



**EVIDENCE
FOR
GOD
AND THE
COMPLEXITY OF
LIFE, BELIEFS,
DEATH AND SELF**

Stephen Clark

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Any comments or questions please direct to:
sclarkp@bigpond.com

A DEDICATION AND TRIBUTE

Dedicated in honour to and as a tributary to all the people throughout my life who have touched it with their helpfulness and kindness, and their caring and compassionate attitude and persona, no matter how seemingly insignificant and implicit this touch was - to make my life a more positive and productive experience.

And these writings are dedicated in honour of and a tributary to all those people throughout the world, past, present and in future, who contribute something positive and constructive - no matter how seemingly insignificant - to someone else's life whilst journeying through their own life and life's ups and downs and trials and tribulations.

The greatest gift one can give to another is to treat another in a manner in which one would also like and wish to be treated.

Thankyou

Steve Clark

PREFACE

**The content and subject matter of these two e-
books is underpinned by the culmination of
twenty+ years of study and research
- at four universities in two countries -
from objective and rational analysis of information
from the disciplines of
RELIGION, SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY, HISTORY,
PSYCHOLOGY AND THEOLOGY**

**For Inquisitors, Believers, Skeptics, Agnostics and
Atheists
Knowledge is Power - Informing Beliefs, Values,
Attitudes & Behaviours**

**The question is Does God Exist? The answer lies
herein explained through philosophical and
historical proof, and scientific reasons, evidence
and logic garnered from the academic disciplines of
RELIGION, SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY, HISTORY,
PSYCHOLOGY AND THEOLOGY as the guiding
evidence to believe in the existence of a God and
Creator.**

**Herein this book discusses and reflects upon God in
relation to the meaning of life, spirit, death, heaven,
soul, mind, self and consciousness of the human
being, including the existence of spirit-energy and
atom-energy as major parts involved in human's
existence**

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The Meaning of Life - In Short

We give meaning to our life because people already exist as we enter the world, and interacting with people and the environment if we can leave this world – when we ‘die’ - a slightly better place than when we entered it, we will have given positive meaning to our life.

Meaning to life - intentionally treating people with goodwill and a generosity of spirit. Interaction with civility, friendliness and compassion as opposed to unkindness and mean spiritedness.

Ultimately, meaning-fullness of life can be as simple or as complex as we wish it to be with what we have.

Question:

Is it more meaningful to leave one person happier in the world when we die (pass-over), and no one unhappy, or to leave a hundred people unhappier and a thousand people happier?

Reflect on the above:

Then consider the following:

Ideal behavioural, thoughtful and empathetic intercommunication aspires to intentionally converse and interact with all people we meet in a spirit of good-faith and good-will. Leaving no one worse-off, but many better-off in their personal sense of well-being.

The Universe > From Something or Nothing?

Life > From Creation or Chance?

Christ > Is ‘God’ or Prophet?

The ‘Creator’ > Is ‘God’?

Will We Meet Again

The Insult of Blasphemy

When one person, or a billion people, swear by blaspheming by using the name of 'their' 'God' in private, then that's their prerogative and their personal 'healthy' relationship with their spiritual 'God'. And their 'God' can no doubt understand all that involves the personal relationship between the two of them, and accordingly, deals, accepts and handles such communication as being part of their private and intimate relationship.

But when someone blasphemes in public by using the name of one or a billion peoples' 'God' as a swear word, such as, "Jesus Christ", "Christ", "Oh My God" "God", "For God's Sake", and indeed the words should they ever be used of "Buddha", "Yahweh", "Allah", "Krishna" including "Muhammad" etcetera, then the line has been crossed. Whether we believe, or not, in a 'God', blaspheming is offensive in snubbing, with disregard to others' spiritual beliefs and sensitivities.

In this instance, the blasphemer intentionally or unintentionally portrays and executes the attitudes and characteristics of bigotry, ignorance and arrogance relating to others' feelings and as such, be interpreted as contemptuous and disrespectful.

These insults and affronts are 'discrimination' on religious, cultural and spiritual grounds, and thus should be decreed as illegal.

Please mind your language in front of others.

Blaspheming against someone's 'God' in the public arena is evidence of the orators and author's bigotry, ignorance, arrogance, and illiteracy.

The Six Dimensions, Steps, and Degrees to Explain a Creator's Infinity and Humans' Immortality

It is important to remember that Spirit Energy exists without the dimensions of Time, Space and Movement. Because spirit-energy can exist without the dimensions and characteristics of time, space and movement, the question, "How can the Creator have always existed?" is not a relevant question to ask when it is asked within in human context in relation to the world.

This is because the meaning of the word 'always', can by definition, only be referred to in the context of Time, Space and Movement, which in turn are only related within the context of a universe.

So the question "How can anything have always existed", can realistically only be asked in the realms of structured atom-energy of the universe – including Black Matter and Dark Energy - with which the world is made, and within the realms and dimensions of Spirit-Energy where time, space and movement is non-existent.

The 6 Steps, Degrees and Dimensions of Life, Existence and Immortality

Step 1 - The two dimensions of Length and Width

Step 2 - The three dimensions of Length, Width and Breadth

Step 3 and 4 - The four dimensions of Time which must include Atom Energy, Space and Movement. The phenomena of 'time' is essentially a culmination of movement of structures of atom-energies in relation to other structures of atom-energies in the medium of space.

Step 5 - The five dimensions of the human senses which include Touch, Smell, Sound, Sight and Taste.

Step 6 - The six dimension of Spirit - being Self, Consciousness, Awareness, Thoughts and Feelings. The spirit is the essence of a

person and pivot of consciousness, self-awareness, emotion and thought defined not by atom-energy structures but by the energy of spirit.

The 6th Step and Dimension of Spirit is the only dimension that can stand alone on its own without the necessary input and interactions of the other 5 Steps and Dimensions.

In reality these six dimensions are designed and planned intelligently to interact and interface with one another.

But if we reduce the above equation of the six dimensions by one dimension, that one being the fourth dimension of time we immediately exclude structures of atom energies, movement and space.

If we remove these dimensions that define the essence of time and therefore the world as we know it one dimension is retained and that is the dimension of spirit.

And if the dimension of spirit, which by its very essence and characteristics, stands alone and apart from time, space and movement, then we cannot ask questions about any Creator or Self that includes within its terms and meaning anything to do with the dimensions and realms of the first 3 dimensions that in part, define structured atom-energies.

Taking these factors into account irrelevant questions to ask would include:

“How could a Creator have always existed”? And, “Who made the ‘Creator’”?

All these questions are asked from the point of reference prefaced on the assumption that ‘time’ is an incumbent necessary part of this world of structured atom-energies, space and movement and not an essential ingredient of spirit-energy.

EVIDENCE FOR GOD: AND THE COMPLEXITY OF LIFE, BELIEFS, DEATH AND
SELF

The dimension and essence of spirit exists alone in timeless sovereign integrity, and explains and answers the question, “How can humans exist eternally or be immortal”?

Without the dimension of ‘time’ involved in the essence of the dimension of ‘spirit’ there can only exist the ‘now’, the ‘presence’, the ‘just being’, and the ‘just is’.

THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

**If Christ is 'God'/ Creator and the Creator exists, then 'God' must
Will Unconditional Mystical Relational Love towards all Peoples**

Perhaps the most decisive and poignant message derived from the "Passion Of The Christ" is that the Creator potentially wills to unconditionally love all peoples, notwithstanding their personal transgressions, or their political, cultural, ethnic and religious persuasions and affiliations, as explicitly exemplified by Christ's outcry, "Forgive them Father, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23: 34-35). This was an outcry by Jesus Christ on His death cross to the Creator, having been shamed, humiliated, and grievously, mortally and fatally assaulted and wounded. A sublime supplication to the Creator from the Son, after being jeered, insulted, spat upon, punched, beaten, scourged, crowned with thorns, nailed to the cross and speared, such that He was killed by Roman soldiers, Gentiles, Jews, Pagans, Elders, Teachers of the law and the Chief Priest. The crime of torturous 'physical' and psychological brutality leading to a person's suffering and death, no human being deserves, let alone the innocent Christ. Yet, regardless of their behaviour, Christ pleads to the Creator to forgive these perpetrators for their actions that precipitated and procured His death. And if they were not practical partakers in His death, forgiveness for their vicarious and voyeuristic complicity, and their individual and collective transgressions as an outcome of their destructive, obsessive and irrational cultural, political, ethnic and religious beliefs. No, they did not ask their 'God', or anyone else to forgive them for their abominably barbaric intentional murderous behaviour. And no, they did not believe in the sacred integrity and dignity of humanity. And no, they did not believe in Christ, either as an innocent human being or as the Son of the Creator. Yet if Christ is the Creator, then 'God' forgave them all, if scripture verse is legitimately accurate. Yes, it is credible that the Creator forgave all these people. Killers and accomplices of Christ's death all forgiven, despite them not believing or seeking forgiveness. If forgiven, it was through the unconditional mystical relational love of Christ, if Christ was/is in fact 'God' and if 'God' does in fact, exist. "Forgive them Father for they know not what they do".(Luke 23: 34-35)

Have You Ever Asked These Questions

- How can intellect and 'free will' manipulate 'base instincts'?
- Humans as sovereign independent beings
- Misinterpreted and contradicting verses in 'holy scriptures' of the Bible and Qu'ran (Koran)
- Why are verses about violence, punishment and hell in the Bible and Qu'ran erroneous?
- How do Philosophers rationalize the Creator's existence?
- Who is Jesus Christ – God or Fraud - and why different from all other spiritual leaders and teachers?
- Why is the Creator's greatest request, relational love?
- What are the dynamics and consequences of karma and reincarnation?
- Are Satan/Devil and Hell real or myths for leverage?
- Why is the Creator's compassion unconditional and infinite?
- What does it mean to value and accept Self and others
- Why does the Creator allow human suffering?
- What are some of the dynamics of prayer?

***EVIDENCE FOR GOD: AND THE COMPLEXITY OF LIFE, BELIEFS, DEATH AND SELF* explores answers to these existential questions.**

“Fear neither the uncharted waters of life, nor the uncharted waters of death; so you fear neither life nor death, as you fear neither death nor life”

“Fear not Self living in this world, and fear not Self’s inevitable anatomical death, for Self is not only of anatomical existence but invisible Spirit that exists on forever.”

“Self ought try to never behave in this life - that if anatomical death should unexpectedly visit upon Self tomorrow, or next week etcetera – Self would, on post anatomical death-reflection, remorsefully regret”

“Despite all Self’s human flaws and imperfections, Self ought to completely, totally and deeply accept Self as being OK, but be honestly open to constructive change”

“Self’s life here on earth will be seen as having been far too short upon Self’s post-earth life reflection, to have lived life selfishly”

INTRODUCTION

If you have an aversion to, and limited time to spend reading introductions, the above Content pages of information, will, per Chapter and per Subsection, provide you with all the subjects in this book that have been extensively researched, discussed. and grappled with.

The title of this book *EVIDENCE FOR GOD: AND THE COMPLEXITY OF LIFE, BELIEFS, DEATH AND SELF* is but a description of the starting point to all the information this book endeavours to encompass. The information in this book, which Chapters and their subsections are clearly described under the 'Contents' hopes to accomplish the furnishing and exploration of evidence-based knowledge, facts, ideas, theories and insights, which cumulatively provide potential answers to those enduring human existential questions that can dwell, often annoyingly, within Self's conscious being. In accomplishing such a goal this book breaks old boundaries and hopes to provide informed information. If we can believe that the existence of the universe was created with design, order and purpose, which evidence within this book implies, then the universe did not just come into being from nothing and by random chance, but had to come from something. Therefore, if there is a 'Creator' of design, order and purpose then there is also potential immortality.

This book emphasizes the fact that what seemingly appears to be fact, is a perceived illusion. However, this perception of illusion is because we are still to change our mindset and shift it to what we now know it to exist of – and that is energy - from scientific research. When we look around us there is predetermined order, design and purpose everywhere. The Will and Soul of a 'Creator' is manifest in subatomic particles, atoms or atom-energy, that not only make up the pages and print of this book but everything in the universe, including inanimate objects (non-life) e.g., stars, galaxies, water, rocks, etcetera, and animate living life, for example, plants, animals, birds, insects and humans etcetera. Only 0.4% of the universe is made of structures with functions made of atom-energy we can observe, with 3.6% made of gases. The other 96 % of the universe is made from an energy that is

atom-less, and perhaps more akin to the spirit-energy of the Creator. Physicists call this unknown 'matter', 'dark matter and energy'. The world is not made of what it appears to be made of as it is made of atoms, which are in essence energies without mass. Atoms are defined as electrical and electromagnetic charges, and are measured as electrical volts (eV). Atoms have no weight but feel heavy because of the electromagnetic energy between the larger planet earth attracting smaller parcels of electromagnetic energy.

This tension is what we call gravity, which constructs our perception and experience of weight. Atoms are in essence invisible, but we see because our eye, brain and interpretation are based on the reflection of light wavelengths into our central nervous system via our eyes. If we think about how hydrogen and oxygen make up ice, water and steam-gases, we can understand how everything in the universe possesses different structures and functions even when made with the same atoms, but with different atom configurations.

As the functions of atoms changes e.g., as in the different structures and functions of ice, water, and steam, although made from the same atoms, are but structured differently, as in tightly packed atoms of ice, as opposed to the less-tightly packed atoms of steam-gases. Atoms interact with other atoms of the same (elements), and different atoms (compounds), that make up the universe.

There are only 118 different atoms that together, or combined, make up all that exists in this world. The exception is the Self, which by definition is spirit-energy of consciousness, thoughts, emotions, self-awareness, personality and will, etcetera. References in this book to the word 'physical' are defined as atom-energy, referring to all that exists, including the body (anatomy) or the 'physical' environment, food and shelter, and all that we observe around us, other than Self and others, which are spirit-energies and include consciousness, thoughts, emotions, self-awareness, personality and will etcetera .

Volume 2 of this series explores these matters in more depth.

This book also explores credible evidence that individual human existence is about living one's life to its fullest potential whatever that may mean for each individual. Whilst the death – the change in structure and function of atom-energy we all eventually encounter, but often ignore and deny, should not be feared, but celebrated as the natural progression of Self and Self's intangible, and therefore, invisible consciousness. Self's invisible consciousness

being a part of Self's spirit, and thus, by definition, immortal living eternally forever.

The information herein is a product of the knowledge ascertained from the mix of perceptions and facts interwoven and interpreted from dedicated and peripheral components and elements of the academic disciplines of Science, Philosophy, Theology and Psychology.

The art of Science consists of the study of subatomic particles that make up atoms, and molecules or atom-energy. This is quantum physics that studies atoms that make up the different structures and functions of the 'physical' world, in essence essentially made of atom-energy. The methodology used for scientific work uses systematic and methodical observation and experiment.

Philosophy is about asking and answering questions from a rational and logical point of view about anything and everything that may mean something valuable to someone or everyone.

Theology is the study of different religions, rituals and scripture with their interpretation of 'God' and then 'God's' relationship with and to Self, others, and the world.

Psychology is the scientific study of the human brain and human behaviour in relation to different mental states of thought and emotion arising from diverse and individual personal experiences. Psychology may also include the study of human awareness and meta-cognition, where Self thinks about what Self is thinking about.

Through the objective and rational analysis of peripheral, vicarious and insightful intrinsic information sourced from the academic disciplines of Science, Philosophy, Theology and Psychology come together to explore unsubstantiated and mythical beliefs, such as the literal interpretation of every word in every verse in all scriptures. This includes the interpretations of 'Hell', 'Satan', Karma, and Reincarnation, and others, including questionable religious, political and cultural faiths, rules, traditions and practices which are identified, explored and explained as potentially psychologically and spiritually aversive to the human spirit and soul.

The human embracement of such inaccurate and illogical ideologies and beliefs can be seen to the result, which originates from the complex mix of human characteristics. These characteristics have evolved from both human base instincts that influence and vice-versa with the higher quality constructs of consciousness, intellect,

cognition, emotion and freewill, which are interactive with the individual's personal experiences and choices.

The innate human need to arbitrarily adhere obediently to particular religious, cultural and/ or political 'beliefs' and 'faiths' in relation to their laws, rules and practices, is seen in part, to be driven by the need for the individual's sense of personal security, psychological comfort and personal acceptance. Including the subconscious and conscious crave and desire to manipulate in some way the experienced existence of Self's anticipated and 'hoped for' immortality and therefore the perceived prerequisite and requirement to 'be right' and 'good' with 'God'. The above premise can then be exacerbated by innocent ignorance, the quest for what is true and real, personal fear, and individual arrogance and pride. These related thoughts, attitudes, emotions and behaviours can then be subconsciously mixed with the misinterpretation and misapplication of particular secular, cultural and religious policies, laws, rituals and traditions, which are required by Self to be perceived as infallible and 'true', and ultimately expressed through thoughts, emotions, values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours and contents of speech.

The selective human adoption of particular religious, political and cultural beliefs and practices may also manifest because of the synergistic power created by the human psych. A psych created and operated through the higher constructs of personal spiritual, intellectual, cognitive and emotional forces, both consciously and subconsciously, can be manipulated and influenced by base human instincts of greed, power, survival and aggression. Self's higher constructs of spiritual and psychological abilities and needs then interact with self's innate primate base instinctive desires potentially resulting in personal spiritual and psychological discomfort and vulnerability. This spiritual and psychological discomfort and vulnerability can lead Self 'open' to the possible exposure of irrational and inaccurate beliefs and faiths of particular religious, and political and cultural persuasions with their exclusive rules and practices, procuring an outcome of individual and collective spiritual, psychological, intellectual, emotional and behavioural confusion and abuse.

As a partial defense against the irrational and inaccurate beliefs and faiths of particular religious, political and/ or cultural laws and practices that can precipitate individual and collective human

suffering, destruction, turmoil and indecision, the investigative analyse of spiritual literatures is undertaken. The identification and interpretation of contradicting verses in religious scriptures are explored, in particular those verses that have the potential 'power' to impact destructively upon human cognitions, emotion, values, attitudes and beliefs, and their subsequent expression through mindsets, behaviours and contents of speech.

Principles for the reinterpretation of religious scriptures are described, which can be applied to other sacred scriptures. How could a loving Creator allow such human suffering? The general theme and message prescribed by the New Testament writings are identified as emphasising the integrity and sacredness of human sovereignty and independence manifest in the invisible and intangible – which therefore can be described as Spirit – constructs of Self. Self in turn is described and defined in part as containing the attributes of human consciousness, personality, freewill, intellect, cognition and emotion, which can be expressed in particular personal beliefs, values, attitudes, behaviours and contents of speech.

The identified general theme and message prescribed by the New Testament scriptures is about practicing the human-to-human expression of compassion and reconciliation. This is essentially about valuing and accepting Self and others 'where you and they are at' at a particular moment in time. Particularly with respect to personal imperfections, and others with different and diverse beliefs, values and experiences as one's Self. A belief in Christ's death and resurrection could be potential evidence identified as being credible for the consideration of the reality of human immortality.

Traditional biblical beliefs about creation and the creation of human beings are reconciled with the scientific evidence of evolution, but evolution as an outcome of pre-programmed DNA as opposed to Darwin's natural selection and chance. This is, the Creator's willed design and order of creation that allows the development of the human brain to interface and infuse with the invisible, intangible and sublime, yet metaphysical and observable, Self. Self being consciousness, personality, freewill, intellect, cognition and emotion together with personal values, attitudes, and beliefs as an outcome of unique environments and personal experiences, knowledge and choices, which by definition, are not visible, but intangible and invisible, and therefore can only be described and defined as being that of Spirit.

The rationale and logical proofs of Theist-Philosopher's in relation to rational and logical 'cognitive' evidence for the existence of a 'God' are discoursed. The 'miracles' of creation as discovered and identified by technologies of modern science and articulated as is the wisdom, both spoken and unspoken, emanating from the general theme prescribed and articulated throughout scripture specifically regarding Creator-to-human and human-to-human relational love.

Combining all the above information together may provide the reader with enough resources to contemplate and consider the possibility of the existence of a Creator. An explanation regarding the difficult concept of comprehending that a 'Creator' must have always existed if a 'Creator' does indeed exist, is also offered. The reality of Parapsychology is exposed by science as being, at best, magical beliefs based on myth, potentially exploiting the spiritually vulnerable and, at worst, encouraging the occurrence of cognitive, emotional and behavioural self-fulfilling prophecies. Self-fulfilling prophecies can prohibit the necessary intellectual and emotional processes of Self's decision making, that in part, drive Self's desire to seek informed knowledge, and ultimately, understanding of Self, and the desire for personal change. This mindset relating to 'predestined fate' inevitably affects Self's ability for self-acceptance, procurement of informed knowledge, and the ability to personally choose to voluntary change particular aspects that Self believes needs changing.

The powerful influence generated by personal beliefs and faiths in a particular religion, culture and/ or politics must be considered such that they cannot afford to be beliefs and faiths based on a blind and hysterical mindset and mentality. But beliefs are required to be predicated on an informed, considered, and educated premise so that choices are underpinned by the interaction between Self's objective informed knowledge mixing and interacting with the reflective introspection of Self's innate spiritual intuition.

Christ's examples and teachings relating to living life on earth, His miraculous, resurrection from the dead, together with the miracles of creation, including the intangible components of Self - consciousness, meta-cognition, thoughts, feelings, attitudes and beliefs - may be viewed as events that provide a source of hope for the real possibility for the eternal and immortal existence of Self. So together and addition to the scientific complexity of creation, and the scientific and logical premise that you can't get 'something' (the

universe and life) from ‘nothing’, and the existence of the intangible components that make up Self, and the considered belief in Christ’s resurrection, together, have the potential to set the precedence, and be the evidence, for human immortality.

The continuation of Self being the eternal continuation of Self’s experiences of consciousness; the eternal continuation of Self’s intimate thoughts, memories and emotions; the eternal continuation of Self’s relational experiences with others, and the eternal continuation of Self’s individual personality.

CHAPTER 1

IN SEARCH OF THE CREATOR

We Do Not Believe
Jesus Calls His Apostle Peter, Satan ('the devil')
Pope John Paul II Apologises to the World
Separation of Church and State
Many Religions, Churches, Faiths and Beliefs
We Want To Believe

We Do Not Believe

We are lying in bed, in the late hours of the night and early hours of the morning. It is pitch black - dead quiet. We can see the stars twinkling at us between the curtains through the window. We may not be on our own, yet we are feeling alone and lonely and somewhat anxious. This is a time when we may feel most vulnerable and fragile, a time when we are most reflective. During a thunderous and wet and windy night when the stillness of the night is shattered, or in the dead quiet of darkness where nothing moves and when we feel we could easily exist alone, then we might imagine the end of the world is near and our personal existence insignificant. Or indeed, it may be during the daytime as the Sun shines down upon us and the breeze blows on our face, or the rain drops fall on our head, whichever the environmental situation may be, our cognitions and emotions could engage into overdrive as we start thinking, contemplating and wondering;

What are we doing here?
Where have we come from?
Where are we going?
Is there a Supreme Being?
Is there an afterlife?
Is there immortality?

It is not the first time we've thought these thoughts and it won't be the last, we know that! For these questions are very significant to us. Upon reflection, from time to time these thoughts and questions seem to obsess our mind and appear to constitute the inner most essence, core, spirit, and personality of our being. These irritating thoughts continue to nag at us from within until we learn to either deny or ignore them, or achieve some semblance of cognitive rationality and sense of cognitive equilibrium towards these incessantly hounding questions we might feel need to be answered.

We may have heard about other people's belief and faith in a particular 'God', which we may or may not believe in or understand. We may be atheist or we may be agnostic and we may believe that the person they call Jesus Christ being the Son of the Creator is but a figment of someone else's overzealous and fanciful imagination. We might also compromise our existential inquisitiveness by entertaining the idea of there being some sort of 'power' out there, or some kind of Super Natural Supreme Being. Or we may even be enthusiastically spiritual or keenly religious. But we may still, albeit subconsciously or consciously, continue to question the unknown, the unseen, the invisible, especially when our defense mechanisms (fanaticism or denial) slip and our intellectual and emotional coping mechanisms self-destruct letting our guard down and, the thoughts of the super natural, and spiritual, in.

Jesus Calls His Apostle Peter, Satan ('the devil')

We cannot help question the purpose and meaning of life here on Earth, and the possibility of Self's personal mortality (eternal death), or Self's personal immortality (infinite life). We know others think these same intrusive thoughts. Our friends and acquaintances seem to be asking these same questions when they can no longer hide their thoughts and feelings about their interest in this "deep and meaningful" subject. There is no doubt that there are many different people in many different churches, in many different denominations, in many different religions, and in many different cultures and politics doing many good things, but people, by definition, are both imperfect and intellectual, and thus, open to the choice of manipulating human base instincts. People are the ministers, administrators and actors of

their particular churches, religions and cultures/ ideologies. Human indiscretions and infallibility is evident within religions, churches and political ideologies, in the depths and breadths of their bureaucracy, administration and ministry. An excellent example of human imperfection in relation to the authority, management and administration of organized religions is evident when Christ speaks to His followers and His apostle Simon who He renamed Peter:

”And I tell you that you are Peter (Peter meaning rock) and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades (or hell) will not overcome it (or not prove stronger than it)”.

(Matthew 16:18)

Perhaps Christ was not promising this ‘church’ would be infallible or perfect, but rather that it would not succumb totally and eternally to absolute evil beliefs and behaviours. Jesus Christ chose an imperfect human being to be the foundation upon which to build His ‘church’ here on Earth. Jesus Christ chose, His apostle Peter, to be the rock on which to build His church. Christ chose His apostle Peter, Peter a person who seriously betrayed Him, and denying any knowledge of Him whilst running for His life.

In the gospels of Mark and Matthew we read:

“Immediately a rooster crowed. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken, “Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” And he went outside and wept bitterly.”

(Mark 13: 35; 14: 30, 68, 72; Matthew 26:34-75)

Indeed, Jesus chose the imperfect apostle Peter to be the foundation of his church. Indeed, Christ chose Peter, a person who Jesus Himself had publicly rebuked and called ‘Satan’. The word Satan has the meaning today which is akin to the meaning of the words Devil and Prince of Darkness.

As we read in Mark 8:31-33; and Matthew 16:23:

“And when Jesus predicted His death He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that He must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter

took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. But when Jesus turned and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter. “Get behind me, Satan!” He said. “You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men”.

This unique and fascinating story about the apostle Peter (the rock) being called Satan by Jesus is potentially symbolic and analogous to human individual imperfections per se, and institutionalised religions’ and churches’ sometimes questionable maladaptive, incompetent and corrupt practices and administrations betraying, denying and ignoring Christ’s teachings, examples and messages. Ideas relating to the meaning of the word ‘Satan’ used by Christ toward Peter, and the meaning of the word ‘Hell’, are discussed in a later Chapter.

Before we continue our discussion and exploration of human and human-to-human imperfections I would like to share with the reader a true story of an extraordinary example of a heart-warming and hope producing act of across cultural and religious altruism within ‘across’ cultural and religious belligerence, indifference and hatred. In Jenin, on the West Bank, Palestine, the family of a Palestinian boy killed by Israeli troops have donated his organs for transplants in Israel, expressing hope the life-saving gesture would bring peace. Soldiers shot 13-year-old Ahmad al-Khatib in a raid on the West Bank city of Jenin in November 2005. The army claimed troops mistook the boy’s toy gun for a real weapon. He died of his wounds in hospital. After consulting Muslim authorities, his family decided to give Ahmad’s organs to six Israelis awaiting transplants. “We are doing it for humane purposes and for the sake of the world’s children and the children of this country,” said Ahmad’s father, ‘When I donated my son’s organs I did not say for a Jewish child, an Arab child, Muslim or Christian.” Hospital officials said the Israelis who received Ahmad’s lungs, kidneys and liver included several Jews. A member of Israel’s Bedouin Arab minority, 12-year-old Samach Riad was given the boy’s heart. “They changed her heart and now everything is good,” said Riad’s father, Gabdan. “I hope peace will come, that, thanks to the Palestinian family.” (Source, Press report)

Pope John Paul II Apologises to the World

This unique and incredible story about the apostle Peter ('the rock') being called Satan by Christ may represent the reality of human imperfection in relation to the sometimes, questionable practices of organised religion. It is credibly symbolic of the recognition of human imperfection that Peter was chosen as leader of Christ's church, notwithstanding Peter's personal gross misjudgements and indiscretions of betrayal and denial, and Jesus' rebuking him for these indiscretions by calling him 'Satan'. This story about this particular part of Peter's relationship with Christ is a good example of the potential abundance of Christ's infinite compassion and mystical relational love notwithstanding personal human imperfections and transgressions.

A poignant example of the culture of inherent human imperfection and subsequent spiritual abuse within churches has been highlighted by Pope John Paul II 1920-2005, who on the 14th of March 2000 courageously honestly apologised to the world for the past 'sins' of the 2000 year old Catholic Church. Pope John Paul II 2005 head of the Catholic Church for 26 years 1978-2005, justly recognised and acknowledged the past wrongs committed by the Catholic Church over the centuries against, Jews, Muslims, Women, Indigenous People and Heretics. Pope John Paul II in this brave apologetic address to the world, dare it be said should we be struck down by God's wrath, has in essence admitted to transgressions that in reality equate to cheating, stealing, discrimination, torture and murder, administered and authorised by various imperfect Popes over the centuries. This candid admittance by Pope John Paul II to these authorised 'church abuses' pontificated from the Vatican provide evidence of the potentiality for enormous diabolical behaviours and their subsequent destructive outcomes, initiating and occurring within the kernel of organized religions.

These have been reprehensible behaviours with disastrous outcomes propagated by spiritual and psychological abuse directed by certain people in authoritative 'spiritual' positions, in often, powerful organised religious institutions as a manifestation of human pride, obsessed self-ego, personal arrogance and spiritual ignorance. But it should also be noted that the spiritual motto of Pope John Paul II was,

“equality of humankind, brothers and sisters in the One God, together redeemed in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ”. The universal importance of these words spoken by John Paul II begin with, “the equality of humankind as brothers and sisters” which surely no one can deny as being true. The words “in the One God” may strike a strong cord with most believers. The words “together redeemed in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ”, are believed by most Christians, and if in fact a reality will undoubtedly apply to all people whether they are believers or not.

Of course, the best predictor of future human behaviour is relevant past human behaviour, so unfortunately there is no guarantee that spiritual abuses will not reoccur in the future. But personal and institutional acknowledgement and awareness of such orchestrated damaging behaviour stemming from both religious and spiritual ignorance and arrogance by the spiritually powerful (those in positions of religious authority) towards the spiritually vulnerable (those searching and seeking spiritual guidance and direction). Is the first step in preventing the repetition of such catastrophic and destructive beliefs, behaviours and contents of speech, that have been given ‘power’, ‘life’ and ‘justification’ in through ‘God’s’ name.

Separation of Church and State

Pope John Paul II, because of the traumatic experiences he suffered as a young man in Nazi occupied Poland during World War II, and his eminent spiritual and administrative position as Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church, was a major contributor to initiating and maintaining the destabilisation of Communism in Eastern Europe in the early 1980s. Pope John Paul II was the catalyst that orchestrated the significant political change from the National policy of authoritative oppression to the policy of political Self Determination. This major political transition from communism to democracy, was implicitly and explicitly legitimated through his encouragement and support of the Solidarity Movement in Poland. With its demands for a Government that primarily and predominantly would endorse representatives from cities that would represent the people based on their particular values, this is, democratic voting and democratic politics. Where democracy implies justice and justice manifests itself from the possession within of a sense of fairness, which in turn

invokes human behaviour directed toward the betterment of the community.

The impact on people from ideologies that promote the non-separation of religions and faiths and Government and State political agendas impacts destructively on the psych of the people who are by virtue of 'corrupt' and biased enforced laws, required to adhere to religious theologies, beliefs and faiths as important components of political ideologies. This is because, particular religious beliefs imposed on a people is as personally damaging as particular political ideologies imposed on a people. The imposition of religions and non-democratic political ideologies on communities, nations and countries through the centuries has often been practiced, and indeed, been the norm rather than the exception. Without the separation of Church and State (democratic) there is the potential for both religious dogma and practices and non-democratic political regimes, as part of their political or religious agendas, to enforce and impose particular ideologies, philosophies and religious beliefs and practices on their people. So necessarily, there is an imperative need and requirement for the separation of Religions and Governments. Governments through their democratic representative administrators and legislators - who must be genuinely representative of the people expressed through the political system of democracy - philosophically, theologically, spiritually and ideologically dignify human existence through the expression of self-determination. Human beings possess the higher transcendent qualities manifest in the characteristics of personal sovereignty, independence and freewill, and as such, by definition, have the right to self-determination.

