouldn't cut open your scrotum to get a good look at the source of your power, you ought to think about what your testicles mean to you instead. You need to watch them figuratively descend from your body cavity as you become more powerful.

You can't literally cut off your penis to rid yourself of the delivery system of your desires. Most men subconsciously wish they had a big penis and large, heavy testicles to convince themselves they have what it takes to penetrate deeply and deposit something of great importance. And many gay men and straight women understand this fallacy better than straight men, and therefore look for a partner who can emotionally and spiritually stimulate them. Size will always be crucial. But let's consider what it is we're measuring when we seek something big...

Some men are best able to express their ability to penetrate deeply by making money. Some prefer to become experts at penetration by doing so sexually, while others are more skilled in penetrating emotionally or artistically. Although many men are spiritually capable of the penetration needed to come to know God, few have the nerve to do so outside institutionalized forms of faith. Although a man may be very capable of expressing a heavy heart at Easter or when his sports team loses a game, he may not be as astute when it comes

to visualizing the balance needed in his soul on which his thoughts and feelings are being weighed. When you experience that sinking feeling inside, it may be because you feel the effects of those 50 pounds of heart as they unexpectedly tip the scale over the 5 pounds of your thinking. Such is the kind of penetration Jesus aspired to.

Your greatest debt in life will always be to your conscience for being your guide. How you spent the 5 pounds you lent your head or the 50 pounds your heart borrowed is less important late in game. Whether you preferred to express your conceit in youth through intellectual trophies or vanity through sexual conquests no longer matters except in memory. It's the forgiveness of your intellectual and emotional debts to yourself in your soul that counts. A self-loving attitude toward your life will emerge and grow as you deepen your relationship with yourself a little bit each day.

See Food: The Gospel According to Luke

Mixed Metaphors

Jesus was the greatest master of metaphor for the simple reason that He didn't compete with the main metaphor of Moses. Instead, He complimented it with symbolism. Jesus mixed His metaphors with symbolism, so that today's standards of self-knowledge include the wisdom, love and generosity of man. We've blended them together into an all-inclusive pursuit of moral self-regard. This makes life an allegory for us all.

Imagine that the evil in ancient man as described in the Story of Noah was so great that God chose to cleanse the world. But that He did so only figuratively with holy water. Imagine He cleansed the world with His love, drowning man in spiritual love. Imagine that when the rains come in late childhood they leave every boy's inner world underwater, submerged in God's love with no one except his immediate family to share in the knowledge of what he's been through. That would mean that every adolescent is adrift in a boat, that he's the personification and recreation of the Flood. And the love that inundated him in adolescence that then receded slowly, cleansed him of the everyday errors of judgment in childhood.

What if the confrontation of Moses at the Burning Bush burned off his guilt in having killed a man. Imagine that for Moses, seeing a bush burning without it being consumed was for us like watching underwater welding. For Moses to understand what he saw it would have been necessary for him to come to see himself immersed not in not just water {love}, but in a thick layer of oily, black guilt floating in slicks upon God's love. In the metaphoric sense the Burning Bush was like an underwater flame that consumed his guilt, the kind of fire in your heart you know so well.

Self-love is an acquired skill that gay men are known for displaying. Some straight men may think gay men are full of themselves. But sleeping with someone of the same gender doesn't signal that you love yourself. And sleeping with someone of the opposite sex doesn't suggest you're any less capable of self-love.

The journey of life should be about treating everyone as a mysterious key that opens you to a part of your heart, regardless what may come out of theirs. Your life will be richer if you see life as a series of lessons with others in which every discussion is part of a search for a deeper, elusive part of yourself. We shouldn't objectify anyone. And we shouldn't objectify any part of ourselves, either. It isn't the lust gay men express that threatens straight men. It's the innuendo that gay love might magnify man's quest for self-love that scares them.

Sibling rivalry is a very good thing if children are competing with one another to see who can do more to help their parents. Sibling rivalry in terms of brotherly love may have

a place in your life if you can remember that our Father loves you for who you are, not for how much better you are than your brother. {And the same can be said about father and sons and mothers and daughters.} Since you'll never be better than your Brother you might as well not try to outdo Him. And as for generosity of spirit, you are your own brother who deserves to receive the best you have to offer yourself.

The Hammurabi code of conduct from Babylonia of an eye for an eye was intended to reduce killing by allowing vengeance, rather than revenge, to become man's motivation. If a man blinded another man, the blinded man could have his earthly suffering exacted on the one who hurt him to teach him how it felt. What he couldn't do was kill the man who blinded him. This was a law handed down to us by the ancient ancestors of today's Muslims, and yet today many refuse to live by that law. They continue to exact acts of revenge from their heart instead of vengeance from their soul.

By the time the concept of an eye for an eye made its way into the Bible {Exodus 21:24, Matthew 5:38-48}, it took on a negative connotation in the West. But we must reintroduce the Hammurabi code of conduct into Islam as a figurative, not a literal, solution. If not, they'll continue killing unmercifully and without end.

Deep within I'm sure all good men would love it if the man who kidnapped and raped a child were dismembered and castrated. It feels symbolically satisfying to turn that man into what would look outwardly more like a woman - someone who could never accomplish that heinous act again. But we know that such an act of revenge wouldn't change his psychological makeup, any more than cutting off the hands of some Wall Street traders would stop them from stealing, or cutting out the tongue of some politicians would keep them from lying.

The thought of bringing poetic justice into our judicial system may feel good on some level, but we know we must use the same spiritual motivation to punish everyone who makes a mistake. Killing criminals doesn't reform them before they meet their Maker. It would be better to send them Home guilt ridden about what they did to the victim rather than identifying as a victim themselves.

The goal of every judicial system must be to allow every criminal the opportunity to reform himself, whether he takes advantage of the opportunity or not. We need prisons that are reformatories not warehouses. We need to teach wisdom, love and generosity of spirit to all our children, or the world won't become a better place for their children. Hacking off body parts and stoning people are literal solutions from sacred texts to spiritual problems that should be addressed figuratively nowadays. Decapitating a man only exhibits what a tough time the murderer is having living in his own head.

“LET ME SHOW YOU WHAT THE MAN WHO COMES TO ME HEARS WHAT I HAVE TO SAY, AND PUTS IT INTO PRACTICE, IS REALLY LIKE. HE IS LIKE A

MAN BUILDING A HOUSE WHO DUG DOWN TO ROCK-BOTTOM AND LAID THE FOUNDATION OF HIS HOUSE UPON IT. THEN WHEN THE FLOOD CAME AND FLOODWATER SWEEPED DOWN UPON THAT HOUSE, IT COULD NOT SHIFT IT BECAUSE IT WAS PROPERLY BUILT. BUT THE MAN WHO HEARS ME AND DOES NOTHING ABOUT IT IS LIKE A MAN WHO BUILT HIS HOUSE WITH ITS FOUNDATION UPON THE SOFT EARTH. WHEN THE FLOODWATER SWEEPED DOWN UPON IT, IT COLLAPSED AND THE WHOLE HOUSE CRASHED DOWN IN RUINS.” [Luke 6:47-49]

Once you see that Jesus was coming from His heart and not from His head, His mixture of metaphor with symbolic logic becomes easy to interpret. If Judaism signifies the sense of grounding that comes over time to man’s mind, then Jesus described the construction of a house in man’s imagination that would always be in need of emotional and spiritual repair.

The house-built-on-a-firm-foundation metaphor is a variation of what Moses inferred about God being the Rock that every tree clings to. The Jews living in Israel at the time of Jesus were so much more psychologically rooted and spiritually advanced than the Israelites, their spiritual predecessors who were more comparable to nomadic tribes brought together and then forced to live and work as one people. The Israelites could never have understood the importance of an emotional home in their own heart because they were displaced peoples and wanderers who came together out of centuries of slavery under the same master. By contrast, the Jews at the time of Jesus were in need of metaphors that were urbane and spiritually more sophisticated because they were at home in the land of Israel even if their houses were literally being threatened by outside invaders at that time.

For these ancient Jews 2,000 years ago to move into the realm of feelings, they had to figuratively see themselves as intellectually grounded while still emotionally threatened by the upheavals in society. Because their inner house was built upon SOFT EARTH {POLITICAL INSECURITY, ANIMAL SACRIFICE AND WORLDLY DESIRES}, God’s tough love was a powerful force, not from the heavens above, but from the Romans, that, like a flood, undermined everything they’d worked so hard to achieve in their country.

God’s love, a creative force that shapes every man from within, was a rebellious and revolutionary new idea for the Jews from Jesus. Later converts to Christianity in Europe, like the early Jewish converts, were overwhelmed by the depth of the message Jesus had told them. We know because they exacted revenge on Jews and heathens alike.

The wooden HOUSE Jesus is speaking of in this parable is the refuge a man builds in his mind with knowledge of God’s eternal presence. This mental sanctuary shelters him while he’s here on Earth. The SOFT EARTH beneath this intellectual edifice creates muddled thinking when feelings well up within him. And when a flood of emotions pour

down from the heavens above, they can seep into his walls of defense and undermine his entire foundation. These powerful emotions may even drown him if he can't keep them at bay. The house that's battered by feelings that destroy the roof of faith over a man's head can cause an utter collapse of rationality, making him vulnerable to psychological ruin, precisely because his imagination hasn't brought these inner forces to creative consciousness through symbolic metaphors.

Jesus's symbolic metaphor quoted above isn't a reference to acts of God that destroy your home literally or financial ruin that leaves your house financially underwater. This is a "symbolic metaphor" that describes the way you need to construct yourself intellectually so that your feelings can become a meaningful part of the forces within you.

The Bible isn't a guide to the construction of edifices out in the world around us. Nor is it intended to tell you where or when to make financial investments to get rich quick. The Bible is intended for much more personal use. Once you see how Jesus's symbols build upon Moses's metaphors, His symbolic metaphors become much easier to understand and extend for personal use in achieving spiritual development.

You may have been born a spiritual tree of knowledge that gripped the Rock {God's wisdom} with your ancestral roots, but over time you developed the self-awareness with which to fashion your spiritual timber into the lumber you needed to construct a spiritual home for yourself on a firm foundation where the challenges of God's tough love wouldn't be able to undermine your foundation or the roof over your head.

This interpretation of Luke 6:47-49 looks at love as a force from God that man must learn to manage, just as the Dutch have learned to manage living below sea level and the Arabs have learned to manage living in a part of the world with very little water. God brought the Jews a Teacher's Assistant who could explain this force to us, and the Europeans turned Him into God. What's important to take away from this lesson is the inner force in man called love. The relationship between the Assistant and the Teacher is irrelevant compared to the miracle of Their message.

Knowing God isn't enough to build your home at rock-bottom. Knowing God isn't enough to construct a spiritual foundation upon your awareness of His presence. You must also love yourself. And the love you need to construct such an inner sanctuary requires wisdom of the heart, awareness of your own emotional presence. This is described using the elements of rain, flooding and the consequent dry rot, rust and corrosion that will teach you to manage your spiritual house more responsibly.

Your inner house is constantly being rained down upon with sorrow and flooded with regrets. Hail hits your roof with disappointments, and snow piles up upon it with apathetic disregard of yourself that leaves you in an eerie, inner silence. If you built your inner house

in your inner world at the shore, you may be overwhelmed with tidal waves of grief in your life and have to move further inland away from your ocean of constant tidal emotions.

Self-love, for some, is so deep, dark and cold an experience that they aren't even aware of where they are when they're in their heart. They're under such pressure to achieve their external goals that they have no idea that there are whales within PROPHETS that come down to such depths, trying to help men see where they really are.

By the time the Prophet Mohammed came on the world scene, Jews and Christians had differentiated themselves spiritually sufficiently from one another to see two faiths having developed out of one. In the spiritual sense, the modern era began with the creation of the third, monotheistic faith rooted in Judaism. Then every man in the Western world had what he needed {land, sea and sky} to understand his inner world as it mirrored the world around him. The only thing missing was the meaning of fire.

When my ancestors were slaves in Egypt they were told to place the blood and leg of a lamb on their front door so that the angel of death would pass over their home during the 10th plague. This blood eventually became the bond of the new covenant through Jesus, the new Lamb of God. His blood became the new deterrent that would separate the deeds of those who felt lovingly from the hateful inclination of wrongdoers.

The recreation of the Passover occurs much more than once a year. It happens whenever death knocks at your door. In wars, epidemics and pandemics, entire societies recreate the story of how the Israelites made their way out of Egypt. But how many of them know that the difference between a story and Scripture is that Scripture is a story that cannot die.

Thanks to Jesus and the Prophet Mohammed, man has become more than a tree of self-knowledge growing over time. Man's trees of knowledge are being used as intellectual lumber to build strong, inner sanctuaries that won't be destroyed by acts of God. But the strength of a man's spiritual house depends on the strength of his head, heart and soul.