Religious institutions by definition, are religions' churches, mosques and temples etcetera, being the wooden and concrete structures and frameworks within and from which worshippers learn, practice and apply their beliefs and faiths are organised institutions that promote, teach and administer the doctrines and dogma of particular faiths and beliefs for 'believing' individuals and communities. We can also surmise optimism that a person's particular 'spiritual beliefs' are personally very personal, intimate and private experiences, which are necessarily, 'spiritual beliefs' that have been voluntarily adopted, chosen and accepted by a particular individual without undue duress or coercion. So a person's belief in a particular religion, can be considered to be necessarily expressed as a

personal, private and spiritually intimate relational experience between themselves and their 'God'. However, and on the other hand, communities, cities and countries are inhabited with people who are unique, independent, and sovereign human individuals with freewill. Thus, communities, cities, and countries are inhabited with people who, by their intrinsic right of being human, have diverse spiritual beliefs, faiths and religions. We can anticipate the problematic implications arising if communities, cities and countries are not democratically governed, but administered by political ideological systems that endorse the imposition of particular religions and 'spiritual' beliefs and faiths. Indeed, the right to express personal and individual sovereignty, independence and freewill in relation to one's spiritual philosophy and political philosophy would be oppressed from the imposition and enforcement of alternative political and spiritual ideologies and beliefs. We have all historically, or in real time, experienced or witnessed the negative damaging outcomes, where for example, Communism, Marxism, Socialism, Fascism, Protestantism, Catholicism, Judaism and Islam etcetera, are both the political and religious criteria that become arbitrary and inflexible powerful non-democratic machines used to govern a particular population with coercion

So something as intimately personal and important to humans as their individual and diverse beliefs and faiths in relation to their spirituality, ideology, religion and politics can never be denied or oppressed if the successful administering and acceptance of policies and legislation to a particular community, city, state, country and nation is to be achieved. But there will never be a perfect political system where everyone is totally satisfied, obtaining all they want in terms of their personal religious, spiritual and political beliefs because everyone is different. However, the political system described as Democracy, if administered fairly and justly, will ensure that everyone gets a vote in who governs a country, and in how it is run. And on planet Earth the political practice of democracy allows all to vote and be represented to some degree. As the potential representatives who receive the majority of votes represent and administer the ideological, religious, cultural philosophical and political policies of each individual. But democracy also represents the expression for political responsibility and accountability, which is assessed at the end of a government's term and which assessment results the outcome of new

representative incumbents resulting from the next democratic election.

The other given about the separation of religion and state politics is that governments and their policies do not interfere in the intimate, private and personal spiritual beliefs of individuals. However, it is possible that the existence, or non-existence of a candidate's personal spiritual and/ or religious beliefs, and those of other elected politicians may affect their persona, values and attitudes and thus perceived to contribute to legislation, policies and interpersonal diplomacy thus influencing who will vote for them. This is unless of course the representatives' personal existence or non-existence of spiritual and/ or religious beliefs and persona, attitudes and values are cast aside to appease any detractors to ensure longevity of their political encumbrance.

Many Religions, Churches, Faiths and Beliefs

If we explore the question of God's existence from the perspective of a non-believer's advocate, then we have no choice other than to reflect on the following. That those who believe, genuinely proclaim their undying faith and belief in a 'Saviour' and a 'God,' but when asked for evidence of God's existence they rattle off Scripture verses that support their particular belief system as their considered but spontaneous response to such questions, as if well trained parrots or computer programs. We have listened to their personal stories of faith, how they may frequent church once a week, how their prayers were answered, how they were 'slain' in the spirit, and how they pay a tithe every week towards the promotion of 'God's' work. We do understand the spiritual need for humans to understand themselves in relation to the world and creation. This is a personal need, which may be, alleviated, from the sense of belonging to a particular religious organization. We understand such a personal need driving personal fervour, and we admire such dedication. But we have sometimes experienced, and thus perceive, such personal religious activities as involuntary compliances to sometimes misguided authoritative directives that are perhaps genuine, but which can be based on innocent ignorance, or tainted with covert agendas. Not least, some spiritual activities may be influenced by the need and

desire for the commercial and financial development of a 'corner assembly' at the expense of the followers' expected and sincere guidance for spiritual, intellectual and emotional stimulation from the education through informed knowledge encompassed with the embodiment of a sense of unconditional relational charity and compassion.

No one has ever proposed to ever having seen 'God'. And often there has never been offered any tangible proof, evidence or experience of such an existence. These statements may be over-generalizations reminiscing sentiments of cynicism, but these can be the sensitised thoughts of people brought about by personal feelings derived from their experiences of the past. This is how we sometimes think and feel about what we have experienced in our search for answers from those who believe and preach to us 'with faith', in their 'God'. Others who are searching for answers have articulated similar thoughts and share similar feelings because of their 'spiritual' experiences.

However, we believe thus far that we are reasonably realistic and objective in our observations, especially where the human temporal interacts with transcendence as these observations are based on personal experience and subsequent intra-personal and retrospective reflections. We have also seen the destruction, the damage, the pain, the carnage and the suffering caused by those who claim 'God' and 'Allah' etcetera, as their King, who claim Jesus as their Saviour, and who claim Mohammed as their Prophet.

We have seen the wars, the fights, the greed, the killings, the judgments, the self-righteousness, the abuse, and the hypocrisy perpetrated by those who proclaim a belief, faith and love for 'their' 'God'. How can we then contradict with such incongruence our rational sensibilities, by believing in the existence of a 'God', the existence of a loving 'God', when the living proof radiating from many of our believing and preaching fellow humans manifests as contaminating fear, arrogance, violence and hypocrisy. Why then, should we believe in a 'God' that we cannot prove to be real, that we cannot personally see, hear, or physically touch and whose worshipers, through the centuries, have been shown to have contradicting, distorted and corrupt spiritual agendas and motives? Or the destruction of other human beings has been explained away and excused as necessary for the preservation of the 'right and true'

Religion, the 'right and true' Faith, and the 'right and true' 'God'. We do not believe in a 'God' because we cannot see 'Him' or experience any proof of 'Him' or the goodness emanating from many of those who believe in 'Him'. So we ask them, "Where's the proof"? "Where's the Evidence"?

We have been told by 'zealots' and fanatics, stories of prophets and 'holy' teachers, who purport to hold the answers to our inner most private questions about the meaning and reason for our birth and life here on Earth. We have read in magazines and newspaper articles. We have studied literature in the Bible. We have viewed on television documentaries and the news, we have listened to Mullahs in Mosques, and Rabbis in Synagogues, and Buddhist monks in Temples, and we have heard from preachers in the pulpits and in churches about the many prophets and wise men who founded the many different Religions of the world. We have heard them postulate their Religion as the one, right, only, and true Religion, Faith and Church that represents the real and true laws and ways of the real and true 'God'.

We have also heard from priests and ministers about the historical, crucified, and risen Christ, the Son of God who was born 2,000 years ago. But we have heard these proclamations from church and religious leaders, the people who hold spiritual authority over the spiritually vulnerable, the people who themselves have been seen in the past to be sometimes blasphemous, abusive and hypocritical. We do not have a problem with humans being imperfect because imperfection is a part of the human condition. But what does upset us is the fact that these religious teachers and leaders, with the power of spiritual authority, may tell their 'flock' to do one thing while they themselves do another with an air of spiritual superiority. They preach to their congregation that this is God's word and subtly signal the message, "woe betide those who stray from God's word."

Church and religious leaders have told us to have faith, to have faith in God, as God's words are written in the Bible, or in the Qu'ran, etcetera, for all to see and read. And God's words are true. God's word is unchanging, and God's word is timeless and infallible. But we are intelligent beings and the term 'faith in God's word' in this context represents a blind and hysterical acceptance of something/anything transcendent without being tempered by the measures of rational knowledge, innate spiritual intuition and/or intellectual understanding. We are a conscious, unique, independent

and sovereign people with the ability to learn and reason, think and choose, and this human request to have the utmost faith in “God’s written words”, written and espoused by those who are human and thus imperfect, can be offensive to our sensibilities. We have seen over the centuries the obsession with human destruction and damage perpetrated by those humans against other humans, and who, either have an unquestioning and emphatic ‘faith’, or who have no faith. So we want to know the reality of the truth about God’s existence and if God exists, we want to ask, “Who is ‘God’ and what are God’s words for humankind”?

People who adhere to different denominations based on the religious faith of Christianity, including Baptists, Anglicans, Catholics, Lutherans, Greek and Russian Orthodox, Mormons, Presbyterians, Methodists, Uniting, Episcopalians and Jehovah Witnesses, etcetera, have informed us that God’s word is in the Bible. They have told us that God’s word is ‘The Bible’, both in the Old and New Testaments. But these words or scripture of ‘God’ in the bible are often invariably all interpreted differently by them. People who adhere to the religious faith of Islam, including the Shi’ite and Sunni factions have informed us, that God’s words, are written in the Qu’ran. People who adhere to the religious faith of Judaism have informed us that God’s word is written in the ‘laws’ of the Hebrew Bible, or the Torah (Pentateuch) being the first five books of the Old Testament. People of the Buddhist faith inform us that karma is the way and Nirvana is the destination.

People of the Hindu faith tell us to follow the cast system and lay our allegiance to the spirits and chief gods of Brahma, Vishnu (Krishna is said to be the incarnation of the god Vishnu), and Siva (Creator, Preserver and Destroyer), and to follow the ancient writings of the Vedas. Hinduism has no founder originating from the rituals, beliefs, and cultures of the tribal inhabitants of India. Buddhism has a founder, Guatama Buddha, who lived about 500 BC.

There is enough historical and contemporary evidence to believe in the suggestion that all the different Holy Books of Scripture, most likely without a question of doubt, do not contain the absolute words of the divine Creator/God. Although these scriptures have been eloquently written, they have in reality, been penned by humans. But many people believe that the words in these ‘holy’ books are the actual and absolute words of God. But although penned

by humans, it is not absolutely inconceivable that some of these words have not been in some way inspired by the transcendent spirit of the Creator.

We Want to Believe

As we will investigate and discuss in the next chapter, the Bible although expressing literary elegance, has literature often permeated with contradictions, paradoxes, irony, variations and sentiments expressed through stories that are intermingled with the messages of love and forgiveness and the messages of violence and aggression. In reality, the Bible is not a literary work described as an expression of consistency and uniformity. The words and literature of the Bible, have been constructed from the real and imaginative stories experienced by many different peoples influenced by their beliefs and faiths from many different cultures over time. So these authoritative instructions from church leaders to follow God's word is not good enough for us, it is not good enough for our intellect and our sensibilities. We need more information, much more.

These postulated beliefs about the meaning of God's words are too abstract, too invisible, too open to hearsay, too open to abuse and too open to grandstanding. This is because the policies, laws and regulations of the institutions of the world, including all religious institutions, are designed, decided, and implemented by humans, who are in essence, inherently imperfect and fallible.

But of course, we want to believe in a Supreme Being, in an afterlife, we want to believe in immortality. Who would not want to believe in their own eternally infinite immortality? But we want to believe in the truth and not man made writings and interpretations of the truth. We want to know the truth, we want to know and understand the essence and reason behind any belief in a Supreme Being who supposedly personifies the Truth, Transcendence and Immortality. We want to see this God! We want to meet this God! We want to touch this God! We may have never personally experienced God's presence, God's grace and God's touch in our lives and until we do experience this we would be naive and foolish to invest and immerse all our vulnerability, all our emotions, all our spirituality, all our consciousness into such an entity. We want to know God personally. We want proof and evidence of the Creator's

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SELF

existence! We want evidence based information about the Creator, because if the Creator exists then Self and Self's family, relatives and friends have a potential chance of immortality and thus the potential chance to exist eternally forever.

CHAPTER 2

EVIDENCE OF GOD FROM HUMAN REASON AND LOGIC

Natural and Super Natural Knowledge

The World is Not as it Appears

Proof of a Creator's Existence through Reason and Science

Philosophers and Theologians

Aristotle, Plato and Socrates

Providence

Thomas Aquinas's Five Rational Proofs for God's Existence

First Proof – Motion

Second Proof- Cause and Effect

Third Proof – Contingent and Necessary Beings

Fourth Proof – A Finite Subordinate Series

Fifth Proof - Perfection

Proof from Order, Descartes, Locke

Atom-Energy Different from Spirit-Energy

The Soul and Spirit of Self

Natural and Super-Natural Knowledge

It's now appropriate we begin the next chapter by making a distinction between the disciplines of scientific astronomy that describe and give access to the 'miracles' of the universe rather than the popular and fashionable cult of the unscientific disciplines of astrology and parapsychology. We now explore the evidence of the existence of a 'Creator' from rational and logical philosophical thought

The following chapters will explore the misinterpretation of Scripture, the magnitude and intricacies of the universe and creation and the blind beliefs based wholly on faith and myth, but we will first explore what theist philosophers have said, and how they have used intellectual rationale to provide evidence, from creation, that some

form of Supernatural Being must most likely exist.

In this chapter, we will explore the evidence that helps to prove the possibility of God's existence through the miracles of creation and natural revelation, which relates to, and is provided by humankind's power and ability to reason by way of their intellectual mind. The conscious intellect provides humans with the ability to contemplate and reflect upon information received and process this information in a rational and logical manner, potentially manifest in productive insight and understanding.

We are all aware of the concept that an infant does not possess the 'brain-power' and the maturity of emotion and cognition from experience to discern and put language to much of anything that goes on in their lives, being dependent on the parent(s) teaching and direction to behave and think in adaptive ways. But as we mature into adolescence and onto adulthood there are two particular ways or processes in which humans can discover and acquire the necessary information regarding existential questions such as the questions this book wishes to explore answers to. To revise, the word 'existential' herein means, one's sense of psychological and spiritual well-being as an outcome of self-reflection and introspection with regard to one's sense of identity. Which encompasses consciousness, thoughts, feelings and emotions in relation to Self's personality, values, beliefs and attitudes including Self's sense of personal value and esteem as a product of Self's sense of intrinsic existence and inherent purpose in relation to Self's existence in this world and potentially beyond.

Notwithstanding the presupposition imposed by many, including ministers, pastors, priests, and imams, etcetera, different faiths and beliefs that assume the understanding of such existential mysteries coming as a of prayer and the conscious fostering of the development of a personal faith, it is suggested that the two imperative vehicles required regarding the acquisition of existential knowledge, includes, firstly, natural revelation. That is, the existential information revealed through the miracles of the Universe and Creation processed by human intellect and reason. And secondly, the existential information revealed through super natural revelation, that is, the information revealed through careful interpretation of Scripture and the potential reality of the story in Scripture about the examples and teachings of the person Jesus, who said He was the incarnation of 'God'.

As it has been said through the centuries by politicians, poets and philosophers, “knowledge is power”. In existential terms, this ‘power’ is acquired from the acquisition of personal knowledge from information, which includes a sophisticated sense of personal understanding through the gift of reason. This newly found personal understanding and awareness from information gathered can invoke a personal and intimate sense of existential belief experienced as emphatic and irrefutable, and which, could overshadow the concept of an arbitrary belief conceived from that construct, faith. This inner belief and knowledge that can supersede belief from the construct called faith becomes a real personal experience from which emanates an intimate awareness of the power of Self’s Spirit and Soul. This experience of a personal and intimate spiritual knowledge can ultimately protect and immune one against arbitrary and intended spiritual abuse caused by the belief of the vulnerable relating to myths, fallacies and untruths told by the ‘powerful’. This inner spiritual awareness from knowledge can also strengthen individuals from the pain of the battle wounds of life, to rise above this pain, allowing the gift of life to be lived more fully.

We will now discuss information revealed and expressed to us through the minds of wise philosophers. Through the gift of human reason and intellect manifest in the reasoning of these philosophers, we may discover a new perspective for thinking about natural evidence that can rationalise the possibility of a Creator as the source of creation and builder of the universe.

In later chapters, we will discuss in detail information that may help to give answers to existential questions based on Super Natural revelation sourced primarily through the contemporary interpretation of ancient Scripture. But for now, we will concentrate on the answers that the greatest philosophers of ancient time, and some would say all time, have revealed to us. Whilst keeping in mind however, that we will better succeed in the task of answering these existential questions when we are able to, through intellect and innate intuitive and discerning wisdom, combine, assimilate and integrate all of the information revealed in all its different disciplines and forms and from all its diverse sources.

The World is Not as it Appears

The world is not made of what it appears to be made of as it is made of atoms, which are in essence energies without mass. Atoms are defined as electrical and electromagnetic charges, and are measured as electrical volts (eV). Atoms have no weight but feel heavy because of the electromagnetic energy between the larger planet earth attracting smaller parcels of electromagnetic energy.

This tension is what we call gravity, which constructs our perception and experience of weight. Atoms are in essence invisible, but we see because our eye, brain and interpretation are based on the reflection of light wave-lengths into our central nervous system via our eyes. If we think about how hydrogen and oxygen make up ice, water and steam-gases, we can understand how everything in the universe possesses different structures and functions even when made with the same atoms, but with different atom configurations.

As the functions of atoms changes e.g., as in the different structures and functions of ice, water, and steam, although made from the same atoms, are but structured differently, as in tightly packed atoms of ice, as opposed to the less-tightly packed atoms of steam-gases. Atoms interact with other atoms of the same (elements), and different atoms (compounds), that make up the universe.

There are only 118 different atoms that together, or combined, make up all that exists in this world. The exception is the Self, which by definition is spirit-energy of consciousness, thoughts, emotions, self-awareness, personality and will, etcetera. References in this book to the word 'physical' are defined as atom-energy, referring to all that exists, including the body (anatomy) or the 'physical' environment, food and shelter, and all that we observe around us, other than Self and others, which are spirit-energies and include consciousness, thoughts, emotions, self-awareness, personality and will etcetera .

Proof of a Creator's Existence through Reason and Science

In terms of science, science has brought us along way in understanding the world as we observe and know it today. But science still can't deconstruct, define or describe the unique essence of energy making up 96 per cent of the universe that scientists term as

dark energy and black matter. The other 4 per cent of the world and universe is that part of the universe and world we observe and see and consists of atoms, and wave-lengths of energies categorised by scientists as being within what has been called the electromagnetic spectrum.

So 4 per cent of the world and universe exists of atoms and electromagnetic wave-lengths emanating into the universe as a result of the complex interactions of atom-energies. Both atoms and electromagnetic wave-lengths, essentially and in essence, have been scientifically deconstructed to be shown as consisting of different forms of interacting energies. This energy is different determined by their unique strengths, motions, positive, negative or neutral charges, their ability to interact with other forms of atoms, their structure and functions and their visibility and weight. Furthermore, it must be emphasised that when scientists talk about atoms being in essence, energy, they are defining and measuring energy in electrical voltage (eV). Atoms and their energies are electrical charges.

I believe we have rational thought and we have science to help us understand the world. Rational thought suggests something cannot come, or be made, or exist from nothing. Science also suggests something cannot come from nothing. Something cannot come, or be made, or exist from nothing, no?

Science suggests what we observe in the world, including all that makes up the world such as the environment, buildings and flora and fauna etcetera, is made of atoms, and atoms are made of complex interacting forms of electrical energy. Science suggests that before the existence of what we term the Big Bang, there was nothing. But there needed to exist as a requirement of such energy that constitutes the Big Bang not only energy but energy with intelligence that initiated the design, plan and order for energy to pre-determinedly evolve into the world as we understand and experience it today.

Indeed before the Big Bang there was nothing except and other than cannot be scientifically defined or reconstructed, or even for some, rationally thought. But there had to exist a mysterious, an other form of unique energy that always was without the need for something to create it and which possesses intelligence.

Intelligence is required of this unique energy for the existence of the organised universe and world as we know and experience it today. That without intelligence the universe and world could not

mathematically statistically exist. Indeed, this is the measure of intelligence required over and above that of random chance, to design and plan, as could the capability of a tornado restructuring the material and contents of a junkyard into a high-rise building, or Jumbo jet, not to mention the complex existence of flora and fauna.

If we rationally follow this line of thought through to its inevitable end then reason and science suggest some other form of energy with intelligence created these first forms of energy that make up the atoms that make up the universe no? What would you call this unique other form of energy that must have intelligence and must have always existed?

For further information about subatomic and atom energies, and how the spirit and soul exist in symbiosis read in *GOD AND DECODING INTELLIGENT DESIGN: EVOLUTION, SPIRIT, SOUL AND SELF (Vol. 2)*.

Philosophers and Theologians

The great philosophers Aristotle, Plato and Socrates and the famous theologians Augustine and Anselm employed their acutely developed faculties of reason and logic to try to understand cognitively and intellectually the possibility of the existence of a Creator and Supreme Being from the evidence of natural revelation. Indeed, a rationale from the evidence of creation created by the mystical relational love of a 'God' that human and their hearts, minds and soul so desired to believe, predicated on human innate spirituality.

Aristotle, Plato and Socrates

The Greek philosopher Aristotle (300 BC) held God to be the supreme intelligence, supreme mind and subsistent thought who is eternally engaged in the contemplation of His own reality. Aristotle said that the proper object of God's being is that of truth. And because God is supreme intelligence, the proper object of His supreme intelligence can only be truth. Therefore, God is the proper object of his own intellect.

Plato (350 BC) thought of God as the supreme good. He was

able to reflect in the terms of; "I see 'good' about me". He was not speaking of moral good but just good: Trees for example are good in terms of providing wood for burning and building. Fruit trees are good for producing food, etcetera.

The Greek philosopher Socrates (400 BC), reflecting on the visible universe, inferred that God exists as a providence, that is, as a provider, responsible for all those things in the world that cater for human needs.

Providence

Now that we have had a little taste of the thoughts of philosophers and before we go further let's listen to the Acts of the Apostles (100 AD) regarding this matter of providence:

"Since the God who made the world and everything in it is Himself Lord of Heaven and earth, He does not make His home in shrines made by human hands. Nor is He dependent on anything that human hands can do for Him. Since He can never be in need of anything, on the contrary, it is He who gives everything, including life and breath to everyone". (Acts of the Apostles 17:24)

Therefore, 'God' may be identified and described as a provider. God may have made everything for human kind! It has been said that God is responsible for all those things in the world that cater for human needs, for example; Oxygen for our lungs - the Earth has four layers of decreasing amounts of air to the height of 500 miles, a digestive tract for our food, a blood circulation system to remove and replenish wastes. It is conceivable the Universe exists as a means to an end. The Universe's creation and existence a means to an end, being that for living life, and for human's to live. For instance, had the planet Earth been 1.5 per cent (i.e. approx. 130,000 miles or half the distance from the Earth to the Moon) closer to the Sun its atmosphere would have a greenhouse effect with a surface temperature of 400C night and day where absolutely nothing could grow or survive this extreme heat. On the other hand, had Earth been 1.5 per cent further away from the Sun it would be frozen in a permanent ice age like Mars where again nothing could grow or

survive this extreme cold. A graphic example to illustrate this principle is that of the North and South poles which are essentially uninhabitable because of their intense cold from inadequate exposure to the Sun's rays. Further, in the distance of a few thousand kilometers, we can experience heat of 45 degrees Celsius in the Australian desert, it being close to the equator the closest point on Earth to the Sun, and minus 30 degrees Celsius in the South Pole, the Earth's longest distance from the Sun.

Moreover, if the original explosion of the universe had not occurred with exactly the right balance of expansive force and gravitation, but instead had been weaker, the expanding universe would have fallen back on itself almost immediately, before the miracle of predetermined evolution could weave its web of magic. Had this initial expansion force been a fraction stronger, cosmic atom-energy would have blown apart so rapidly that galaxies could not have formed. So, there had to be Some Substance, or Something, or Someone, or Some-Super Natural Being which could provide such substance to exist with such preciseness to enable creation to form, develop and evolve as it has. And that Substance, Something, Someone, Super Natural Being, we may decide to call the Creator, or 'God', or 'that which nothing greater can be thought', for what else, for who else could create something from nothing, or create something from its Self.

Astrophysicists have now ascertained, by calculating the velocity of radio waves and colour of the light spectrum i.e., red = moving away and blue = moving towards (called the Doppler affect) transmitted from the furthest galaxies and received by satellite dishes that the 'big bang' occurred about 13.7 billion years ago. Further, they are also able to determine that the galaxies and universe continue to expand at an accelerating rate. By calculating the measurement of gravity required for this accelerating expansion there does not seem to exist enough atom-energy, such as the atoms of gases, dust, planets and stars, etcetera. Only 4% of the universe is made from atom-energy that we observe. From the measurements of gravitational forces there must also exist energy, which scientists cannot detect and has been called 'dark matter' spread between atom-energy like stars and 'dark energy', which consists of 23% of the universe. The other 73% of the universe that exists between that which we observe as atom-energy and drives the accelerating expansion of the universe, is explained by

the existence of what has been called 'dark energy'. This is the existence of massive amounts of energy created at the time of the 'big bang' and which might better be described as the Creator's spirit-energy of the 'Word'.

Thomas Aquinas's Five Rational Proofs for God's Existence

Thomas Aquinas (13th century AD) described in his own words proof of the existence of God's existence in terms of; Motion; Cause and Effect; 'Contingent' and 'Necessary' Beings; Finite Subordinate Series and Perfection. Which alone, have the potential to prove the existence of God from human reason. Let us now have a look in more detail at these proofs.

First Proof - Motion

We are certain, because it is evident to our senses, that in the world some things are in motion. It is equally clear to us that whatever is in motion was moved by something else. If a thing is at rest, it will never move until something else moves it. When a thing is at rest, it is only potentially in motion. Motion occurs when something potentially in motion is moved and is then actually in motion; motion is the transformation of *potentiality* into *actuality*. Imagine a series of dominoes standing next to each other. When they are set up in a row, it can be said they are all potentially in motion, though actually at rest. Consider a particular domino. Its potentiality is that it will not move until it is knocked over by the one next to it. It will move only if it is moved by something actually moving.

From this fact, Aquinas drew the general conclusion that nothing can be transformed from a state of potentiality by something that is also in a mere state of potentiality. A domino cannot be knocked over by another domino that is standing still. Potentiality means the absence of something and is therefore *nothing*; for this reason, potential motion in the neighbouring domino cannot move the next one because it is *nothing*, and you cannot derive motion from non-motion.

As Aquinas says, "nothing can be transformed from potentiality

to actuality, except by something in the state of actuality." What is actually at rest cannot be simultaneously in motion. This means that the particular domino cannot be simultaneously the thing that is moved and also the mover. Something potentially in motion cannot move itself. Whatever is moved must be moved by another. Each domino could become a *mover*, only after it had been moved by the one prior to it.

Here we come to Aquinas' decisive point: if we are to account for motion, we cannot do so by going back in an infinite regress. If we must say about each mover in this series, that it in turn was moved by a prior mover, we would never discover the source of motion. Even if such a series went back infinitely, each one would still be only potential, and from that, no actual motion could ever emerge. The fact is, however, that there *is* motion. There must be a Mover, which is able to move things but which does not itself have to be moved, and this, says Aquinas, "everyone understands to be God".

Second Proof – Cause and Effect

We experience various kinds of affects, and in every case we assign a cause to each effect. The cause of the statue is the work of the sculptor. If we took away the activity of the sculptor, we should not have the effect, the statue. But there is an order of causes; the parents of the sculptor are his cause. Workers in the quarry are the cause of this particular piece of marble's availability to the sculptor. There is, in short, an intricate order of causes traceable in a series. Such a series of causes is demanded because no event can be its own cause; the sculptor does not cause himself, and the statue does not cause itself. A cause is prior to an effect. Nothing, then, can be prior to itself; hence, events demand a prior cause. Each prior cause must itself have its own cause, as parents must have their own parents. But it is impossible to go backward to infinity, because all the causes in the series depend upon a first cause that has made all the other causes to be actual causes. There must then be a first cause "to which everyone gives the name of God".

Third Proof - Contingent and Necessary Beings

The material universe he says is made up of contingent beings. All the trees, birds, water in the sea, clouds scudding across the sky and humans, are all contingent beings. That means they could exist, or could not exist. The trees out there need not have grown until someone planted them. They did not appear of their own volition. If our Mother and Father had not met, we would not be. Once upon a time, we were not.

We did not will Self to be. The whole material universe is contingent. They exist now but their non-existence is a possibility. Say you have a litter of newly born kittens. There was once upon a time when they were not, then they were; and one day they will not be and they will not exist. If all that exists is contingent, then in fact nothing can now exist because there is a principle that states; anything that cannot be, must necessarily once not have been and must necessarily cease to be, unless there is something out there that keeps them going. A 'contingent being' in existence is contingent upon certain things, happenings, for its existence, so that being need not have been there.

But if there was a time when nothing existed then nothing could start to be and even now, there would be nothing in existence, "because that which does not exist begins to exist only through something already existing". But since our experience clearly shows that things do exist, this must mean that not all beings are contingent. So we have to get out of the visible system, to come to a being, which is necessary as opposed to contingent, a necessary being who supports the contingent beings, and maintains them in existence. If every single unit, every speck of sand and dust is contingent, and they didn't just appear of their own volition, by their own native power, then nowhere in this visible universe is there an adequate explanation of this activity, which we call existing. So we have to come ultimately to a necessary being that requires no other being to account for His existence. A power that possesses existence of its very own Self, a supreme being we may call God!

The Philosopher, Saint Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109), held a similar argument to Augustine, when he said, "Everything that exists, exists either through something or through nothing. Obviously, it cannot come out of nothing. You can't get something from nothing. To say that it is caused by something else could mean that things cause each other, which is also absurd. There must therefore be one

thing that alone is from itself and that causes all other things to be, and this is God."

Fourth Proof – A Finite "Subordinate Series"

Reason tells us that it must be impossible to have an infinite 'subordinate series' of units. For example, a parrot on a hat, the hat on someone's head, the head on a person, the person on a deck, the deck on a boat which is on the sea, which is on the planet Earth, which is in the solar system, which is in the Milky Way, which is moving in space among other galaxies etcetera. Each unit is immediately dependent on the unit before it. Take the hat away and the parrot falls. The parrot is there because of the hat. Take the boat away and the man sinks, take the galaxy away and the solar system is disordered. But as long as all is maintained, we have a series called subordinate.

A unit depends on the thing before it, before it, and before it, etcetera. Knock out any one of these and everything after it fails, falls, shifts or changes. It is impossible to have an infinite 'subordinate series' because the whole series is dependent on the unit before it. Take the whole series; imagine if you can, that it is infinitive. This whole series is made up of units, which are dependent upon the unit before it, which means that the whole series is dependent. Because the whole series is dependent, there has to be some being somewhere who itself is independent and maintains the whole series. That being we call God.

Fifth Proof - Perfection

Thomas Aquinas saw that the visible universe was composed of beings that are limited in perfection. There are more and less beautiful roses; more and less good fast drivers; more and less, good pole-vaulters, etcetera. These are certain degrees, more and less of perfection. If there is limited perfection anywhere, it has to be ascribed to something that has perfection in an unlimited way. And that perfection we may call God.

Proof from 'Order'

Let's now look at the proof of 'order' first developed by the

Greek philosopher, Anaxagoras (5th Century BC). So God created order. All natural beings whether living or non-living have to be ordered and programmed. They have the characteristic of an ordered means to a certain determined end. They have to depend on an intelligent cause for their program. If we plant a bean it will grow into a beanstalk. A quail with chicks runs away from a hunter. It doesn't intelligently assess a hunter and say this is a hunter with good aim with a loaded gun whose bullets will kill quails. No. The quail reacts exactly as if it's been programmed. It does an intelligent thing. It eludes the hunter. It has not got intelligence, so somewhere there is an intelligence that programmed the quail. Likewise, our lungs don't say "let's breathe," or our ears "let's hear". The human eye and all that is behind it, all the way to the brain, is made up of various components, all of which are organized to this end; that the possessor see. They are not inserted in the skull as a counter-weight for the back of the head or to make the face agreeable. They are there to make the face and the person who owns it, see. All these things; these innumerable parts and elements that go to make the eye and all that is associated with it, like the optic nerve etcetera, and that part of the brain that is involved in the activity; all of these diverse elements come together to one end: to permit the seer to see. This indicates that somewhere around there is an intelligence that organized all these diverse elements to this one end - to make the sense of sight possible.

Here is another example of order: There is so much information in the DNA within one living cell, if you wrote it all out, it would fill 1,700 volumes of the Encyclopedia Britannica or fill 10,000 miles of computer printout. What's more, the nucleus of every cell in a person's body contains the same unique DNA for that individual being, that is, the same information. Yet the cell knows somehow that it has to reproduce a cell that will become part of an eye or a toe, a gut or a muscle, etcetera. How does it know which page to read out of all the information? It has been ordered, and programmed by some intelligence.

This ordering of means to an end is characteristic of all natural bodies whether living or non-living. Those trees out there, they suck up water from the ground, they take various nutrients from the ground and turn it all into a tree. Here we have a program so organized to produce a certain end that in another few hundred years there will be a completely different generation of trees doing exactly the same thing.