Bodybuilding isn't just a physical exercise. It's an emotional workout that trains you to swim through waves of guilt created by how you feel about your body. The calming effect of love lapping up at your shore when you see muscle where there had been none before teaches you to love love, even tough love. Those who suffer from the physical deterioration of aging have to go through the deep, dark, emotional consequences associated with poor health and dying. It may lead them to conclude that they "BUILT (THEIR) HOUSE WITH ITS FOUNDATION UPON SOFT EARTH."

Time will undermine a man's view of himself if he doesn't understand how he constructed himself in the first place. When emotional floodwaters weaken his muscular control of his body and disappointment floods his heart with limitations of movement, a man realizes his whole house will one day collapse entirely. He will have to leave here and go Home. This is what it means to realize we are all mortal.

A house built upon self-knowledge that's threatened by the raging currents of disappointment, loss and grief may leave a man emotionally feeling homeless and humbled before God if he doesn't develop faith from the process. Such men may have to go through terrible agony and may become increasingly confused, perplexed and discouraged at what it was all for. They may lose hope as they try to keep themselves physically intact in a world where the effects of emotions and spirit are still so poorly understood. A man of a certain age may feel tested even if he has a personal relationship with his Creator. The path to self-love ne'er did run smooth.

God stopped questioning mankind with Adam. He stopped lecturing us at Mt. Sinai. He stopped cross-examining the Jews with the end of The Age of Prophecy. He stopped judging us with the Holocaust.

We live in a new age now, an age in which we're expected to question, lecture, cross-examine and judge ourselves. We're not spiritual infants, children and adolescents any longer. We've reach spiritual adulthood. The man who can grow up will reap the rewards of self-commendation and condemnation. And he'll find a reason to embrace God whether he's Jewish, Christian or Muslim. He'll submit to God's will: self-love.

We live in a new world of great possibility, generosity and hope. We live in an age of inner hospitality. Nobody in his right mind would think to accuse God for His wrongdoings, as did some of the Jews in Auschwitz Concentration Camp. Putting God on trial didn't help them then, and it isn't going to help us now. He doesn't forsake any of us. Christ only felt forsaken because His love for Himself wouldn't achieve perfection in His lifetime.

The man who can see his own self-ignorance will stop blaming others quite so much, and get to work. Our Teacher isn't just alive and well; He isn't just here and There; He cares. And He's capable of teaching each of us what we need to know to care for ourselves. The question is whether the student, not the Teacher, is ready to appear.

The ancient Israelites gave up the autonomy they knew as slaves for the dubious gift of freedom. They gave up serving others with enmity for spiritual service to the Lord with wisdom. But that spiritual transition took 400 years to get them out of bondage in Egypt and another 1,400 in Israel to adapt to the many responsibilities that come with spiritual success.

The Jews learned from their enemies then, and they're still learning from their enemies today. The patience and generosity of spirit we see in the way Israelis deal with their neighbors is the direct result of having learned the very best from those neighbors for thousands of years. Find another country in this world that deals as compassionately as Israel with her enemies, enemies whose hatred of Jews and gays knows no bounds.

The cement the Romans invented and used in Israel to construct monuments to their greatness became a metaphor for a new way of pouring our faith in God into ourselves. Today the Gazans use the cement given to us by the Romans to build tunnels to kidnap and kill Jews. The timing of Jesus's contribution to the ancient, Jewish, spiritual challenge was profound, but not coincidental. Pain and suffering will be the legacy of those who refute the God who first heard the cries of the Israelites. The wails of Hagar are not the only tears raining down on the land.

Only God can grow a tree, but only man can construct a house for himself with it. We're not like monkeys that simply swing from branch to branch to around under the forest canopy God provides them. We're the evolutionary, end product of God's plan on Earth, and we have to learn how to build houses, literally, emotionally and spiritually.

A house of love for others does not a happy home make. A man must build a castle of self-love with thick walls, a moat and a drawbridge if he's going to feel secure in this world. And he must feel like a king in it if he's going to go down in his own mind as a regal branch of the spiritual lineage of his people.

To accomplish this he must judge himself as wise, loving and generous. His neighbors must admire his inner strength, and his enemies must fear intimidating him because he has God's laws on his side. A house of self-love is easier to dream about than it is to build upon a firm foundation. Many men only build their castles in the sky.

A man can't soar through his soul with the dizzying view above his own land and sea until he's practiced constructing something more secure in the world around him. The First Temple {957 BCE} and Second Temple {515 BCE} were just for practice. The first was our Jewish attempt at building a temple to God in our head; the second was an, ultimately futile, attempt in our heart that has literally left us with only one wall standing: the Wailing Wall. But our historical efforts mirror our inner inspiration and creativity, making it possible for everyone today to avoid our previous mistakes.

Even you can do it right the third time by doing it for yourself, personally, privately and permanently by working from your soul. You can use all the mistakes the Jews made, but only if you're grateful to us for having made them first.

The external world has always been just for practice. Jerusalem has always been the Jewish rock given to us by God upon which Christian love and Muslim generosity have struggled for eons to build greater faith for all mankind. KIPAT HASELA {rock cap} is the rock at the center of the Temple Mound in Jerusalem where Solomon built the first temple in 957 B.C.E. upon the rock where Abraham tried to sacrifice Isaac: the noble sanctuary where the Muslims built the Dome of the Rock in 691 A.D. about 100 years after the Prophet Mohammed ascended to Heaven from that spot. That spot can be accessed from within.

It's easy to slip into a human body when a zygote is created that has only one cell. It's much harder to get out of a fully formed human being at the end of decades of life when you've got 37 trillion dead cells to deal with. There isn't a human being on Earth who doesn't turn to God when he wants to get out of the physical vehicle he's been in at the end of his days on Earth. That's when atheism ends and religion begins, no matter who you are or what you profess to believe in.

Little boys and girls who play with their matches will pay for the fires they start by asking abortion doctors to put out. And religious fanatics who don't look at the digestion process from mouth to anus as a metaphor for the spiritual map they're using while here on Earth will be very surprised when they get to the light at the end of the tunnel and discover what an ass they've been all along. If you don't make your conscience your guide you'll waste precious time perfecting morality by wagging your finger at others.

God descends from Heaven to the "KIPAT HASELA" in our conscience mind and slowly turns that piece of rock jutting out from that holy hill in every man into a land of great promises. Thanks to our history, a man of peace can return to the holy site given to the Jews on the outside and the world within to meet and greet Y.H.V.H. Joshua A L L A H where He will enter into him.

To become a temple unto the Lord you have to first learn to be a good host. To become a good host you must have an "EER ATIKA" {OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM} within yourself where you can experience the various Jewish, Christian and Muslim holy sites from within.

Because God enters and leaves your inner Israel using the paths Jesus and the Prophet Mohammed used to ascend to Heaven from Jerusalem, you must learn to make peace with yourself from the inside out to use that "HIGH/HIGH/high way" to Heaven. {If you think metaphors and symbols have been hard to unpack, wait till we get to signs in my next book.}

To describe this process using Judaic metaphor you must blossom with knowledge of the self to achieve self-transcendence. You must follow your thoughts like branches that leave a trail up from each bough that you can follow to the farthest twig. That's where growth is most obviously happening and where the fruits of your endeavors will bring you the bounty you're searching for. The clarity of your concepts depends on the thickening of your thoughts like the trunk and boughs of a tree, something that only occurs over time. The dream of the fruits of your labors lives and wafts in your imagination like blossoms in the spring, tempting you all the more to follow the mystery of the path God has taken you on.

But you must learn to use your nose rather than your eyes or ears to get you there. As you grow you'll see "visions" {thoughts mixed with powerful feelings} that will alert you to this new view God is giving you of your life, one you can only follow using intuition to

create a map. You must figuratively smell your way to God as though you were Helen Keller, and couldn't see or hear.

Recreating Jerusalem in your soul requires a physical sanctuary that you're proud of, one that won't be swept away by upheavals by your inner weather. It's because every man's inner Jerusalem is under siege that the Jewish capitol in the Jewish state still knows no peace.

Until you develop a spirit that's a moral fusion of outer truth and inner beauty that can withstand all the forces this world can throw at you, you'll feel like the Israelis, even if there are no bombs going off around you.

Justice and mercy {wisdom and love} will never be enough to satisfy your curiosity about the miracle of being alive. The construction of your house of self-loyalty must be built on the firmest of rocks, the firmest of foundations, the Israel you want for the Jews, the Israel you want for yourself, and the two-state solution in you that will begin with a head and heart that are guided by a good conscience.

For you to make a secure and happy home for yourself within where no one can invade your privacy, you have to bring the truth of your own generosity of spirit to consciousness. You have to see yourself as a soulful land of milk and honey that no one can take away from you. Until that happens your jealousy and envy of the Jews will destroy you. Gay-Jews weren't created to be hated, disparaged and demeaned. No Jew was. No one was.

It took 2,000 years for Christians to make peace with the Jews. But they finally have. Now the Muslims must learn to do the same. Love or magnanimity will never rule the world without wisdom. Christians and Muslims will continue to kill one another unless each of them gives up his insistence on ruling the world alone and allow the Jews to do it with them. They know in their heart that they can't trust themselves. They must have Jews, and preferably gay-Jews, by their side at all times to help.

If a Jew curses you for your religion, color, gender or sexual orientation take your grievance to directly to God. I assure you He won't like what He hears if your concerns are valid. There are many orthodox Jews who don't want to admit how much they hate gays, so they claim to be apathetic to our cause instead. They've moved away from the passion of hatred to the dispassion of indifference. Until they learn to love gay-Jews as they claim to love God, they'll continue to be seen in Israel as our poor relations. Their inner poverty is an embarrassment to our holy nation, but, hey, there are spiritually indigent everywhere. Not all Jews are rich inside or out.

Wisdom and love will never be enough. History has proved that man cannot live by fruit, bread and wine alone. God didn't begin and end His story with Moses. And He didn't stop telling His tale with Jesus. He knows what He's doing. Don't dismiss the evidence just because it doesn't conform with your opinion of how He should behave. Teach wisdom

of the heart and men will embrace their education, both secular and spiritual. They'll find ways to help you bring peace to the world's religions through their own struggle for inner peace. Humanity is more connected than you might think. We're all created by the same Creator. Would it take a threat to the whole world to get you to see that?

Jesus lived at a time when the Jews had already survived as a nation longer than any other previous civilization in the world, including the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians and Greeks who were their neighbors. {And we were, of course, destined to outlive the Roman Empire and all the civilizations that rose and fell in Europe after Jesus died, as well.}

Moses had viewed life through the eyes of a citizen of *this* world, but Jesus viewed life through the eyes of a citizen of the *next* world. Even the fishermen He gathered around Him were cosmopolitans in comparison to the slaves Moses had freed from bondage in Egypt. And so Jesus challenged Himself to come up with spiritual imagery that would elucidate the words of Moses while helping every man catch and pull himself out of suffering like a fish from the sea.

A tree may be the mightiest of achievements in the botanical world, but it's not a place a modern man could ever feel comfortable living in. The metaphor of man-as-a-tree-of-knowledge leaves me feeling spiritually homeless inside. Birds may build their nests in trees. Monkeys may swing gleefully from a tree's branches. Wild cats may climb the trunk of trees to get a better view in their pursuit of prey.

But I can't see myself living in a treehouse except in a futile endeavor to recapture my youth. It's evolutionarily and spiritually insulting to try to go back to living like Tarzan, the monkey-man. It was a pleasant fantasy for an urban kid like me who grew up surrounded by cement. But the man who identifies only with the natural world, and not also with the world to come, is likely to feel more alone and alienated amongst men, not less.

And yet I cannot divorce myself from nature. The noble savage was a romantic 19th Century concept, spiritually unrealistic and morally idealized. But I can't and shouldn't give up the notion of the noble savage in myself.

Man is noble, but he's also a savage citizen of the modern world. He's the product of 10,000 years of spiritual schooling that has taught him to appreciate life like an animal in a tree, a savage on the ground and an angel in disguise. Through the animal and plant kingdoms we can learn to see our nature, which is our only hope in preserving Mother Nature and insuring a future for mankind. If we need to destroy nature to survive, then, yes, we'll have proved that we are only savages not worthy of eternal life. The future of the next world depends on our efforts in this one.

A modern Judeo-Christian is, in a sense, a spiritual treehouse, not a tree or a house. The modern Judeo-Christian is, in a sense, a spiritual double-decker bus with many people on both levels, people who all want to get to the same place whether they're sitting upstairs in their head or downstairs in their heart and soul. God gave the world Americans who are making life more spiritually complex and unified as we become more faithful to our future and as we learn to use His WORD/WORD/w o r d with more creativity and sensibility.