This reveals intelligence. Intelligence isn't in the tree so it's got to be in someone who is organizing the means to the end. The existence of order around us and in us requires an intelligent cause to account for it because it is still striving towards its goal, its end! All of this indicates that we are not alone in the universe. Our intelligence is not the only intelligence around nor is our intelligence of a particularly high order in comparison, that is, with the intelligence we see organized things around us. We are the subject of organization to and for a particular end. In our case, the supreme end is eternal life with that intelligence, that is, eternal life with the Creator.

The ancient prophet Isaiah in 750 BC (Isaiah 45:18) said:

"Yes, thus say Yahweh,
Creator of the heavens,
Who is God,
Who formed the earth and made it,
Who set it firm,
Created in it no chaos,
But a place to be lived in."

Descartes

Descartes (17th Century AD) says, "Our reason tells us that something cannot be derived from nothing and also that the more perfect cannot be a consequence of the less perfect. Our ideas possess different degrees of reality. It is manifest by natural light that there must be at least as much reality in the cause as in the effect. By the name God, I understand a substance which is infinite, independent, all-knowing, all-powerful and by which I myself and everything else have been created. How can I, a finite substance, produce the idea of an infinite substance? Indeed how could I know that I am finite unless I could compare myself with the idea of a perfect being." For these reasons Descartes concludes that, since ideas have causes, and since the cause must have at least as much reality as the effect and since he is finite and imperfect, it must be that the cause of his idea of a perfect and infinite being comes from outside himself from a perfect being who exists, and that is God!

Locke

Locke (17th Century). His proof begins with an intuition of one's own existence. Since 'nothing' cannot produce something, and since man is aware that he had a beginning, he must have been produced by something else. If there is not some external being, the problem simply regresses indefinitely. Therefore, something external must exist, and this is God. Furthermore, not only does God produce that which has a beginning, but He also produces it as the kind of being that it is. Again, there are created beings that have intelligence and the capacity to love.

Hence, God must be intelligent and loving and, therefore a personal being. So through the events of Providence, Motion, Cause and Effect, Contingent and Necessary Beings, Subordinate Series, Perfection, Order and Something from Nothing, we may have formulated from this evidence through personal reason and logic a strengthened consideration to there possibly being in existence some Super Natural Being for creation to exist itself.

Atom-Energy Different from Spirit-Energy

The Soul and Spirit of Self

A Caterpillar Transforms into a Butterfly – But with a Different Brain and Same Memory. New research has identified that the caterpillar's brain dissolves when it transforms into a butterfly, but the transformed butterfly retains the laboratory-conditioned behaviours of the caterpillar in terms of being aversive to the memory of a particular scent.

When humans create or build non-living atom-energy structures such as artefacts, artwork, or a culinary dish etcetera, we use not only the non-living structures of atom-energies in the form of building materials, paint brushes, paint, and cooking utensils, harvest food and cutlery etcetera, but also living structures of atom-energies in the form of human hands, body/anatomy and brain etcetera. When humans create, we also use the non-atom

spirit-energies of thought, will, belief, ideas, images and design, order, plan and then the execution of these as the goals. These processes are encapsulated within Self and expressed as a manifestation of Self's soul and spirit.

Self, being the creator of these creations must by definition then leave part of their Self, being the will, design and creation of the artefact etcetera, and thus Self as and in part of the creation, but with an independent and sovereign standing. Thus the Self's creation is a part of the likeness and image of Self, as a function of Self's soul and spirit. The soul and spirit now residing within the creation is a part of Self and retained as soul and spirit-energy, being the blue-prints and 'finger-prints' of the designer, planner and doer of the artefact and creation.

This multi-dimensional process of creation is perhaps a simple analogy of that described as 'being made in the likeness and image of the Creator'. The artist's creations of structures of atom-energy (paintings, houses, etcetera) did not come into being by themselves. But required essentially as a major contribution for production, both the structural atom-energy of body, hands and brain etcetera, but also the spirit-energy of the characteristics of Self in thought, will, design, plan and execution, which must be the spirit and soul energy of Self.

Now if someone else recreates what we have created, then that person too, will use both the atom-energy of their body and the spirit-energy of themselves. But in recreating what has already been created there will need to used similar structures of atom-energy as in body parts, and use of spirit-energy as in the unique thought, design, order, plan and will to execute that which has been previously created and brought forth from consciousness.

Self's creations of artefacts from soul and spirit energy, and thus in a sense being part of Self, can perhaps be a reverse analogy of the existence of atom-energy structures created from the existence of subatomic particles brought forth by a Creator's thought, design and will, manifesting in the Big Bang, including the existence of other forms of energies.

These energies include the energies of atom-energy, electromagnetic energy, dark-energy, dark-matter and spirit-

energy, all designed and planned with thought, design and will of a Creator and thus have within them a part of their Creator as does Self's creation has a part of Self, but with an independent and sovereign standing.

As the chemical formations and interactions that initiated the beginnings of life through complex interactions of particular atom-energy structures developed over time, so the evolved atom-energies of life increased from one cell to trillions of cells and with them, so the spirit and soul as a manifestation of the signature of the designer.

The human brain has developed larger and more complex in humans than in any other species. This development of the human brain gives humans the ability to think, plan and do all the intellectual, emotional and behavioural things humans can do.

Thinking and emotions are part of the spirit-energy of consciousness being part-and-parcel of Self. Spirit-energy cannot be objectively measured, and captured as atom-energy can. We may consider the essence and existence of Self to be a divinely inspired outcome from predetermined design and order of the Spirit/Word.

So we may be able to say, that through the energy of 'The Word', was brought forth and embedded the Soul and Spirit in the different energies within the universe including the soul and spirit of life and Self.

Humans' Spirit and Soul may be inherited and passed on from species to species, from generation to generation, through the soul and spirit-energies dwelling particularly within all living existence, as the defining divine signature of the 'word' of creation.

The energies of Soul and Spirit may also exist within, yet on a unique dimension or plane, or exist parallel to, or in symbiosis to the atom-energy structure of DNA. Atom-energy makes up the structure and function of the brain, which is the vehicle for the interactions and existence of the spirit-energies of Self.

CHAPTER 3

HUMAN PAIN AND SUFFERING FROM INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL CONFUSION

Brief History of Scripture's Language
Misinterpretation of Scripture in the Bible
Spiritual Abuse
Human Destruction from Base Instincts, Faiths, Beliefs,
Cultures, Politics and Religions

Brief History of Scripture's Language

Now that we have read from some of the greatest philosophers and theologians of all time we will now look at the importance of language and the spoken word and how it affects our understanding of the world we live in and accordingly our beliefs.

Language is a human verbal tool developed and evolved over many centuries for the use of human communication. For over three millennia, Hebrew has been both the literary religious and secular language of the Jewish people. Hebrew is a Semitic tongue, and was spoken during the period of the migration of the Patriarchs into Palestine remaining the language of the Jews throughout most of the Old Testament period. In the period post Old Testament the Hebrew language gradually gave way to Aramaic as the spoken language for day-to-day communication, but Hebrew continued throughout the centuries to serve as the language of ritual and prayer.

Most of the Old Testament texts were originally, written in Hebrew, and were derived from oral traditions as far back as 1000 BC. But the younger books of Ezra and Daniel were written in 165 BC in Aramaic. The language of the people of Palestine shifted from Hebrew to Aramaic sometime around 500 B.C. Therefore, Christ probably spoke in Aramaic as did his disciples and contemporaries.

Over the centuries, the perceived messages of Christ spread

throughout Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia in this Semitic Aramaic tongue. However, between the 4th century BC and 4th century AD, Hellenistic Greek, also known as Koine Greek, was the most widely spread language of the times due to the empire of Alexander the Great. It eventually absorbed all local dialects and became the standard language of the times. The New Testament (the 4 Gospels, the Letters of St. Paul and St. Peter, and the Apocalypse of St. John) then was collated and written in this Koine Greek, but was later translated into Latin around 380 AD.

Misinterpretation of Scripture in the Bible

As we continue the search for life's meaning, and evidence of a Creator's existence, we may understand that whether we like it or not, rightly and wrongly, warts and all, the values, beliefs, perceptions, perspectives, laws and policies, to some extent, adopted by Western Civilisation have been framed, shaped and driven by Christian philosophy. A Christian philosophy being the thoughts, ideas and beliefs evolved over the last 2000 years and based primarily on the New Testament of the Bible. Christian influence in the world started with the measure of universal Time reinvented, with the splitting of Time into two, becoming "Before Christ" BC and "After Christ" AD. Furthermore, Western Civilisation has over the last 2000 years, been on a roller coaster of both constructive development and destruction. It is therefore important that we deconstruct and reinvestigate the misinterpretation of scripture in relation to its construction and interpretation. The Bible being the primary premise of Christian thought, beliefs and philosophy. We discover that the many different meanings given to Biblical scripture can be, attributed to the many biblical verses, which are differently interpreted by both religious institutions and individuals. So a more conservative and 'safer' way to read any Holy Scripture is to read it with an informed spirit and rational and open mind and heart.

We will discuss the meaning and interpretation of controversial verses in the Bible, and learn what biblical scholars and academics say about how we can, as individuals and organisations, alternatively read and interpret such complex ambiguous writings in 'Sacred Scripture'. Information on biblical construction and interpretation is important

because the Bible is said to be the most wonderful and genius of all literatures. The most widely read book in the world, handed down from ancient history through the millenniums potentially wielding an aura of psycho-spiritual information to the reader. Without a doubt, if read in context, the New and Old Testaments of the Bible furnish one with the acquisition of a rich source of historical, cultural and spiritual information.

Those Biblical scholars who have studied the construction of Sacred Scripture say that its contents need to be interpreted carefully. Even though the Bible is said to be inspired by God, that is, by spiritual inspiration and quality breathed into humans to give a proper understanding of God's intent and purpose (Job 32:8), it's obvious to all that the Bible did not fall to Earth directly from heaven from 'God'. But, rather, is made up of human words and writings representing the perceived 'words' and 'meanings' of 'God' by humans who believe they know what truths come from 'God'. Although some writings are surely, inspired by the spirit of 'God', we begin to realize that we must not confuse the two different origins of the two different 'words' in the Bible. That is, the 'words' originating from the personal agendas and perceptions of humans mixed with the 'words' originating from the inspiration of 'God'. The Bible may indeed be considered to originate from the confusing combination and mix of the above two origins. Nor must we be tempted to just arbitrarily separate out these words, but instead seek and identify those words and verses that are definitely gross contradictions, in turn discovering the central theme written within scripture and ultimately the purpose and meaning of the Creator's message. Perhaps then can we define the divine message from the Creator's 'inspired' words, appreciating the mystical message and its meaning when interpreted within the appropriate literary genre and within its particular cultural and religious contexts.

God's actual words spoken through Christ, are perhaps hidden and camouflaged through inspired human words that attempt to describe the true story of the Creator's mystical relational love. If Jesus Christ was the Son of the Creator, then the Creator has spoken words of great wisdom on this planet. Although Christ did not write any words His time on earth was communicated through speech to others before being written and immortalised by His followers. If Christ is 'God' then the Creator has lived and spoken great wisdom on

planet Earth. Christ's words being initially transmitted and communicated orally to others, because His disciples and followers did not follow Him around with a pen and note pad jotting down His every move and articulation.

Instead Christ's articulated wisdom was recorded, sometimes years and decades after His resurrection and ascension, and therefore unlikely to have been written verbatim. However, many recordings written about Christ's thoughts and actions can be, considered to convey reasonably accurate messages and teachings intended for humankind if they are interpreted with care. There have been many erroneous and potentially damaging attempts at interpreting 'sacred scripture' when taken out of context *visa versa* for verse rather than thought as a general theme and message.

During Christ's time on earth He wrote nothing down with pen on paper or chisel on rock. There is good reason why Christ did not immortalise His miracles, examples and teachings by writing down his thoughts and instructions on some permanent material and manner.

This intentional omission was for good reason, and that was His determined intention and strategy to emphasise the fact humans are imperfect but sovereign and independent beings that we are. Indeed to emphasise that we are beings imperfect, who make mistakes and because of such human characteristics that which they hear, interpret and write down must be assessed carefully, but all the same, is open to flaws and fallibility. For this reason alone that which has been written about the Christ requires to be attended to with the main focus on the grand general theme and message of the written discourse of His Story.

Furthermore and in addition to the above explanations, Christ respected the sovereignty, independence, individuality and free choice as human gifts. In essence giving them the freedom to interpret His life on earth, expressing it their unique way and in turn giving credibility to the special-ness gifted to humankind notwithstanding that such interpretation of His life and word would be less than perfect verbatim, but perfectly imperfect if understood within his point of reference.

For instance, Grant Jeffrey tries to prove the legitimacy of every word the Bible as being that written and inspired by God, in his book *The Signature of God*. He attempts to do this by purporting to

having identified a Bible code that reveals future historical events, by finding words such as 'Hitler' and the 'September 11th World Trade Tower Attack' in the letters of a particular sequence of words in the Bible. The scientific academic discipline of Statistics would propose that if one has enough words (as there are in the Bible) to work with, one can generate through a computer program any number of preconceived words from a particular letter from a sequence of words. The more words one has to work with as a resource, the greater the chance and probability of creating a particular word or phrase, and in this instance, the suggestion that God has inscribed in the Bible a covert and subliminal secret code. This suggestion is akin to suggesting that God validates the predisposition of predestination in the course of every human action and event. Of course, this is an absurd depiction of 'God', because if every human action was predestined then the gift of freewill and choice may as well be redundant.

The idea that human belief, behaviour and speech are predestined is an aberration to the invisible constructs of human intellect, freewill and choice. The acts of human freewill and choice are transcendent characteristics that allow humans voluntarily to choose their actions, behaviours, and speech, congruent with their experiences and personality. Self's personality predicated, in part, on particularly chosen beliefs, values, attitudes, ideals and experiences. If everything people did was predestined then people could chose destructive behaviours without conscience, because they could justify these behaviours by saying, "Well if I do such and such a 'thing' it is okay because God already knew I was going to do it because it is predestined and so therefore out of my control". This mindset can only be considered to be extremely dangerous and damaging to the dignity of human personal determination, and an aberration to the Creator's purpose for the uniqueness of Self's personality manifest through the independence and sovereignty of Self's dignity, autonomy and freewill, and as such, Self's Spirit.

Moreover, it is conceivable that in a complex divine and mysterious way, the Creator chooses not to know. If we had died at a very early age but God were to know what we would have done with our free will had we lived, then He would be justified in allowing us the experience of the process of purification for any transgressions that we may have committed had we lived. If this is the case then we

would perhaps have to reflect on and experience the pain we would have inflicted on and caused others despite being materially innocent. If God chose to know everything that we humans will do with their lives then freewill, by definition, cannot be free. Human consciousness, thought and emotion, freewill, intellect and discernment, etcetera, provide categorical evidence that the Creator has created humans as beings with the integrity for personal independence and individual sovereignty. The creator then cannot be perceived to have created humans as beings who live lives that have been preplanned, preprogrammed, pre-mapped or predestined. If the Creator chose to know each person's future activities, including Self's thoughts, emotions and behaviours etcetera, then this knowledge, by definition, would amount to human beings being in essence, pre-preprogrammed and predestined freaks of creation. The Creator perhaps chooses not to know how a person lives their everyday life and chooses not to intervene in the day-to-day activities of a person's life, unless of course that person wishes to specifically relate to and communicate with their Creator.

To understand the writings of the Bible more fully we need and want to know when, how, why, to whom, and by whom the different books and gospels of the Bible were written. Through our exhaustive research, we find that there are many contradictions, variations and inconsistencies between and within the different forms and styles of literature, and in particular, messages from verses written in the Bible. For instance, there are two entirely and possibly three, different stories about how humankind and the universe were created.

The first story of creation described in Genesis 1:1-31 and Genesis 2:1-4, and the second story of creation described in Genesis 2:5-23. These creation stories were, first shared verbally, between individuals and communities, who brought them down through the ages in both written and verbal forms. These creation stories were, expressed orally through story telling by the people of the time, to help explain their creation, life experiences, and personal existence on Earth. The Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament) in the Bible were eventually documented in writing by the 'first authors' so they could be remembered and communicated to others.

The first story of creation in Genesis (Genesis 1:1-31; 2:1-4) explains how humans, both male and female, were made in God's image and likeness on the sixth day, being after the Universe, Sun,

Moon (lights), and trees and animals were created in the first five days. This version describes how these creations and creatures were brought into existence within a timeframe of six days, and God saw that it was good. And on the seventh day, 'God' rested.

The second version and different story of creation in Genesis (Genesis 2:5-23) explains how Adam, which translated to its original Hebrew means man, was created first and placed in paradise of The Garden of Eden. This story tells how Adam was, created first, before the trees, water and animals, and then placed in 'The Garden of Eden'. It then describes how Eve, a generic name for life itself, and the personification of motherhood, was created from a rib of Adam. This version of creation has humans created before all the other creations of water, trees and animals, etcetera, of the Earth, which is in direct contradiction and opposition to the first story of creation in Genesis.

Also this second story of creation does not describe a timeframe of six days for the Creator's creation of creation. It also describes how Eve ate from the tree of life and knowledge of good and evil, in the center of the garden - and not from an apple from an apple tree - and how from that moment onwards humankind suffered from the consequences brought about by the choice made by Eve. A third, but brief version of creation, also described in Genesis reads:

"When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them. And when they were created, he called them man. When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth. After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Adam lived 930 years, and then he died".
(Genesis 5:1-5)

The evidence provided and described in the book of Genesis by these three different versions about how 'God' created the universe and life suggest a single author with differing views or several authors and as such the identification of serious contradictions about the concepts and stories regarding creation and indeed the authorship and written construction of the Bible. Instead of being read as the absolute words of 'God' these stories need to be read as the different ideas and interpretations of different people (writers) written at different times

as representing how they think 'God' could have created humans, the world, and universe. So these particular stories about creation must not and cannot be read literally as literal texts and words coming directly from 'God' if the integrity of the meaning of the words and verses in the Bible are to be maintained. Although the words used by authors to describe the creation of the universe and life in the book of Genesis may have been originally written for literal interpretation they are more likely to be words to be interpreted in the metaphor genre. A metaphor is a figure of speech in which a term or phrase is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable in order to suggest some form, or type of semblance. To interpret these words as actually written in the metaphor genre makes for a more sensible and realistic read as explained by New Testament scripture itself.

In 2 Peter we read:

"One thing you must never forget my friends is that with the Lord, a day can mean a thousand years and a thousand years is like a day."
(2 Peter 3:8)

The fact that ancient Scripture uses a word in Genesis that translates to the English word 'day' to describe and explain the time frame it took 'God' to create the universe is interesting in its self. The writers of Genesis have used a human word describing human experience, and as such, words used in the metaphor genre to describe the creation of creation. The human (English) word 'day' describes the behaviour of the Earth in relation to the Sun where it takes 24 hours (humans' measure for time) for the earth to revolve once on its axis, giving us a period of darkness and a period of light, which we term 'one full day'. The word 'day' then, describes a particular phenomenon related to time, movement, objects and space in the universe and essentially only exists within this context. Prior to the creation of the universe the reality of a 'day' including time and space did not need to exist. Therefore, the Creator who created the reality of what we describe as a 'day', and who created time, movement, objects and space, did not need to require or possess as a prerequisite, time, movement, objects and space, as humans know and experience these realities today. These are realities which, in part, give us light and dark, and which we term night and day. The word 'day' is a human word humans use to explain and describe a particular phenomenon of

creation itself.

So we cannot necessarily reduce and deconstruct the Creator's work as depicted in Genesis, to a specific 'time frame' of days, or capture and interpret the reality of God's creation upon the literal reading of a passage or verse in the Bible. There are many varied forms and styles of literature in the different books of the Bible. For instance, in the Old Testament there are the stories of the histories of the chosen people, a story about the beginning of God's personal relationship with those made in His likeness and image – human beings - and the story of His love and intended purpose for them to live life fully in a just and sustainable society.

The Bible consists of interpretations of the people's sacrifice to God and their rules and laws to live by, their plights, their kings, their wisdom writings, their stories about suffering and their exaltations to God. We read about these in the stories of the Old Testament and in the Psalms and we read about their prophecies for the future in Daniel, Isaiah, and the Prophets.

As we move our investigative attention to the New Testament, we notice a dramatic and significant change of theological and psychological pace and direction. We read stories in the New Testament about the good news for humankind and about God's unconditional mystical relational love for humankind. We read about the teachings and commandments of Christ and about 'God's' new laws of relational love, charity, hope and compassion. We read about the 'acts' of the apostles and the letters they wrote and carried to their communities. We also read verses that contradict and are incongruent to this new message of relational love, providing further evidence for the need for cautious interpretation as being the words articulated by human experience and thus human interpretation to a significant event.

Spiritual Abuse

From researched information into the interpretation of biblical Scripture, we find that we need to be careful in how we read and interpret both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. Many Biblical writings are in a style that they require to reading with an open mind, spirit and heart. Much of Sacred Scripture needs to be

interpreted from a metaphorical and allegorical literary perspective than from a literal literary perspective if we are to derive from this work its full sense of meaning and purpose. Indeed, people's past and current inaccurate interpretations of Scripture have caused much physical and psychological harm in and throughout the world in relation to people's individual and collective lives. There has been much spiritual and psychological damage caused as an outcome of the misinterpretation of Scripture and the resulting instructions, rules and laws espoused and interpreted by the vices of arrogance and ignorance of the 'spiritually and religiously powerful' directed towards and demanded from the spiritually vulnerable.

All humans are spiritually vulnerable or conscious because human spirituality is an essential component of humans being human beings. All humans are spiritually, and psychologically vulnerable because, firstly, humans have been created, by a Creator, a Spiritual Supreme Being, and thus are created and infused with an independent and sovereign spirit by virtue of their creation. Secondly, humans have been endowed with the possession of the invisible spirit of consciousness, self-awareness, discernment, intellect, cognition and emotion, etcetera, and thus can reflect on their own inevitable physical death, and therefore on their own mortality. Humans can also reflect on the possibility of the death and cessation of Self and Self's consciousness and personality. But in contrast to this, humans also have the capability to contemplate concepts such as the eternal, infinite and immortal existence of Self, and all that entails the invisible Self, as opposed to the physical body within which the invisible/spiritual Self resides. Because of this intimate reflective ability of humans to contemplate Self's potential immortality, people are spiritually vulnerable, and as such, open to possible spiritual abuse by those in positions of 'spiritual power'. Spiritual power defined in terms of perceived and expressed religious knowledge and authority.

Over many centuries, many different churches, from many different denominations, have interpreted verses of Scripture in many different ways, and mean many different things. These many interpretations by many churches create many laws and rules designed for compliance by believers. Directing believers in what to believe in, what to do, and what not to believe and what not do. Particularly in terms of what is 'spiritually' 'right' and 'good' and what is 'spiritually' 'wrong' and 'bad' in relation to one's thoughts, feelings,

values, attitudes and subsequent behaviours and content of speech. This in turn potentially underpins the measure of the perceived quality of one's 'spiritual' standing with 'God', and thus one's perceived spiritual state in relation to one's potential transition from the physical death of Self to Self's transcendence to personal immortality.

Because of the psychological power, that can be wielded over people because of their given and innate spiritual needs, and therefore, their spiritual vulnerability, religions and churches and their administrators need to read and interpret Scripture prudently, within the literal genre and cultural context it was written, and in light of when and why it was written. For example, the 38 parables about Christ as described in the New Testament were stories told by Him or about Him at an appropriate and particular time and context for an immediate purpose (Collins, 1984). But, which can have profound messages for people today because they can be applied for the benefit of all people in every age. So it would not be prudent and accurate if these biblical stories were interpreted literally on a word for word basis as they perhaps were originally written in the metaphor genre tens of hundreds of years ago. But these verses can be, if interpreted carefully and therefore fully understood in relation to their original context, applied as a message for today's circumstances, purposes and important issues. Many people recognise that various parables in the bible have been written in the metaphor genre as an intended way to explain a particular teaching.

For instance in Thessalonians we read:

“For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night”. (Thessalonians 5:2)

Some will understand that the following phrase; “The day of the Lord will come,” as a metaphor. That time being one's own personal physical death and subsequent spiritual ascension. Others may understand it to mean the actual second coming of Christ to Earth, and others may understand it to be synonymous with Christ plucking one from Earth and into Heaven, whilst still physically alive. And the phrase, “just like a thief at night” may be reasonably understood to mean that one's physical death will more than likely come unexpectedly;

The following verses written in the New Testament are harsh and ambiguous with an apparent emphasis for the motivation of obedience through the incitation of fear by way of the threat of eternal damnation in hell. These particular verses may have been written originally for literal interpretation. However they may also have been written at a time and in a culture where they were intended to be interpreted within a genre that expresses messages through deeper metaphorical and allegorical (figurative and symbolic) meanings. However, this latter possibility is perhaps being too kind, but we could suggest the jury is still out on these theoretical possibilities. Although, the use of the principles for scripture interpretation will provide a clearer idea of the complexity involved for such interpretations, and in turn, a picture that is clearer and closer to the reality.

For example, we read in the Gospel of Mark:

“If your hand causes you to sin cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out.”

(Mark 9:43)

Again, in Mark’s gospel, we read:

“And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell”.

(Mark 9:47)

In the Old Testament of Hebrew scriptures, some writings were written to explain human experiences such as in the story of creation in Genesis and the story about the incongruence of sin and pain and suffering in relation to Job’s reality of leading a ‘good’ life. But perhaps other scripture verses were intended to be, and still are, interpreted literally;

As in Exodus, we read:

“And if any mischief follow, then you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.”

(Exodus 21: 23-25)

Leviticus says:

“Breath for breath, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has caused blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again.”

(Leviticus 24:20)

Deuteronomy states:

“And your eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth and hand for hand, foot for foot.”

(Deuteronomy 19:2)

But in stark contradiction to these messages inciting fear, pain and suffering through the infliction of physical maiming and the command for revenge and equitable retribution, we read in the gospel of Matthew Jesus’ definitive redefining of past religious rules and laws espoused throughout the writings of the Old Testament;

We read in the Gospel of Matthew:

“You have heard what has been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, but I say to you, that you resist not evil, but who so ever shall smite thee on the right cheek turn to him the other also.”

(Matthew 5:38)

We also read in Matthew:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbour and hate your enemy’ (Leviticus 19:18). But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

(Matthew 5:43-44)

These New Testament messages provide evidence that many ancient religious scripture instructions and commandments are based on the barbaric laws, rules and behaviours of a particular culture, of a particular people, at a particular time in history. We can appreciate that these ancient rules and laws are clearly not humane, compassionate, or sensible practices in today’s society, or in the context of Jesus’ new law of mystical relational love. Many of these scripture verses at the time of their writing were probably written with the intention for literal interpretation, but through Christ’s reinterpretation carry within them evidence of antiquated scripture construction. Many of these verses need to be completely overhauled or reinterpreted as Jesus explained, imploring the need for urgent

change of the interpretation to the ancient laws and rituals of scripture that fall short of the new message of mystical relational love and compassion. To arbitrarily interpret the meaning of these verses in a literal context is negligent and erroneous amounting to the reception of potentially dangerous, abject and destructive information for Self and others. Furthermore, in Biblical scripture there are sadly 15 references to hell and 59 references to punishment.

But, as the apostle John states:

“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love”.

(1John 4:18)

As discussed later, it is incomprehensible and inconceivable that in the divine Will, Desire and Mind of the Creator, there exists concepts, realities and entities that relate to the spiritual, physical and psychological pain and suffering of people through the generation of fear expressed by the threat of the potential reality of infinite punishment and damnation. And, the eternity of flames from the fires of hell.

Human Destruction from Base Instincts, ‘Faiths’, ‘Beliefs’, Cultures, Politics and Religions

It would be helpful to define the meaning of the above words. Base Instincts are all those ‘primitive’ behaviours performed by animals and primates, and humans. Base instincts, come from the origins of human evolution and were originally designed for survival, and include, aggression, fear (fight and flight), territory dominance, control and power. We observe the behavioural dynamics of ‘the pecking order’ in many species- sex drive and the survival needs of food, water and shelter. For instance power, dominance and control over territory and subjects is prevalent in the animal kingdom where even in a chicken pen chooks will gang up together and peck the weakest chicken to death. The emotions of anger and fear are related to the fight or flee response and originate from the primitive part of the brain called the amygdale. Therefore these base behaviours have

been adopted by humans as a result of predetermined and preprogrammed evolution passed down through the genetics of DNA, but prevail to impact negatively on humanity through their continued expression and therefore conditioning, within parent-child relationships and, in turn, whole communities. But these primal base instincts also include the seemingly counterintuitive need for many species of animals, including humans, to be social, to live and belong in colonies and/or groups. This need for some species, including humans, to be social, living together in close proximity and the need to belong to the same species group can facilitate and exacerbate the expression of the negative characteristics of base instincts. Base instincts less dormant in humans manifesting negatively as destructive manipulations of power, control, aggression, fear and sex drive. The idea of the predetermination of the creation of human evolution is fully discussed in another.

The meaning of the word culture can be defined as particular personal experiences brought about by people adhering to a particular set of beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviours which are possessed, promulgated, nurtured and grown within and by a group of people living, working, playing and/or worshiping together. The dynamics of Culture are everywhere, including within a communities of people in any family, office, company, church, organisation, and/or political party with confined or unconfined boundaries and may extend nationally and internationally. The meaning of the word Faith on the other hand, can be complex, but put simply, can be defined as a deep-seated personal belief that may or may not conceptually represent a blind acceptance of the transcendent without a rational foundation of knowledge and intellectual understanding of the subject matter. And which can be driven by a personal innate spiritual need to transcendently belong. Faith can be an unquestioning, substantiated or unsubstantiated belief in anything of perceived importance to do with someone or something. Faith can be an inner 'spiritual' belief initiated and maintained by informed or misinformed innate spiritual intuition. The construct of human faith can often be initiated and maintained through informed and/ or misinformed traditions, practices, laws and rules of particular cultures and religions.

Sadly, we experience elements of systematic barbarism in particular cultures, political regimes, ideologies, traditions and religions operating to this day. These often uncompromising

individual and group acts of aggression and violence towards other humans can be understood as being driven by what may be termed as inherent and intrinsic human psycho-spiritual dynamics and principles. Therefore, in essence the blame for these contemporary human acts of abuse and violence cannot be seated solely at the foot of the ignorant and erroneous misinterpretation of particular 'Holy Scriptures'. This abuse is part and parcel of an insidious and pervasive human mentality that is a result and outcome of human beings' innate need to adhere to particular 'faiths', 'beliefs', cultures, personal attitudes and/ or politics, which will potentially provide a perceived sense of personal well-being and security. The need to adhere to a particular faith and belief is also predicated on human beings' innate 'spiritual' desire and quest to aspire to and achieve that which is true and right driven by the Self's need for potential immortality.

This is in essence an innate human need to psychologically aspire to the achievement of that which is perceived and believed to be 'absolutely right' and that which is perceived and believed to be 'absolutely true'. These aspirations and desires to achieve and embrace that which is 'true' and 'right' are often driven by and expressed through ancient or neo religious practices and beliefs, cultural and/ or political teachings and traditional rituals and practices. The practices, beliefs and faiths one may be drawn towards, may in essence, be primarily irrational and founded on ignorance, with the power and control dynamics of a system that has originated from the depths and mix of complex human experiences.

The innate human need to adhere obediently to arbitrary, religious, cultural and political 'beliefs' and 'faiths', is in part, driven by the need for a sense of psychological security. This is exacerbated by innocent ignorance, a sincere quest for truth, personal fear, and the misinterpretation, and then application, of particular secular and religious policies, laws, rituals, traditions and scriptures, which are by definition, fallible, but which may be perceived as, but are definitely not, perfect or infallible. The personal selective conscious, subconscious and/ or arbitrary adoption of spiritual, political and/or cultural beliefs and practices may manifest through the synergy of a powerful psychological dynamic created by the mix and interaction of spiritual, intellectual and emotional desires manipulated by needs produced from base physical and psychological instincts. These

particular mixes, interactions and manipulations result in a potential powder keg of personal vulnerability leading Self to the possible exposure of irrational beliefs and faiths that result in spiritual, intellectual, emotional and behavioural confusion, and the possibility of interpersonal abuse. Moreover, these beliefs and faiths can be adopted and widely disseminated without questioning the origins, reasons and affects of such beliefs, and their corresponding outcomes on Self and others.

We have seen examples of systematic and nonsystematic physical, psychological and spiritual abuse in many cultures and societies as an outcome of perpetrators ignorance, arrogance, fear, paranoia and hatred exacerbating the hysterically blind following of misinformation and propaganda that affirms one's beliefs, thoughts and feelings manifest from the mix of one's intellect, cognitions and emotions interacting with one's base desires. The interaction of base desires and instincts in association with one's personal choices, environment and/or experiences can produce thoughts, feelings, attitudes, values and beliefs that facilitate particular behaviours and content of speech that manifest in a actions such as, violence, discrimination, hatred and barbarism within and between individuals and groups. Furthermore, human-to-human atrocities can stem from the addition of the aforementioned added to a plural basis of personal ignorance, arrogance, pride, fear, vengeance, paranoia, and anger as a manifestation of the interaction between base instincts and the advanced intellectual and emotional capabilities to manipulate these base instincts. Such an interactive recipe can result in the choice of a particular course of action with diabolical repercussions.

Past and present cultural, political, and religious beliefs, faiths and experiences may also contribute to an individual's or group's chosen course of behaviour and mode of operation. Some examples of human-to-human psychological and physical violence through ignorant and arbitrary cultural, political, and religious beliefs, practices and behaviours humans have cruelly perpetrated on one another include:

- The 'Christian' Crusades
- Radical Muslim Jihad and it's coercive indoctrination of Islam
- The 'Catholic' Spanish Inquisition

- 18th, 19th 20th and 21st Century Colonialism and Neo Colonialism
- The fervor of Nationalism as an ideology
- Communism as a political ideology
- The political ideology of Fascism
- Human Right's Violations across many countries
- Availability of Female and Male Circumcision
- 'Honour' Killings for cultural and religious reasons
- Bride Burnings for cultural and religious reasons
- Suicide Bombings for political, cultural and religious reasons
- Voodoo and Witch Craft Practices
- Universal Racism
- Universal Discrimination
- Terrorism for political, cultural and religious reasons
- Ethnic Cleansing to justify wars in many countries
- Religious sectarian violence, e.g., between Christian Catholics and Protestants, and Muslim Shi' ites and Sunnis
- South Africa's past Apartheid laws and practices between 'whites' and 'blacks'.

Human beings, by nature, are creatures who have the potential to be misinformed, and 'pumped' with their own importance, consequently displaying destructive attitudes of pride, ignorance and arrogance, which often overlay and/or are overlaid with negative feelings and thoughts, such as fear, paranoia and revenge. These less than constructive human characteristics weaken an individual's ability to make informed, independent, and constructive choices, allowing for the impression and persuasion by people and events that promise a sense of perceived personal gain, at others' expense, because of individual selfishness and greed, and political, cultural and religious ideologies, beliefs and practices. But there are more complex and sinister interplays affecting destructive human psycho-spiritual behaviour.

It may be that destructive human behaviour and contents of speech are a result of the culmination of the intertwining of inflexible distorted and irrational cultural, political and religious traditions, beliefs, ideologies and practices mixed together with primal base instincts. These 'true' beliefs are generated by questionable beliefs,

attitudes, and faiths as an outcome of past and present experiences and the quest to achieve psycho-personal gratuitous benefits and gains. These personal human dynamics may in turn be exacerbated and fermented by perceived and/or real 'wounded' sentiments and egos, and the distorted and perverted quest for personal benefits and security, juxtaposition with the desire for retribution and/or to be 'right' with 'God' and/or 'powerful others'.

This ultimately achieves a perceived sense of maintaining or creating Self's ego in terms of pride, power and control. These distorted human mindsets can result in feelings, thoughts and attitudes that manifest in anger, fear, paranoia, revenge and oppression towards others with outcomes of obsessive violence, racism, discrimination, oppression and abuse, to achieve personally perceived individual and collective 'important' goals manifest in personally perceived individual and collective personal satisfaction.

These are outcomes that we have seen in humankind's sometimes, diabolical thoughts, feelings, values, beliefs and attitudes resulting in coward and abusive behaviours and contents of speech towards others by both individuals and communities. These behaviours of abuse may be explained by the act of being driven by political, cultural and/or multi mass-slaughters, genocide, and psychological and spiritual abuse, oppressing and destroying the fragile, the vulnerable, and the innocent religious ignorance, arrogance and bias, often manifesting in widespread.

Such examples of hysterical, cowardly, senseless and mindless motivated acts of violence, genocide and oppression in the world, have perpetrated over hundreds and hundreds of centuries. As the tribes and armies of particular countries have attacked the tribes and armies of other countries to take over executive control, and become the power. Moreover, people of different religions have formed armies to attack and kill people of other religious persuasions.

The philosophical and political ideology, culture and behaviour of many European countries, in the early and late centuries, was driven by their desire for power, greed and security, believed achievable through the growth of their Empires through indiscriminate acts of annexation and colonisation. World War I (1914-1918), in part, began with the large number of people living in Bosnia-Herzegovina unhappy with Austrian rule, and favouring union with Serbia, whilst achieving independence from Austro-Hungary. At the

beginning of the 20th Century, Germany was one of the most powerful countries in the World, economically, industrially and militarily. The German government announces its full support for Austro-Hungary if it decides to take reprisals against Serbia.

Russia promises that it will help Serbia if attacked by Austro-Hungary. Austro-Hungary declares war on Serbia. Russia mobilizes its armed forces in support of Serbia. This includes the sending of troops to its borders with Germany and Austro-Hungary. Germany declares war on Russia. Germany declares war on France. And Germany invades neutral Belgium. Great Britain then declares war on Germany. But senior political and military people before, during and after wars are renowned for making senseless, unintelligent and irrational decisions, including the ability to implement benign bilateral interpersonal relations in regard to human-to-human diplomacy, mediation and negotiation at individual, national and international levels.

For instance, to pick one event during World War I, New Zealand's defense chief Air Marshall Bruce Ferguson, on the 90th anniversary of ANZAC, alludes to Winston Churchill and his Senior military Officers, both English and Australian, demonstrating gross incompetence and ignorance in their misguided and ill-informed decision to invade Turkey at Gallipoli. Indiscriminately sending brave and courageous young soldiers to their death, as if lambs to their slaughter. Brave and courageous young men, trained to kill and trained to be killed, as in the 'Battle of the Neck', where wave after wave of (150) men without ammunition and armed only with bayonets, were ordered to charge the Turks. Only to be cut-down and shredded by machine gun fire just a few yards from their trench to die a meaningless and hopeless sacrificial death.

And in World War II (1939-1945), where the people of Germany and its 'professional dignitaries', yes professionals, including both men and women who were supposedly highly educated with attributes of knowledge, honesty and ethics, such as, Scientists, Politicians, Journalists, Medical Doctors, Nurses, Lawyers, Judges, Psychologists, Teachers, Ministers, Priests and Psychiatrists, etcetera, supported Hitler's Nazi Party. These 'professionals' supported the Fascist ideologically driven extermination of six million Jews in death camps, Auschwitz, etcetera, and millions of the mentally ill, disabled and homosexuals, through either their implicit silence, or explicit

contribution to Hitler's regime. A regime that desired to ultimately implement, firstly, a universal 'purity of race' defined by the personally perceived meaning of the indefinable abstract adjective words 'beauty' and 'perfection', and secondly, territorial dominance of the world.

In may 2005, at an opening speech in Moscow, celebrating the 60th anniversary of Nazi Germany's defeat, the president of the United States of America, George Bush, admitted that allowing the soviet domination of eastern Europe was 'one of the greatest wrongs of history'. This 'mistake' was ratified by the 1945 Yalta Agreement, and signed by Franklin D. Roosevelt, Winston Churchill and Josef Stalin. This agreement followed in the 'unjust tradition' of war pacts that carved up continents, leaving millions oppressed. The Yalta accord gave Stalin control of Eastern Europe delivering millions of people into communist domination. The philosophical ideology behind Britain and Americas' support for Russian domination of Eastern Europe – the soviet annexation and harsh occupation of the Baltic countries after the war continued for almost 50 years, until the downfall of communism - after World War II, appeased and excused tyranny, and sacrificed freedom, in pursuit of stability and security for particular countries. President Bush said, "We have learned our lesson: no one's liberty is expendable. In the long run, our security and true stability depend on the freedom of others", and "Once again when powerful governments negotiated, the freedom of small nations became expendable", and "The interests of all nations can only be served by the growth of freedom that leads to prosperity and peace".

The Yalta agreement is another sad and unfortunate example of the damaging effects that authoritative and non-democratic policies, imposed by the politically powerful, can have on the lives of ordinary human beings. These are authoritative and non-democratic policies, that are driven and underpinned by 'secular' ideologies that embrace activities that quench their need for 'power' and security. At the expense of other nations' 'power' and security, as opposed to the embracement of genuine democratic policies underpinned by a universal concern for all humans. A universal concern for all humans as unique and valuable beings, who, intrinsically deserve by right of their humanity the dignity of independence/ autonomy and sovereign integrity that should embody and encompass personal political and

spiritual self-determination. The psychotic aberrations and abominations of depraved human-to-human oppression also include:

- Fear of communism driving the Vietnam War
- Colonial and religious rule of Rwanda promoting the minority Tutsis and Hutu tribes attitude of 'jealousy', and in turn, the cultural, ethnic and religious based genocidal slaughter by Hutus tribes and militia of eight hundred thousand Tutsis.
- The presence of the United Nations Security Force could have prevented the Rwanda slaughter, but instead, individual countries decided to withdraw their troops at the first sign of genocide.
- Race, ethnic and 'power' fuelled political corruption and violence in the Congo, Sudan, Zimbabwe and Cambodia
- Abuse, torture and sex slavery of young girls by rebels in Sierra Leone and Uganda
- Israel's conflict with Palestine in their quest for national identity and personal and communal pride and possession in relation to their religious and cultural beliefs and terrestrial dominance
- India and Pakistan's fear and protection of territorial, cultural and religious assimilation
- Muslim's desire for Islamic States in Chechnya, Iraqi, Afghanistan and elsewhere
- The United Nations food and medical sanctions causing death to thousands of Iraqi men, women and children
- Islamic terrorism of the World Trade Towers on 9/11/2001 , Madrid, London, Bali and Mumbai.
- Saddam Hussein's savage cruelty towards particular religious sectors of the citizens of Iraqi, the Marsh Arabs and Kurds
- Religious and nationalistic IRA gratuitous violence, and the cultural and territorial motivated violence between Irish Republicans and Nationalists.
- The obsession of fear and dominance manifest in excessive expenditure for the manufacture of military arms and nuclear power in North Korea at the expense of food and medicines

- Political, religious and cultural ideologies underpinning the implementation of the ‘stolen’ generation of Aboriginal Children’ in Australia
- Politics, culture, power, peer-pressure and religious beliefs underlying the reason for Christ’s murder

Meanwhile, and in addition, the Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian War between 1991 and 1995 represented religious, cultural and ‘nationalistic’ oppression by Serbia towards other states after the dissolution of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. Serbia attempted to increase borders for a new federal state for Serbs, by incorporating territory taken from two of the other states, Bosnia and Croatia. This aggressive annexation was, countered by Bosnia and Croatia, from which Serbia sought to ‘steal’ territory, both of which, along with two other states, Slovenia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, attempted to protect their territorial integrity, and establish their independence. Croatia, with their territory under Serb control, attempted to seize territory from Bosnia in the course of the conflict.

This aggressive terrorism was the central theme of the conflict, which had war theatres in Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia. The conflict to establish new borders lasted ten days in Slovenia, but Croatia and Bosnia were subject to a protracted Serbian attack, administered and controlled by the communist Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic. This entailed the killing, terrorisation, and expulsion of non-Serbs in order to create new Serbian territories. More than 200,000 innocent people were, slaughtered in this gratuitous genocide. One of the most repugnant and abhorrent acts of terrorism and ‘ethnic cleansing’ in the four years of conflict occurred towards the end of the war near Srebrenica. In July 1995 the Bosnian Serb army, dominated by the Christian Orthodox Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic, and General Ratko Mladić overcame the Srebrenica “safe area” guarded by the United Nations peace keeping forces, expelling over 40,000 Muslims, whilst at the same time cold bloodedly murdering 8 thousand Muslim men of military age.

Human-to-human violence and oppression also includes individual as well as collective person-to-person manipulation and exploitation, such as domestic violence; physical, sexual, spiritual and emotional abuse; workplace and school bullying; police, civil,

political, private and corporate corruption and fraud; organized crime (e.g. the mafia) and outlaw gangs. These types of aberrant human-to-human behaviours can include despicable activities where corrupt members of Governments can and do, in some countries, siphon off public wealth and aid into personal and private bank accounts. Where police corruption manifests itself when police officers commissioned as 'upstanding' members of the community choose to abuse the extensive powers bestowed upon them by the public's representative (Government) to endorse and enforce legislated law. Where, in police corruption, the end seems to justify the means. The 'means' defined firstly, as personal voyeurism, illegal activity, complicity, duplicity, obtaining information, and the general abuse of their use of power.

The 'end' defined as the number of 'successful' prosecutions, or personal financial gain, or drug use or individual addiction to power broking. Such a distorted philosophical mindset necessarily drives behaviour that entails police interacting with the public and 'alleged criminals' at the expense of judicial, transparent and natural justice – through the unethical and illegal process of 'wheeling and dealing'. For example, police corruption manifests itself when particular police officers choose to use 'drug addicts' as 'unofficial' police informers, or choose to use 'working girls' as 'unofficial' police informers. This procures an outcome that indirectly and implicitly, but 'officially', encourages that individual addicted to drugs to use drugs, or indirectly and implicitly 'officially' encourages that individual working in the sex industry to continue to 'work', or indirectly and implicitly 'officially' encourages whoever else to continue doing whatever else.

Police officers have been found guilty and been convicted of planting 'evidence', drug pushing, sexual assault, physical assault and murder. Of course, many police officers in many countries around the world are honourable individuals imbibed and imbued with integrity. But there are more than a few who undoubtedly become obsessed with the abundant powers bestowed upon them, believing and acting as though they are above the law and as a consequence, have no qualms about breaking the law that they have been specifically inaugurated and commissioned to uphold. This results in the destruction of lives.

Furthermore, individual corruption can also be defined in terms of 'professionals' living distorted and twisted lives, because

their behaviour is 'dollar' driven and driven by all that the 'dollar' promises. For example, tobacco companies continue to manufacture, promote and sell cigarettes to fellow humans despite their intrinsic knowledge relating to the danger and harm to human health caused by nicotine etcetera. Where 'professionals', those people in the community who are supposedly highly educated, with the assumed attributes of honesty, common sense, and ethics, such as, Psychiatrists, Psychologists and Lawyers have been known to write dubious and questionable reports and assessments about a particular individual geared toward the specific agenda of their fee paying client. These 'professionals' interact with and assess a particular client in a way that is inherently influenced and biased toward the particular agenda of those individuals or organisations that have commissioned such 'professional' interaction, and who will remunerate them for this 'professional' interpersonal assessment and communication. Professional medical doctors and nurses have been found guilty and convicted of murdering their patients.

Also corrupt outlaw gangs may encourage 'prospects' (potential gang members) to commit horrific crimes against individuals, such as bashing and rape, as the process for their initiation and 'right of passage' to gang membership and the ownership of club 'colours' and 'patches'.

These examples of human-to-human cruelty and aggression include regular people hurting their families and others, together demonstrating how easily it is for human beings, both male and female, to continue with depraved and barbaric practices towards one another. And which behaviours are explained or justified by an individual's particular adversarial upbringing or particular attitudes based on their unquestioning faith and belief to particular cultures, politics, traditions and/ or religions. These are personal choices made albeit choices often based on ignorance and misinformation, or choices deliberately made without mitigating factors.

These are evil and corrupt acts predicated on personal and communal arrogance, pride, power and greed. These acts are often 'rationally justified' and implemented through ideologies that are pseudo-sanitised and psychologically camouflaged through a personal need to belong and commit – albeit irrational and distorted - loyally to individual or tribal, or national subjective beliefs to particular cultures, politics, traditions, rituals and/ or religions. These irrational and

distorted mindsets manifest in destructive behaviours and contents of speech without the intellectual foundation of logic, reason, thought, and emotion, to the injustice, pain and injury inevitably suffered by others. This is in spite of the destructiveness and amount of pain and suffering these acts of physical and psychological violence bear upon fellow human beings.

Such practices seem predicated on personally destructive experiences and/ or compliance to authoritative religious texts and literature, and/ or compliance to traditions and rituals, or compliance to powerful political figures from which personal loyalties and beliefs towards such cultures and bureaucracies ferment a deep-seated attitude of arrogant exclusiveness, and perhaps, the fear of abandonment for noncompliance. Compliances of this nature result in base 'tribal' and 'gang like' mentalities because of the unquestioning and irrational adherence to particular faiths and beliefs that consequently result in destructive behaviours and contents of speech through individual and/or collective human-to-human policies of human psychological and physical oppression and violence.

Inhumane political ideologies and nationalistic loyalties and practices, are underscored by 'distorted' and 'irrational' attitudes, values and beliefs formulated as a result of acute knee-jerk, and/ or extreme and chronic psychological reactions driven by base instincts and selfish ego driven desires as a way of manipulating and controlling particular civilian climes and situations for gratuitous personal benefit. Of course, these destructive practices are a consequence of coming from the self-absorbed perspective of a secular and sectarian ego, rather than from a starting point and reference of relational love, charity, reconciliation and compassion, being the driving force and rationale of this book's discourse. Nonetheless, the human-to-human experience of inter-relational hate and destruction, resulting from individual and collective traits of fear, arrogance, pride, power and greed, is an indefensible excuse.

But without going over board and throwing the baby out with the bath water, 'appropriate' political, cultural and religious beliefs can sometimes be the building blocks of society's healthy psyche, and positives may flow from history including, constructive ancient traditions, and rituals. But valuable lessons can also be learnt from the many past and current disastrous mistakes made by humans from destructive behaviours and speech driven by the base instincts of

ignorance, arrogance, self-obsession, self-absorption and the personal possession of irrational and destructive ideologies, beliefs and faiths. Indiscriminate beliefs in questionable ideologies of particular cultures, politics, traditions and religions can impose psychological influence over subjects through the ingestion, imposition and/ or embracement of regulations, rituals, values, attitudes and faiths regardless of their intrinsic integrity, commonsense and rationale.

These beliefs, in turn, through their specific criteria for personal admission, can often promote within the psyche the need for regimental and arbitrary psychological oppression and aggression because of their insanely orientated attitudes and behaviours inevitably experienced as destructive to societies, groups and individuals. These beliefs and behaviours can often be a result of conscious and/ or subconscious brainwashing influenced by those who advertently or inadvertently promote, propagate and teach these cultural, political and religious traditions, beliefs and practices that can either be transmitted from one generation to the next or evolve 'in situ'. And which, are adopted through personal fear and/or arrogance because of the need for a personal sense of security and power and/or a personal faith and belief that gives meaning to one's life. These diverse cultural, political and religious faiths and traditions are exacerbated and perpetuated by the followers' and members' psychological, communal and spiritual need and desire to dutifully adhere to the code of their specific cultural, political and/ or religious practice as an expression of implicit and explicit spiritual, political and cultural commitment, zeal and dedication.

These 'dutiful' behaviours and beliefs can be emotionally, and cognitively justified, through the psychological need for a fanatical belief in one's faith, politics and culture. This is, the psychological need of being faithful to one's faith, politics and culture and the unwavering and intrinsic desire of a fervent and uncompromising belief in one's faith, politics and culture as the prerequisite for being a dutiful and 'good' follower, and thus as such, an admired person. That is, a personal belief and faith in a particular politics, religion and/ or culture, which is considered to be the only 'true' and 'right' one, and as such, is deeply ingrained in the spiritual and intellectual psyche compatible with being a 'belonged and needed loyal member and person.'

Some thoughts and feelings going through an individual's mind with such subjective belief's relating to these personal self-needs, may include, ideas and words that represent sentiments, like: "If I am faithful to the laws and rules - regardless of any negative impact on others - of my culture, politics and/or religion. And am dedicated to 'believing' in 'this' culture, politics and/or religion, which I 'know' and 'believe' to be both 'true' and 'right', and a means to my end. "Then I will be filled with pride and admired and accepted by the authorities, peers and/or 'God', as a loyal and dedicated subject. Therefore, I will be an 'important', 'powerful' and 'good' person, giving me a sense of personal fulfillment and meaning to my life. I will also continue to be a valued member of my particular 'faith believing' community in relation to this particular culture, politics and/or religion, and therefore, a faithful, valued and important individual belonging to such an 'important' and 'powerful' entity."

It is because of the potential damage engendered by the psyche generated from an unquestioning faith and belief in the rules, rituals and laws of cultures, politics and religions, that it becomes understandably imperative that we consider believing in ideas and values underpinned by unbiased and soundly informed logical and rational foundations of knowledge and information. This is, informed knowledge about an important subject, which has been, or will be, intellectually synthesised and integrated with an informed, reflective, introspective, intuitive and discerning intellect and spirit of goodwill. A particular mindset based on a sound, logical and rational foundation integrated with a reflective, discerning and intuitive spirit will result in constructive thoughts, feelings and behaviours towards Self and others. These expressed articulations are not about excluding every facet from all 'faiths,' 'politics', religions and 'cultures' from the complex mix that manufacture human attitudes, values and beliefs and subsequent behaviours and speech content. But are intended to highlight the potential dangers of human base instincts and selfish needs manifest in attitudes of exclusiveness, ignorance, arrogance and pride, at the expense of personal commonsense and humility, at the cost of human suffering and pain.

Psychological and physical pain and suffering will occur because other very important components and information are not included in the mix that precede an individual's propensity for potentially treacherously disastrous thoughts, feelings, values,

attitudes and beliefs and subsequent behaviours and content of speech. As an outcome of constructive, rational, unbiased and evidence based information, interactively mixed with a reflective, introspective discerning and intuitive spirit, human beliefs, behaviours and speech, will potentially impact in a positive way through constructive personal thoughts, feelings, attitudes and values that are characterised as selfless as opposed to selfish.

As discussed, a spiritual, intellectual, logical, rational and appropriate foundation and measure for one's thoughts, feelings, values, attitudes, beliefs and actions can arguably be based on the principles derived from informed knowledge, spiritual intuitive discernment and freewill, manifest as personal integrity, reason, honesty, relational love, compassion and charity. Rather than being based on that which has the destructive and debilitating, polarising and dichotomizing affects and outcomes from thoughts, feelings, values, attitudes, behaviours and speech that are based on base instincts and the personal selfish needs and requirements to be right and proud and not 'wrong' or 'insignificant' and therefore possession of a perceived sense of security.

If we are 'right', then we are 'good', with a potential sense of smugness and personal power, but everyone else must therefore be potentially wrong and therefore potentially bad. If everyone else is wrong and bad then this will inevitably lead to personal feelings, thoughts, behaviours and speech that reflect the attitudes, values and beliefs reminiscent of self-righteousness, judgment, pride and hypocrisy and ultimately, discrimination and hatred towards those who are perceived to be different and therefore 'bad' and 'wrong'. Perhaps we may possess the mindset that if we are not 'right' and therefore 'good', then we must be wrong and the meaning of wrong within this context may be identified and defined as being 'bad', this is, the opposite to the meaning of 'good', thus potentially leading to personal feelings of perceived inadequacy, inferiority and low sense of self-worth.

But hey, in reality all humans are imperfect and so fall short of the ideal of perfection. But through the personal act of riding the 'high moral ground' or thinking that one is 'holier than thou', such conscious intellectual and emotional attitudes and beliefs and subsequent behaviours and speech exemplify confirmation of human personal imperfection. So as we may understand, we are talking about

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personal and conscious attitudes, behaviours and speech, which are determined by individual and/or collective beliefs, values, and faiths, determined by personal needs and which are either fundamentally and radically rational and constructive, or which are fundamentally and radically irrational and destructive to Self and others.

CHAPTER 4

INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL CONFUSION REVISITED

Principle Factors for Interpretation

Lucifer and the King James Version of the Bible

Other Holy Scriptures and the Qu'ran (Koran)

More Similarities than Differences between Religions

More about Comparative Religious Beliefs

Principle Factors for Interpretation

So then, when reading literature from within the Bible, it would be helpful to be familiar and aware of five principle factors pertaining to the interpretation of scripture. Without such informed knowledge regarding the construction, origins and editing of ancient scripture we could adversely interpret Scripture, and thus, the cognitive and affective influence it may hold. We could unknowingly distort, through misinterpretation, the meanings of the words in the text of the verses, and consequently, the interpretation and understanding of the semantics of scripture, in both the Old and New Testaments.

To add to the mix of confusion relating to scripture interpretation, keep in mind that today there are at least thirteen different versions of the Bible. These different versions of the Bible have their own individual literary nuances, which are evident in every Chapter. These different Bibles include, for example, the American Standard Version, New American Standard, New Living Translation, Contemporary English Version, King James Version, New King James Version, Revised Standard Version, New Revised Standard, The Darby Translation, Hebrew Names Version and The Latin Vulgate.

Unfortunately the misguided and inaccurate interpretation and misinterpretation of such powerfully influential writings as the various

Holy Scriptures, such as the Bible and Qu'ran etcetera, will inevitably - specifically for many individuals, and generally for many communities, both nationally and internationally - determine the way Self thinks and feels about Self. And the way Self thinks and feels about others, and in turn, the content of Self's values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours ultimately resulting in the manner in which Self treats Self and Self treats others, and thus the manner in which others treat Self.

The five principle factors for interpretation of scripture include:

(1) The attempt and need to grasp with present day experiences taking into consideration unique cultural contexts, the original meanings of the Hebrew and Greek words in verses written many hundreds and thousands of years ago. And a decision made whether to extrapolate and apply these meanings or not to present day problems, contexts and issues.

(2) The ability to decipher and identify the accuracy of the corresponding meanings of the Hebrew and Greek words when they have been translated into 'equivalent' English words, or the words of another language, is critical in the understanding of Scripture. For example, today we have a natural tendency to read the word "church" as if it referred to the reality we know by that word today. That is, as the prayerful community in a highly structured, organized and institutionalised Religion of a particular belief and faith. Yet, the reality in Peter and Paul's time, when Paul speaks about the word "church," was rather different from its meaning today. In Peter and Paul's era there was the ritualistic and formal Holy Temple of Jerusalem and the followers of the Jewish splinter group 'The Jesus Movement'. This movement identified with the behaviour of people gathering informally to dialogue and discuss their everyday experiences and spiritual beliefs, achievements, future plans and goals, in order to disseminate the phenomenal message of the Messiah.

The list of these 'theological' words interpreted differently today is long and some translators try to avoid the difficulty by using other synonyms. For example, the word "community" would, be used, instead of the word "church". The word "church," in Paul's

time was not a Christian invention, but a common word used in the Greek world at that time with a specific secular meaning. Those people who first heard Paul's letters, read to them, would have been aware that a common secular word was being used with new connotations. Yet today when we hear the word "church", we hear it in its pure contemporary meaning and are probably unaware of its original secular connections.

(3) The need to be aware of the degree of accuracy that the original authors, editors and redactors of Christ's life had in remembering Christ's living reality, and the degree of accuracy in their interpretation of what Jesus really said and did. Furthermore, we need to be aware of the possible inaccuracies subsequent editors may have incurred whilst interpreting original written sources.

(4) The need to be mindful of asking Self the question; is the text which was originally written in the metaphor genre being read by Self as intended, that is, metaphorically rather than literally? And is text that was originally written in the literal genre being read in today's context rather than the context in which it was originally written?

(5) What was deemed, as 'the law' and 'good and right' more than 2,000 years ago in terms of the Old Testament and in some verses of the New Testament, may not be necessarily right or good, appropriate, humane and practical today. Because of the scientific, cultural, ethical and technological changes within society, and the continual development and refinement of beliefs, values and morals through the progression of intellectual, emotional and social evolution, the process of hermeneutics in relation to the interpretation of Scripture is about reinterpreting ancient Scripture within a contemplative, spiritual and contemporary context. This is, reinterpreting literal or metaphorical messages from antiquity into messages that are relevant for today. Christ Himself totally overhauled and redefined many of the ancient scriptures and replaced them with messages that relate to the invocation of unconditional relational love, compassion and reconciliation to be practiced between all peoples. This imperative message from Christ of unconditional relational love, compassion and reconciliation, is by definition, a message that is universal and timeless and can be expressed and performed by individuals

regardless of cultural and religious contexts and which interpretation is immune from the ages and generations including today's 'modernity' and 'contemporary' society.

Here are two more interesting and ambiguous verses that require our special attention to decipher their deeper and metaphorical or literal meaning:

In the gospel of Matthew we read:

"If the miracles performed on you had been performed on Sodom it would be in existence today. On the judgment day God will show more mercy to Sodom than to you,"

(Matthew 11:22-24)

Again in Matthew we read:

"It is harder for a rich man to go to heaven than a camel to fit through the eye of a needle, impossible for man but for God everything is possible."

(Matthew 19:24-26)

At a deeper underlying and metaphorical level of meaning, perhaps the author of these two verses is emphasising the power of the Creator's ability to mystically relate with all peoples through divine unconditional love, no matter whatever their past, present or future personal experiences. Whatever their past, present or future personal situations and circumstances may be.

Lucifer and the King James Version of the Bible

The ease with which Biblical Scripture can be misinterpreted, is exemplified by the historical evolution of biblical literature in relation to the literal mistranslation and transmutation of the word "Lucifer". Most of us would acknowledge that the meaning of the word "Lucifer" relates to and is just another word used for the words Satan, Devil and Prince of Darkness and the meaning these words represent, which themselves, are words, that have also been misrepresented and misinterpreted. However, the word "Lucifer" makes its appearance only in the King James Version of the Old

Testament of the Bible, in the book of Isaiah Chapter 14 Verse 12. If you search the web site, www.biblegateway.com you will find that all the other Bible versions of Isaiah 14:12 use the words, King of Babylonia, or Morning Star, Shining Star, or Day Star, instead of the word "Lucifer".

The King James Version of Isaiah 14:12, reads:

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!
How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!"
(Isaiah 14:12)

A scholar at the library of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati says that in the original Hebrew text, the fourteenth Chapter of Isaiah is not about a fallen angel by name or by reference, who fell to become the ruler of hell, but is about a fallen Babylonian king, who during his lifetime had persecuted the children of Israel. Isaiah then, in the original Hebrew language, is using a word that means a bright light, and metaphorically represents and illustrates the apparent power of the Babylonian king, but a power, which then faded. In the Hebrew text (language), the expression used to describe the Babylonian king before his death is Helal, son of Shahar, which translates to "Day star son of the Dawn."

The word "Lucifer" is a Latin name, which in Roman astronomy was the name given to the morning star that we now call Venus, also from Latin. This 'morning star' appears in the heavens just before dawn, heralding the rising sun. The name "Lucifer" derives from the Latin term 'lucem ferre', bringer or bearer of light.

The scholars who were authorised by King James I to translate the Bible into current English, did not use the original Hebrew texts, but used versions translated from Hebrew into Latin by St. Jerome and called the Latin Vulgate Bible (4th Century). Jerome had translated correctly the Hebrew word for, "Day star, son of the Dawn," as "Lucifer," because in Latin at that time, "Lucifer" was the word used for what we now call the planet Venus, which was/is observed, as a morning star. The word "Lucifer", was not equated with the word Satan until after Jerome's translation, which was then misinterpreted. So, Jerome wasn't in error, but later Christian (and Mormon) translations were in equating "Lucifer" with "Satan". So

over the centuries a metamorphosis (transformation or transmutation) has taken place and the word “Lucifer”, the ‘morning star’, has now become synonymous for a ‘disobedient angel’ that has been cast out of heaven to rule eternally in hell.

Theologians, writers, and poets have taken this misinterpretation of the word “Lucifer” and transformed it into the mythical story and erroneous ‘doctrine’ of ‘The Fall’. So now, the word “Lucifer”, means the same as the misinterpreted meanings of the words Satan, Devil, and Prince of Darkness. Subsequent christian scholars and scribes, writing in the Latin, which was used at that time by the Church, have intentionally, or unintentionally decided for themselves that this story is about a fallen angel. But this creature the “Fallen Angel” is not even mentioned in the original Hebrew text, but nonetheless has ‘conveniently’ been given the name "Lucifer". However, only the King James Version now still uses the word “Lucifer” in the text of Isaiah 14:12.

Other Holy Scriptures and the Qu’ran (Koran)

Importantly, some of these same guiding principles that would allow us to read and interpret the verses of Scripture in the Bible with increased accuracy and clarity would also apply to the readings and interpretation of the writings of other ancient ‘Holy Scriptures’ in existence today. These ‘Holy Scriptures’ have been written with their contextual stories, laws and rules that provide the foundational impetus for the intellectual, behavioural and emotional climate of a believing people that can fertilise the seeds of innate spiritual desires and needs, and the attitudinal climate that incubates and nurtures the ongoing culture, theology and philosophy of a people. These beliefs and behaviors, in turn, continue to drive many of the diverse religions and faiths existing in the world experienced and lived by humans today. And so similar to the influence Christianity has had on the western world so Islam has impacted on Eastern Civilisation over the last 1300 years in relation to the values, beliefs, perceptions, perspectives, laws and policies that have been framed, shaped and driven by Islamic philosophy based on Muhammad and the Koran.