Jesus gravitated to symbols city folk could identify with, and this made His message much more relevant in a Mediterranean world that was becoming citified and connected by trade. For the next 2,000 years it would be people from cities who'd bring the message of God to the folks in the countryside in Europe and worldwide. It was Christian and Muslim soldiers with weapons in hand who imposed the message of God on the meek in the Middle East through CRUSADE and j i h a d. But conscious awareness of God's spirit always became concentrated in places where power and industry were made manifest. God saw to it that wherever expression of His intention was occurring around the Mediterranean, there would be Jews there to make their views known to man.

Those Muslims who are radicalized Islamists don't care about history. They don't care about His story before their story. They only want to get to Mecca to destroy Islam. From there they'll head for Jerusalem to destroy Judaism and Christianity. And from there they'll head for your hometown. The Jews tried to take over the world they knew between 900-500 B.C. The Christians tried to do the same for the past 2,000 years, and now there are Muslims who are trying to do so, too. The story is so old that it's actually boring. Will someone please educate the ignorant, and then let's all move on to create a better, not bitter, world.

Every evangelical pilgrim today who's on a spiritual journey must balance the science of evolution in his head with the creationism he holds dear in his heart. Although it makes no rational sense to see the world as having been literally created in six days, if viewed from God's heart, He obviously did it subjectively in a very short period of time. I'm sure He created the architectural underpinnings in no time, but after the plan was in place it took about fourteen billion years for the universe to get from the first day to the sixth. Those today who insist on choosing either the metaphor of Moses or the symbols of Jesus's will suffer with a spiritual frustration they'll never be able to resolve in their conscience or their lifetime. The true answer they seek lies deeper than in either faith.

If you think it'll be easy getting out of your spiritual vehicle when you arrive at your destination if you've {6} murdered, {7} cheated, {8} stolen, {9} lied or {10} coveted along the way, believe me the day will come when you'll find yourself in a dead body either buried under six feet of dirt or in a body going up in flames. Atheism will end on that day, but your errors of judgment will live on with you as you try to figure out where you need to go next.

I assure you the Ten Commandments for the Jews and Christians and the Noahide laws for the rest of humanity are as real as the gravity you can't see, hear, touch or smell. If you think you're exempt from the moral laws of the universe, try jumping up and staying up for any length of time. As your penis can attest, "What goes up must come down."

The main metaphor of Moses presented a bucolic view of God's world as seen through the backdrop of a garden surrounded by rivers. It was intended to create loyalty to land, sea and sky with God as the Creator of it all. Torah continues by describing the creation of His first chosen people, and we've never turned our back on that metaphoric truth. But Jesus brought the city slickers in Jerusalem a message of love that we all apply to our lives today, albeit often unconsciously. His symbols of the emotional truth of our existence are just as true in another way. Feelings have no place in a science textbook, but they certainly haven't been given nearly enough recognition for their contribution to the writing of the Gospels and Quran.

The tension between God's WORD as passed down by Moses to Jesus can be united through Spiritual Linguistics, the study of the spiritual formation of every word we use. Every word in your vocabulary is a part of your tree of knowledge. Every word comes from the bark, root, leaf, bud, flower or fruit nurtured by God with His modesty, humility and grace. You can grow even if you don't believe in God. (An atheist isn't just a caveman with a fire sitting in the dark. He's someone Plato described beautifully philosophically because he, too, is fascinated by the shadows on the walls.)

You can't fashion the architectural "I" beams and spiritual motherboards that describe the inner world we live in today without the guilty pleasure that comes from exploring science and technology with curiosity about God's plan. Every modern man is intellectual timber he trades with society to meet his survival needs with hope for more to come. Those who are the most educated in the secular and intellectual sense get top dollar for their wood. But a secular education only gives you the kind of knowledge you can trade for money. Even money has its roots in evil, or it wouldn't grow.

Parents, teachers and coaches are example of other forms of spiritual expertise that, sadly, aren't always well remunerated monetarily for their wisdom, love and generosity of spirit, let alone their ability to model cooperation and teach tranquility. The problem with the secular education we're giving our children is that a college education isn't enough to transfer your credits to spiritual nursery school. If you know nothing about nurseries you know nothing about spiritual school.

Increased appreciation of man's emotional education will compound our investment in humanity with greater appreciation for everyone's heart, even if your own head and heart aren't always on speaking terms with one another.

What difference does it make if you were created as heavy as mahogany or as buoyant as balsa wood? What difference does it make if you're more like a ginkgo tree than a southern pecan? The only way to appreciate each individual human being is to seek an appreciation for the spiritual construction of us all.

If the world doesn't learn to appreciate its dependence on our Judeo-Christianity culture in America, they won't appreciate that the key to the Kingdom is connected to the four elements of this world {earth, water, wind and fire}. If you can't meld the idea of God as your Rock at the root of your tree and the feeling of Him as the foundation beneath your house of wood, you're not going to be able to soar above the landscape in your soul to receive the inspiration you need to pour out your life with miraculous and meaningful emotions. These are the mixed metaphors that will only make sense if you have the spiritual foundation in place with which to understand them.

We need to appreciate that words have more than one meaning because they can come from more than one place in inner space. This is why words can be used with different meanings and various interpretations. Civilizations fell, not because their cities were destroyed, but because people saw cracks appearing in the walls of their inner edifice. Societies crumbled, not when their books were burned, but when its citizens weren't educated enough to appreciate the fire within that fueled their love of learning about themselves more than keeping tyrants in power.

We Jews are the people of the scroll. Christians are the people of the Good Book. But in this day and age if you can't see the spiritual poetry in scrolling up and down on a computer screen, you're going to be left in the ignorance of man's past.

The sentimental world where people still turn the pages of a book is a fine way to reward your hands, but your mind has to open to evidence that will lead you into your future. The scroll and the book have been technically and spiritually melded into the mechanical devices we use today. Reading the Bible online doesn't change the meaning in the slightest. The only thing that will change the meaning of Christ's words will be coming to them from your soul rather than your head or heart.

Every civilization in the past has fallen into decay, like rotted fruit that enriches the ground. A civilization that becomes self-indulgent with dogma becomes weakened from within. Its branches become blighted with spiritual fungi; its fruits are invaded with worms; and its roots rot from overwatering that saturates the ground needlessly. The great question for our time is whether America can heal like a tree, as well as repair our society like a house we love. Can we merge spiritual virtues with family values?

Moses guided the Israelites to the banks of the Jordan after 40 years of wandering, but they didn't build suburbs in the Sinai along the way. The Israelites were in search of a spiritual homeland they were willing to wait patiently to receive. They worshipped God in

the Tabernacle; a moveable tent they believed literally housed Him on their journey. The later destruction of the two permanent structures to God in Jerusalem, the First and Second Temples, were our ancestors' way of moving from spiritual, nomadic life to becoming spiritual gentlemen and ladies in our Lord's court in His kingdom in Israel.

Courtesy is the most important part of spiritual courtly life. Courtesy is a key to the kingdom that emerged out of Temple life long before it was transplanted to Europe where it was taken to the next level in God's plan.

Jesus was the spiritual king born in a courtly system under siege by enemies everywhere. His presence foreshadowed the physical destruction of the Temple by the Romans because He was the first spiritual messenger to come out in the flesh from the Temple. He was the prototype of human beings who'd carry God's message from a new place in inner space. He personified another way of perceiving the world from within.

But if Jews continue to blame Jesus for what Christians did to them, it's the Jews who'll suffer for it. We must never abandon anyone from our tribe. This the hyper-orthodox Jews don't understand.

It's difficult to talk about God using metaphor, symbols and signs, but the relationships created by words are all we have to work with. Poetry, not prose, comes closest to describing God's plan. Because so many things happen at once in our 3-D world, we can't include all our perceptions through any one way of stating the facts. Truth seems to be coming from many directions, but the exploration of spirituality through spatial consideration is a challenge in perceiving the truth worth learning. Almost anything is better than picking out sentences from Torah like stones and throwing them at people.

Gays hold a whole, new form of organization of words that's transforming the way the world will do business in the modern age. Our coming out of the tabernacle {closet} within gives others permission to do the same in their own figurative ways. The closet is a spiritual construct, a sign of the times. It's more than a metaphor or a symbol. It's a sign that you're going to come out of your tabernacle someday, too. Every man today should endeavor to perceive the rainbow flag as a promise of joy that gays are bringing to humanity. We echo the future of a rapture yet to come.

Today Islam must be added to the metaphoric mix, for without the spiritual insights in the Quran, which was written with the help of Jews and Christians, the bounty of Islam's future contributions to humanity will be gravely delayed. We won't move through to the next, deeper level of God-consciousness until a more unified understanding of His world is understood. Until Muslims are raised out of their impoverished political, financial, intellectual and emotional condition the rest of us won't receive the spiritual blessings from the next stage of enlightenment and soulfulness bequeathed to us all.

We need a global, spiritual warming to melt the hearts of hard-hearted men, not environmental, climatic catastrophe. Those who turn the other cheek in order to look away from the evidence all around them of what's going on within are going to seek refuge from their fear of the future by clinging more voraciously to irrational dogma that further separate them from others. Clinging to Jesus out of fear of growing up, as would a child to a big brother, is no way to pray in this day. Those who want to live and die as their parents raised them, without moving further forward on their own, will drown in deep disappointments with themselves or others. The future lies with those who move forward to the political center, not those who move further and further to the extremes.

We must look forward to the day when religious leaders embrace gay-Jews. But that surely won't happen until the most oppressed group of people on Earth is set free: women. The revolutions happening in the Arab nations must break the bondage of their Jew du jour: their mothers, wives, sisters and daughters. The evolution in Europe must break the bondage of their Jew du jour: Israel, the land from which all their milk flows and honey emanates. When that happens gay-Jews will find the hope we need to feel free.

The problem with the Muslim penis is the same problem you find with all the other penises in this world. They all expand for a while and later shrivel down to their original size. The only part of man that can grow bigger and bigger and never has to shrink back to its original size is, of course, his ego. Would that men put as much attention to their conscience as they do to using their penis to penetrate this world with their wants and their ego that makes them think they deserve everything they want.

Mixing metaphors with symbolism leads to a concentration of ideas that produces insight. Mixing metaphors with symbols will also produce signs that will bring insight to hindsight and foresight. But you're not obliged to do so. You can use words any way you wish. But there was a good reason for learning to speak at the same time you learned to walk. Together they were preparing you to fly.

See Food: The Gospel According to Luke

Healing or Repair?

Jesus healed many people who suffered diseases, ailments and evil spirits. He restored sight to many who were blind. He said, “GO AND TELL JOHN WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN AND HEARD. THE BLIND ARE RECOVERING THEIR SIGHT; CRIPPLES ARE WALKING AGAIN; LEPERS ARE BEING HEALED; THE DEAF ARE HEARING; DEAD MEN ARE BEING BROUGHT TO LIFE AGAIN; AND THE GOOD NEWS IS BEING GIVEN TO THOSE IN NEED. AND HAPPY IS THE MAN WHO NEVER LOSES HIS FAITH IN ME.” [Luke 7:21-23]

In an effort to repeat these miracles, the field of medicine has dedicated itself to relieving pain and suffering in the physical realm. Science should give us more, not less, reason to believe in God’s healing power. Science should be seen as a partner with faith. Science doesn’t diminish the miracles of the Holy Scriptures. Science personalizes the hope of miracles coming true for each one of us.

To use the church instead of science is a fool’s paradise. To advocate for religion without science is something only a hypocrite in this day and age would do. Are you cooking with gas or firewood? Are you wearing cotton clothing or only animal skins? Do you live in a house or a cave? What is it about science that you can’t believe came from God?

When you can be grateful to your parents for having trained you; your teachers for having instructed you; your partners for having educated you; and God for having taught you the merits of getting a spiritual education - you’re ready to profess your truth to yourself. When you realize that you’re your tutor and your tutee wrapped into one, you’ll take more responsibility for your ignorance.

Faith in God must begin with faith in yourself. But if you don’t see the importance of your ancestral roots in Judaism, you won’t appreciate how you’ve been able to branch out like a tree. And if you don’t see the importance of your ancestral branches in Christianity you won’t be able to blossom in other ways.

You may have had to start out by feeling abandoned and rejected, like a prince of a guy {Moses} who ended up killing a man. You may have had to then feel like a runaway, homeless in your heart, a nomad, a drifter aimlessly wandering in a desert, only to die in another desert in an unmarked grave after you did your best to make a difference in others’ lives.

If you want to feel the fury of Moses, you won’t connect the Old Testament with the New. You may succeed getting out of your head with excuses and denial, but you won’t

make it into your heart. If you can't be real you'll never strive to be ideal. You'll find yourself stuck in your Adam's apple, choking on the stories you tell yourself. You'll become stiff-necked and stubborn. You'll turn the other cheek to spirituality and the pressing problem of where you're at inside yourself.