The Qu’ran (Koran) is the holy book of Islam, which was/ is

said to been revealed to Mohammed in 616 AD through an angel called Jibra'el (Gabriel). Mohammed was born in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, and revered as a Middle Eastern Arabic prophet. Muhammad traveled extensively and, is very likely to have been familiar with the city of Jerusalem, as well as both the Old and New Testament writings of the Bible. Indeed, the Aramaic language was widely used between Jerusalem and Saudi Arabia in those times, just as the three wise men (or kings, or magi as they were also known) spoke the same language as Jesus, but came from Babylon (now known as Iraqi) in the East. To put the writing date of the Qu'ran into perspective, the Qu'ran was penned about 400 years after the collation of the writings of the New Testament Gospels and Letters, and many more centuries after the writing of the Old Testament.

The contents of the Qu'ran are said to been given to Muhammad through the revelation of an angel called Jibra'el. The Qu'ran consists of 114 Chapters or Suras, and has striking literary similarities and semantic resemblances to both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, although the Qu'ran is a smaller book. In light of this knowledge, it is perhaps not surprising that Abraham of the Old Testament is the focus of attention in Sura 14 of the Qu'ran. Also, Jesus' mother, Mary (Miriam) of the New Testament is addressed 33 times in the Qu'ran. The Qu'ran also is remarkably comparable to the Bible in that it relies heavily on an emphasis and preoccupation of violence, punishment and hell as a threatening lever for the driving motivational force to instill a particular belief and subsequent reform, conformation and obedience. The Qu'ran comprises of 114 chapters, which within are 97 verses dedicated to the threat of hell and 171 verses dedicated to the potential experience and threat of punishment.

For example in Chapter (Sura) 2 Verse 206, we read:

“And when it is said to him, guard against the punishment of Allah; pride carries him off to sin, therefore hell is sufficient for him; and certainly it is an evil resting place.”

In Sura 3 Verse 12 we read:

“Say to those who disbelieve: You shall be vanquished, and driven together to hell; and evil is the resting-place.”

Sura 3 Verse 77:

“(As for) those who take a small price for the covenant of Allah and their own oaths-- surely they shall have no portion in the hereafter, and Allah will not speak to them, nor will He look upon them on the day of resurrection nor will He purify them, and they shall have a painful chastisement”.

Sura 3 Verse 86:

“How shall Allah guide a people who disbelieved after their believing and (after) they had borne witness that the Apostle was true and clear arguments had come to them; and Allah does not guide...the...unjust...people”.

Sura 3 Verse 90:

“Surely, those who disbelieve after their believing, then increase in unbelief, their repentance shall not be accepted, and these are they that...go...astray”.

Sura 3 Verse 91:

“Surely, those who disbelieve and die while they are unbelievers, the earth full of gold shall not be accepted from one of them, though he should offer to ransom himself with it, these it is who shall have a painful chastisement, and they shall have no helpers”.

Sura 3 Verse 162:

“Is then he who follows the pleasure of Allah like him who has made himself deserving of displeasure from Allah, and his abode is hell; and it is an evil destination”.

Sura 3 Verses 196-197 we read:

“(As for) those who disbelieve, surely neither their wealth nor their children shall avail them in the least against Allah; and these are the inmates of the fire; therein they shall abide. A little enjoyment and they shall have a punishment.”

In Sura 4 Verse 93, we read:

“And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his punishment is hell; he shall abide in it, and Allah will send His wrath on him and curse him and prepare for him a painful chastisement.”

In Sura 4 Verse 121, we read:

“These are they whose abode is hell, and they shall not find any refuge from it.”

In Sura 4 Verse 169:

“Except the path of hell, to abide in it for ever, and this is easy to Allah.”

In Sura 7 Verse 4, we read:

“And how many a town that we destroyed so our punishment came to it by night, or while they slept at midday.”

Sura 7 Verse 41 reads:

“They shall have a bed of hell-fire and from above them coverings of it; and thus do we reward the unjust.”

Sura 8 Verse 50:

“And had you seen when the angels will cause to die those who disbelieve, smiting their faces and their backs, and saying: Taste the punishment of burning.”

Sura 9 Verse 6 reads:

“Allah has promised the hypocritical men and the hypocritical women and the unbelievers the fire of hell to abide therein; it is enough for them; and Allah has cursed them and they shall have lasting punishment.”

In Sura 3 Verse 67 we read:

“Ibrahim (Abraham) was not a Jew, nor a Christian, but he was (an) upright (man), a Muslim, and he was not one of the polytheists”

Sura 3 Verse 85 reads:

“If anyone desires a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him; and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost all spiritual good”.

Sura 5 Verse 51:

“O you who believe! do not take the Jews and the Christians for friends; they are friends of each other; and whoever amongst you

takes them for a friend, then surely he is one of them; surely Allah does not guide the unjust people”.

Sura 5 Verse 72:

“They do blaspheme who say: "Allah is Christ the son of Mary." But said Christ: "O Children of Israel! Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord". Whoever joins other gods with Allah - Allah will forbid him the GARDEN, and the Fire will be his abode”.

Sura 9 Verse 30:

“And the Jews say: Uzair is the son of Allah; and the Christians say: The Messiah is the son of Allah; these are the words of their mouths; they imitate the saying of those who disbelieved before; may Allah destroy them; how they are turned away”!

To the ‘faith’ believing reader, these ‘holy’ scripture verses contain literature that appear to consist of a complement of specific words and statements dictating harsh and vitriolic sentiments that threaten ‘physical’ violence, including the ultimate punishment, eternal hell. The collation and collaboration of these frightening verses, are obviously calculated to inflict the inducement of maximum fear on the believer, enforcing strict adherence and obedience to the rules and laws of these particular religious faiths. These intimidating verses of laws and rules are used to induce the manipulation of specific behaviours by using the leverage of personal fear from the threats of ‘physical’ violence and spiritual damnation.

Indeed, the threat of calculated punishment and hell towards those followers, believers and nonbelievers who do not comply with or are not obedient to the structured framework of ‘spiritual’ regulations required by the particular faiths of these religions. Of course this intimidating and threatening ‘physical’ and spiritual modus operandi to achieve specific and particular behaviours in relation to the compliance and obedience to the dogma and creeds of religions and their ‘spiritual’ leaders occurs in many other beliefs, faiths and religions. But in contradistinction to the above verses, the following writing illustrates a more benign and constructive message.

But again, in stark contrast to the above potentially belligerent, judgemental and counter constructive religious scripture messages, we have a more user-friendly verse that attempts to describe a 'God' that 'is loving' towards believers of different faiths and religions:

Sura 3 Verse 89:

"Except those who repent after that and amend, then surely Allah is...Forgiving...Merciful".

Sura 3 Verse 129:

"And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allah's; He forgives whom He pleases and chastises whom He pleases; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful".

Sura 3 Verse 134 reads:

"Those who spend (benevolently) in ease as well as in straitness, and those who restrain (their) anger and pardon men; and Allah loves the doers of good (to others)"

Sura 2 Verse 62, which reads:

"Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve".

In the next example we have several verses alluding to Mary as being the virgin mother of the Messiah (the anointed one):

Sura 3 Verses 42-47:

"And when the angels said: O Marium! surely Allah has chosen you and purified you and chosen you above the women of the world. When the angels said: O Marium, surely Allah gives you good news with a Word from Him (of one) whose name is the Messiah, Isa son of Marium, worthy of regard in this world and the hereafter and of those who are made near (to Allah). She said: My Lord! When shall there be a son (born) to I me, and man has not touched me? He said: Even so, Allah creates what He pleases; when He has decreed a matter, He only says to it, Be, and it is".

The following verses, with similarity to the Old Testament of the Bible, describe the time it took Allah (God, Creator) to create the Universe:

Sura 7 Verse 54:

“Surely your guardian-Lord is Allah. Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods of time”.

Sura 10 Verse 3:

“Verily your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and the earth in six periods”.

Sura 11 Verse 7:

“He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods”.

These verses are, in general, further evidence of the spiritual literary contradictions of holy scriptures and the need to interpret positively scripture as a whole.

Misinterpretation of such verses can easily turn to weapons creating potential damage by eliciting negative misinformation from the literal interpretation of ‘holy’ and ‘sacred’ writings. These verses clearly indicate an illustration of the incongruent and contradictory nature of the messages conveyed in such scripture and allude to the possession of similarities in relation to other scriptures, including those of the Bible.

We will explore how this seemingly gratuitous extravagant emphasis on violence, punishment and hell in both the Bible and the Qu’ran, and also implicitly advocated through the notions and concepts of ‘Karma’ and ‘Reincarnation’, can never ever be attributed to being the messages and words that come from the mind and will of a Creator. From a creator who is mystical, creative, intelligent, unconditionally loving, compassionate and merciful.

Moreover, to attribute the threat of such potential realities as ‘physical’ and psychological violence, and such spiritual images as eternal punishment and damnation in Hell with Satan, to ‘God’, to the Creator, will, by association, unjustly and unfairly portray ‘God’ the Creator as a vindictive, angry, belligerent and violent Super Natural Being. This would reduce the Super Natural Being to a Creator and ‘God’ who’s quality of mystical relational love with the created is

solely defined in essence by a value that is predicated on the quantity and quality of human 'goodness' and/ or 'badness'. That is in turn, judged and measured by the notion and concept of being 'right' and/ or 'wrong'. Such portrayal of the Creator can only produce in humans a mindset and mentality that incites human-to-human 'physical', psychological and spiritual violence and abuse that ultimately manifests in the real expression of personal prejudice, judgment, fear, disharmony, arrogance, pride and violence.

Nevertheless, the interpretation of Scripture verses, will never be entirely satisfactorily completed. New experiences and challenges at every stage of our generational and human lifecycle of experience will inevitably bring to light new insights and meanings about the value, need and reason for Sacred Scripture in the world. Thus, there will be new and evolving interpretations and meanings in Scripture to grapple with, to internalize and appropriately apply to our experiences as we continue to evolve and grow individually as human beings and collectively as a community, nation and international world.

More Similarities than Differences between Religions

We have discussed many contradictions with religions and differences between religions. There are many more core and intrinsic similarities between all the religions, than there are inherent differences. Personally, I think it is helpful to acknowledge and celebrate the similarities between and within religions because this builds the sense and experience of cohesiveness, which brings humans closer together rather than alienating them and making enemies of them. This religious 'sameness' and inclusiveness will demonstrate our 'brotherhood' and 'sisterhood' for each other as human beings who carry the need for personal goals such as the requirement for self-improvement and immortality of the Self – that is to eternally exist after one's anatomical death. So lets discuss the similarities and differences between religions.

Firstly, in Christian religion, its founder, Jesus Christ, was the only 'person' who claimed to be the Son of God observed and described to have performed many miracles, including raising the anatomical dead back to life again. The 2000 year old 'Catholic

Church' is said to have been the first 'Christian' church with its succeeding denominations of Christian churches splitting from Catholic genesis. The Christian churches or Christian denominations that split from the first church were initiated, administered and ministered by imperfect humans. But all these imperfect humans with negative innate traits to transgress, be selfish, greedy and exploit others may still provide to all humanity, believers or not, Christian or not, contributions to peoples of the world.

The universal contributions to the world, by these groups of 'religious' people, may be described in the following way. Over the months, decades, centuries, and millenniums of time and space, the imperfect - Christian religion - has connected with the perfect - Christ. Christian religions with their association to Christ, have over the past 2000 years, connected the imperfect with perfect. So the Universal Christian Churches have connected in an imperfect way the person they are founded upon and revere - Jesus Christ the Son of God. The Christian churches contribute to communities and society, because although being imperfect, their continued presence and existence in the world connect the experience of all past, present and future humans with the memory of The Christ. But sadly, for many, the memory of Christ and Christ's teachings have been misinterpreted and distorted causing disharmony and bloodshed throughout the ages. But overlaying disharmony and bloodshed, Christian churches have, over the past 2000 years connected in a spiritually memorial and practical fashion, Christ, with people living in the past, present and future, whether conscious or a unaware of this connection. On top of these connections, it must be remembered that Christ was born, died, rose and ascended, for all peoples of the world, past, present and future.

So, through Christ, the 'conscious spiritual infinite' has celestially and transcendently been connected with the 'physical' finite. Christians will proclaim that the eternal, infinite, immortal, unique, independent and sovereign Creator who always was and who always will be, has now been consciously and transcendently connected in a 'spiritual-relational way' with the infinite, immortal, unique, independent and sovereign created entity of the human being. So Christ's historically earthly, and present heavenly presence, now in a spiritually-material fashion, disseminates his perfect and intrinsic essence of compassion, mercy, justice and forgiveness towards the

potentiality of compassion, mercy, justice and forgiveness that human beings will follow and so act towards one another.

Now we must be mindful, without prejudice or favour, without arrogance or pride, the Christian church must take its place alongside and with all religions of the world. Religions, that by definition and practice, all deliver their own brand of particular rituals, beliefs and traditions but which have very similar goals. These are the human goals that anticipate and hope to achieve, as a destination, the personal experience of self-improvement, peace, happiness and immortality. These are goals that unquestionably humans admit and confess to desiring as an innate and intrinsic personal happening. Indeed, these are the experiences that all humans anticipate and desire to occur at anatomical death. That is, that their consciousness, self and personhood, with all that these comprise, will live immortally and infinitely even though their physical body dies. These desires would be generic for most if not all humans no matter race, creed or colour.

Moreover, within the barrow of diverse religions there include multiple denominations of Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims, all with varying forms, degrees and extremities of beliefs etc. These diverse religions, through their own unique experiences, traditions, rituals, faiths and beliefs are commutatively, ultimately directed towards understanding more deeply the idea and reality about the existence and nature of a Supreme Being juxtaposed with living life, and life after death. This is, after anatomical death, when the structure and functions of the atom-energy of the body dies (changes in form, structure and function), the person continues onwards with their consciousness, memory, experiences and awareness, in another place, and in another dimension to the universe as we now know it.

Of course, the various religions of the world use different rituals, traditions, beliefs and ideas to encapsulate the transcendent concept universally imbibed by humans to understand themselves, life, the universe, and life after death. This process of transcendent understanding undertaken is often kick started and propelled along by the ingestion of the material content from the different religions which people fervently belong to. As described, most religions ascribe to similar goals. These are personal universal goals that relate to understanding the complexities and unknowns of immortality and the continued consciousness of Self, including achieving personal improvements in all the aspects that make up the Self. An example of

such personal improvements would include the expression of platonic love, reconciliation and compassion in day-to-day interpersonal communications and interactions with each another.

Most religions have a 'spiritual' modus operandi of personally working through one's challenges in this world and improving Self through discovering and then acknowledging personal strengths and weaknesses and benignly adjusting and changing as required for self-improvement. Most religions adhere to the belief that in the next world we will experience a personal sense of infinite and perfect wellbeing, happiness and satisfaction after reflecting on our actions, thoughts and feelings that we have expressed negatively towards others in life on earth. Reflecting on our responses and actions towards other human's perse, and their feelings and thoughts will define our past interactions with others, and any pain we have caused we will experience allowing us to acknowledge and lament on our behaviour and its consequences. We thus become more aware and conscious of ourselves as unique individual sovereign beings, who have the ability to improve ourselves. And this is a form of spiritual personal purging and 'purification'.

So there are many similarities between the different religions and their ultimate goals. However there are many differences in the ritualistic, ideological, philosophical, and theological aspects and elements that make up the 'machinery' of the different religions.

Although there are the commonalities between religions that describe the definition of most religions perse, this does not mean that religions have not become tainted, or contaminated or institutionalised over time. Just as there are theological and practical distortions and contaminations etc., and extremes, cults and spin offs in the broader 'Christian' church, there are also 'extremist', 'cult' and 'spin offs' in other religions that distort their intrinsic and unique ability to find and experience the essence of truth they so desire. Of course there is absolute Truth and personal 'Truth', both are elusive entities, but personal Truth may be described as being the personal consciousness and awareness that ultimately leads to one's personal understanding of Self, perse, both independently and dependently in relation to the Supreme Being.

Moreover, not only are there many similarities between religions, there are also many diverse and different ways that religious institutions go about achieving their universal goals of self-

improvement and understanding and achieving immortality. For example, many non-Christian religions believe in the process called reincarnation - in all of its different forms – said to achieve personal purification and enlightenment through ‘good works’ and meditation. Followers of different forms of reincarnation believe that purification of the Self is achieved either here on earth, or in the ‘other world’. Reincarnation is believed by some to be a ‘spiritual’ vehicle, that allows a person who anatomically dies, to come back to earth as some kind of plant, animal, or human situated in a ‘better’ or ‘worse’ status, dependant on the quality of their past life in terms of being and doing ‘good’ or ‘bad’.

Most religions that adhere to reincarnation as a form of purification use the concept of ‘karma’ as being the punishment or reward for the ‘good’ or ‘bad’ behaviours, thus being a natural ‘cause and effect’ way or transcendent spiritual machinery being the motivation for improving Self. This is, experiencing a higher or lower level of consciousness. So if one has lead a ‘bad’ previous or present life a person will be punished, and on the other hand, one will be rewarded for living a ‘good’ life. One of the downsides of the belief in karma is that it is open to abuse. That is, it is ok to abuse those who are poor, disabled, or disadvantaged because their punishment is ‘deserved’ and because they have lived a ‘bad’ life in the past or present life. On the other hand, these believers ‘look up’ to those who are healthy, rich and successful as being their rewards for living a ‘good’ life in the previous and present one. We do not have to be rocket scientists to realise that these associations made between a person’s existing status in life and their ‘good’ or ‘bad’ behaviour in the past or present life are not necessarily absolutely connected.

It is ignorant to believe that everything ‘bad’ that happens to a person, can with certainty, be relegated to the ‘bin of punishment’, for a particular ‘set’ or singular ‘bad’ acts. For example, you surely cannot arbitrarily and judgementally relegate to the ‘bin of punishment’ the person who gets terminally ill, or who dies from cancer, or who killed by a drunk driver, or whose business collapses, or who loses their job, or the child who dies from drowning, or run over, or the child who was harmed by their parents. These tragic acts, by themselves, and independently, by their very nature, explain and describe how such tragic events cannot be blamed to have been caused

by an individuals 'bad' behaviour. Sadly, this is the concept, ideology and philosophy that defines the meaning of karma.

Within this belief system of reincarnation, destructive judgements of others are often made justifiable because of the belief in reincarnation that karma drives and dictates to whom or what one comes back to earth as. And one comes back to earth to experience a higher or lower status and consciousness depending on their past or present behaviour being, 'good' or bad'. Karma is the concept within the system of reincarnation that evaluates and dictates when and how you will die, and to what you will return to earth as. If you have transgressed in your past life, it is believed that you will come back to earth with a lower status and consciousness, and if having attained certain level of enlightenment one will return to earth with higher level of status and consciousness. The 'entity of karma' determines whether you will return to earth 'punished', or 'rewarded'. The idea of 'punishment' in Karma is about 'the purification' of the person who has lived a previous 'bad life', and through the 'cleansing' of punishment, becomes a better person.

Other religions have other concepts believed transcendentally designed to achieve the human goals of self-purification and immortality. Christians – rightly or wrongly – believe in the transcendent entities of hell and purgatory that allow Self, the person, to reflect on both their individual level of virtuous contributions whilst living in the world, as well as their degree of indiscretions, and by doing so, more fully attaining awareness of their potential as sovereign, independent and unique beings. Of course, those who believe in a 'hell' would say that you are there to suffer in pain forever. On the other hand some followers of Christianity would describe purgatory as being the spiritual process that invokes the purification and purging of transgressions through personal Self reflection, increased awareness, and as a result of this, Self improvement. And who wouldn't want to be a better person in the presence of the Supreme Being and all our friends, and relatives etc., who have also passed to the 'other side'. For many religions this ability to purify self occurs after anatomical death, as Self remains on the 'other side' rather than travelling back and forth to and from earth as in reincarnation. So the goals of personal purification in terms of becoming a 'better person', and achieving personal immortality of

consciousness, etc., are indeed the central goals that most religions have in common.

Similarities in religions also, sadly, include an appalling record in human rights, ethics and moral violations. It is an abomination to the word of God and Allah, and to sovereign spiritual human beings, that there exists forms of human violations in the name of religion, Allah, and God. These horrific human violations in the name of religious and cultural rituals, include the depraved acts of female circumcision and bashings that exist in many parts of Africa (Somalia), India and Pakistan, etc and often practised in the name of Hinduism and Islam. Human aberrations in the name of religion and culture also include the diabolical acts of 'honour killings' which occurs when females are mercilessly killed by their families for perceived acts of 'dishonouring their families' through 'infidelity', and dowry issues. 'Honour killings' and circumcision are acts driven by religious and cultural rituals normally enforced by male dominance and which also manifest in the general oppression of women throughout the world. Christianity has not been immune from such abominations either.

Abominable acts carried out under the name of religion also include the murderous suicide bombings that we often see used as the weapons of choice in Islam's Jihad. 'Jihad' is the name Muslims use for the potential and real wars Islam wages against any culture and religion in the world that is not Islam. Different religions, cultures and ideologies throughout the world can be viewed as a threat to Islam disseminating their beliefs and practices worldwide. All these religious abominations, are, sadly, current today, but it is hoped that spiritual common-sense and awareness, guided by a conscious spiritual truth from meditation and informed knowledge will prevail throughout the globe, blowing away hate and disharmony and imbibing a new tide of peace, inclusiveness and harmony across humanity.

These flawed distortions and aberrations within religions are often not the original 'criteria' and 'rules' of a belief system or religion that you have decided to belong to. This is, a belief system that has undoubtedly evolved through time and so may have originated with 'contaminations' or evolved with distortions – as does a Chinese whisper. So you experience the current beliefs and ideologies but you may also have the luxury of learning about the

legitimate history of the Faith to that to which you have decided to belong to, thus giving you more informed knowledge and understanding of the origins and evolutions of the religion and belief system you have chosen to belong. But distortions and contaminations of any original 'truths' may have evolved slowly within the different cultures and traditions that encompass a religion. Sometimes the original rules, principles, and criteria forming the basis and framework of a religion or belief system may be the result of the activities of a 'prophet', or charismatic person which activities may include personal pride, opportunism and the need for personal power. They may have also, in part, have been plagiarised from other ancient religions and belief systems.

Because of the inadequacies and imperfections of belief systems – because, by definition, humans are imperfect at remembering and interpreting - ones belief in a particular faith and religion should not be an absolute belief in all that is written and spoken about that particular religion. And definitely, ones beliefs should not hang on the personal feeling that one's belief is perfectly 'right' or 'good'. Or a belief that is about being personally proud, arrogant or having a sense of exclusiveness about their religion with regard to other religions. Because having an attitude that one's religion is the perfect and 'right' religion automatically puts other religions in the position of being 'wrong', evil, and or 'bad'. So ones beliefs should also include celebrating one's awareness that all religions are vehicles for worshipping and understanding Self and Self in relation to the universe and Creator, including understanding more the invisible spiritual intricacies and dynamics of Self and Self's consciousness and awareness. Including acknowledging self's strengths and inevitably any weaknesses that need adjusting, changing and working on in relation to Self towards Self and others in the world.

More about Comparative Religious Beliefs

The word Karma is an ancient word meaning 'for the fruits of action'. In Hinduism, Karma is often about retribution, vengeance, punishment or reward. The pure meaning of Karma simply deals with what is. Karma is an extension of natural universal acts. The affects of karma potentially experienced are also believed to be mitigated by

actions, and are not necessarily fateful. This means that a particular action now, does not bind you to some particular, pre-determined future experiences or reactions; it is not a simple, one-to-one correspondence of reward/ punishment or an 'eye for an eye'. Because Hinduism originated from the culture and tribes of ancient Indian peoples, the meaning of words such as karma have been given interpretations with more menacing and self-serving meanings.

In general, religious and cultural terms the effects of deeds, actively create past, present and future experiences. This makes one responsible for one's own life, and the pain and joy it may bring to others. Of course, this is a limited simplistic concept of life lived because life is lived in very complex ways, often dictated by the environment, family, community and government interventions that may dramatically stifle one's choices.

However, in the religion of Buddhism there is no outside intervention from God as there is with Hinduism. In Buddhism most types of karmas, with good or bad results, will keep one within the wheel of 'samsara'- the cycle of reincarnation – other actions conceived will produce 'seeds' that sprout into the appropriate result that liberates one to nirvana. The idea of karma is related to the personal motivation behind an action. When full enlightenment is achieved, or when one becomes a 'Buddha' one is not influenced or controlled by the notion of reincarnation, but achieves nirvana or a state of perfect wellbeing where reincarnation ceases to be.

Nirvana is a mode of being free from what are called personal defilements of lust, anger, ill will, avarice, greed, jealousy, conceit, hatred, fear, sensual desire, obsession, passion, irritation, distraction, vengeance, depression, anxiety, worry, doubt, restlessness and clinging to the body etc. of which there are different levels and degrees. But meditation through the process of jhana is about auditing such personal defilements through internal investigation, analysing, and experiencing and understanding the true nature of each defilement through applied and directed thought, sustained thought, neutral feeling and one-pointedness achieved through instigating the fixation of the mind on the meditation object to eliminate and reduce the defilements. Higher attainments in the scale of concentration and consciousness include the dimension of the infinity of space, infinity of consciousness, dimension of nothingness and the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.

Over time these meditations eventuate in a state of great inner peace and contentment, and one which is of “the highest happiness”, Enlightenment and Nirvana. That is, not a sense-based happiness but an enduring transcendental happiness of the highest spiritual attainment. It is one of ‘deathlessness’ and calmness attained through Enlightenment. Nirvana is the domain of the True Self. This is, a state constituting the attainment of what is “Eternal, the Self, Bliss, and the Pure”.

Enlightenment dissolves the causes that keep beings forever wandering through realms of desire and form. This concept in terms of Christian beliefs would compare with an individual moving through, after anatomical death, to the cleansing place they call purgatory and in heaven with spiritual bliss. Described simply, depending on one’s degree of virtuous living on earth will determine the level of ‘pain’ experienced through one’s self-reflection when one ‘passes over’. If one has lived a virtuous life this is akin to becoming pure and thus a ‘Buddha’, and so, closer to the experience of enlightenment and the Creator.

But Buddhists believe in the ‘purity’ and contentment of self as the ultimate goal and immortality as being not too far removed from Christian belief. The author believes these entities and elements are inherently interwoven. So as with most religions, different terms describe different paths to self-improvement and immortality, but which paths ultimately all lead to the same destination. Indeed in Hindu passage – Rig Veda 1. 164. 46c, it states, “The truth is one the wise call it by many names”. On the other hand, the Hindu sect of Vaishnava believes that spiritual liberation can only be obtained through submission to God in the form of Vishnu.

Moreover, Buddhism understands karma as an inherent principle of cause and effect manifest from the actions of the individual without the intervention of a Supernatural Being. Most Christian and Western religions understand God dispensing the deserved reward or punishment when Self passes to the “other side”. This reward and punishment concept from God, is, however, becoming obsolete in terms of the new generation of thought where one’s Self reflects on one’s life both in ‘this’ world and after anatomical death resulting in one experiencing the happiness or pain one has produced for others on earth.

This reflective experience then is either more or less congruent or incongruent with the knowledge of Truth of 'God's' unconditional love, and determines one's required degree and need for self-improvement.. Other Christians believe in the earthly cause and effect response – 'what you sow you shall reap' – but which is qualified by the commandments of the behaviours of 'compassion and forgiveness'. This is in addition, as discussed above, to Self reflecting on one's life regarding both transgressive and virtuous behaviours, and learning from any pain and suffering caused or pleasure and respect given to others.

In Christian, Western and Eastern religions the religious and spiritual purpose, destination, and goals are similar where the ultimate desire and goals are to reach a state of perfection and spiritual deathlessness. Immortality and eternity means that after death the individual does not age, does not die, and does not perish. So religions ultimately carry the same goals with different paths and this is no less truer for those belief systems that contain elements of extremism, which by definition, means their path is corrupt and distorted and open to abuse.

But belief in a religion or no religion does not exclude one from the fruits of desire and goals of self-improvement, happiness and immortality. But one gains internal conscious and unconscious knowledge from the information disseminated through people and the media regarding the beliefs, structures and frameworks of different religions.

Indeed, many Hindus venerate scriptures of other religions because it is believed that the 'One Divinity' can reveal itself in infinite ways. Of Hinduism the experience of divinity is the only thing that can give self true peace, happiness and salvation from suffering and ignorance. Many have heard of the pop culture 'Yoga', but Yoga in Hinduism describes Yoga as the different methods to achieve the spiritual goal of life.

For example:

- Bhakti Yoga - is the path of love and devotion to God – Rama or Krishna;
- Karma Yoga - is the path of right action where you do your duty, always, but without attachment;

- Raja Yoga - is the path of meditation where one seeks to gradually gain control over their own thoughts and actions, rather than being controlled by their impulses. They seek self-knowledge through concentration of the mind inward. They seek to perceive whether they have souls, whether life is of 5 minutes or of eternity, and whether there is a God. Thus, meditation is about experiencing God-realisation or the Ultimate truth;
- Jnana Yoga - is the path of knowledge and rational inquiry prescribed for people where reason appeals more than faith. They practice discriminating between things that are impermanent, worldly pleasures and those that are permanent (God and Soul) and renounce unhealthy attachment to things that are impermanent. The different Yoga can be combined, or inevitably directly or indirectly related and associated to each other;
- Raji or Hatha - Yoga - deals with physical exercise, but the concept of Yoga can be interpreted in this narrow sense. Raji and Hatha Yoga are most familiar to westerners.

The religion of Hindu believes reincarnation continues between a pleasant and unpleasant rebirth until over the cause of time a person sufficiently purifies the mind and intellect to attain the goal of life which is to experience the highest truth about God. Reincarnation is called Samsara according to the Vedic texts. This is, being bound to the cycle of repeated birth and death through numerous lifetimes. The soul is immortal, while the body is subject to birth and death. A person desires to be reborn because he/she wants to enjoy worldly pleasures.

Hinduism teaches that worldly pleasures can never bring deep, lasting happiness or peace. Once a person realises their own divine nature, realises that the true self is the immortal soul rather than the body or the ego, all desires for the pleasures of the world vanish. This breaks the cycle of reincarnation and thus one attains the state of Nirvana. Hindu practice seeks to increase a person's awareness of the divinity that is present everywhere and in everything. The more a devotee can think holy thoughts, the sooner he/she can purify his or

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SELF

her mind. Seeing the Supreme Being in firstly in one thing and then
another.

CHAPTER 5

TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN FANTASY

**Did the Creator become Human?
American Astronaut James Erwin
Was Christ's Coming Foretold?
Who Is Jesus of Nazareth?
Is Jesus Christ Also 'God'?
Jesus' Claims of Being the Son of 'God'
Jesus Christ Rising from the Dead
The Logical, Psychological and Philosophical Strategy**

Did the Creator become Human?

We have in part so far discussed information revealed to us by way of Natural Revelation. This is information from human reason and intellect in relation to the deduction of knowledge from the scientific knowledge regarding the entities of the universe. From logical and rational deduction from this information, we may now be increasing further the contemplation of the incredible and amazing features of creation. For those of us that have been cautiously skeptical we may possibly be starting to consider in believing that a Creator may need to exist for life its self to exist. But has this Creator personally revealed Himself to human kind here on this planet through supernatural revelation? Amazingly, the evidence suggests that the answer to this question maybe yes. The Creator has possibly revealed Himself through the incarnation, by becoming a human, by becoming a man, a man called Jesus Christ. Christ is the Greek word for "the anointed one" and Messiah is the Hebrew word for "the anointed one". Based on historical evidence, the person called Jesus of Nazareth really did exist about 2000 years ago. If we can believe that a Creator created the universe then we could believe that this Creator

could also come to Earth in the form of a human or any other form for that matter. If we can cognitively and emotionally accept the historical facts about the possibility of the person Jesus Christ, truly existing. And if we can cognitively and emotionally relate to the notion that a Creator of the universe would find nothing IT willed impossible. Then it would be true to say, that any perceived discrepancy, and the only potential ambiguity and question remaining today, regarding the person Jesus Christ, would be about whether He really was/ is the Son of 'God', that is, the Son of the Creator. So the defining question is whether or not Jesus Christ really is 'God' incarnate". Instead of questioning whether the person Jesus Christ actually did or did not exist.

It is said that Jesus Christ was and still is both fully and completely human, and fully and completely Divine. It is said that the Creator came into this world as a human being, one of us, for humans to see Him experience first-hand, human consciousness of emotions, thoughts and relationships. The Creator came into this world to demonstrate solidarity with the reality and sacredness of human dignity and sovereignty and the human experiences of sadness, happiness, fear, joy, grief and death. The Creator came into this world to show us the power of interpersonal relational love, compassion and reconciliation. He came into 'our' human world to show and inform us of whom He, the Creator, really is, and to make aware and inform us of the potentially destructive nature of human base instincts associated with gratuitous damaging choices made by humans as a result their freewill. He came into this world to declare His desire for an interpersonal relationship. He came into this world to pay the dues for all humans, to pay debts incurred through the human imperfect condition, to fully, and perfectly, justify all peoples in the Divine eyes, heart and soul of the Creator. For all have transgressed and fallen short of the glory of 'God' thereby the necessity of opening up the Creator's kingdom to all the peoples of the world. The Creator came to planet Earth so that humans could experience the resurrection and thus confidence in their personal eternity and immortality.