If you rely on Moses, Jesus or the Prophet Mohammed to solve all your problems, you won't develop the tools to solve your syndromes from the inside out. In short, you'll give up on yourself. You'll make your way from your Egypt to Israel, but you won't make it to Heaven via Mecca and Jerusalem to sit with Them at their table. You'll lose hope that you might be the person you've always been waiting for. You'll die disappointed in your serpent because every time it talks out loud, you'll find you're somewhere else entirely. Rapture will elude you.

If Moses brought the salt {wisdom} of God into this world, then Jesus brought His sugar {love}. If you're bitter {disappointed} and sour {angry} because you're not hot {sexy} enough, that's not Their fault. God made you in His image and you figuratively taste the way you do with good reason. If you think His cooking needs to be spiced up a bit, you'll find all the usual condiments at His table. Season yourself to taste.

Most young men today unconsciously live under the metaphor of life-as-a-war-with-men rather than a STRUGGLE WITH GOD. They project their inner struggle out onto the external world. They strut around looking hot and sour, but inside they're secretly bitter and lonely. Hot and sweet turns them off: too gay...

Young men love video war games, not T.V. cooking shows. To take the "game" of war to heart and to greater emotional heights, the player would have to break through his own projections to see that he's really fighting an enemy within. If the soldier or mercenary in such a video game were given the body and face of the player, then as he lost blood and limbs he'd see himself being physically transformed into a disabled veteran. This would give him a healthy dose of fear that would penetrate his imagination with the possibilities of reality. A war game that isn't realistic can't claim to be educational. It's just escapist behavior for emotional cripples.

Moses was not the perpetrator of a crime against the Egyptians, and Jesus was not the perpetrator of a crime against the Jews. Adding salt {wisdom} to your food after its served isn't an insult to the chef, and adding sugar {love} to your coffee at the end of a meal isn't an insult either.

You must prove to yourself that you're your own best friend if you want to become the sort of man you admire. This is a project that can't be accomplished without the melding of religion and science into spirituality using the power of the humanities and liberal arts.

You moved through spiritual darkness at birth when you were blinded by the light. You bonded with that strange bedfellow you sleep with every night while you were still in the

crib. What you see around you are millions of examples of people as shortsighted and lonely as you are. Don't even try to be like them. Don't even try to be different from them. Try to be more like yourself. Even if you aren't very good at it at first, you'll succeed in being you with sufficient practice.

Being familiar with either the God around you {religion} or the God within {spirituality} is no longer an option in the New Age. You have to experience Him in both outer place and inner space to believe. And sometimes you have to do so simultaneously i.e. with strangers watching. Connecting your objective and subjective worlds is something you have to forge for yourself with yourself. But know that you're not alone in doing so, even if people look on the outside like they've got more experience in doing so than you. You've always got at least one crazy, gay-Jewish friend in a spiritually high place routing for you. {And it may not even be me; it may be Jesus.}

Even if you'll never be able to fully admit that you *like* yourself, you may be in a very good position to help some others who *hate* themselves; those who still suffer "entity-illness." Entity-illness is the combination of mental, emotional and spiritual illnesses that end up erupting in physical ramifications. You don't have to like the body that was allotted to you. It can disgust you until it makes you vomit. You can get hot under the collar until you have a fever. And you can get stuffed up and teary-eyed until your self-apathy ends in a cold.

You don't have to like the intellectual abilities bestowed upon you that create trains of thought that force you to disembark at stations that seems useless to you. You don't even have to like the emotional range of responses you were trained to express that may leave you with tracks that go nowhere. With help you can heal the world around you, but alone you must heal your world within. There's nothing wrong that can't be righted. There's nothing bad that can't lead to something good. All realists are optimistic. All pessimists are idealists who can't make anything pragmatic happen when they want it to occur.

Those who get mad are frustrated when they see one side of a word, but not the other. And when they turn that word over in their mind, like a coin, they may get confused in addition to angry because they realize the second meaning corresponds to a different feeling in their heart. They don't yet have the Buddhist ability to look at both sides of words like coins resting on a glass table. They don't have the ability to know up from down and use that information to their advantage.

The Gospel According to John begins, "IN THE BEGINNING THERE WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD." [John 1:1]

We can't hear the WORD of God by only listening to Torah as it's spoken by others. We have to learn to listen to ourselves repeating the WORDS of Torah to hear how they resonate

within us. We also have to read and recite the WORDS of the Apostles to understand God's plan.

When the Bible is read aloud in your house of prayer it's brought to life through you if you pay attention to how it makes you feel. If it makes you sour or bitter, don't hold that against the gays today or the ancient Jews who wrote it. Those tastes were created for *you* to feel, not to make *others* feel. You don't have to remain bitter or soured on yourself. Add sugar and salt to your spiritual diet to sweeten and salt yourself if you find yourself not to your liking. If you can add sugar {love} from your heart and salt {wisdom} from your head to the beliefs in your soul you'll discover that your soul will get spicy all on its own.

The transmission of words on the page comes from God to humanity through a spiritual process by which we first turn His symbols into visual images in our imagination and then sounds that hold even more specific meanings. Those who are physically deaf can't literally hear. Those who are emotional deaf can't figuratively listen to the whisperings in their heart. And those who are spiritually deaf are unable to believe, therefore they ignore the importance of this mystical, spiritual process altogether.

But unless you've had your tongue ripped out of your mouth, you have the ability to taste. God gave you a tongue for you to use it. But if you only use it to eat and talk with, you're not making good enough use of it.

People can be healed with faith, but faith healing requires changes in your body, transformations in your heart and a transcendence of your spirit. And these changes may not occur in that order. Healing is a lot of work because it moves you closer to God, but healing always gets easier as you develop more and more faith. There are doctors on every level of life to help you through this process, but you're going to have to heal yourself with everyone's help. The more interest you take in the moral importance of healing, the more intimate your relationship with yourself will get.

Hating blacks, Muslims, gays and liberals is a sign of a sickness. It's a sign that you don't want to be healed. In a world where so many people don't hate you or Jesus, the obvious answer will come from within.

God makes "sounds." They just don't sound like the sounds we're accustomed to hearing with our ears. If you can't hear the symphony in every sunset, for instance, you're spiritually deaf. If you can't hear the hope in a child's laughter, you're hard of hearing emotionally. But if you *can* hear the fear emanating out of your own, immanent, physical pain, it's because you have excellent hearing for spiritual sounds that occur up close. And sometimes the pain of those you love can reverberate in your heart with more fear and consternation than your own pain.

The severity of your spiritual, hearing impairment must be revealed to you personally. This is figuratively referred to as an opening of the heart, but only you can prepare to have

it opened. You prepare that way by humbling yourself to yourself. But if you don't discuss your inner condition with yourself honestly, sincerely and authentically, you won't earn the humility to make peace with yourselves.

God rewards us for our efforts in making peace from within by opening our heart to ourselves. This is what gives you a taste for wonder and a desire for more spiritual sugar {love}, which is mandatory for you to appreciate each step on the way to a heavenly reward.

The word "paradise" in Judaism is derived from the word PARDES {ORCHARD}. The paradise after life is the orchard of experiences we grow with self-love. This is why Jesus was able to describe the importance of wisdom of the heart. To do a "MITZVAH" {GOOD DEED} out of duty, rather than joy, doesn't bring you into awareness of this paradise, the orchard of self-love. If you don't want to do something good for others for the sake of the self-love you'll derive from doing so, force yourself or don't bother. Either way there will be something for you to look at and learn. I'm not guaranteeing you results. I'm guaranteeing you tools.

The body needs instruction on healing intellectually. We call those healers teachers. Healing at the physical level of reality is largely, but not entirely, automatic and unconscious. But we need physical healers called doctors. There's just as much you can do to heal your heart and soul. Emotional healers are called psychologists. And healers of your soul are called spiritualists.

You can begin by perceiving the experience of being human as an inner topography you're learning to explore while moving through outer reality. You can cut tunnels through inner mountains to derive intellectual shortcuts to your thinking patterns. You can build bridges across the rivers of your feelings that wind through you to ford those feelings with good feelings. But the effect of the wind on your inner landscape will erode you anyway over time. Make the best of the way you were made and do what you can to protect yourself from your inner elements. Life is so much bigger than it looks. (Consider listening to Joni Mitchells' song "Comes Love" to gain insight into the fatalism of love ruling your life.)

The healing miracles Jesus demonstrated can be separated into two sets of feelings, those for your mother and those for yourself. The mother/son relationship of most men today still mirrors 19th Century romantic relationships of undying love and devotion to an idealized person who you hold high on a pedestal. Men get into romantic relationships with strangers in the unconscious hope that the other person will help them break the projection of love they have on their mother.

That's neither realistic, nor healthy; but it's common. Idealized relationships with others aren't ever going to lead to pragmatic, spiritual outcomes. If you want to imagine

the Eve in your heart as Steve, you're going to have to give up your fear that doing so will turn you queer.

Most people are in a relationship with themselves that they give up on every time they get frustrated with themselves. You can't even have an ideal relationship with yourself, so why would you strive for an ideal relationship with another person? {1} Reinforce your relationship with yourself daily by being as realistic about it as possible. {2} Then strive to be more idealistic in the way you treat others. {3} Then you'll discover how to pragmatically meld the two. Undying love and devotion to this process will develop a romantic relationship with yourself that you can then share with someone who'll make a good companion.

Childish ideas of eternal love are generally broken or at least seriously cracked at puberty when an adolescent boy goes through his first crush. But his idealized relationship with his mother can linger for decades or return many times over his lifetime. Some men unconsciously hold on to the religious model of the idealized Mother in the Mary/Jesus relationship. Others have a mother/son bond that's cantankerous and emotionally realistic. Every partnership in life with another person elucidates some aspect of your ongoing relationship with your mom. Your mother may have passed on years ago, but your emotional relationship with her is always developing. That's why we say that love is eternal.

Possessive feelings of ownership of another person don't only exist in baby boys for their mommy. Men work out their relationships with their mother on other men as well. Your desire for connection with others is modeled on your ever-present relationship with your mother, but it's manifested in your relationships with everyone. Moving from real to ideal to pragmatic isn't that hard if you watch what you're doing from your heart rather than your head or soul. What you think and what you believe to be true aren't ever going to be as important as how you feel.

The intellectual/psychological/spiritual process is reflected in the Judeo-Christian axiom of faith we celebrate in this country every Christmas and Easter with the birth and death of the idealized male. If you're busy avoiding the feelings of these seasons, you're going to miss the insights you could glean from them. If you aren't willing to take up these spiritual lessons with the Teacher's Assistant {regardless of your faith or philosophy}, you're not going to be well prepared when the Teacher comes to lecture you. (And we're all lectured by our Teacher from time to time.)

We do our best to heal on all four planes of reality, the physical, intellectual emotional and spiritual, even though we usually go to separate specialists nowadays for help with each problem specifically. It would be unrealistic for medical doctors to work with psychologists and spiritualists to determine the course of action for every one of his or her

patients. But, paradoxically, that sharing of information is precisely the model for inner unification you should learn to achieve with yourself.

The healing balm of liking yourself as you are has to be self-administered before self-love can become personal and meaningful. But you can't like yourself until you overcome your anger and disappointment in not having been able to give yourself everything you desire. Therefore, you should acknowledge your character as it is before you try to appreciate why you do what you do. Once you like your external personality, you'll be more pleased with your internal persona. You'll appreciate why you become as sweet, sour, bitter, salty and hot as you did. As you develop a taste for yourself, you'll experiment with spiritual sweeteners, lemon, herbs, salt and chilies that will release the flavors in your persona that will bring out the tang in your personality.

As you come to know and love yourself more deeply and intimately, you'll be able to tolerate other people a lot more. Familiarity with yourself doesn't breed contempt. But moving through self-contempt will improve your essence and aroma. It will teach you to tolerate, accept and even admire yourself for how you are. Once you've done that, accepting others as they are becomes so much easier.

It makes little sense to admire others if you see that you've projected your self-admiration onto them. It's equally senseless to act out any more desire you might have for God's admiration. He doesn't need to admire you. You do. It would have been audacious for Pinocchio to ask the woodcarver Maestro Geppetto who made him to admire him. That's why Pinocchio's nose grew when he lied and not the nose of those he lied to.

Our Creator's admiration of us comes indirectly. As we find reasons to admire ourselves for the way we behave toward ourselves, we instinctively come to see that He admires us, too.

We, too, have been made of wood {albeit spiritual}. We also resemble Pinocchio in that we, too, have a tendency to lie, only we call it denial. The author of this story, Carlo Collodi, created the concept of a wooden puppet that dreamed of becoming a real boy, although Collodi was tactful enough to make Pinocchio's nose grow long when he fabricated stories rather than the kind of swelling most men get when they feel erroneously empowered by getting "it" their way. Lying feels good. It makes us feel powerful. It gives us the comforting feeling that we're safe and hidden away. Here are the lyrics to the song "Wooden Heart," lyrics by Fred Wise, Ben Weisman and Kay Twomey. It was sung by Elvis Presley in the film "G.I. Blues" in 1960. Imagine Elvis singing this song to himself:

"Treat me nice

Treat me good

Treat me like you really should

‘Cause I’m not made of wood
And I don’t have a wooden heart”

Today most men know better than to hate themselves, but they’re often left with the unpleasant feeling of disliking themselves, or worse, feeling apathetic to themselves. When you saw off Pinocchio’s long nose, it’s like dismembering a man, making him feel less than himself. How could anyone like himself in such a sorry state?

Another man’s self-love isn’t something you perceive from the outside of him. Self-love doesn’t show in the size of his nose or his penis. It’s when you bore into the trunk of a tree that you discover the syrup that flows through its unseen veins. Self-love has to be tapped. {It takes 40 gallons of sap to make one gallon of maple syrup. Could God be telling us something about the nature of male self-love?}

“GO AND TELL JOHN WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN AND HEARD.” Don’t take physical healing for granted. It’s the greatest miracle of being in a body. As you learn to apply physical healing to the deeper levels of emotional repair and spiritual renewal you can acknowledge the ways you like and dislike yourself. This will make you more soulful. What you see in yourself when you look out the window of every train of thought is a scene God is giving you to motivate you to restore the damaged land within you. The Earth doesn’t have a chance of healing if you don’t heal yourself. Every tree is precious.

The question presented in the title of this chapter was “Healing or Repair?” “TIKKUN HAOLAM” {REPAIR OF THE WORLD} is a concept that began with the idea that God planted two trees in the Garden of Eden, a Tree of knowledge of good and evil and a Tree of life. You are both those trees, metaphorically speaking. Adam and Eve are the names of those aspects of your conscious self that you allowed to eat from your tree of knowledge, which filled you with self-awareness. As you continue to grow with self-awareness, your whole garden will grow. Gather the seeds of self-knowledge and plant them in others. Have faith that God will take these precious seeds and miraculously transform them into the greatest form of knowledge there is: wisdom of the heart. Then you’ll be ready to approach yourself like fruit on the Tree of life without worrying about your ever-weakening stem.

This world is just for practice. If you don’t learn to serve yourself faithfully with the gift of guilt, you’ll never discover your own love for life. You’ll only indulge yourself with pleasure upon pleasure. You’ll consume sugar, but you’ll remain artificially sweetened. If you don’t learn to be of service to God during your lifetime by promoting the virtues of spiritual farming here on Earth, you’ll want little or nothing to do with Him until you suddenly realize it’s you He’s going to harvest next. The desire to be of service must come out of love for your life, not merely a desire to do your duty to others.

See Food: The Gospel According to Luke

Compliments or Praise?

Most people think God rewards them with money and punishes them with financial ruin. They think the wealthy, healthy and beautiful are being rewarded and that the poor, sick and ugly are being punished. It's hard to see God as rewarding and punishing each of us in ways that are personal and private to our individual nature to help us learn to love our life as it is. That perspective requires the humility to see everyone as a student in school with a curriculum that gives personal meaning to his life alone. In this way you progress, grow and affect the world around you as profoundly as you care to.

Some very good-looking people have unrealistic perceptions of their body. Some emotionally challenged individuals demonstrate great loyalty and concern for others, but not for themselves. And some in very secure marriages show very little in the way of universal love for their fellow man. Don't judge a book by its front cover or by the review others write behind their back. The story inside each one of us is more mysterious than anyone imagines. Everyone is a part of history, chosen by God to be here now with a reason we'll never be able to fully fathom.

And yet anyone can see how money helps some people ripen while others it spoils. We can see how some misuse their good health while others feel rewarded just by being able to get out of bed in the morning. Without a spiritual perspective from your heart on your soul, you're going to come to bizarre beliefs about the meaning of your life. If you don't bother to compare your bounty to your behavior, you're not going to get a realistic view of what you need to work on.

Nobody can figure out why God sometimes chooses to use pain and other times suffering to make His point. Sometimes He showers people with an embarrassment of riches. Other times He just showers them with embarrassment. If given the chance, most of us would sign on to a class action-suit against God if we thought we could win the case. We forget that we all pout much more often than we should sheepishly grin. Our attitude about the least, little gift we're not given can be less than admirable. If we realized what we don't have that we don't yet deserve, we might work harder to change our attitude about what we've been given. Making your dreams come true is a gift you earn, not a gift owed to you.

Six million Jews died in the Holocaust. Three hundred thousand gay men died of AIDS in America. If you were to have judged Jews and gays in the time in which these events occurred you wouldn't have gotten a realistic view of God's plan as seen through those horrendous misfortunes. Only in retrospect can we see the gifts of gays in making all marriages a union of love, not just for those of opposite genders. Only in retrospect can we

see that the creation of the State of Israel has been a light unto the Christian nations, which has taking them out of the darkness of cynicism that individual Christians still suffer from today. Only now are we beginning to perceive that Jews and gays will be a light for the Muslims out of the spiritual darkness that led many of them to conclude that suicide is a virtuous and viable path to get into Heaven. Martyrdom leads to eternal death, not eternal life. Anti-Semitism and homophobia will only lead to greater unrest in Muslim lands.

God praises those who move past self-indulgence toward spiritual endeavors that will better themselves in His eyes. He gifts those who test their intellectual and emotional choices for greater and more personal, moral meaning. He praises those who think about their inner prosperity and rewards those who feel prosperous by giving them tools to enrich the lives of orphans and widows. He bestows spiritual health on those who yearn to use their physical strength to serve those who are weak. He blesses those who use their external beauty to beautify the world around them with the beauty within themselves.

God made students who look different and are tested differently, but they're all in His one-room class for the same reason, even if that reason is too big to be put into words that don't come across as paradoxical. The whole point of financial poverty is to get out of it by enriching the world within you first. The point of being financially secure is to stay that way by enriching both your worlds. The point of being rich in money is to seek to become rich in honey {wisdom}.

The point of physical illness is to heal the world within you so that you appreciate your health. The point of having good health is to use it to heal the world around you. The point of being young and attractive on the outside is to beautify your world within. The point of being older and less attractive on the outside is to beautify the world to come.

You've got to be inventive to receive God's praise. You've got to see your crimes and self-inflicted punishments and then find ways to use them to achieve His awe of you and your own mysterious ways by turning them into paths of goodness. God doesn't limit Himself to the morality of man. He can choose to do anything He wants to you, for you or despite of you. Therefore you have to use your conscience to decide how to turn your fate into your destiny.

Just growing naturally like a tree, blossoming one season and showing off the fruits of your efforts in another, isn't enough to receive high praise. It doesn't matter if your roots are Jewish, Christian or Muslim. You've got to find ways to use every part of your tree of knowledge to better this world. If you were the tree that fell in a forest, and nobody was there to hear or care what happened to you, what evidence would you have to show that your existence had mattered? It's not always about someone else being here to hear you. Sometimes you should stop and listen to yourself.

Sometimes God should be compared more to a teacher than a father in the sense that most men outgrow their need for a father, but they always have great reason to remember their favorite teacher. There comes a point in many a son's life when he sees himself as having surpassed his father in some way. He looks back at his father with pity, sorrow, anger or denial. But God is the Teacher we can never outgrow because He gives us a curriculum each day that's beyond the concerns with which we fill our calendar. He gives us assignments we never would have picked and unexpected grades that always come as an unbelievable surprise.

In the sense that life is a school, the "A" student reads the red marks on his paper with keen interest. He's anxious to learn as much from God's praise as from His criticism. The "B" student looks at the grade and casually peruses the comments to feel vindicated for his modest success. The "C" student is just grateful he didn't fail but doesn't bother to look over his paper, afraid of what it says about his work habits. The "D" student tears up his test paper and throws it away. And the "F" student may have showed up to class the day of the test, but his grades are his least important reason for coming to school.

Those of us who take life the most personally read the most into everything we do. We see everything that happens inside and out as a lesson from the Teacher who allows it to turn out as it does. We feel it's our duty to weigh every criticism we receive from others and to remind ourselves of our good grades rather than downplay them. Every test we've passed in life becomes a trophy on our inner mantel.

As an ordinary human being, we have the ability to point out to those who feel average how normal it is to get grades that range all the way from "A" to "F." When you realize that everything in life is a part of your curriculum, you begin to see how wide a range of grades you're receiving. If you could take a peek at God's roll book, you'd see that your grades run the range of normal. It's only then that you don't have to point fingers at others accusing them of not being normal.

Sunsets, births, Christmas presents, sex and senseless acts of kindness are compliments from the Teacher that can be turned into personal praise if you receive them with gratitude. If you don't see today's sun as having risen just for you, you're not taking life personally enough. If you don't look at the face of every dog and are forced to smile a bit, you're not facing yourself from your heart.

Misfortune, loss, sorrow and depression are noteworthy red marks on your tests that could teach you how to re-right your life with greater accuracy. When you're willing to examine your thought and feelings with greater moral discernment, God enters into your conscience to help you guide yourself through errors of judgment toward increased self-awareness. School gets easier the longer you attend if you like comparing and contrasting yourself to who you once were. Then your grades go up and your attitude improves. You

like your Teacher and your classmates. When you enjoy school, you do more to shut up the bozos at the back of the room because they're interfering with your education. You refuse to allow that to happen for everyone's sake.

But if you want to blame life, your classmates or the Teacher for your own misfortunes, you'll be left with a lot of overdue homework before you'll graduate the elementary, school principles of life and be allowed to move on to a secondary, spiritual education. There are still more children in this school than teenagers, and more teenagers than college graduates. If you don't grow up, you'll graduate just the way you are now. {Isn't that a frightening thought?}

The Jewish people were chosen by God. He changed our mind about the meaning of life, and we had no choice in the matter. But the Christians got to choose whether they want to come from their heart or their head to decide what they want to believe. Christians had the right to make a choice. Muslims aren't chosen and they didn't get to choose. Muslims submitted to God because that's what their faith calls them to do. They were slightly made another way.

Everything you think, feel and believe goes into God's lesson plans. Therefore not even the short quizzes or incidental exercises in life should be emotionally ripped up or morally discarded. If He sees every sparrow that falls, surely He already knows everything you want in life and allowed you all the choices you've made. If you've not gotten all that you want from those choices, maybe you should consider practicing submission to His will to improve yourself before you dismiss Islam as unholy. Maybe our Teacher is still waiting for you to pass the classes you're in before He's going to advance you in your curriculum. I'm not suggesting you become more passive or active. I'm suggesting you become more sensitized to the way it's turning out for you – especially if you're Palestinian.

“No” is a word that many people {not only Christians} don't like to use when contemplating God's love. They'd much rather hear “maybe.” Maybe means they have a chance of getting what they want if they work hard enough for it. No is hard to hear because there can be so many reasons for no, while maybe always gives us the impression that we're at least moving in the right direction. The good news is that God loves you even when His answer is “No!”

Christianity was created because God believed that everyone deserves a second chance. Islam was created because He even believes you deserve a third chance. But whether you're chosen, choose or submit is up to you. It's a personal decision, and whether you make that decision in your head, heart or soul doesn't matter in the least. You should be pleased with your decision wherever it's made within you. And you should like the outcome.

When Jesus indirectly complimented Himself in the Book of Luke saying, “GO AND TELL JOHN WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN AND HEARD” it should give you pause at the

importance of looking at what you're doing right with regard to your healing, repair and self-service. Jesus was inferring that you need to compare {+} and contrast {-} what you see happening in your head to what's going on in your heart. Contrasting {-} your thoughts to your feelings may be easier, but the results are less positive. Comparing {+} them is much more positive and affirming. Your goal should always emphasize the ways your self-love has grown and your self-loathing has diminished. The former denotes an increase in hope. The latter points out a decrease in desperation. You need to pull from in front and push from behind.

Muslims whose loathing for Israel and the Jews has grown should question whether they're happy with the results around them and contented with the results within. For European Christians whose resurgence of anti-Semitism has grown, they should do the same. When you see America bounce back from her mistakes while the rest of the world lands with a thud, it should give you pause. You should ask yourself what God's plan is doing for America that it isn't doing for you.

More than Jesus wanted His disciples to be pleased with Him, He wanted His followers to be pleased with themselves. They had no clue to the spiritual meaning of the first person singular reflexive pronoun "myself" when uttered subjectively from their heart. They only knew animal sacrifice and self-sacrifice. They couldn't say the words, "I believe in myself" with a sense of hope for fear of what God would think of them for having said something so powerful and self-serving.