Secular scholars and historians agree unequivocally on the existence of Jesus Christ of Nazareth nearly 2,000 years ago as an historical figure, a historical fact of those early times. It is contemporary knowledge that Jesus Christ existed as a historical figure, equally as much as it is known other famous historical and

ancient figures existed, including Buddha, Socrates, Plato, Pontius Pilot, Constantine, Augustine and Mohammed, to mention only a few famous and colourful figures from the past. Famous people from the past, whose contributions and influences to the world have been carried down to us through the ages, through history and through the centuries of time.

Secular historical evidence of the existence of Jesus Christ includes; Cornelius Tacitus the Roman Historian who was Governor of Asia Minor in 112AD described the Emperor Nero's persecution of Christians in Rome, "Christus, from whom they got their name had been executed by sentence of the prosecutor Pontius Pilate when Tiberius was Emperor". Dr. Steve Kumar looks at the historical figure of Jesus from another perspective in his book, *Answering the Counterfeit* (1992). The fact is, how could Jesus have even been a great moral teacher or prophet let alone the Son of God if he was lying about the nature of his true being? If the man they called Jesus of Nazareth was wrong on the most pivotal and crucial area of his life he could hardly have been a great moral teacher and prophet and all the writings of the Gospels would be pointless. Indeed, if Jesus Christ wasn't in fact the Son of God as purported by his disciples that he claimed to be, he must have been either a liar or intellectually and/or psychologically 'challenged'. Thus, the entire writings of the New Testament would be fanciful and based on fiction. Furthermore, if the disciples, writers, and authors, of the New Testament had lied, or been misquoted, or mistaken, about what Jesus had said and taught with regard to being the Son of God, then the entire New Testament and the two thousand year old Christian movement, with its billion followers, would be based on nothing but error and folly.

These statements and concepts provide us with a significant and profound intellectual quandary. Is it not true that we must either believe that Jesus of Nazareth had to be a liar or intellectually or psychologically disabled or he was misquoted or his disciples lied about what he said or we must believe that Jesus must have been the Son of God. That is, Jesus Christ did rise from the dead, and was and is God, and God was and is Jesus Christ?

The American Astronaut James Erwin

The American astronaut James Erwin, who was one of the first humans to travel deep into outer space, and set foot on the moon said, on his return to Earth, and after seeing creation from a new perspective. "The greatest event in history was not when man was able to travel deep into outer space and walk on the moon, but when God Himself walked on this Earth." This is a profound statement from one with the opportunity to view the earth and universe objectively from the depths of outer space. We may discover that we too could find that statement difficult to disagree with as we continue to explore the reality of God becoming man through the historical figure Jesus Christ – God incarnate.

Jesus Christ is the name of a man who most people on Earth have heard of. We may have all heard about Jesus Christ even if only through the cursing of His name from someone's mouth and lips, or we have heard of Him through the media, or from friends and relations about the festive celebration of Christmas and Easter.

Was Christ's Coming Foretold?

Interestingly enough it appears that some of the 'prophets' and writers of the Old Testament may have foretold, through the gifts of spiritual insight, the coming of God, the coming of the Messiah in future times through and as a human being, centuries before the actual event of the birth of Jesus Christ.

Verses in the Old Testament that foretold Christ's coming, include Isaiah 53: 1-12:

"Like a sapling he grew up in front of us,
Like a root in arid ground.
Without beauty, without majesty (we saw him),
No looks to attract our eyes;
A thing despised and rejected by men,
A man of sorrows and familiar with suffering,
A man to make people screen their faces;
He was despised and we took no account of him.
And yet ours were the sufferings he bore,
Ours the sorrows he carried.

But we, we thought of him as someone punished,
Struck by God, and brought low.
Yet he was pierced through for our faults,
Crushed for our sins,
On him lies a punishment that brings us peace,
And through his wounds, we are healed.
We had gone astray like sheep,
Each taking his own way,
And Yahweh burdened him,
With the sin of all of us,
Harshly dealt with, he bore it humbly,
He never opened his mouth,
Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter-house,
Like a sheep that is dumb before its Shearer
Never opening its mouth,
By force and by law he was taken,
Would anyone plead his cause?
Yes, he was torn away from the land of the living,
For our faults struck down in death.
They gave him a grave with the wicked,
A tomb with the rich,

Though he had done no wrong
And there had been no perjury in his mouth.
Yahweh has been pleased to crush him with suffering.
If he offers his life in atonement,
He shall see his heirs,
He shall have a long life,
And through Him what Yahweh wishes will be done.
His soul's anguish over
He shall see the light and be content.
By his sufferings shall my servant justify many,
Taking their faults on himself,
Hence, I will grant whole hordes for his tribute,
He shall divide the spoil with the mighty,
For surrendering himself to death,
And letting himself be taken for a sinner,
While he was bearing the faults of many,
And praying all the time for sinners.”

And Isaiah 7: 4 reads:

“The Lord Himself, therefore,
Will give you a sign,
It is this: the maiden is with child,
And will soon give birth to a son whom she will call, Immanuel.”

Isaiah 9: 5-6 says:

“For there is a child born for us,
A son given to us,
And dominion is laid on His shoulders,
And this is the name they give Him,
Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God,
Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace,
Wide is His dominion,
In a peace that has no end.”

Isaiah 42: 1-4 states:

"Here is my servant whom I have chosen my beloved,
The favourite of my soul, I will endow Him with my spirit,
And He will proclaim the true faith to the nations,
He will not brawl or shout,
Nor will anyone hear His voice in the street,
He will not break the crushed seed,
Nor put out the smoldering wick
Till He has led the truth to victory,
In His name the nations will put their hope."

Also including:

Malachi 3; Isaiah 62:11

Zechariah 9:9; Psalms 110:1

Zechariah 11: 12-17; Psalms 2:1-12

Micah 5:2-5; Daniel 9:25

Daniel 7:13; 14: 27

Who Is Jesus of Nazareth?

Who was Jesus Christ? Who is the historical Jesus of Nazareth? Who is the Jesus as the written facts of ancient history would allow us to understand. In a third rate and subjected nation to the Roman Empire, Jesus of Nazareth, later known as Jesus Christ, was born a Judean or Jew of a Jewish virgin peasant woman called Mary. However, over the centuries Jews have acquired a new identity as Jewish people. It is written that Jesus was born in Bethlehem - where King David was born 1000 years earlier - in a stable of hay surrounded by animals, in the territory of Judea, which was then occupied by the Romans. Although some biblical scholars say Jesus was more likely born in Nazareth rather than Bethlehem, which was a creation to fulfill the legacy and lineage of King David. His father was also a Judean and a carpenter called Joseph, who was embarrassed by Mary's pre-marriage illegitimate pregnancy, often called the 'The Immaculate Conception'. Hey, if a supreme intelligent being can create the universe and infuse humans with consciousness, cognition and emotion, and Jesus raised the dead to life, then 'God the Creator/Father' could equally as easily and believably infuse Mary's womb with the 'Son Of God' – No? But Joseph stood by Mary and rather than comply with the law and have her stoned to death, he married her. Jesus' family questioned the legitimacy of His work being that of a Messiah, as He did not outwardly portray the behaviour and characteristics of a King, a messiah who could save the world, and as the oldest son He was not readily available to help support the family which was the custom at that time.

At twelve years of age Jesus preached in the Jewish Temple, which was the focal point for economics, trade, politics and religion. He chastised them for abusing His Father's house. Jesus never had any money or owned any property and He was without formal education never holding any office or position of influence. He never wrote a book and never traveled further than a long walk from his place of birth. He trained as a carpenter and was seen to be a student of Hebrew Scriptures, but also wandered around Jerusalem and Galilee teaching Judean priests and the people about the new laws of God. To disseminate His messages He told intriguing and

sophisticated parables and performed miracles, raising dead people to life. He loved the company of others, but also enjoyed the moments when he preferred to be alone. He enjoyed eating food and drinking, and the fellowship of others, and he wanted other people to enjoy these things to.

He was a friend and advocate of the poor and hungry (Luke 14:12), of the unemployed (Matt 20:9), of the widow and the orphan (Matt 23:4). He knew the cure for human misery, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls" (Matt 11:28). And he knew too that the folk most likely to come to Him and hear His message and find their fullness and satisfaction were those who had nowhere to go and no one to love or care for them, those with an open heart and mind and those without debilitating arrogance and pride. "Blessed are the poor, ye that hunger now, ye that weep now" (Luke 6:20-21). They were 'blessed' because their human condition raised no obstacles between themselves and the kingdom of 'God' and the message of Jesus. But He was 'there' for all peoples both sinner and saint alike.

He performed many miracles of which 37 were recorded in the Bible, from the changing of water into wine at Cana, walking on water, feeding of the 5,000 with a few loaves and fishes, to the raising of Lazarus from the dead (John 11:14-43). Christ was made known to not only the general population, but also to the authorities, through the witnessing and reporting of the miracles performed by him. These miracles included the miracle of the raising of Lazarus back to life and the blatant turning over of the 'money changers' tables in the Temple (people had to pay for 'holy tokens' to enter and pray in the Temple). These activities, along with Jesus' claim of being 'King of the Jews' exposed Him as a significant risk and threat to the status and authority of the Temple's Chief (High) Priest.

"Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied".

(Matthew 27:11; Mark 15:2; Luke 23:5)

At the young age of 33, Jesus was condemned to death by the

High Priest Caphias and the Roman prosecutor Pontius Pilate. He was killed because He was seen as a threat to the traditions and way of life of the elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law (Mark 8:31-33). He was murdered because He was seen as a threat to their culture, their beliefs, and their values. He was killed as if a lamb to the slaughter because He chose to be. He was annihilated because He was believed a threat to the political and religious agenda's, power and practices, and the privileged, comfortable and secure status. He was exterminated because He talked of being a new King, but a king of the Kingdom heaven, and not a king of this world. He was kicked and punched He was scourged and whipped. He was 'crowned' with large thorns. He was verbally insulted and spat upon. He was 'forced' to carry His cross whilst physically incapacitated. His hands and feet nailed to a wooden cross. He had given to Him vinegar to 'quench' His thirst. Then He was speared in His 'side' to prove, through the pouring of water and blood, that the last breath of life was extinguished from Him. He suffered a lonely, humiliating and brutal death at the hands of His enemies.

But He forgave those who remained silent thereby allowing His death, He forgave those who instigated His death, and He forgave those who carried out His death. And three days after His burial in the tomb He rose from the depths of darkness. He rose from the dead. He rose above the shackles of the world's transgressions. He rose above the 'physical' and emotional pain of His suffering. He rose above the emotional, spiritual and intellectual anguish of the world. He rose for all humans. He suffered His death and rose to life as the Creator's payment for the faults and transgressions of all the peoples of the world. He rose above all human imperfections potentially nullifying their effect in relation to their spiritual disparity between the Perfect and the imperfect, between the Creator and the created, between the divine and the human. He suffered death and rose to life opening the way for all people to follow Him in an eternity of intellectual, emotional and spiritual existence.

After His death and resurrection thousands of the followers of Christ were, killed, murdered and martyred for their undying conviction and belief in Christ as the Son of the Creator. The followers of the Jesus Movement murdered without a hint of provocation. They themselves did not commit the murder of non-believers. His miracles and examples, His proclamations and

assertions about being the Son of God, about being the True God, has impressed upon human kind so deeply that today about a third of the world's inhabitants strive to live by his teachings and example.

Indeed, the very fact that a man called Jesus Christ came to live and express Himself on Earth in this meek, humble, fragile and vulnerable manner, while also portraying extraordinary, virtuous, miraculous and divine characteristics must undeniably place its own categorical seal of authenticity on the origins and content of His proclamations, assertions, examples and teachings. If any human being was planning God's entry, via another human being, into this world, seeking to radically change and revolutionize the way participants of the human race identify with themselves and others. They surely would not have planned it, executed it, reported it, and written about it, after the fact, in a way that exhibits such an outward and explicit display of seeming variation and contradiction, simplicity, openness, naivety, insecurity and fragility.

Is Jesus Christ Also 'God'?

Importantly, there are three unique reasons why pure Christianity – without imperfect human intervention - is so very different from all other religions, including Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism. There are three unique reasons why the historical person Jesus Christ can be intellectually and spiritually set apart from all other spiritual and religious leaders of the world, such as Buddha, Vishnu, Mohammed and Confucius. They include, Jesus' Claims to being the Son of 'God', Jesus Christ Rising from the Dead and The Logical, Psychological and Philosophical Strategy. The first reason is because:

Jesus' Claims of Being the Son of God

Jesus Christ's claims to being the Son of 'God' and therefore 'God' Incarnate are claims manifest in the proclamations by the authors of the Gospels in the New Testament of the Bible, and therefore are a major theme:

He was the light of the world

(John 8:12)

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SELF

He was the bread of life	(John 6:35)
He could judge the world	(John 5:25-29)
He was sinless	(John 8:46)
He was the truth	(John 14:6)
He could forgive sins	(Matt 9:1-8)
He could give eternal life	(John 3:16)
He could answer prayer	(John 14:13)
He had all authority	(Matt 28:18)
He was worthy of worship	(Matt 14:33)
He was the object of faith	(John 8:24)
He and the Father were one	(John 10:30)
To believe in Him was to believe in God	(John 12:44; 14:1)
To see Him was to see God	(John 12:45; 14:9)
To receive Him was to receive God	(Mark 9:37)
To know Him was to know God	(John 8:19; 14:7)

And:

Jesus Christ is the unique Son of God.
(John 1:14; 3:16-18)

He is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the
Holy Spirit.
(John 1:1)

He has no beginning or end.
(Revelations 22:13)

He is the eternal God and Creator of all things
(John 1:3; Col. 1: 15,16,17; John 20:28; 1 Timothy. 2:5; 3:16; Phil.
2:6-7; Isaiah. 9:6; John. 10:30; 14:7-9).

He had two natures, one divine and the other human.
(Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1, 23; 5:18, 23; John 8:58; John 12:37-41; 17:5;
20:28; Heb. 1:1-12; 13:8; Rev. 22:13, Isaiah. 7:14; 9:6; Phil. 2:8-11;
Rom. 9:5).

The Bible teaches that there is only one God.
(Ex. 20:2-3; Isaiah. 42:8; 45:5).

Although there is only one God, and there can be only one God, it is believed by some, that God may exist in three forms, indeed He could exist in any type and number of forms He chooses to. He may exist as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

(Matt. 3:16-17; Matt 28:19 John 14:26; 15:26; 1 Cor 12:3-6; 2 Cor. 13:4 Eph. 2:18; Eph 3:1-5, 14-17)

Further antidotal evidence written suggests that Christ was indeed the Creator and therefore different from all other great teachers and prophets revered by humankind:

- “In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.”
(Hebrews 1:1-2)
- “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”
(1 Timothy 2:5)
- “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which, we must be saved.”
(Acts 4:12)
- “Jesus Christ, is the same yesterday, and today, and forever”.
(Hebrews 13:8)
- “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth”.
(John 1:14)
- “Jesus did many other miracles in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name”.
(John 20:30-31)
- “Christ who is God overall, is forever praised”.
(Romans. 9:5)
- “The righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ”.
(2 Peter. 1:1)

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- “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”.
(John 1:1-2)
- “No one has ever seen God, but God the only Son, who is at the Father’s side, has made Him known”.
(John. 1:18)
- “Thomas said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God’”.
(John. 20:28)

Still there is antidotal evidence and overt theme trailing throughout the gospels that the man called Christ was God, and God is Christ, and therefore different from all other great teachers and prophets:

- Only God should be worshipped (Matt. 4:10), yet Jesus Christ accepted worship repeatedly.
(Matthew. 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25 and 28:9-17).
- The Magi fell down and worshipped Him.
(Matthew. 2:11)
- One of the lepers, healed by Jesus, worshipped Him.
(Matthew. 8:2)
- The blind man whom Jesus healed, said to Him, “Lord, I believe”, and He worshipped Him.
(John 9:38)
- Those in the boat worshipped Him.
(Matthew. 14:33)
- After the resurrection, the disciples, when they saw Him, worshipped Him.”
(Matthew. 28:17)
- God the Father commanded all angels to worship Him.
(Hebrews. 1:1-8)

The authors of the Bible also gave Him the highest honour due only to God:

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. By Him, all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him, and for Him. He is before all things, and

in Him, all things hold together. And He is the head of the body, or the church, He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy". For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in Him, and through Him, to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood shed on the cross".
(Colossians 1:15-20)

The second reason why the man Jesus Christ should be considered as set apart from all other teachers and prophets is because of the historically authentic possibility of:

Jesus Christ Rising from the Dead

Some epidemiological and philosophical evidence suggesting that Jesus Christ rose from the dead includes:

1. Centuries before the event of Christ's Resurrection this miracle was foretold in Daniel 12:1-4 as Luke writes:

"This is what is written. The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day."
(Luke 24: 46)

"They will kill Him and after three days he will rise again."
(Mark 9: 31)

2. Christ Himself predicted that He would die and rise to life again:

"When Jesus predicted His death He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that He must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. But when Jesus turned and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter". "Get behind me, Satan!" He said. "You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men".
(Mark 8:31-33; Matthew 16:23)

“On the third day he will rise again.”
(Luke 18: 33)

“He is not here; he has risen. Remember how He told you while He was still with you in Galilee.”
(Luke 24: 6)

“We remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said; after 3 days I will rise again.”
(Matthew 27: 63)

“But after I have risen I will go ahead of you into Galilee”.
(Matthew 26: 32)

3. He could not have risen from the dead if He wasn't ‘God’.

4. If He was ‘God’, He could have risen from the dead.

Three major historical facts support the authenticity of the story of the resurrection: The empty tomb; the appearance of Christ; and The origins of the Jesus Movement and the Christian Faith

1. The empty tomb

The Roman guards saw the empty tomb; the Jews never denied it; and six of Jesus' disciples saw it:

“You are looking for Jesus of Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.”
(Mark 16: 6; Matt 28:1, Luke 24:1-12 and John 20:1-10)

2. The appearance of Christ

The historical facts demonstrate that after His death and resurrection, Jesus was seen, alive, by His believers, by His skeptics, and by His enemies. Importantly, after rising from the dead, Jesus was reported first seen alive by women, by the women who had followed Him everywhere. The gospels report and record Jesus first seen by

Mary, Jesus' mother, by Mary Magdalene, and by the mother of James who was also Mary. Mark 16:1-9 reads, "After he had risen on the first day of the week He first appeared to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons." This is significant in itself. Because these women, these females, who first saw Jesus' empty grave and tomb, were a people living in the Jewish historical culture of the times, which possessed, sadly, patriarchal traditions where women, especially those unmarried, were always the least believed, were always the most vulnerable, were always the worst treated, and were always the least respected.

It is significant that Mary Magdalene was one of the first to see the empty tomb and the first person who Jesus appeared to. This is because of her previous reputation and encounter with Jesus, where it is said that He had cast out seven demons from her. She therefore had a less than reputable standing within the Jewish community. If the story in the New Testament about Jesus Christ's resurrection was fabricated by the disciples, authors and writers, it is highly unlikely and improbable that Judean women, and in particular, Mary Magdalene, would have been officially reported as being the first to have seen this phenomena. This miraculous world-changing event, as is the rising to life from death of the crucified, buried and 'dead' Jesus Christ.

"Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen Him after he had risen".
(Mark 16: 14)

"It is true. The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon whom Jesus called Peter" – Peter meaning "the rock."
(Luke 24: 34) Including: (Matthew 28:9-20; Mark 16:9-20; Luke 24:13-49; John 20:11-31; 21:1-23)

After Christ's death the apostles would have been very afraid of also being persecuted by Caphias, the Chief Priest of the Temple, and by the Roman Soldiers, so it must have been some extraordinary experience that gave them the courage to claim they had seen and talked to the 'risen' Jesus.

“With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all”.
(Acts 4:33)

Through belief in the event and experience of Christ’s resurrection, people need no longer fear their own individual ‘physical’ death. Through belief in the event of the Christ’s resurrection and ascension (John 3:13; 20:17), humans can conceive that life and life’s experiences are not rehearsals to be wasted or abused. They are not rehearsals for another life here on Earth, they are not rehearsals for something else or for something ‘more real’ than this life, but they are intrinsically the real deal. They are real experiences to be celebrated and treated as serious, sacred and joyous. Life and life’s experiences are to be celebrated, the humorous and joyful, and the sad and painful times as opportunities for improved self-awareness of Self, and Self’s strengths and weaknesses for personal challenge and growth, and which experiences will be remembered for eternity. Through belief in the event of the resurrection of Christ, death of the human body (change in structure and functions of atom-energy) can be recognized and valued as the final step, and ultimate transition, of one’s ‘physical’ and spiritual journey of life here on Earth. This is prior to entering the next life, the life of the after-life, the life of the spirit without the ‘physical’.

3. The origins of the Jesus Movement and the Christian Faith

“After his suffering, He gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days”.
(Acts 1:3)

Christianity came into being because the disciples had also been there to see that Jesus had risen from the dead. The resurrection of Christ brought life and courage to the disappointed and disillusioned disciples. It was because of the message "He Is Risen" that the Christian movement spread miraculously across the impenetrable and formidable Roman Empire, continuing to significantly influence human behaviour throughout the world today. For example, the Roman citizen, fanatical Jew, and zealous Christian

persecutor Saul, who was also called Paul, after having personally encountered 'God' through hearing the Voice ,and seeing the Light of the risen Christ. And having being blinded and then having his sight restored, converted to Christianity and traveled to numerous cities sharing Jesus' teachings and the story of the miracle of the resurrection (Acts 9:1-22).

Although the seeds of Christ's reality have been sowed and fertilized we can still observe that the beliefs and practices of organized Christianity and other institutionalized religions has impacted and influenced the world in a distorted and corrupt fashion, causing significant suffering to both followers of Christianity, other faiths and non-followers alike. Humans have, over the centuries, in part through misguided loyalty, arrogance and ignorance institutionalized, hijacked and power played the intrinsic essence of Christ's' sublime spirituality and supreme authority manifest in His teachings, examples, life, death and resurrection. Jesus, a radical and revolutionary divine authority through which God intended to disseminate the essence of His Being of unconditional relational compassion and reconciliation and to provide substantial and unequivocal evidence for the continuation of human immortal life after 'physical' death. For there is no greater sacrifice than to lay down one's life for another; there is no greater miracle than to rise to life from death, and there is no greater source of hope for human immortality than the reality of Christ's resurrection.

"They came out of the tombs and went into the holy city and appeared to many people."

(Matthew 27: 52-54)

As the "Acts of the Apostles" affirms: In about the year AD 30 in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, Peter made a proclamation to the Jewish pilgrims gathered together for the festival:

"Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through Him in your midst ... this Jesus you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. But God raised Him up ... and of that, we are all witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which

you see and hear ... God has made Him both Lord and Christ”.
(Acts 2: 22-34)

Those who heard Him asked what they had to do:
“Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Three thousand were baptised at that time and the church was born.
(Acts 2:37-41)

The third reason why the man called Jesus Christ may be considered to be the Son of God, and therefore set apart from all other teachers and prophets, is because:

The Logical, Psychological and Philosophical Strategy

Think about it. From a logical-psycho-philosophical perspective, the true reality of Christ's life can be broken into two parts. The first part is, the actual reality of Christ, the real experience of Christ, who Christ actually was, and what Christ actually did. The second part, is how Christ was actually perceived by His followers, and how they spoke about Him, related to Him, experienced Him, talked about Him, and wrote about Him. The reality and experience of Christ, and who Christ really was, was not expected, or accepted by the Judeans at that time. Indeed, the Jewish religion is still waiting for the coming of the Messiah. Christ was not expected, but He existed. Christ did not write pages of parables, rules and instructions about how to behave, because His mission involved the people around Him, and all the peoples of the world. His mission involved the experience of interpersonal relations culminating in His death for humankind's imperfections, and in His resurrection for humankind's immortality.

The authors of the gospels could have instigated and espoused individually, or colluded and conspired collectively, the origins and contents of Christ's teachings and parables written in the Gospels, by announcing that they had been received directly from 'God' or God's angel. But the scripture verses and parables of the gospels and letters in the New Testament were written decades after the experience of the reality of the living Christ. The apostles who

knew and followed Christ or people who knew and followed the apostles of Christ wrote the gospels and letters of the New Testament decades after the event of Christ. The gospels were not records of events written verbatim, but are recollections and memories of the events and messages, teachings and examples from Jesus Christ. The gospels were not written down or recorded, in the first one, or two decades after His death. So this was not the power that drove the first followers of Christ. It was the actual experience of Christ's life that drove the early Christians to live life with relational love, reconciliation/ forgiveness and compassion, to teach this and then to write and record this about Him.

So who was the real Christ that is portrayed in the gospels? Is the Christ in the gospels the real Christ? Now, they were expecting a Messiah, but not this particular Messiah, so they could have written any spin about Christ they wanted to, but they did not. The writers of the gospels could have put any spin on Christ's life at that time and it would have been about who and what they were expecting. Or it would have been a story that would influence and compliment their particular agendas in the culture of their time. Indeed, individual's personal experiences and the accuracy of individual's memories may contribute to the fact that there are some significant contradictions within the stories of the gospels. But, you don't ever write and record the life and teachings of an ordinary person, but of a charismatic person, a person who has perhaps performed miracles that only the Creator could perform.

You cannot write about phenomenal events decades after the fact with credibility to influence present and future readers, without there being something extraordinary, without there being something credible, without there being elements of truth to them. You write about someone special, indeed you write about someone special decades after their death, because the person and events were/are extraordinary special. You write about them to the best of your ability, remembering and recording their real life and their teachings from the oral stories told by that special person's disciples and apostles and/or their followers. The real experience of Christ was so dramatic and so powerful at the time, that alone, it was enough to inspire a major shift in many Jew and Gentile's beliefs, and consequently, their behaviours. Indeed, Christ's life created a new form of Judaism, a Judeo-Christian belief and way of life based on His

life and teachings.

If the man they called Jesus Christ, who without a doubt existed 2000 years ago, was a phony. But the writers of the gospels wanted to portray Him as God's messenger and deceive the populace and people of the community that He was the Son of God, the easiest and most convincing way to gain the peoples' trust and support at that time would surely have been to write a spin about the power of His 'physical' might. Through His coercive powers, political might and military savvy. Indeed, sell the idea of Judean superiority, and promote and conspire military rule and victory over the Romans to convince the people that Christ was God. Because this is what the Judeans were expecting. They were expecting a Messiah to be a King in the lineage of King David, to rule and lead the people to political, religious and territorial victory.

These factitious stories would perhaps deceptively convince and sell the idea to the people of not only the content of the message, but also the source of the message. But those people who had not witnessed, or could not remember the real experience of Jesus could only accept such deception, such a factitious spin. This could have been a deceptive fictitious story written many decades and centuries after Christ's death and recorded as a historical fraud. But it could not be a story written while people still remembered Christ. It could not be a fraudulent story of deception to be then, credibly accepted, whilst written only a few years and decades after Christ's death.

Of course Christ the Son of the Creator could have presented Himself in this way, conjure Himself as an instant King and create an army out of thin air to crush a powerful empire if He had willed to. But this was not His way. This was not His message. But He did, indeed, perform equally astounding and astonishing miracles. Yet He did not have the need or desire to write down a single word, or wear a robe and crown, or sit on a throne, except when He forced to do so during His abuse and humiliation, just before His death. He did not need to kill or murder a single person. He didn't need to command a great army, but instead, Christ said He was the Son of God, He said He was the God incarnate, and He performed many miracles that only a Supreme Being could perform. He was eloquent and charismatic, but from a human perspective He willed not to be materially coercive, nor did He will to be militarily or politically savvy. Christ did not

need to be that which was expected of Him, but instead He performed absolute and divine miracles.

The articulation of His message was eloquently divine, inspiring a new way of living in the world, a new way of viewing the world. Christ was divinely intelligent, compassionate and humble. Christ was all these things, but the authors of the early gospels (as opposed to the much later Gnostic gospels), could have been inane enough to spin any story they wished about Christ to propagate their own particular agendas and personal interests. But they didn't because they would have been words without credibility, words without endurance, words without transparency, words without evidence, words without substance, words without truth, words without justice and words without foundation. Indeed they would have been words that could only appeal to human base instincts and needs, human ignorance, and human arrogance.

Regarding what the writers of the gospels said Jesus had said. The authors could write that Jesus said He was 'God', and Jesus could say to the people that He was 'God', and hope everyone else is gullible and crazy enough to believe them. Or they can say and write about the truth, about what Jesus really said and did. That He had performed incredible miracles and said He was God, and back up their claims with their real experience of Christ. From all accounts, from all perspectives and from all results and purpose, Christ did in fact display and execute such supernatural wonders, from the raising of the dead to His own resurrection and ascension. These are miracles that potentially can give much hope to the existence of one's personal immortality. For the event of an eternal afterlife to those who can believe in Christ's resurrection.

We can also explore the legitimacy of Jesus of Nazareth being the Son of God by looking at the gospels from another perspective, by placing our minds inside the minds of the New Testament writers, the witnesses and disciples of Jesus Christ as authors of the New Testament. It is obvious that the writers of the gospels could not have fraudulently fabricated, 'set-up' and conspired an interaction between themselves and 'God' so as to influence a change in their politically oppressive environment, by recording in pen a 'phenomena' of the coming of 'God' to Earth in the guise of a human. Because we can visualise and experience history through the

psychological and intellectual rationale of logic, that this would have been strategically impossible.

The fact that the early Christians were driven solely by the real experience of Christ's life and not by the written word - as the gospels and epistles were non-existent at this time - is verification that Christ's life and relationships with humans preceded any written word. Indeed the early Christian movement began to exist gradually juxtaposition with the written words as they began and continued to be written. The writings of the gospels and letters by the apostles are a fertile and rich source of information about the life and teachings of Jesus, the activities of the apostles, the first Christians and the dawning of the early Christian church. The uniquely creative literary structure of these gospels and letters of the New Testament expose the necessary technical and personal dynamic processes required to drive and promote a legitimate way of life, and belief system followed with universal impact. By all accounts, the sequence of events, the type of events, and the process of events throughout Jesus' life. The birth of the Christian Movement, and the subsequent evangelism culminating in the written words of the gospels, must be considered unequivocal proof justifying serious consideration for a belief in the amazing phenomenon of the life of Jesus, as being authentic and legitimate.

The writers of the gospels probably had no idea what they had written about Christ, would be revered, studied, and followed by millions and millions of people for more than 2000 years. And this is perhaps one of the reasons why they have written what they have written and in the style and context they have written in. These Gospels were written by a people writing about their personal experiences about Christ and Christ's followers and the memories and stories they had of Christ and His followers. The Gospels were written for a particular people, at a particular moment in time, which in retrospective reflection allows these writings to be considered authentic and believable.

Yes, they may have exaggerated and embellished certain events, and they may have not remembered everything with total clarity, but the stories of Christ are unique and special, being an eloquent blend of contradistinction between the ordinary and the extraordinary. And if we were writing the gospels ourselves as deceptive and fraudulent works of literature, recording the life of a person who claimed to be the Son of God, to be used to motivate in a

particular way a certain community. Or engineered to be handed down through the centuries to be read by a future people, surely we wouldn't have written them in the particular, unique and special manner we know them to have been written.

The authors would surely not have written about God's coming in such a superfluously glib and somewhat contradictory and diverse fashion, but would have coordinated and streamlined their writings within and between themselves. But the messages and writings are not streamlined within and between the authors and writers of the four gospels, because perhaps this really was not a fraudulent and fabricated event that was 'set-up' and conspired for self-gratification and benefit, but a real event written by different witnesses, in different times, and from different perspectives. The authoritative collators of the New Testament gospels surely would not have had John's 'left of field' gospel included together with the more consistent gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke's. John's is a gospel written, in comparison to the others, with a different imagery, genre and style. But they did, because perhaps God's message can also be delivered and expressed in a diverse, mystical and lateral literary style through the eloquence of imagery as an alternative perspective reflecting the Creator's message.

If fraud, deceit, conspiracy, collusion and personal agendas were the impetus for the motivation of the writers' writing the gospels then we can perhaps be assured that the authors surely would not have chosen a fragile and vulnerable 'human' baby, an infant, as the representation and personification of 'God's' visit to Earth. They would instead surely have prescribed a Powerful, Majestic and Kingly figurehead as 'God'. Or they would have had themselves receiving God's messages from above. But they didn't prescribe a 'powerful' king as their political and religious saviour, or proclaim their writings were messages from God above, but they wrote about a baby, because perhaps this baby really was the Son of the Creator. Perhaps baby Jesus really was 'God' Incarnate.