Thank God, pride is no longer a religious issue anymore. The denunciation of this deadly sin is a true sign of man's psychological and spiritual progress. If you believe in yourself, you should be proud of yourself. Humanity has worked tirelessly for centuries to make that possible.

Spiritual Linguistics brings the personal meaning of the words you use out of your head and into your heart. Spiritual Linguistics is a mandatory class in the school of life for all those who wish to learn to pray to God without coming across like a talking head. If you don't want to embarrass yourself before your Creator, you're going to want to learn how to see the other side of the words you use. You're going to want to make words that are now 2-D, 3-D.

Obviously those whose inner world isn't flat aren't going to fall off it. Obviously you can't communicate with God effectively if you haven't learned to talk to yourself with heartfelt and soulful intentions. Obviously pontificating is something you'll want to avoid doing if you don't want to be mistaken for the Bishop of Rome – especially if you're gay and Jewish.

You can't be the villain or just a supporting actor on your own stage. You won't be able to convince yourself you cared about the ending of your story if you don't become the

hero of it in this act. You won't need to be an anti-hero to yourself if you learn to obey yourself. You'll find less need to rebel against progress if you're promoting it. Change is good for you even if it scares you. But transformation is a whole lot better.

Many of our veterans are suffering from P.T.S.D. without receiving guidance from religious leaders to get them out of the metaphor of life-as-a-fight" into the metaphor of life-as-a-dance-you-perform-with-yourself. Those who feel the need to express their loyalty to their principles through fighting express the warring metaphor in all that they do. The metaphor of life-as-a-dance will change the way they move within themselves. It'll help them choreograph the steps they need to take in life with greater moral regard for the rights of gays, Jews and women worldwide. It will bring liberty and emancipation to the struggle for freedom.

A man's body never lies. His body may think it wants to fight with others, but it really feels like dancing. Fear of dancing is one of the most profoundly debilitating consequences of a man living in his head. It's not what he'll look like on the outside, but how he'll feel about himself that embarrasses him. Dance is the highest art form there is.

Although I'm a peace-loving member of the human race, I'm not opposed to war in special circumstances. If you're lazy, greedy or gluttonous, you really need to declare a war on yourself. In short, your struggles with others should always be in an effort to internalize guilt and love to derive emotional truth about yourself. All the wars in Israel have only made Israeli men more soulful and spiritually developed. Denial of either the message of Moses or Jesus will lead you to extremes in thinking and feeling that will have disastrous moral consequences. Islam cannot succeed without Judaism and Christianity to help it support itself.

Loyalty to your country, community, career, family, friends and team are all projections of your loyalty to yourself. These projections don't have to break you or leave you feeling broken to be appreciated; they only have to be observed with conscious regard for yourselves. When you've gone through an extremely challenging experience that tests your loyalties, you should look for the outcome that will bring you the greatest sense of loyalty to yourself. And yet, that's often the most difficult, moral choice to make because you've got to make sure you'll be proud of yourself for having chosen the most righteous path God has given you.

Abortion, homosexuality and assisted suicide are three such decisions that have enormous personal importance. If you don't want to have sex with a man, by all means don't. If you don't want to have an abortion on your conscience, by all means make sure you're always packing protections. And if you don't want anyone to pull the plug on you, make sure that doesn't happen by having your affairs in order. But what others do with regard to these decisions is really none of your business. Their grades aren't going on your

report card. Your anger and guilt at their choices in life can only be a projection of something you haven't faced in yourself.

Many young men go to war for our country and come home at war with themselves. Many survive the horrors of killing others and then succumb to killing themselves. P.T.S.D. is a fancy word for suicidal tendencies, and suicidal tendencies are a common occurrence in our society because we don't look at suicide as a breaking of the 6th Commandment. {THOU SHALL NOT KILL.} The unconscious reason for this is that we're just leaving a 2,000-year period of promoting self-sacrifice, and just now entering a period of self-seeking.

P.T.S.D., mental illness and terrorism are continuums on the path to suicidal tendencies. Racism, homophobia and misogyny are just inconvenient stops to slow you down along the way. Healthy people have a live-and-let-live attitude about life. They make their conscience their own guide, and let God deal with His student body Himself. Every way you give up on yourself is a rejection of hope in improving your grades in favor of an early graduation. But it's your graduation. What difference does it make to me what diploma you receive or when you receive it?

Forcing people to obey the Ten Commandments is an obscene misuse of God's laws unless people put the planet in danger by ignoring them. If you can't attract people to the Ten Commandments, maybe you're not attracted enough to them yourself.

Although some people have a desire to be fruitful through procreation, everyone can enjoy creativity in many, other ways. God gifts us with an inner child experience that's often evidenced by a love for animals rather than children. Some people show a natural affection for kids while others would rather spend their time in a barn with baby goats. God gave us the animal kingdom to learn to love the kid in ourselves. Just because you had to grow up too quickly gives you no right to take away the opportunity from others to perceive life like a child.

Although it's often seen as immodest to toot your horn in public, don't extrapolate from that, that it's immodest to toot your horn in the privacy of your own head, heart and soul. Jesus obviously loved Himself. He seemed to be able to relate to all others with a full heart. If you recognize the importance of your love for yourself, the only thing you have to fear is the fear of not being yourself.

When Moses revealed more of God's divine process to the people, they uttered the phrase, "NA'ASEH V'NISHMA," "WE WILL DO AND WE WILL LISTEN." [Exodus 24:7]. And that's exactly what the Jews have done since. We do what we can, and then we go back and repair what we didn't get right the first time. First we do. Then we listen.

"WHAT CAN I SAY THAT THE MEN OF THIS GENERATION ARE LIKE - WHAT SORT OF MEN ARE THEY? THEY ARE LIKE CHILDREN SITTING IN THE MARKETPLACE AND CALLING OUT TO EACH OTHER, 'WE PLAYED AT

WEDDINGS FOR YOU, BUT YOU WOULDN'T DANCE, AND WE PLAYED AT FUNERALS FOR YOU, AND YOU WOULDN'T CRY!' FOR JOHN THE BAPTIST CAME IN THE STRICTEST AUSTERITY AND YOU SAY HE IS CRAZY. THEN THE SON OF MAN CAME, ENJOYING LIFE, AND YOU SAY, 'LOOK, A DRUNKARD AND A GLUTTON, A BOSOM-FRIEND OF THE TAX COLLECTOR AND THE OUTSIDER!' AH, WELL, WISDOM'S REPUTATION IS ENTIRELY IN THE HANDS OF HER CHILDREN!" [Luke 7:31-35]

This passage must be explicated carefully to glean the self-loving process that arose from Jesus as He contemplated life from His heart to reveal His views through His emotions to those around Him. By moving in and out of the third person singular in the passage above, He demonstrated His proximity and distance from Himself. He demonstrated how He could identify as a man of His generation and as a universalist.

He spoke to the general opinion of the Jewish people at that time of John the Baptist as a crazy man. He also described Himself in their eyes as a drunkard, glutton, and a friend to the tax collector and the non-Jew. He was a Jewish rebel who didn't believe He needed to do and then listen. He didn't see Himself as childish and dafka, but childlike.

“WISDOM'S REPUTATION IS ENTIRELY IN THE HANDS OF HER CHILDREN” because the Children of Israel {like everyone else in this world} will eventually behave in ways that are either childlike or childish. Unless you use your head and heart to determine what's motivating you, your desires will get the better of you. The reputation of your own wisdom depends more on the wisdom of your heart than your head. The *childlike* are motivated by love. The *childish* are motivated by their penis. You must always decide for yourself what's motivating you.

The men of His generation were Jews who were aware of the spiritual process they'd been handed down from Moses as it had been revealed up until then. They also knew what the PROPHETS had done for Israel, but they couldn't have known better than to call John crazy. He wasn't. He was different. Different looks insane until you understand what motivates differences. If it's your heart, you're different. If it's your penis, you're crazy.

Prayer used to be the only recourse for those who were severely anxious about the ways they were being treated unfairly by others. Fortunately today we have greater conscious awareness of what motivates us, and many more spiritual options thanks to the interplay between the Western faiths and Eastern philosophies. You can't make fun of a person's eyes, skin color, nose, height, deformities or mannerisms anymore. These are differences that aren't motivated by a man's heart or penis. Today we have the luxury of being able to meld religious study with modernity without denigrating people for looking different, being different or acting differently. We no longer have to choose faith over philosophy or science over religion. We can embrace differences as God-given and desirable.

And still, there are so many like the men of Jesus's generation who He spoke about as "SITTING IN THE MARKETPLACE AND CALLING OUT TO EACH OTHER." They were motivated by cynicism when they said, "WE PLAYED AT WEDDINGS FOR YOU, BUT YOU WOULDN'T DANCE, AND WE PLAYED AT FUNERALS FOR YOU, AND YOU WOULDN'T CRY!" They had a bad attitude about life because everyone has to go through darkness before he can get through darkness. The Jews Jesus was describing were graduates of spiritual, nursery school, calling out boastfully to those around them at what they knew then to be true. When you're still a very young student in the school of life, only periodically tested, you tend to experience euphoria in feeling chosen one minute even if you feel deep disappointment in yourself when you feel like a failure the next. It's only as you grow older and graduate to harder problems in life that you realize how much more often you're tested now than you were in your past.

Life gets harder. The tests get harder. Your sense of failure becomes greater and your need for emotional answers increases as you realize wisdom of your heart must be included in every answer you give. Putting gays down today doesn't work anymore than putting Jews down worked for Christians in the past.

For most men it's their mother they wish to thank for training their heart. Most men can clearly see that their mother was a spiritual entity having a physical experience, even if they can't quite see other men having the same experience. The truth is that everyone's pain and suffering helps the struggle for humanity in each one of us. Everyone's struggle is personal and private as well as public and universal. The humanity you see in your mother is no different than the humanity you see in yourself, or the rest of us.

The more you can see your feelings as vital to your spiritual development, the sooner you'll realize you're not alone when you feel all alone. You're never alone. Yes, you may have to solve your problems by yourself. But your feelings affect your decisions more deeply than you might admit. You're filling an empty cup with something more precious than champagne. The bubbly feeling you associate with fear, anger and anxiety is the product of a fermenting process that will have lasting results. God is always watching your choices and preparing new challenges for you based upon what you indicate to Him you want to learn about life.

They say, "Charity begins at home," but it really doesn't. Charity begins close to home, and you're supposed to bring charity closer and closer until you can convince it to come home and live with you forever. Being charitable to yourself is one of the hardest things in this world to accomplish. You should practice charity on others often and generously until you learn how to perfect it.

Feelings need time to age. Love is a process, not a product. Love isn't something bottled up inside that you separate from all your other feelings. Each spiritual season is one in

which you gather the grapes from your vineyard and make a new batch of love to bottle and age in the cellar in your inner home. You uncork a bottle of your love every time you recall the way you felt in the past compared or contrasted to how you feel now. Love begins as an aroma that describes the scent of the fruit of a young wine, but love becomes a bouquet that determines the quality of your fermentation over time.

Taking off your clothes and standing nude in front of others has become easier and more guilt free thanks to the sexual revolution. But letting down your inner walls and facing your embarrassment nude, your shame naked and the humiliation that leaves you see-through to yourself before yourself is still hard for many to do. Men don't usually ask God to help them feel kinder toward themselves. They don't usually pray for self-love or greater charity toward themselves. Because feelings are irrational men don't think it's wise to ask God for something irrational. They prefer to wish for things that are real rather than ideal.

Today's Jews shouldn't have any difficulty in admitting that they don't feel the way our ancestors did in the past. And thanks to the continuity of our culture and our devotion to learning, we should study the words of the rabbis in our past to compare and contrast their feelings to those of modern men today. We should see how much we've learned from our contiguous past and how differently we feel from our forefathers thanks to how great Thou art.

There was a time in history when people literally believed in demons. Nowadays, most Jews don't believe in them at all, and most Christians use the expression "inner demons" to express their psychological struggles in an anthropomorphized way. The history of demonology has moved from real demons that most Europeans once believed were literally living in Hell and coming to Earth to possess people (usually by entering them through their anus) to a euphemistic inner space of discomfort with themselves.

Today people complain about being in a Hell of their own making. But they rarely admit that they're the "devil" in disguise. An inner demon is a negative feeling combined with an illogical thought that plagues our conscience. We turn these bad thoughts and hateful feelings into videos in our mind {fantasies}, but we don't see that these demons are a plague from our own Hell that we all have to go through to seek moral illumination. Nowadays the Hell within us has leaked out and is creating a new kind of living Hell around us.

The only way to kill these inner demons is to allow them to surface into the light of day through conversations with yourself. Only in this way will they shrivel up and die with the illumination of wisdom and warmth of self-love. Reoccurring sexual fantasies and violent thoughts that include acts of revenge are conversations you're having with yourself about yourself. They're your way of communicating to you how you feel about all your fears,

angers and sorrows in life. Don't dismiss your fantasies or you'll never achieve your dreams. And then visions of a world safe for gay-Jews will elude you.

As a rule, men get angry with themselves for being afraid of anything. And the smaller the fear the greater it must be magnified with anger for him to take it personally. Once he breaks through that projection shined onto another person, the anger disappears, the fear surfaces into reality, and a softening occurs in him as he feels he's achieved some newfound intimacy with himself.

Mental illness is a living Hell because people don't have the spiritual tools to handle self-intimacy without self-sacrifice, victimization or martyrdom. Mental illness is a series of self-made videos in a man's imagination that bring his demons to consciousness. It's very painful. But if he doesn't know that he can develop the tools to manage his desires, feelings, thoughts and beliefs, he can lose a lifetime in an Eden of infancy without graduating to more morally interesting challenges within himself. It's not that hard to become your brother's keeper when you identify as your own brother.

God made the mind of man in such a way that it alerts him to a false belief by initiating a bad thought linked to a hateful feeling and an immoral desire. Acting more ethically means policing yourself internally. Only the most rational can be stopped with laws and outward surveillance. Most of us are so in love with irrationality that we have to learn to monitor ourselves. The law isn't nearly strict enough to help guide us. We have to watch these inner videos and pierce them with insightful commentary. We'll never allow others to make us sane. We all must insist on doing the AVODA ourselves.

Jesus spoke about Himself in the third person because He thought about Himself that way from time to time. You can't convince the arrogant that they might be wrong without giving them the chance to change the way they think. Until each of us becomes spiritually old enough to parent his own inner child, to admit that he holds within himself many ages and stages, we'll have to continue to watch as men insist on their innocence while tormenting one another – especially the poor and disenfranchised.

You can't teach a toddler not to put his hand on a hot stove. Even a child has to get burned once in a while to remind himself how it feels. But what excuse does a grown man use for burning himself over and over again? Clearly such a man is an adult child who unconsciously thinks that self-sacrifice, victimization and martyrdom will heal him. And that, not the efforts of John the Baptist, is what's crazy.

You can't go through the developmental stages of the infant, child, adolescent, young man, mature man and wise village leader without perceiving all these inner voices becoming very much alive and well within you. In your heart of hearts you know that you must celebrate these inner voices separately before you'll be permitted to watch them all come together.

The moral of the story beneath the horror movies in your imagination that come on-screen from time to time may terrify you if there aren't other, well-developed voices inside to help you find moral meaning in watching your horror movies more closely. If you haven't been instructed on how to analyze your inner demons, they may only lead to destructive, self-medication techniques such as overeating, smoking, alcohol, drug abuse or violence.

If you can't talk to "killer," the savage beast within you that wears 10,000 masks, he'll ruin your time with yourself when you're alone. Much of the negativity that emanates in from within could be spiritually educational if you used inner dialogue to question the intention of such stories. Negativity exists with good reason in your imagination and has a powerful effect on your relationship with yourself. But that effect could be positive if you could break through to understand why you create these angry reactions to your fears. If you could learn to talk about your horror movies with the kind of third person distance with which you watch them in the theater, you could learn a lot about the moral messages you're sending yourself.

Your conscience always wants to teach you to become more intimate and loving, but you have to do more than passively watch these negative thoughts and feelings without interjecting insightful observations from your soul. How will you be able to grow if you have to watch yourself prune you without asking what your intentions are? If you feel like a bonsai tree or a topiary shrub maybe it's your fault, and not the fault of the Jews, Christians, Muslims or gays.

Jewish children play with "draydles," {Yiddish: top} at Hanukkah on which is written a Hebrew letter on each of its four sides, "N, G, H, P". These letters stand for the expression "NESS GADOL HAYA PO." {A GREAT MIRACLE OCCURRED HERE.} The Greeks forbade the Jews from studying Scripture about 150 years before Christ, so the children played with draydles when Greek soldiers were at hand, and then took out their Bibles and got back to their studies when the soldiers left.

The really great miracle in every age is not that the oil that was only enough for one night in a lamp happened to last eight nights, hence the eight days we celebrate Hanukkah. The great miracle is that children can't be stopped from wanting to learn regardless of how much violent men try to stop them. Once the light of learning has been lit in a child, nothing can extinguish it.

"WISDOM'S REPUTATION LIES IN THE HANDS OF CHILDREN" because it's the children who have the awe and wonder that allows them to be guided by life's lessons of self-love. Children are curious, inventive and imaginative by nature. You can't stop children who love to learn, and you especially can't stop them from learning about themselves. Nor can you unteach anything children already know by heart. You can only

misguide them with hatred, apathy and a thirst for power. What a child already knows about love, you can add to with your generosity of spirit. This is why God felt the need to give humanity a third chance.

Jesus said, “THEN THE SON OF MAN CAME, ENJOYING LIFE.” What made life enjoyable to Jesus? Was it money, power and prestige, or was it teaching what He knew? The gentle man who models the attributes of a gentleman comes to the spiritual table with something important and new to say. But what will you say of interest to others if you’re not even interested in talking to yourself? We only learn by conversing. Even books are two-way conversations. If you don’t enjoy life with yourself, you’re not modeling your life on Jesus’s life. You’re not learning to talk to the one you’re with.

In The Gospel According to Thomas, discovered in Egypt in 1945, which gives insight into the oral, gospel tradition, Jesus is reported to have said, “WHEN YOU MAKE THE TWO INTO ONE, AND WHEN YOU MAKE THE INNER LIKE THE OUTER AND THE OUTER LIKE THE INNER, AND THE UPPER LIKE THE LOWER, AND WHEN YOU MAKE THE MALE AND FEMALE INTO A SINGLE ONE, SO THAT THE MALE WILL NOT BE MALE NOR THE FEMALE BE FEMALE, WHEN YOU MAKE EYES IN PLACE OF AN EYE, A HAND IN PLACE OF A HAND, A FOOT IN PLACE OF A FOOT, AN IMAGE IN PLACE OF AN IMAGE, THEN YOU WILL ENTER THE FATHER’S DOMAIN.” [Thomas 22:4]

Most people are so busy convincing others to believe in them that they don’t realize that’s a projection of an urge they should be having with themselves. Jesus found that the best way to speak to Himself about Himself {and really hear what He was saying} was by using the third person singular in referring to Himself.

The gay movement in San Francisco didn’t magically change the opinion of our nation about gays overnight. We had to prove to the doubting Thomas within ourselves over the course of 40 years of wandering within that real righteousness doesn’t begin with the law, but through the love inherent in the reasons for having laws. We had to walk our walk and talk our talk with one another until we could finally believe in our own self-worth. We had to overcome our prejudice against ourselves before we could convince others of our dignity.

The children Jesus spoke about in the marketplace said, “WE PLAYED AT WEDDINGS FOR YOU, BUT YOU WOULDN’T DANCE, AND WE PLAYED AT FUNERALS FOR YOU, AND YOU WOULDN’T CRY!” Many go to weddings without becoming happy and to funerals without being sad. Many hold an attitude of condescension to keep themselves from having to feel altogether. Children often see this emotional truth more vividly than adults, but children will also blurt out the truth turning it into a weapon.

What a child can't tell you is how he knows right from wrong without experience. He can't tell you how his heart operates sometimes with love and sometimes with desire for revenge.

Those who refuse to dance at weddings and cry at funerals are adults who've forgotten how to feel like a kid inside. But, it must be stated, that those who play music at weddings and funerals who are all consumed with how the guests aren't responding with heartfelt intention have also forgotten how to feel something important. They've both cut out a piece of their heart to spite their head.

Today separate covenants with God for Jews and Christians is no longer a shocking concept. The idea that God would develop people differently to teach us tolerance for one another actually makes sense. The idea that we'd need to learn to appreciate one another's life lessons to grow seems like a good plan. The idea that the Messiah would have already been here for some and wouldn't yet have arrived for others makes perfect sense depending on where you're looking for Him, in your head or your heart.

It's easy to say, "Thank God," but it's hard to spell it without causing a controversy. What if God could say "Thank God"? What if He was so thankful to Jesus for bringing His love into the world that He was grateful to Him? What if They had good reason to be grateful to you? What if He looks for reasons to love you despite all the things He allows to have happen to you to teach you to love others?

The importance of metaphor is that it's the first way of describing the mysterious and indescribable plan of God in terms of the experiences of life all men can identify with. The importance of symbolism is that it's the only way to make love come alive as more than just a theory. And the importance of similes is that they teach you how to teach yourself to love the miracle of life on Earth. With three methods to triangulate our way through life, life becomes a mystery, a journey and even an adventure as you make your way toward an indescribable destination. It's more likely that everyone is a little bit right than it is that everyone but you is wrong.

Symbolic logic approaches the mystery of life by asking us to fill ourselves while we're here. It speaks about the life of a rabbi who gave all of humanity, not just the Jews, a second chance. It speaks to a new place in inner space out of which hope can spring eternal.

Islam intensifies that filling process with simile. Submission to God's plan once you have the wisdom and love to perceive it is the magnanimous third chance that nobody would have expected from Him. Comparing and contrasting yourself today to who you were yesterday makes it possible to give yourself so much more in the way of personal, moral support. It gives you greater reason to hope big. Submission to God will turn every incident into a sign without superstition to frighten and misguide you.

But the gifts of the new covenant and Quran are meaningless without the original Abrahamic Covenant to back them up. Love without wisdom leaves the heart fully exposed

to raw desire. Emotional intensity without the four compass points of the heart won't give you the direction you need. Wisdom {Adam} is your only defense when your conscience finds itself in an adversarial relationship with your feelings {heart} and desires {serpent}. Why would God have spent so much more time questioning Adam than Eve if not to send him out into the world with a moral direction to go in? If Adam could have learned right from wrong just from good and evil, he wouldn't have needed the lecture. And if Eve could have learned her mistake only from having been beguiled by the serpent she would have morally enlightened herself.

It's no coincidence God brought Jesus and John the Baptist together. Baptism is a crucial part of Christianity that spiritually differentiates it from Judaism and Islam. If Jewish and Muslim men could come to see circumcision as a spiritual scar from God we share, a leaf torn from our tree, we'd both be in a better position to accept the unseen scar in the heart of the Christian that's been flooded with His love.

From a man's head his relationship with his grandmothers, mother, aunts, sisters, nieces, daughters, female cousins and granddaughters is cut in stone. These roles are not ambiguous. But from his heart these relationships are spiritually fluid. If you have an older sister who was like a mother to you, you might have felt your mother was more like your grandmother. If you shared a common enemy in your mother with your grandmother, your relationship to your grandmother may have been more like an older sister. If you have a punitive sister, she might treat you like her child. A beloved niece might be someone you treat like a sister. One of your aunts might feel like your wife while the others feel like distant cousins. And when your mother ages she might call out to you to become like the benevolent father she never had. The man who doesn't see women as having many roles in his life is creatively petrified, spiritual wood. His head will struggle with the wondrous, irrational relationships he has created in his heart instead of celebrating them. (Read Paul Simon's lyrics to his song, "Loves Me Like a Rock.")

Once out of Egypt the Children of Israel realized they'd be indebted to God forever for getting them out of that living Hell. But when their ancestors were taken into slavery in Babylonia, they had to come to terms with God in a whole new way. The Children of Israel knew God had met them in Egypt and went on the Exodus with them. Their children brought Him into the Temple they built for Him in Jerusalem. But when those ancestors were banished into slavery again in Babylonia 600 years later they questioned whether God would still be with them that far away from Israel. This questioning of God's whereabouts continued for the ancient Jews through the destruction of the second Temple, slavery in Rome and again in Germany in the modern era.

Our relationship to where we are in God's eyes is always developing. If we look for him in our heart, we'll find He brings us many relationships that aren't just what they appear. If we look with the eyes in our head instead of listening with the ears in our heart,

we'll never graduate spiritual, nursery school. We'll be lost in a house of mirrors with distorted images of ourselves that will terrify us.

And who do you think we're going to blame for what we see? You guessed it, the gays and/or the Jews. (Look up Carly Simon's song "Anticipation." Apart from the wisdom of seeing that anticipation makes us late and keeps us waiting, she also realized that "these are the good old days.")

The stereotype that Jews love money more than other people is false, insulting and not to be used humorously, except by Jews. When we make fun of ourselves we do so to accentuate a problem we don't want others to make. When others make fun of us they accentuate us as the problem.

Today, Jews in America; those Jews living in Israel; and all the other Jewish communities worldwide – know in our heart of hearts {our soul} that generosity of spirit is the next lesson we must all learn and teach our children.