The authors surely would not have written the Son of God coming to Earth as a human baby, but surely as a fully-grown adult, but they did, because perhaps the Creator really did come as an infant human being. The authors would surely not have said and recorded that God's Son had come to Earth in human form instead of God coming in a spiritual and Godly form. But they did write that Jesus

said He was the Son of 'God', because perhaps the Creator really did come to Earth as a human being and Jesus really was the Son of 'God'. The authors surely would not have written the Son of God was born into a human family comprising of Mary (the Virgin Mary) and Joseph and with four brothers or cousins, James, Joseph, Simon and Jude (Mark 6:3). Instead have Him existing independently without a father, mother and brothers, but they did, because perhaps the Creator really did want to be born into a human family with parents and siblings as a gesture of solidarity with humanity.

The authors surely would not have written that the Son of God was born in a manger in a stable (although Luke's gospel describes this as a house) with farm animals, but have Him born in a Palace fit for kings, but they did, because perhaps He really was born (from a human perspective) without pomp, ceremony, style and prestige. The authors surely would not have written that the Son of God was the impetus for Herod's diabolical slaughter of the innocent infants in his search for the King of 'kings' who he perceived would derail his own personal status and kingship. Instead surely the authors would have had Him saving the infants, or better still, not have had them killed at all, but they did, because perhaps this whole story is really true and Herod really did kill the innocent infants. And perhaps God really does not interfere with the freedom of human choice, responsibility and decision making, no matter how evil the action may be. And perhaps the Creator does hold the sovereignty of human integrity, responsibility, and personal accountability of freewill as sacred. And perhaps it really was not yet baby Jesus' time to teach or work miracles or perform out of the normal context of the human developmental process.

The authors surely would not have written that the Son of God was born into poverty, but have Him born with riches and wealth, but they did, because perhaps he really was born poor and without earthly and material resources. The authors surely would not have identified Jesus as riding upon a donkey and walking in the dust, but have Him being carried upon a splendid golden throne, winged by angels, but they did, because perhaps he really did live and lead a very poor, humble and simple life. Interestingly, Jesus' donkey ride also fulfilled ancient scripture prophecy alluding to the coming of the Messiah (Zechariah 9:9). The authors would surely not have had the Son of the Creator writing no words of wisdom at all, but instead,

have Him writing all of the gospels. But they didn't, because perhaps Christ Jesus really didn't write anything, but intended His teachings, life and words to be recorded and interpreted through the sovereign determination and experience of human beings – through human personality, spirit, intellect, emotion and freewill – expressed and interpreted through human hands and minds.

The authors surely would not have written that the Son of God had befriended the tax collector and the 'possessed' and promiscuous women, but instead, have them condemned, whilst having Jesus accompanying and fraternizing with the upper class, priests and aristocrats. But they did, because perhaps Jesus really did have a radical and revolutionary mission to fulfil and message to give, and perhaps He really did relate to and connect with everyone, no matter who they were, and no matter how they behaved, or what position in society they held. The authors surely would have had the Son of God 'physically' crushing the oppressive authority of the Romans and their Empire, but they didn't, because perhaps Jesus really was the Creator with a special purpose, with a special message to announce, a message of compassion and charity, to be expressed freely through personal choice.

The authors of the gospels and letters recorded in the New Testament surely would not have had the Son of God's own family, mother, father and brothers, question His credibility and authenticity as the Messiah, as the Creator's Son. Jesus Christ was the Messiah who shocked and upset His Mother and Father when He was 'lost' whilst He was preaching in the Temple. Jesus was the Messiah who they thought would be an earthly King, a king who would crush the Roman Empire, bringing wealth and authority to Judea. But the authors in their writings about Jesus contradicted these expectations about the Son of God, because perhaps Jesus wasn't about bringing instant authority and wealth to humanity, but instead, really did have the Creator's uniquely divine mission to undertake and complete, which was directly opposite to His family's and followers' expectations. The authors of the New Testament surely wouldn't have written that Jesus had contradicted many scripture verses in the Old Testament, but they did, because perhaps Jesus really did contradict these 'Holy Scriptures' and verses, because perhaps they really did contain literary content based on humans' genuine but flawed interpretation of the Divine Will and Desire of the Creator. For

instance, the authors would surely not have written that the Son of God overrode Moses' laws on punishment, such as the stoning to death of the adulterer. But they did, because perhaps Jesus really did overthrow and revise the rules and laws of the Old Testament which advocates the corporal punishment for 'sins', and replaced them with the psychological virtues of relational love, compassion and reconciliation.

The authors surely would not have written that the 'Son of God' was betrayed by His own disciples, but have Him being treated loyally and respectfully and with honour. But they did, because perhaps Jesus' love and trust really was betrayed and slighted by His human friends, by His followers and by His apostles, because by definition of the human condition, all humans are imperfect. For instance, the apostle Peter betrayed Jesus three times by denying any knowledge of Him because of his personal fear of violence. And the authors would surely not have written that Jesus had to rebuke Peter and then have Him calling Peter Satan, but they did, because perhaps Peter was an imperfect human being, whilst Jesus also redefined the meaning of the word Satan/Devil. The authors surely would not have had the Son of God proven to be 'physically' vulnerable manifest by 'physical' beatings and the brutal murder He suffered at the hands of the Romans, but instead have Him overpowering and overthrowing the Romans. But they did, because perhaps the Creator really did intend to be truly human, and thus 'physically' and psychologically vulnerable through the pain and shame of being abused and bashed by human beings. The authors surely would not have had the Son of God suffering 'physical' and psychological abuse by the Romans, elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, but have Him commanding and demanding their respect and loyalty. But they did, because perhaps He really was disrespected, misunderstood, feared and insulted by human beings, and commanding and demanding their respect was not the divine message to be enunciated through the Creator's life on Earth.

The authors of the gospels and letters surely would not have had the Son of God being humiliated, spat upon, bashed, crowned with thorns, speared and nailed to the cross, but instead, have Him rising above this quagmire of abuse in strength and might, slaying his nemesis and exhibiting powers of strength, splendour and majesty. But they did, because perhaps He really was treated worse than an

animal by frightened humans and squashed like an ant because His message was about the inadequacies of human nature, behaviour, faith and belief, expressed through the humanness of His 'physical' death, and through the divinity of His spiritual resurrection. The authors surely would not have had the Son of God slaughtered on the cross, but have Him ruling Judea and the world, with the authority and power of a mighty King. But they did, because perhaps He really was crucified and killed by ordinary men, killed by human beings, to show that He doesn't need to succumb and retaliate to the 'physical' might, power and oppression of base human instincts. But rather, teach by the influence of examples of human-to-human unconditional relational love, compassion and reconciliation, manifest as an outcome of Self's informed consciousness of Self's thoughts and emotions manifest through Self's attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviours manifest through the sovereignty and dignity and of Self's freewill. The authors surely would not have recorded women as being the first to sight Christ's empty tomb, and the risen Christ, but have Him first seen by His male apostles. But they did, because perhaps women really did see Him first having risen from the dead, giving further credibility as to truth of the stories about Christ in the gospels, whilst also emphasising women's equality.

As has been suggested, instead of Christ's disciples and their witnesses having written the gospels, the authors surely would have had Christ as the writer of the Scriptures and verses in the Gospels and New Testament, but they didn't, because perhaps Christ really did will and desire to write nothing. And the authors surely would have had just one writer of the gospels who would then write consistently and without contradiction and variation. But they didn't, because perhaps there really were numerous writers who didn't consciously streamline and coordinate their scripts, because perhaps there really were many valid and sovereign witnesses with varying personal experiences, accounts and perspectives to the life of Jesus Christ. The authors surely would have just written down scripts and messages saying they received them from God above or God's angel, but they didn't, because perhaps they really didn't receive any messages from the transcendent God above, but wrote from their own personal experiences of the teachings, messages and examples of Christ.

The authors and disciples surely would have said that Jesus was the author of the New Testament. But they didn't, because

perhaps Christ really had no intention of writing, but rather, teaching by example, whilst respecting the disciples' and followers' individual, personal and spiritual sovereignty, dignity and independence. By allowing them the intellectual, emotional and spiritual freedom to interpret, perceive and understand the divine meaning of His coming, the divine meaning of His life, and the divine meaning of His resurrection and ascension. The authors of the New Testament surely would have embellished and exaggerated Christ's coming and going in the phenomena of an 'ideal' state of wondrous hype and thunderous glory, without controversy or dilemma. But they didn't, because perhaps they couldn't, because perhaps Christ really didn't come in that way, but instead, came in His own unassuming, unpretentious, unique, loving, gentle, humble, special, but yet divine and revolutionary, radical, sophisticated, complex and mysterious way.

And so the authors wrote and recorded the life and story of a man who lived perhaps more simply and poorly than most. Yet who also performed the most unbelievable miracles, whilst promoting and teaching knowledge about the higher transcendent qualities and characteristics of compassion, charity, reconciliation and relational love. Inspiring humans to choose intellectual, cognitive, emotional and behavioural actions and content of speech that contribute towards the construction of constructive and positive intra-personal and inter-personal relations and communications. The ubiquitous incredulous literary genre and style of the gospels in the New Testament, with their somewhat psychological, paradoxical and incongruent content must lead us to consider that the writers of the gospels about Jesus Christ were either, at best, comedians, or at worst, irrational and crazy. Or that there is indeed an uncanny and divine truth within this seemingly chaotic and diverse, but wonderful and miraculous story, that perhaps only the divine will of the Creator could truly orchestrate. That only the divine will of the Creator could choreography through use of the sovereign, yet imperfect hands and minds of humans.

And we must not forget that throughout the centuries throughout the world, the Creator has perhaps allowed miracles – only those legitimate phenomena that have been scientifically tested and validated as authentic - to occur in different forms and in different parts of the world. Especially the miracle of the stigmata of Padre Pio, 1887-1968, who for fifty years manifest the bleeding and open wounds of Christ, and where upon his death, these wounds completely

vanished. These are perhaps contemporary miracles validating the reality of the event of the crucifixion and resurrection occurring over 2000 years ago, reminding humans of the humility and compassion of Christ, and the potential reality of human immortality. Finally, it would surely have been more credible, more dramatic, and more sensational for readers of the gospels, if the authors had written that Saul who became (Saint) Paul had believed in the risen Christ with an unquestioning and categorical faith without having to first hear and 'see' being visually blinded – for three days - by Christ's words and glory. But the authors wrote that Saul had to see and hear the risen Christ in His spiritual light before he could believe in Him, and thus a spiritual and physical 'see' to believe faith.

As the New Testament Letter testifies:

“But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison. As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” The men travelling with Saul stood speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus”.
(Acts 8: 3; Acts 9: 1-8)

Similarly, it would have been far more credible if the authors of the gospels had Thomas believing in the risen Christ without him first having to see and touch Christ's wounds. But they didn't record in writing, the apostle Thomas having an unquestioning faith in the risen Christ. Because although Thomas personally knew Jesus before His death, Thomas was as sceptical as any person would have been, and did not believe with unfettered faith in the risen Christ, without first having to see with his own eyes, the evidence of Christ's wounds (John 20:26-28). Many of us perhaps can strongly relate to Saul and Thomas's sceptical spiritual/intellectual dilemma regarding the need for concrete evidence before allowing one's self to believe in the possibility of a mighty and wondrous miracle, such as the resurrection of the Christ.

Perhaps it is a spiritually transcendent statement endorsing

this unique, wondrous and incredulous story of the experiences of Jesus Christ who claimed to be the Son of God, that today, about a third of the world's population strive to live by the teachings and examples of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. These people struggle to live in the Spirit of His unconditional and universal charity, hope, reconciliation and compassion. Therefore, it is surely imperative for these people who follow in the footsteps of Christ, that life is lived with an accepting, non-judgmental and non-righteous attitude, both towards Self, and others. This means in practice, respecting with dignity all peoples, including those who call themselves atheist, or those who have no belief, by treating others with compassion, acceptance and dignity as valuable and unique human beings. This accepting, non-judgmental and non-righteous psychological mindset and attitude towards others includes extending to acknowledging other's religions and diverse beliefs in the Creator as valid ways of knowing 'God'. No one can have an absolute monopoly of 'understanding' about the realities of 'God' the Creator. A God, 'that nothing greater can be thought'. This is because the Creator must be, by definition, far too Awesome, far too 'Omnipotent', far too Magnificent, far too Complex, far too 'Benevolent', far too 'Omniscient' and far too '????', for human minds to accurately and comprehensively conceptualise with a clear, absolute and transparent image and definition. Even a fleeting image of the defining realities of such a Being would surely be impossible to be fully expressed in human words, feelings and thoughts which could unequivocally, categorically and transparently describe the absolute true character, nature and essence of such a Supernatural Divine Master as the Creator of the Universe.

It is understandable that humans therefore, can only pigeon hole and imprison the Reality of 'God' in the confines of human intellect and understanding. Authentic and genuine Christians who try and follow the examples of Jesus – the word Christian being a name which meaning has been misinterpreted, because it has been tainted over the centuries by blatant and inadvertent misuse by those in positions of religious authority and power - will respect and celebrate the sovereignty and integrity of human independence and dignity. Manifest in human spiritual diversity and understanding, as displayed through the beliefs of those who make up the many denominations of Christianity, in those who journey the way of the Hindu, in those who

follow the path of Buddha, in their sisters and brothers of Islam, and in the Jewish People from whose roots the Christian tradition arose.

When we as human beings can see through and beyond the psychological obstacles created by human tradition, ritualism, fanaticism, illusion, politics, misinformation and pride. And when we can see through and beyond the psychological obstacles of the human attitude of “having to be right or wrong”, and the human mindset of “being good or bad” within any religion, belief and culture. We can then consciously and advertently gaze into the real, authentic and genuine heart and spirituality of a people who ultimately want to understand, ‘that which nothing greater can be thought’. Christians can acknowledge and respect with dignity a people who have different beliefs, a people who also strive to satisfy their inner intellectual and spiritual thirst and hunger for the absolute truth, for human justice, human immortality, and belief in a Creator or ‘God’. The Creator, a Being that would perhaps be too far removed from that which human thought could conceptualise if not for the existence of Jesus Christ, if indeed we can spiritually, emotionally and intellectually consider Jesus Christ to be the Son of ‘God’.

It could be said, that through the spiritual, emotional and intellectual knowledge and understanding of the life of Jesus, God’s unconditional and universal relational love, compassion, justice and reconciliation can be manifestly expressed in the relational love Self receives when someone cares, values and accepts Self. That the Creator’s unconditional and universal relational love, compassion, reconciliation and justice can be manifestly expressed in the love Self gives to others as defined when Self takes time to understand, value and accept others as unique and special beings. That the Creator’s unconditional and universal relational love, compassion, reconciliation and justice can be manifestly expressed in the love that enables Self to overcome and celebrate the potential barriers and obstacles of intellectual, psychological and spiritual diversity that has the propensity to intellectually, psychologically and spiritually separate human beings from one another.

CHAPTER 6

WHY DID THE CREATOR BECOME HUMAN?

Humans Are Imperfect

The Incarnation

The Conscious Voice of Self

Atheism

Personal Integrity and Choice

Christ's Teachings

The Original Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments Very Relevant but Inadequate

Humans Are Imperfect

We are all aware of at least some of the defects in our personalities, the flaws in our character and the imperfections in our behaviours. We are often aware of the inclination to do less than good, the indiscretions we sometimes chose to perform at times when we offend and hurt others with our offensive attitudes and behaviours, from which results and derives as an outcome, personal and emotional pain and anguish. But our 'sinfulness', in part, is a condition of being human, because we were made both with personal autonomy, intellect and consciousness, with the capacity to act and behave in anyway we choose as well as being made from the process of evolution whereby we inherit some of the characteristics of human origins, this is, the characteristics of primates. But humans sometimes and in other cases often, abuse the high quality constructs of freewill, intellect and autonomy. We only need to look around at the suffering caused to people, by people, from people thinking, feeling, behaving and speaking less than constructively towards others. The Creator knows this suffering caused by people to people, for if He made humans, He must know of human weaknesses and imperfections. And this is an

excellent reason why the Creator may have sent and gave His only Son, Jesus Christ, to the human race by which through His examples and teachings humans are more conscious and made aware of their imperfections and indiscretions that cause Self and others intra-personal and interpersonal suffering and anguish. The Christ may be considered to be the example from the Creator given to humans so that humans may have a credible and observable Supernatural and Transcendent measure or 'yard stick' for human thoughts, feelings, attitudes, behaviours and speech. That human beings may have a divine 'measure' for personal 'goodness', a 'goodness' which function is one of a healthy and wholesome intra-personal and interpersonal relationship with Self and others. The Christ, a transcendent earthly 'vehicle', for humans to potentially come to know and understand, the reality of who and what the Creator is all about.

The Incarnation

If we believe in the possibility of Jesus Christ being the Son of God then we will consider believing that 'God' has offered up to all the people of the world, offered up to everyone in the world, past, present, and future, the ultimate Sacrifice. Christ is the ultimate sacrifice of 'God' Himself as the Due Justice paid for humans' debts manifest in imperfections, faults and transgressions that may have been committed against self, and others. This offering and sacrifice of 'God' to human beings through Jesus Christ, this offering and sacrifice of 'God' the Christ, could ensure the wholesale salvation of all the peoples of the world.

So through Jesus Christ, the God incarnate, it could be considered that God intended to:

* Buy humans' immortality with His personal body, blood, suffering and humility.

* Prove His unconditional mystical relational love and compassion for every single person in the world, past, present and future.

* Say, there is a better way to live life; there is a productive and constructive way to live life, a way to live life that is defined by interpersonal compassion and reconciliation for and between Self and others.

* Say, “Hey, what about a personal relationship, can we be cognitively and emotionally intimate, can the Creator and the created, be friends?”

* Say, it's never too late; it's never too late to be reconciled between Self, others and the Creator, for anything and everything ever committed that's compromised 'good', that's compromised the spiritual integrity, sovereignty and personhood of Self and others. To reconcile for any 'physical' and emotional suffering and pain incurred by Self and experienced by Self and others as a result of Self's indiscretions compromising of the manipulation of base instincts through personal choices.

* Say, “Can I will walk with you, and you with me, through the imperfect valley of tears and anguish; through the mountains of pleasure and smiles; through the weakness of the seas of despair and tribulations”. Through such spiritual inter-relational experiences with the Creator may come strength and satisfaction manifest in personal contentment in having lived life to its fullest potential in relation to compassion and acceptance for Self and others.

Human Beings, who have evolved from animal, primate mammals, are able to choose their behaviour. Humankind, masters of themselves, an independent people, with the gifts of intellect, choice and freewill to do as they see fit. Humans, a people who may choose to embrace, follow and live by the above sentiments of a transcendent human/ 'God' interrelationship, because:

- Through Jesus Christ simultaneously being both 'God' and man, we meet with, relate to, and come to know and understand the Creator as both human and divine. We come to know in part, 'God' The Almighty One, 'God' The Supreme Power and Force, and 'God' the Mystical Relational

Lover of Compassion and Reconciliation. Through Christ we come to know the Creator as a human being, as a person with a body and with human temptations, but also an invisible spirit, with thoughts, feelings, values, attitudes and beliefs. We come to know the Creator who becomes what He created, a real human being with personality, but also as a divine person.

- Through the incarnation, the Creator became man by way of Jesus Christ. And so the infinite has become finite, the intangible has become tangible, the abstract has become concrete, the invisible has become visible, and the reverie (dream) has become reality.
- Through the incarnation, humans become Christ's brothers and sisters; humans become Christ's kin and Christ's relatives. Jesus Himself said this to his disciples after His crucifixion and resurrection.

“Go and tell my brethren”
(Matthew 28:10; John 20:17)

- Through the incarnation, humans have received the ‘new law’ of mystical relational love, compassion and reconciliation. This new decree imploring conducive interpersonal relationships gives independent sovereign human beings made with consciousness, cognition, emotion and personality the informed knowledge to voluntarily choose to respect and honour Self and others. This is the practice of real relational love emanating from personal integrity to voluntarily choose to act with love towards others and Self, and in so doing, respecting and relating with the Creator and the Christ. Loving and accepting Self and others as a free and conscious choice rather than ‘loving’ out of fear of retribution and punishment.

“We love Him because He first loved us”.
(1 John 4:19)

- Through Jesus Christ we receive the law of freedom of love. Freedom of love, because through His mystical love He sets humans free from the world's traditions, rituals, and judicial observances. Through His mystical love He sets humans free from both the ancient and contemporary irrational religious and cultural laws and rituals.
- Through Jesus Christ, we pass from the condition of a servant, "who does not know what the master is doing", to that of a friend, a son, a daughter, and a heir of Christ, who knows what He is doing and wants.
(John 15:15; Jas 1:25 2:12; Rom 8:15)
- Through Jesus Christ, The Word became flesh; the Word became flesh and human to make humans, through complicity, partakers of His divine nature, and partners in His immortality.
(2 Peter 1:4)
- The Son of 'God' became man so that we might realize our full potential as human beings through his examples, becoming improved people spreading kindness, ultimately sharing in eternal immortality.
- The Creator assumed human nature so that He, 'God' made into man, through His teachings and examples will elevate humankind's attitudes and behaviours so that humankind lives life to full potential.
- To redeem humankind, the Creator became man, taught and suffered, thus conveying to man/ woman the Creator's unconditional mystical relational love and compassion in order that man/ woman, should not become obsessed with his/ her own pride and arrogance. Which could potentially procure Self to a life of personal destructiveness, unhappiness, emptiness and hopelessness.
- Through the incarnation the Creator gave humankind proof of His intrinsic unconditional relational love and compassion for

humankind. That through this act of humility He might obtain peoples' motivation to desire to voluntarily choose to relationally love and accept Self and others, and in so doing, others to relationally love and accept Self, and thus also the Creator in which image humans are made.

- Through the authority and humility of the voluntary act of the incarnation – 'God' becoming human - humans can recognize and resolve the power of their transcendent high quality intellectual and emotional constructs and break free from the magnetic base instincts of human pride and arrogance.
- Through the incarnation Christ's sacrifice was totally acceptable to the Creator, because if Christ was/ is the Creator/ 'God' then there is an infinite, absolute and just atonement for all human 'debts'.
- Through the incarnation the suffering Christ through His humanness and solidarity with humankind potentially alleviates the personal frustration humans may experience caused by tension between the maladaptive cognitive, emotional and behavioural characteristics potentially motivated by base human instincts and the constructive intellectual, emotional, and behavioral characteristics potentially motivated by the transcendent spirit.
- Through His life and death, Christ has unequivocally and categorically, won victory over evil. He has paid the ultimate price. He has paid the perfect price for human imperfections and faults. With His life and death He has paid universally for human debts. He has paid the debts for all human indiscretions and transgressions. That is His, 'physical', emotional and, intellectual humiliation and suffering for human/Self's immortality.
- Through His resurrection, He has opened up for all humans the 'gates' of a better place we may choose to call heaven. Through His resurrection, He gives proof of an after-life after

one's 'physical' end (death) on earth. Through His resurrection, He gives hope for human immortality.

The Conscious Voice of Self

It perhaps should be brought to our attention an experience that we all may have known. Yet, is an experience intimate and personal and sometimes uncomfortable, and that is the sense or feeling that somebody is dictating to one from within, and saying, "You should not use this means for that purpose or pursue that particular goal or behaviour." Yes, one of those quiet little voices of the conscience that talks to us within. We may rationalize to Self that something is okay or that it is good, but it doesn't and will not totally silence what we call the voice of spiritual truth within us. It is said that every person born into this world is illuminated and affected in one way or another by the light of spiritual truth within (John 1:9).

We all have this gift of voice, this noise of our conscience and spirit within our being. Through this quiet voice of consciousness, this voice of and within Self, we can make choices and decisions about our actions and behaviours, about our thoughts, emotions, values, attitudes and beliefs. We can choose to, or not to listen to that voice which may be based on the spirit of truth, to that which may be based on goodness, and to that which may be based on fairness and justice. We can choose to, or not to do that which Self's heart and mind believes may be constructive, or that which Self's heart and mind believes is destructive. In most cases, the choices and decisions Self makes and decides to act upon are Self's to make.

But perhaps we can keep in mind the potential spiritual support that might be available:

"Yet in fact He is not far from any of us, since it is in Him that we live and move and exist."
(Acts 17: 28)

But if we constantly resist this internal voice of conscience, this private voice whom some would say is the prompting of Self's Spirit, Self may eventually reach a state where Self chooses to be impervious

to the voice of truth and its promptings and what it is trying to say to Self. The consequences from the decision not to listen but to deny this voice of conscience may include the prospect of eventually becoming immune and numb, incapable of feeling, hearing, and responding to it, choosing to deny its presence. We may therefore eventually become oblivious to what the Creator is trying to convey, we may become oblivious to the promptings of the inner spirit, which drives Self's conscience to seek out that which is good, true and just encapsulated by compassion and reconciliation.

It is not that the Creator has stopped wanting to talk and relate to Self, it is perhaps that Self may find it difficult to connect with the Creator because of past experiences and the potential pride manifest in Self's attributes and integrity of independence and sovereignty. Self may be ignoring the possibility of the Creator's existence, thereby denying Self the opportunity to experience personal and private reflection in relation to Self's relationship with Self and hence Self's relationship with the Creator. It could be said that the invisible door has been slowly closing for such a long time that the door through which the Creator emanates may become rusty and cannot easily be opened without some extra incentive and personally intended application.

Self-absorption as opposed to self-reflection may possibly, through involuntary ignorance or blatant will, become the product of the manifestation of pride and arrogance manifest in indiscrete base acts, which hurt Self, and others. This process may result in living a life of self-centeredness, and gratuitous selfishness, and as a spiritual and psychological consequence, possibly harmful to Self's inner being and others as a product of the aftermath. These particular attitudes may directly cause discriminate and indiscriminate human-to-human pain and suffering. Relief through personal acceptance, compassion and reconciliation may prevail when Self is able to decide to choose to disabuse Self's denial of Self's intrinsic spiritual existence, imbibing the independent and sovereign Self to live life that effectively flows outwards from within as a result of Self consciously 'centering' Self.

The deliberate transformation of Self by choosing to listen within Self's center may act as if it were magic, changing every aspect of one's being, thereby enabling Self to live life in harmony with Self and Self's brothers and sisters in a spirit of compassion, acceptance and reconciliation and thus, in truth, peace, love, joy and happiness.

Atheism

Agnostic is a word defined by an individual's non-belief in a 'God's' existence, because that individual believes that there is not the evidence available to prove in the Creator's existence. But surely if one does not study and read appropriate information then one cannot learn and will never acquire enough information necessary to consider the possibility of 'God's' existence.

The word Atheism is a term often used to describe those who choose not believe in the possibility of a "God," a belief they choose based on the principles generated by their personal attitude and values from the information they have acquired. This stance about not believing in a Creator and labeled as Atheism may be based on misinformation and one being uninformed of all the necessary evidence required by an individual to make such an informed decision, which may otherwise lead one to consider the possibilities of the Creator's existence. This particular mindset and stance may be based on the false perception of one's personal and individual autonomy being exaggerated to the point of believing one is denied and has had extracted, extinguished and nullified one's personal independence and sovereignty by belief in a Creator. Logically speaking, this position of requiring total intellectual and emotional independence is understandable, and indeed, such attributes as consciousness, intellect and emotion can allow individuals to believe in and experience their personal sense of being and uniqueness, which by definition may be a very private and intimate affair.

A Creator of invisible constructs such as consciousness, intellect, emotion and freewill surely respects the integrity and sovereignty of each individual, enabling a person to think and feel, and allowing an individual to possess personality, values and attitudes as characteristics of Self and Self's being and Self being Self. But we are also social beings and require others for comfort and support. And we are beings who are 'physically' and psychologically dependent in some way or another, on creation, including, the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat, for our existence. And we are spiritual beings who can reflect within as we think and feel about how we think and feel.

But inevitably, human bodies of atom-energy are, through

design, order and plan, programmed to 'die' or more accurately, change their structure and functions as we have experienced them. The sacredness of being human involves believing and thinking as one wishes without the burden of the Creator's coercive influence or threat of wrath. Indeed, humans are entitled to expect their individual rights but as adults are also accountable and responsible for their actions and the subsequent consequences associated with these actions. But perhaps all peoples need to be cognizant of having an open mind and heart to listen to and contemplate fully all the information in relation to such transcendent possibilities. Some people may harbour a personal resentment against the possibility of a Creator formed from the idea of such an incredible Power, Force or Spirit necessary to create humankind and the universe. This stance may also provide the motivation for one to seek out the available evidence for the existence of such a Creator and 'God'. To acknowledge and consider the possibility of the existence of a Creator is in no way to oppose or deny the sovereignty and independence of Self or human kind. Since the essence of human dignity is grounded in and brought to perfection in a loving Creator who loves unconditionally and universally, and who, by nature, is essentially intrinsically and substantially all 'good' and perfect. A Creator, who indeed, may exist and love regardless of whether we like it or not, and who may exist and love whether we believe or not.

Personal Integrity and Choice

The ability gifted to humans to reason and choose, and therefore, to be able to make decisions, and to act freely in a certain way, or to not act in a certain way in the things they do, think and say, has the potential to shape the development of human character and personality. And, therefore, the personal experiences of Self and others for better or worse. This freedom to act and to do so is a force for our personal growth and maturity in dignity, truth, love, forgiveness and goodness and hence a force shaping our personal well-being. The spiritual and personal growth we can achieve is ultimately perfected and magnified when enacted and expressed in the direction of 'God', who is the essence of all love and truth.

Humans are social creatures made to enjoy community with our

fellows, and we are spiritual creatures made to enjoy community with God. Until the day comes when we can enjoy community in fullness with our fellows and enjoy community with 'God', our experience of the world may not be fully complete, or fully satisfied, but only partial. As humans we were made to "long" for real justice, real truth and real love. Self cannot but advocate Self searching for the true meaning of Self's life - which discovery will be satisfying - if Self is not in any personal spiritual, intellectual and emotional denial of the sacredness of Self's human sovereignty.

Our desires can be boundless as we yearn for the love and truth that can fill the feelings we sometimes may experience of the emptiness and limitless wanting of our hearts and minds. These feelings we may have experienced, that we may have felt about our human limitations and human brokenness are perhaps the symptoms of the need and desire in our hearts and lives for a sense of relationship with others and the absolute 'God'. We have within our being a taste for the infinitive, a taste for divinity, a taste for justice, a taste for mercy, a taste for love and a taste for compassion, which when filled will go towards satisfying our need for personal wholeness.

The philosopher and theologian Augustine (4th century AD) eloquently described this phenomenon when he said:
"We are restless beings who cannot rest except in the one who made us".

However, this reflection, although potentially true, may seem slightly simplistic as it may ignore the sovereignty, integrity uniqueness and the potential sacredness of personal freewill and independence created within the being of each human. Also, by adding to the mix the true and wonderful relationships we can experience with others may be our console and highlight the sacred experience of relating to the spirit of another person, and in turn, connecting with the Creator through the spirit of the other as made in the image of the Creator. The faculty of Self's free will and choice to choose a particular action has the potential to be a very powerful force. These faculties give Self the capability to both love and/ or hate and destroy other human beings. We only need to look on the state of the world to realise this with wholesale emotional

‘psychological’ devastation and ‘physical’ annihilation from acts causing human-to-human suffering through people’s choices to perpetrate acts of war, greed, hatred, prejudice, cruelty, and murder etc. These are some of the atrocities and abominations perpetrated by human beings against their brothers and sisters.

Christ’s Teachings

So what are the possible answers to rectifying and healing the irrational and painful devastation humans have created and perpetrated for and against one another. We humans need information and resources, we need to be educated, we need to be fully informed about our spiritual heritage our spiritual makeup and how our actions, thoughts and feelings can have catastrophic consequences for Self, and others. In this way, through education, it is hoped that we can make measured and considered decisions and choices based on all the relevant material and facts so as to best behave in a way that is in keeping with the master blue print of our inherent spirit and essence and ultimately, that for which we were intended and made for.

The application of the above principles and concepts undoubtedly incorporate and intertwine all the spiritual and psychological areas of our personal lives and the personal lives of others. Such a ‘God’ knows the importance of human knowledge about these facts, of course, and to this end Jesus Christ, His examples and His teachings, are the resulting outcome. These examples and teachings exemplified and espoused by Jesus Christ, are the principles and values expressed as a main theme throughout the New Testament, but also based on the refinement and re-development of the original Ten Commandments in the Old Testament. So as a measure against destroying Self and each other, and as a guide to real truth, real love, real mercy, real justice and real compassion, improving on, reflecting on, and practicing living life with unconditional love, as is described and expressed within the messages, teachings and letters witnessed throughout the New Testament, can be behaviour aspired to.