That doesn't mean we're going to give the nation God gave us away, but it does mean that we're going to have to open our doors and our hearts to those who enter their Israel, their spiritual home, if they do so with the proper respect for us. If you think God doesn't have a plan that includes the Jews and the Jewish homeland, you're acting out an unconscious, atheistic tendency that will only lead to a rude awakening. Beware the loss of those you cherish, Pharaoh! A Jew shouldn't have to remind you of that.

The Christian stereotype of the Jews as cheap insinuated that we wouldn't give them something that was ours that they wanted us to share with them. That's hardly the case. We've shared ourselves with the world for 3,400 years, and we're prepared to continue to do so, provided people don't get the impression that we're obliged by God to share anything with anyone or everything with everyone. There's no obligation in our relationship with God that involves anyone other than ourselves. What He shares with us individually and collectively is ours to do with as we please. And after having participated in so many civilizations in the past, I suggest you look at our record and decide for yourself whether we're as cheap as Christians portrayed us.

The stereotype that gays are perverts who can't keep their penis in their pants is false, insulting and not to be used humorously, except by gays. When we make fun of ourselves we do so to accentuate a problem we don't want others to make. When others make fun of us they accentuate us as the problem.

Today, gays in America; gays living in Israel; and all the rest of the gay communities worldwide – know in our heart of hearts {our soul} that generosity of spirit is the next lesson we must teach our brothers and sisters. That doesn't mean God is going to give us a nation just for ourselves. His plan for us isn't the same as His plan for Jews, but it does mean that we'll open our doors and our hearts to those who enter our individual Israel if

they do so with the proper respect for us. If you think God doesn't have a plan that includes the gays, you're also acting out an unconscious, atheistic tendency that will also lead to a rude awakening. Beware the loss of those you cherish, Pharaoh! A gay man shouldn't have to remind you of that.

(I suggest you watch old episodes of "The Golden Girls" from 1965-1992, starring Bea Arthur, Bette White, Rue McClanahan and Estelle Getty. This sitcom was seen by many gay men at the time as a vehicle for our most cherished dreams to be held and portrayed by these wonderful women. The theme song from this show, "Thanks For Being a Friend," by Andrew Gold, makes a fitting "KADDISH" {MOURNERS' PRAYER} to them from us.)

Jesus anticipates the rift He was creating between His Jewish and non-Jewish followers in His story about the two men in debt to the same moneylender. Today's Jew is only indebted to Jesus 5 times for all He did for us because He's one of our own. We expect every Jew to help our tribe. The Christian is indebted to Him 50 times because they're adopted brothers and sisters through God's second covenant. It's natural that a Christian would feel more enthusiastic and indebted to Him for His words of wisdom than he is about all the teaching of Tanach put together. The Hebrew Testament is only the ground floor that brings them up to the story where they enjoy the view out that they have.

We, Jews, were commanded by God to live peacefully with every member of our tribe, and our track record has been exemplary in that respect {although not perfect}. The struggles of the past 2,000 years to learn to love our non-Jewish neighbors as we love ourselves, shouldn't leave us angry at Jesus or God. As our neighbors have become more and more violent, we've had to expand and modernize our beliefs to incorporate more diverse groups of people. {But surely that was all part of God's plan.} Just because Christians should be 10 times more grateful to Jesus than we are doesn't mean we have no debt to Him for overturning the tables of the moneychangers. Thank God He did, even if you don't want to thank Jesus directly. We might still be sacrificing animals to assuage our guilt had it not been for Him.

Wisdom may be equivalent to the white light that passes into a prism. But love is like the rainbow of color that emerges on the other side. The duty your mother conveyed to you to take good care of your body was the white light of wisdom she shined into you with her sparkling eyes. But the self-love you're expected to teach yourself is the rainbow that shines out of the prism in your heart on the other side. A child shouldn't conclude he knows all about his body. Puberty will change all that in ways no one can adequately anticipate to tell him. But the fully, physically grown adult shouldn't conclude from the sky above his head that there isn't an eternal rainbow of hope shining within him that he may not have yet discovered. Each day is a brand, new present. As you age spiritually, you should be experiencing a spiritual rapture that puts your orgasms to shame.

What Jesus preached can be found in Torah, only it's presented in another light from a new location. But few, modern Jews read the Hebrew Testament for personal hindsight, and {sadly} they certainly don't read the Christian Testament for insight into what it means to be a good Jew.

Spiritually educated Jews and Christians in our Judeo-Christian communities in America ought to combine their spiritual efforts by discussing the Old and New Testaments with one another with more avid interest. Interfaith communities also hold the key to understanding and transforming Islam so that Muslims will be able to transcend themselves. There are many more secrets in Torah that have yet to be revealed. Wouldn't it be nice if Jews, Christians and Muslims could search for them together?

Jesus said to Simon, "CAN YOU SEE THIS WOMAN? I CAME INTO YOUR HOUSE BUT YOU PROVIDED NO WATER TO WASH MY FEET. BUT SHE HAS WASHED MY FEET WITH HER TEARS AND DRIED THEM WITH HER HAIR. THERE WAS NO WARMTH IN YOUR GREETING, BUT SHE, FROM THE MOMENT I CAME IN, HAS NOT STOPPED COVERING MY FEET WITH KISSES. YOU GAVE ME NO OIL FOR MY HEAD, BUT SHE HAS PUT PERFUME ON MY FEET. THAT IS WHY I TELL YOU, SIMON, THAT HER SINS, MANY AS THEY ARE, ARE FORGIVEN; FOR SHE HAS SHOWN ME SO MUCH LOVE. BUT THE MAN WHO HAS LITTLE TO BE FORGIVEN HAS ONLY A LITTLE LOVE TO GIVE." [Luke 7:44-47]

The attention Simon's wife showed Jesus really accentuated her attention to her own love and for her reputation before God. Self-love was the aspect of Jesus's love that Simon hadn't fully considered. It never occurred to Simon that his wife modeled what he needed to learn until Jesus pointed it out to him. Simon talked about the need for love from the point of view of someone who knows what's wrong with others because of how he'd felt mistreated himself. But his wife spoke from her heart with a generosity of spirit Simon hadn't appreciated and therefore never thought to copy.

God didn't create men like Simon only in the Jewish faith or only at that time in history. Many men start out as he did in life. Most men like Simon claim to love their neighbor as themselves, but they treat their wife more like a younger sister when they have guests over. As Jesus inferred, men need women to teach them how to become gentlemen. The idea of a boy learning how to become a man without exploring the myriad, fluid roles he has with women is an idea whose time has come, albeit one that Jesus presented 2,000 years ago.

The taboo against sleeping with your mother is hardly at issue when it comes to imagining all the roles you've explored with your own mother. The greater issue is how to use the many facets of your relationship with her in all your relationships with other people. This is something gays have been exploring with creativity for decades. This is where

straight men need to catch up psychologically if they're going to learn to use their head in conjunction with their heart and soul.

The Jewish mother is the archetype for all relationships. Mother Mary is the quintessential, role model for healthy relationships between sons and mothers. If God chose a Jewish mother for Jesus it says something about your relationship with your mother whether you choose to look at that or not.

Men who prefer sex with women rather than men should ask themselves what it is they find so attractive about women. It can't all be physical? For pupils of life, women are only cows to be enjoyed for their sexual meatiness and the calves they produce year after year. For students, lust for women is a hunger that makes removing the wrapper a pleasant prelude to savoring the sweet treat they get to leave inside them. But for a scholar of life, the cover tempts them to open a woman like a good book. The man who can tempt a woman open to learn from her will find the "x" factor that makes him half woman, himself. The scholar sleeps with a woman because she holds the key that will open half his heart and soul. This is the man who figuratively enjoys a lesbian relationship with his wife.

I'm sure Simon appreciated his wife physically, but Jesus certainly appreciated her much more than Simon did spiritually. Jesus could see something in her that Simon couldn't, even though Simon knew her in the Biblical sense of the WORD. The true beauty in people lies in the loving deeds they express for others with modesty, humility and grace. As today's men and women learn to share tasks previously performed by males *or* females, they'll begin not only to like one another more than their forefathers did; they'll begin to love themselves as well.

Love may not appear to be the most efficient way to perform your duties, but love adds a quality to personal performance that can be inspiring when you see yourself emotionally engaged in all that you do. When you perform your duties with love, you set the example Jesus was describing to Simon that his wife had set for Him. When you demonstrate your quality of presentation, you add spiritual depth to your endeavors. A woman such as your mother, a female teacher, companion, relative or friend may inspire you to do your duties with love for women, but your loving intentions really come from an inner place in your heart that reflects the "x" factor in you. All men love the man who can love himself. This is the essence of why Jesus's message has gone so far and lasted so long. But the man who can love himself must love, in part, the part of him that's female.

"THE MAN WHO HAD EVIL INTENTIONS BEGGED JESUS TO LET HIM TRAVEL WITH HIM, BUT JESUS SENT HIM AWAY WITH THE WORDS, 'GO BACK HOME AND TELL THEM ALL WHAT WONDERFUL THINGS GOD HAS DONE FOR YOU.'" [Luke 8:38-39]

Being able to praise yourself is crucial in loving yourself, but this is a conversation best had internally, not by telling others how great thou art. Tell God how great Thou art, and see what He says. Surely He has reasons to agree with you. But if there's nothing feminine you love about yourself, you loathe half of who you are.

Jesus said to His followers, "IT IS YOUR FAITH THAT HAS HEALED YOU - GO IN PEACE." [Luke 8:48]

Today, Jesus's message comes even closer to home. Today we can put the emphasis where it needs to be. It isn't His faith in you, but *your* faith in you that will heal you. If you choose to give your faith in you to Him that demonstrates that you're Christian, but it says nothing about the righteousness of your motives. Plenty of people in the past put their faith in Jesus and did horrible things to others. If you don't commit to giving your faith in you and to yourself, you're going to emotionally dismember and spiritually castrate yourself. The man who hates women, ironically, has turned himself into a Ken doll who has lost any visible proof that he has genitals.

Jesus promised everyone a piece of His pie. And His pie is love. The whole world will come to know love. But God, our Father, is going to slice it. So if you want a bigger piece than you think others are going to be served, you'd better do more than convince yourself that you're a loving person or a good student of the Abrahamic faiths. You'd better prove to yourself that you love yourself through your deeds, as well as your WORDS/WORDS/w o r d s. And you'd better do so in ways you haven't yet seen you do thus far, or you won't convince your own conscience that you're as deserving as you claim.

You've boldly read this far. You've earned the right to admit how gratifying it is to be your own best friend even though it means slugging through a lot of mud {ground and water} at times. Wouldn't you have told me what I've told you if you'd learned it before I did? It should be no surprise, then, that my heart is focused on someone like you. Imagine how many people haven't bothered to read this far in this series because they assumed they knew what was coming. Think about how different you should feel right now.

Misappropriation of faith in other people is called naiveté. Misappropriation of faith in God is called superstition. Those who overcome their fear of putting their faith in themselves learn that naiveté and superstition diminish as they come to rely more and more on themselves. And although I know I'm preaching to the choir, I hope this conclusion about naiveté and superstition is something you'll be able to pass along to someone who needs it.

When you can talk to yourself in the third person it opens you up to a new understanding of the Abrahamic faiths: Judaism {HE}; Christianity {He/He/He}; and Islam {He}. And when you can talk to yourself in the second person it teaches you to acknowledge: Judaism {YOU}; Christianity {You (pl.)}; and Islam {You (sing.)}. The

more you use these spelling hints when you pray, the more powerful your prayers will be because you'll know what you're talking about.

Cynicism is a combination of negative thoughts mixed with disappointment that leads you to assume the worst. Cynicism comes from thoughts devoid of hopeful feelings. *Skepticism* avoids utter disappointment by presenting questions that aren't rhetorical or bitter. Skepticism includes a hint of hope. It comes from thoughts and feelings that bring up good questions that you're open to having answered in new ways. And *suspicion* teaches you to probe your own methods with moral scrutiny to achieve only the highest of positive outcomes. Suspicion comes from a preponderance of positive feelings that bring up questions that lead to the details in how you might change.

Those who bring their suspicions to the surface discipline themselves to follow their own exacting instructions. They're able to use their cautious nature to develop patience rather than demand patience of others. Suspicion makes it possible to see miracles as they're happening because suspicion keeps you from acting impetuously. While most people live life using the full-speed-ahead philosophy of the cynic or the go-anyway attitude of the skeptic, the suspicious have slowed themselves down enough to watch carefully as everything happens. Cynics live life pressing the fast forward button. Skeptics push "play" and move at the normal speed of life. But the suspicious live life in slo-mo.

The question posed in the title of this chapter was "Attraction or Promotion?" Moses promotes. Jesus attracts. Your head promotes. Your heart attracts. But you're going to have to become attracted to yourself to promote yourself. These are two of the pieces of the puzzle God wants you to put together so you can then share them with the rest of us.