The Original Ten Commandments

The historical biblical Ten Commandments written in the bible

said to have been given to Moses from 'God' on Mount Sinai were useful behavioural and moral guidelines and rules for the people of the time, who did not have any 'divine' code to live by. And which without question were and are still considered to be good morals and rules for personal guidance promoting better behaviour and living for humans.

The Ten Commandments read:

1. You shall have no false gods except me.
2. You shall not bow down to or serve any carved image or any likeness of anything in heaven or on earth.
3. You shall not utter the name of Yahweh your God or misuse it.
4. Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.
5. Honour your father and your mother.
6. You shall not kill, maim or injure.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.
10. You shall not covet your neighbours wife, husband or anything that is his.

These commandments are in the following verses of both Testaments. (Matthew 5:20-48; 19:16-22; Mark 10:1-31; Exodus 20: 1-21; Deuteronomy 5: 1-22)

The Ten Commandments Very Relevant but Inadequate

However, some would say and commonsense would dictate that these ancient moral rules, although generally excellent guidelines to live by, if read and interpreted literally with absolute faith, will be deemed today to be inevitably inflexible, narrow and flawed in their specificity. If these commandments are interpreted literally with little room for movement rather than being interpreted with room for interpretational nuances, like the inflexible analogy 'of embracing the concrete inflexible colours of black and white' rather than the opposing analogy, 'embracing the shades of colours of all the colours of the rainbow', then problems of scripture interpretation will

undoubtedly decrease. Dare it be also said, that these ancient 'imperative' moral rules and laws are of course very relevant today underpinning moral behaviour, but inadequate as being the perfect spiritual guidelines and boundaries safeguarding against the manifold complex transgressions committed by Self against Self's neighbour that we too often see and experience in today's world.

Furthermore, these prohibited activities prescribed in the Ten Commandments are in many circumstances considered too narrow for many situations in many different countries today, and therefore, are behaviours that are possibly even justifiable and legitimate as being the lesser of two evils in some circumstances. For instance, some parents, sadly, abuse their children and so the commandment to do good and not sin, 'to honour your mother and father,' could not only exacerbate further abuse, but indeed destroy 'God's' credibility in the eyes of those who are and have been harmed. In many countries, citizens are dying from starvation, or killed and murdered by militia and supporters of dictators and tyrants. And so, for people in these cultures, when it involves the taking of another's' life for self-preservation and self-defense, or stealing food for survival against starvation, we cannot surely and automatically say, "you have stolen and so have committed a grave sin" or, "you have killed someone and therefore committed a mortal sin". So it could be justifiable to break Moses' commandments and laws under certain circumstances.

These laws show how an absolute faith and belief in Sacred Scripture and the absolute unwavering compliance of these rules may inevitably lead to further 'physical' and psychological harm, compromising psycho-spiritual health, and ultimately, the murderous killing of humans. Only the Creator knows the full and total circumstances of any one person's situation, who might perform certain behaviours, and so only this Supreme Being can judge such a person's behaviour absolutely. It could be suggested that to amend the anomalies of the commandments in the Old Testament, God in His infinite Wisdom, through Jesus Christ, became the architect, author and example of the new commandment, the new law of the world, the new law of love. In the next chapter, we will investigate the meaning of this new law of the 'Creator', this new law of love.

CHAPTER 7

THE NEW COMMANDMENT OF LOVE

The New Law of Relational Love
Live Life with Relational Love for Self and Others
Judging and Self-righteousness
Philosophy of Love

The New Law of Relational Love

Let us again front the reality of life and death. Living life as a human would mean nothing in the end if, when all is done and finished, life has been lived without love for Self and others. If life is lived without the experience of value, respect, compassion and acceptance, etc., for Self and others, life itself may be deemed to be experienced as worthless, and in reality, wasted. There is nothing more important in the world, in the universe, than the experience of human love, charity and compassion and the subsequent enduring health of spiritual and psychological well-being that flows from the 'relational love' experience. It is a universal truth that these attributes and virtues of the higher transcendent qualities of relational charity, reconciliation and compassion, can provide personal satisfaction in terms of meaning, vision and hope to Self's life and existence.

The importance of the value of love is endorsed and verified when Jesus Christ summarised, overhauled and redefined the above historic Ten Commandments and rules of the Old Testament, into two major and imperative concepts. The term 'concept' is used here, firstly because the word 'commandment' encourages the notion of 'rightness' and 'wrongness', and this could never have been the true intention. Real love is about freedom and choice. Real love is intrinsically unconditional and is predicated on the essence of Life and Creation itself, and not on any notion of 'rightness' or 'wrongness'. The notion of being 'right' and therefore not 'wrong' creates a

psychological and spiritual polarization, which has the propensity to perpetuate attitudinal psychological compartments within Self and others which are labeled by a particular belief, as 'good' and/or 'bad'. This can propel an inner drive in Self for goodness and perfection, which becomes distorted because it becomes a need for goodness and perfection at any cost, and ultimately, necessitates the elimination of all that is considered and perceived as bad and imperfect. This inner need to do and be good, perfect and right at all costs, necessitates the desire to eliminate badness and imperfections in others, which in turn, risks personal thoughts, feelings, values, attitudes and behaviours that can be obsessive, compulsive and destructive such as thoughts, feelings, values, attitudes, beliefs and acts that include discrimination, aggression and hatred. This mindset and behaviour-set inevitably destroys the ability for one to experience and practice true love, which by definition, is not based on right or wrong, pride or arrogance, but on understanding, compassion and unconditional love.

The attitude of needing to 'be right' is dangerous one as it comes with exacerbating consequences. If we have a need to 'be right' in terms of a spiritual and religious context, it is because we believe that only if we are 'right' are we then good enough to live eternally with God. And so our belief systems, our religion, has to be the 'right one', and everyone else's therefore must be inherently bad and/or wrong. These destructive 'true' and 'right' belief systems are then compounded and intensified by thoughts of exclusiveness and thus quickly develop into attitudes, feelings and behaviours that are characterized by hate, fanaticism, fear and anger, which are the antithesis and antipathy of compassion, acceptance and unconditional love. Secondly, the meaning of the word 'concept' in the statement 'the concept of love' gives the connotation of love being a choice or option, and so ultimately, an attitude, belief and behaviour that no one can ever be forced into or coerced by. Because the act of love is indeed not love if one is threatened by anyone in anyway, to love.

To love is a choice. To love is an option. If the act of love originated in any other way other than by virtue of choice or option, then love would essentially mean nothing, and mean anything else but love. Conscious emotions, cognitions and behaviours to love provide the essence and ingredients of the love that is transmitted by the 'lover' and received by the loved. This experience of love can become the most powerful spiritual energy in the universe. This

energy of love experienced between peoples, is never forgotten, but always remembered. It never disappears, but always exists, in minds and hearts and has the spiritual characteristics of transcending all time, all places and all spaces. These new and overriding commandments (concepts) of love for the Creator, and love for Self, and others, from Christ, undoubtedly may resonate as an inner song within the innate spirit, and in fact, and in principle, mirror each other. Because the image of the Creator is in all of us, and because, it has been said, whatever we do or say to others' we do and say it to the Creator. For we are all made from and by the Creator so the Creator is in all. These commandments read, firstly:

1. "First, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind and with all your strength."
(Matthew 22:37)

This is the first of the two great commandments given to people from God through Jesus Christ. This is a commandment to love the Creator. But we can only really love the Creator if we know what the Creator stands for, and we can only really love the Creator if we understand that the Creator has first loved us. God has first loved us, firstly, through the creation of creation and human existence and immortality, and secondly, through the Creator's Son's birth, life, death and resurrection. Our experience of the Creator's love may be direct. That is, through belief in the knowledge of creation, and belief in the knowledge of the Creator's Son's birth, life, death and resurrection, or indirect, that is, through the loving relationships we may have experienced from others who reflect the Creator's love and who appreciate and accept our uniqueness, experiencing the Creator's image and likeness within us.

It behooves the author to explain that this commandment (concept) to love the Creator must be an act of free choice made out of personal and intimate knowledge and understanding. Just as the Creator respects the sacredness and dignity of human integrity and sovereignty through the gifts of consciousness, free-will and personal and private thoughts and emotions, so knowing and loving the Creator needs to be an act of genuine choice made out of a personal and intimate spiritual knowledge and understanding. This does not entitle anyone to be condescending or judgmental towards those who choose

not to know the Creator. Relating with and knowing the Creator is a uniquely personal and intimate experience between Self and The Other. A relationship formed by intimately personal experiences, awareness and understanding.

Secondly:

2. "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."
(Matthew 22:39)

This is such a powerful commandment or concept and must be considered a wonderfully constructive component of the new law of relational love and compassion. This commandment states and emphatically requires all of us to love others as we love Self, to do unto others, as we would have them do unto us. This commandment assumes therefore that we need to love Self in such a 'good enough' way – good enough way, for no one is perfect - that we are able to also love others in an equally 'good enough' way. This commandment therefore requires us to love Self so that we can, in turn, love others, thus love others as Self loves Self.

This commandment, which encourages Self to love others as Self loves Self, implies that if Self doesn't love Self 'well enough' - because Self needs to love others as Self loves Self - then Self won't love others 'well enough'. Indeed, we could say that Self is required to love others as Self loves Self, and thus Self, should love Self so that Self can love others. And when Self loves Self with the psychological characteristics of a good sense of self-worth, self-identity and self-esteem, Self would also want others to love Self with the same quality of love. When Self loves, accepts and respects Self, Self would also appreciate others to treat Self with this same respect, acceptance and dignity. So, this commandment asks Self to treat Self with love, respect and acceptance, so that Self can, in turn, treat others with the same attitude of respect, love, acceptance and dignity.

So Self is asked to love others as Self loves Self, and so the more Self loves Self, the more Self is able to love others, so the more others can then love themselves, and in turn, love, respect and accept others. The more Self loves Self, and the more others love Self, the more Self would want to love Self and others. Consistent psychological research has proven this human behavioural phenomenon to be credible. This may be explained by Self needing to

realistically and genuinely love Self before Self can realistically and genuinely love others. Self cannot realistically and genuinely love another whilst hating and/or not loving Self. Self might think they can love others and not love Self but this would be a distortion of the true definition of love. This is because the subjective and perceived degree and depth, quantity and quality - described as characteristics - of the love Self has for Self, whether experienced and expressed implicitly and/or explicitly, definitively defines for Self what love is per se. Therefore, the characteristics that comprise the definition of love Self has for Self are the only characteristics available to Self for Self to love others by.

How can Self, love others if Self does not love, accept and respect Self first? Indeed, if Self dislikes Self, Self will consequently dislike others, disliking others as Self dislikes Self. If Self dislikes and can't love, accept or respect Self, Self will not really expect others to treat Self with love, acceptance and respect, neither will Self be inclined to treat others with love, acceptance and respect that Self is unable to experience from Self or others. If Self cannot love, accept and respect Self with Self's own imperfections how can Self then navigate a 360 degree turn and love, accept and respect others with all their imperfections? Would it not be psychologically and practically impossible?

The power of the behaviour and act of loving and accepting Self is based on psychological rationale that to love, respect and accept Self with all of Self's own personal limitations, weaknesses and imperfections will in turn allow Self permission to love, respect and accept others with all their personal limitations, weaknesses and imperfections. If Self cannot accept Self's imperfections, weaknesses and limitations, it will be impossible to accept the limitations, weaknesses and imperfections of others. In addition to knowing the rationale of the cause and effects of the characteristics of loving or not loving, respect and acceptance for Self and others is also the notion that if Self loves and accepts Self with all of Self's personal limitations, weaknesses, and imperfections Self possesses, then Self can become positively motivated toward change. This is, opposed to not being motivated at making the desired and/or necessary changes to improve Self's personal limitations, weaknesses, and imperfections. If Self cannot love and accept Self with all Self's imperfections, weaknesses and limitations, Self will find it almost

impossible to muster the psychological energy and strength required for the personal motivation to materially improve on Self's imperfections, weaknesses and limitations. So to improve the love and acceptance for Self and others, Self needs first, to love Self with all of Self's imperfections, weaknesses and limitations.

This new divine decree or concept or advice regarding relational love can be defined as putting into practice through self's constructs of cognition, emotion and behaviour the acts of compassion and reconciliation for Self and others. So this divine 'advice' states that we need to love, forgive and accept Self first so that we are able to move towards the process of loving, accepting and forgiving others. Importantly however, this law does not state that we have to like everyone, everywhere, and then have them live on our doorstep, but rather, to harbour and center within Self, a sense of value, respect, acceptance and peace towards Self, so that Self may sense the same value, respect, acceptance and peace towards others. However, if we can't forgive others because of perhaps the enormous abuse others may have subjected us to, and perpetrated upon us, whether it be in the present and/or past, we can instead, try and forgive Self for not being able to forgive others. For whether the truth is 'good' or 'bad', Self's personal truth will set Self, free. This sense of personal and dignified freedom may possibly eventually allow Self the forgiveness of others for Self's personal sense of closure.

This attitude of intra-personal forgiveness and acceptance for Self will help facilitate the stemming of bitterness towards Self, and in turn, towards others, whilst encouraging spiritual and psychological healing within, that will also enhance Self's ability to heal and grieve at the loss of personal justice and dignity. This may in turn prohibit any feelings of shame and guilt brought about and by any acts of intentional abuse and destructiveness towards Self by others. So Self needs to give Self the dignity Self deserves under particular circumstances and forgive Self for not being ready, able or having the capacity and resources within, to forgive others. These psychological mindsets may help Self to make the necessary choices needed to forgive others and thus take back Self's personal sense of control and power that has been taken. In turn, this personal action of forgiveness to Self and others will allow Self to move on with Self's life, without the repercussions of becoming psychologically disempowered, disenfranchised and maligned, with the possibility of carrying the

acquired and compounding painful experiences into new relationships, events and situations. This will allow the spirit of goodwill and peace to flow within and through Self, and allow Self to come to accept any offending perpetrator as being spiritually and/or psychologically sick/unwell. It will also allow Self to move on with Self's life, allowing the possibility of Self to increase the love, respect, acceptance and dignity for Self, so that Self can continue to treat others constructively as Self treats Self.

This concept or commandment, to love, is perhaps the most important behaviour for people to embrace and live their lives by. Upon this law of love for Self and others, shall, by its intrinsic definition, hinge and underpin the consciousness of thoughts, emotions, values, attitudes, beliefs and speech and behaviours towards Self and others.

As the authors of these scriptures prudently reflects:

“On these two commandments should hang all future spiritual laws and the agenda and directives of the prophets.”

(Matthew 22:37-40; Romans 12:9-21; 1 Corinthians)

Live Life with Relational Love for Self and Others

This new law of Mystical Relational Love is described, emphasised and confirmed, in ‘The Letter to Romans’, which reads:

“If you love your fellow then you have carried out your obligations. All the commandments: You shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal, you shall not covet, and so on, are summed up in this single command: You must love your neighbour as yourself. Love is the one thing that cannot hurt your neighbour; that is why it is the answer to every one of the commandments”.

(Romans 13:8-10)

Jesus also says in John's Gospel:

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you: abide in my love”.

(John 15:9-12)

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you”.

(John 13:34)

So we are to behave in a certain way, in a way that does not hurt the inner spirit of feelings and thoughts of others. But as we have discussed above, this love must go further, for to love others as ourselves, we first need to love Self, so that Self may have the psychological and spiritual depth and strength to love others. So the more we love Self the more we will be able to, and be inclined to love others, thus living the Creator’s new law of love. By living life in and with an attitude of love, respect and acceptance, Self will also learn to experience self-acceptance and self-respect, self-love and self-forgiveness. Self will experience Self as a unique and special Being with the attributes of personal freewill, independence, sovereignty and dignity. Self also needs to be gentle on Self, particularly in the areas of self-judgment and self-incrimination, whilst restraining Self’s temptations for feelings of personal pride, arrogance and self-righteousness.

Through actively living life in the way of relational love for Self and others, Self will be enriched through the reciprocation of this intra-love of self-acceptance and kindness for Self, because Self can then give this acceptance and kindness to others, and in return, others will give acceptance and kindness to Self. Self’s and others’ personal happiness and sense of peace, will be initiated and sustained through relational love, charity and compassion. From this interpersonal relational love of charity and compassion comes the warm inner psychological sense, cognition and feeling of spiritual well-being for Self and other Self’s which could be considered to be the Creator’s ultimate intention for all peoples.

The Apostle Paul has provided an eloquent and incomparable depiction of charity in his letter to the Corinthians:

“If I have all the eloquence of men or of angels, but speak without love, I am simply a gong booming or a cymbal clashing. If I have the gift of prophecy, understanding all the mysteries there are, and knowing everything, and if I have faith in all its fullness, to move mountains, but without love, then I am nothing at all. If I give away,

all that I possess, piece by piece, and if I even let them take my body to burn it, but am without love, it will do me no good whatever. Love is always patient and kind; it is never jealous; love is never boastful or conceited; it is never rude or selfish; it does not take offence, and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people's sins but delights in the truth; it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love".

(1 Corinthians 13:1-13)

Incidentally, the above passage of verses is a good example of the diversity of language nuances used experienced in Bibles of different denominations. The different Bibles use slightly different words to describe and convey what Paul had said in 1 Corinthians 13:1-13.

Christ died out of love for us, while we were still "enemies." Jesus asks us to love as He does, to make ourselves the neighbour of those farthest away, to love the most vulnerable, as if they are Christ, Himself (Matthew 5:44; 25:40, 45 and Mark 9:37). And so, the duty of making oneself a neighbour to others in active service becomes even more crucial when it involves the disadvantaged, the vulnerable, the lonely and the weak, in whatever area and capacity this may manifest.

"As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me."

(Matthew 25:31-46 and Mark 12:28-34)

The Creator of the universe has been termed as being akin to the analogy of both a 'Father' and 'Mother' to all peoples. But this description of the Creator is perhaps inaccurate, condescending and superficial, 'pigeon holing' and genderising that which nothing greater can be thought. Human fathers and mothers are by definition imperfect but have been created in the Creator's image and therefore, although imperfect, independent and sovereign beings. If God is the creator of humanity and God creates with the will and purpose of divinity, then humanity has likely, been made in the image of this Creator. Humans made in the image of the Creator that may be defined by Self's experience of the invisible spiritual personal

constructs of consciousness, personality, freewill, intellect, cognitions and emotions. Just as the information in the genes (genetics) of parents creating new life transfer to their offspring, so their child is partially created in their image, and so the partial mirror and reflection of their 'physical' and psychological parents. The parents will always be there for their 'child', and will usually feel deeply for their child's well-being, safety and happiness. When children are in pain so normally their parents are also in pain.

However, the child will grow and develop into an adult, becoming its own sovereign and independent person, but, will usually, always still be loved by its parents. If humanity is made in the image of God then humanity partially mirrors and reflects God's spirituality and personality as a manifestation of the Creator's existence and love. Just as parents hate to see their children hurt one another, so the Creator, who must deeply care for and love each individual, is offended and pained when people do not treat each other with dignity, love and respect. So when we hurt or love another we are hurting or loving the Creator in whose image we are made. Respecting with dignity the lowly, the lonely, the poor, the hungry, the sad, the abused, and the victimized etc., is particularly poignant because these are often individuals without a personal sense of security, without a personal sense of high self-esteem, and therefore more vulnerable to the dynamics of interpersonal relationships, particularly with those who possess the balance of power.

So this same duty to love others as we love Self extends to all peoples who are more vulnerable than Self, including those who think, believe and/or act differently to Self. This love for others needs to extend to those with different religions and cultures, and those with different creeds and faiths, and those with different ethnic backgrounds. At the end of the day, we are all humans who have evolved from primates and the animal species. We may have slightly different hair and skin colours, different organs, different functions, and abilities and different beliefs, attitudes and values, etc., but importantly, we all clearly share the extraordinary gifts of consciousness, thought, emotion and speech. We are all vulnerable and sensitive – manifest through our conscious emotions and cognitions - to the way other people think, feel, and talk about us, and act towards us. We also share in common, the ability to choose how to behave towards people and the ability to build personal

relationships with Self, others and the Creator if we so choose. We all share in common, through these gifts of consciousness, feelings, thoughts and speech, the ability to develop constructive relationships and thus the potential to invoke personal well-being and the sense of peace for others and Self.

The teachings of Christ go so far as to require the forgiveness of offences. However, we need to forgive Self before we can possibly forgive others. We need to learn to forgive Self as a conscious act of the heart and soul, lest we grow bitter and twisted and angry from the tainting of the spirit, inducing the interpersonal toxins of vindictiveness, vengeance and hatred. Forgiveness is a choice Self makes and not the product of the waving of a magic wand. Forgiveness is a choice Self makes from the mind, heart and soul. Forgiveness of Self also prevents Self from carrying the debilitating thoughts and emotions of guilt and shame, anger and bitterness, which could prohibit Self from further personal growth and from productive and caring interpersonal relationships.

Christ throughout His life extended the examples of the behaviours of love and compassion, being that of the New Law, to all people, enemies or not, whether the conflict and tension is underpinned by spiritual, 'physical', or emotional misunderstanding and differences. This does not mean we have to 'wine and dine' those who have offended us, or have them live on our doorstep, but means the ability to forgive others, in due course, thus extending the personal and private energy of inner peace, mercy and compassion to those who are less informed or psychologically and/or spiritually incapacitated. This inner sense and attitude of peace and acceptance of Self towards others will help create a more comfortable spiritual and psychological cushion between Self and those by whom we have been hurt. Giving the psychological space, climate and time required for healing and the time to allow others a chance to choose to reconcile, by apologizing with genuine contrition, if this is at all possible for them.

This inner sense of self-acceptance and forgiveness may enable one to live in the space of inner peace with Self, and therefore with others. This may reduce the build-up of personal psychological, spiritual, cognitive, and emotional tension and stress. Stress and tension activates hormonal and biochemical toxins such as, corticosteroids and adrenaline in the body, which in turn, suppresses

the functions of the immune system. This further increases stress and tension within Self, building greater psychological and physiological barriers preventing the development of constructive relationships and limiting the potential personal experience of inner peace, harmony and well-being.

The letter to Romans states:

“Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends upon you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay”, says the Lord”.

(Romans 12:16-19)

We read in 1 Peter:

“And so to reiterate to all of you, live in harmony with one another, be sympathetic, love as brothers and sisters, and be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing”.

(1 Peter 3:8-9)

Judging and Self-righteousness

Can we refrain from arbitrarily judging others as we have all transgressed and fallen short of the Creator’s intrinsic and absolute perfection, grace and, mercy. As humans, we are limited in fully understanding the love, grace and mercy of the omnipotent Creator. We are limited in knowing what the omnipotent Creator knows. Therefore, it makes sense, only the Creator has the power, love and knowledge to make judgments about another person, about other human beings. Only the Creator knows the full truth and circumstance about any one particular situation. It makes sense then that we don’t fall into the trap of self-righteousness and judgment, but take care of the “log” in our own eye, rather than worry about the speck in another’s eye (Matthew 7:3-5), so to speak.

So with the new law of relational love comes the law of, “not judging.” If we are to love others as Self loves Self, there is no room for us to commit arbitrary intellectual and discriminatory judgments about others, or allow to committing Self, to having feelings of self-righteousness. Value judgments are the personal and cognitive decisions made by Self about others and are based on the limited (or incomprehensive) information we have about a particular subject matter. The information we may possess about another person is always only partial to all the facts of that particular subject. It is a known fact that in criminal court cases innocent people have been convicted for crimes they did not commit and others have been found not guilty for crimes they did commit. As humans, we will never fully know or understand all the complexities of the circumstances that go towards driving another’s behaviour, only the Creator can truly know all these facts, and so only the Creator can judge absolutely. For instance, from a human perspective, we know creation to be in part, both perfect and imperfect, but therefore must be extremely complex to comprehend. But creation must be perfect, because if we believe God created creation, and if ‘God’ is perfect, then creation must be the outcome of the Creator’s perfect design, order and plan. But creation could also be said by humans to be imperfect, because we have all seen the destructive and painful suffering caused by the anomalies and extremes of creation in nature, and humankind. So to humanely reconcile the anomaly between creations characteristics of ‘perfection’ and ‘imperfection’, we could say that creation is perfectly imperfect or imperfectly perfect, for creation has been created by the Perfect One.

We have seen the destructive effects of Volcanoes, Tsunamis, Tornadoes and Floods that occur because of the Creator’s specific design and order of the planet. Where the Creator has desired, planned and willed the order and design of the Universe, Galaxy, Solar System and planet Earth. Where the earth’s inner crust consists of magma (boiling molten rock) and powerful Tectonic Plates, which continually slide and move in tension against each other until resistance becomes so strong that something gives, causing land and under-sea earthquakes and as a consequence, tsunamis and volcanoes that destroy life and humans. The Creator has willed the design and order of creation whereby every so often asteroids randomly zero in on Earth penetrating the atmosphere with the potential to create widespread destruction of life and humans. Sharks, Snakes and

Crocodiles, etc., have been willed and desired by the Creator, creatures that give much pleasure and joy to people, but which also have the potential to kill and maim people. And don't forget, people maim and kill people too. We have seen the Creator's mysterious anomaly of creation in nature in the sickness of disease such as cancers, viruses and bacteria indiscriminately destroying the body and life of human beings. We have observed the human pain of Creator's creation of nature whereby babies are born with intellectual and 'physical' disabilities.

We can also begin to understand the complexity and 'anomaly' of the Creator's creation of humans when we acknowledge that an individual can be born as "Intersex", whereby a baby's genitals are neither clearly male nor female. Indeed, the biological sex of humans at conception is neither male nor female, until the complex mix of chromosomes and sex hormones activate soon after conception and during pregnancy. Exposure to sex hormones in the early months after birth is linked to gender identity. Many different biological conditions can cause intersex. Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia (CAH) is another condition where the baby's adrenal glands overproduce a male hormone before birth, causing 'virilisation' of the genitalia and making a girl look like a boy. It is also possible to have the chromosomes of one gender, but the genitals of another; or a child may be born with both male and female genitals. That is, the ovaries and sometimes vagina of a female, in addition to the penis of a male. The medical description for this condition is termed hermaphrodite. Sadly people with intersex can be negatively affected in many psychological ways by others' harsh and discriminate judgments. If the Creator can allow it possible for humans to be conceived and born with such diversity then what gives humans' the right to detrimentally question this difference. So the Creator does not have a neat, tidy and 'perfect' archetype and template for human physiology and mindset. And so is not diversity and difference good? It must be 'good'. It is 'good'. And if the Creator creates such diversity, albeit physically temporary through Supreme intelligent design and order, cannot anything be possible?

An individual with both male and female sex organs will tend to be bio-psychologically inclined to think and feel like one gender or the other, think and feel like a male or female, but which one? And so this person may be gender identity confused, or may desire to live as

either a male or female, and may be attracted to who knows what gender? But who is capable of judging this person's gender transition or sexual preference as right or wrong, or good or bad? This way the Creator has chosen through the particular design and order of creation, - what some people may consider anomalies – the potentialities and possibilities of the characteristics of nature and humans.

Research has also discovered that during the development of the fetus in the womb unborn babies are subjected to different degrees of testosterone and estrogen. These are the hormones that ultimately influence the degree to which these individuals may feel psychologically inclined and predisposed to behave and think in either a feminine or masculine manner and to which gender they may be attracted. However, some people consider themselves to be psychologically the opposite to their bio-physical anatomy including genitalia. The word 'trans gender' describes a person who in essence, psychologically, intellectually and emotionally, identifies themselves to the gender opposite to their biological physiology. Transgender occurs equally in both biological males and females. Trans gender can be caused by factors such as the deviation of critically timed hormonal releases – sometimes caused by stress - during pregnancy, or the presence of hormone mimicking chemicals present during a critical development phase of fetal development. New research has shown that a part of the brain is dedicated to the attribution of both feminine and masculine traits and characteristics that contribute to their 'balance' in each individual. But at the end of the day the psychological characteristics of gender are identified and defined by bio-chemistry, physiology and socialisation. Research has shown that up to the age of five children both male and female genders exhibit remarkably similar characteristics and behaviours.

New research published in the *Journal of Endocrinology* (2004), found anatomical differences between the brains of rams that prefer other males to rams that prefer ewes. The part of the brain that controls sexual behaviour was smaller in rams that preferred other males than in rams that preferred ewes. Thus, sexual preference is in part determined biologically in animals and possibly also in humans. Studies showed that about 8 per cent of domestic rams display preferences for other rams. Same sex attractions are also widespread across many different animal species. Another study observed a group of cows in a confined space over an extended period, were also

likely to be 'attracted' to each other. This same sex attraction was attributed to the stress experienced from enclosed confinement. So God's creation of life must be either 'imperfect' and ok, or perfectly imperfect and still ok. But humans are not in the all-knowing position to make arbitrary value judgments, or any personal accusations and judgments about anybody, or anybody's particular situation, because only the Creator has the divine and transcendent ability to know all of anyone's circumstances.

We have also seen the reality of human life where some people are brought up in an environment of love and others in an environment of abuse, and still others are brought up somewhere within this inter-relational continuum, which undoubtedly interplays on future behaviour. New research has just discovered that there is a resilience gene. This gene they call 5-HTT - depending on its length - can influence a person's reaction to traumatic events in terms of a more positive or more negative stress response. And there is research that indicates that people with schizophrenia have a gene that prevents the normal growth of the myelin sheath that is designed to insulate cerebrum neurons from short-circuiting, disrupting the 'normal' process for processing thoughts and feelings. New research by Vaughan Carr, scientific director of the Neuroscience Institute of Schizophrenia and Allied Disorders, comprising a team of Australian and international researchers studying the brains of people with schizophrenia have identified a thinner outer layer of grey matter compared with people who do not have this mental illness. This brain tissue loss occurring in people with schizophrenia directly links to impaired brain function, thought processing, and the abnormal thinking they may experience. Their impaired thought processes and an inability to problem solve was directly linked to the reduced grey matter thickness and the reduced activity of the affected part of the brain. Interestingly, new cognitive therapy methods and concepts, suggest that the steadfast delusions some people experience with mental illness are modifiable with Cognitive Behaviour therapy, being on a continuum with the inflexible and deeply entrenched political and religious beliefs, many 'regular' people hold. And the experience of psychosis in the mentally ill can be related to 'normal' experiences regarding the intensity or irrationality of beliefs in 'regular' individuals (Chadwick, Birchwood & Trower, 1997).

Here are some examples of how the origins and reasons for

human behaviour cannot be explained simply, but are often the result of complex events and the interaction between nature, nurture, human genes, hormones and neurotransmitters, including the psychological outcomes related to the experiences of trauma often associated through nature and nurture. But it should be noted that the effects of nature and nurture are not irreversible in terms of their final destiny for human behaviour, but can be modified through the power of an individual's desire and will to choose an alternative path. It makes sense that only the Creator can ultimately and perfectly judge the actions, thoughts and feelings of another human being, as only the Creator has the ability to choose to know comprehensively the total and absolute situation and circumstance of anyone required to make absolutely just and true value judgments.

Self-righteousness may be interpreted as the feelings and cognitions that generate the sense and notion that we are 'right' and everyone else should be 'right' in the same way that we are 'right'. If others are not right like we are, then they must be wrong and therefore bad. This attitude and spirit of judgment towards others, this sense of self-righteousness, is often based on an inner sense of personal pride, self-importance and arrogance that we possess, and which also may be exacerbated and triggered by personal ignorance and personal fear of the unknown and so, a fear of Self, others, the world and the Creator. In light of this information, we could make it our business to choose not to judge others. This notion of not judging others, is emphatically stated in the teachings in Matthew 7:1-5 and the metaphorical parables of Matthew in Chapter 13, and Mark 4: 24.

Including the writings in Romans 14:1-12, with its very powerful message, espousing:

“If a person's faith is not strong enough, welcome him all the same without starting an argument. People range from those who believe they may eat any sort of meat to those whose faith is so weak they dare not eat anything except vegetables. Meat-eaters must not despise the scrupulous. On the other hand, the scrupulous must not condemn those who feel free to eat anything they choose, since God has welcomed them. It is not for you to condemn someone else's servant: whether he stands or falls it is his own master's business; he will stand, you may be sure, because the Lord has power to make him

stand. If one man keeps certain days as holier than others, and another considers all days to be equally holy, each must be left free to hold his own opinion. The one who observes special days does so in honour of the Lord. The one who eats meat also does so in honour of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God; but then the man who abstains does that too in honour of the Lord, and so he also gives God thanks. The life and death of each of us has its influence on others; if we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord, so that alive or dead we belong to the Lord. This explains why Christ both died, and came to life. It was so that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the brother who treat him with contempt, as some of you have done. We shall all have to stand before the judgment seat of God; as Scripture says; "By my life - it is the Lord who speaks - every knee shall bend before me, and every tongue shall praise God. It is to God, therefore, that each of us must give an account of him or herself."
(Romans 14:1-12)

So can we all learn to accept and love Self so that we may love and accept others? Can we learn to be forgiving and merciful without a hint of judgment or self-righteousness towards Self so that we may act in a spirit of good-will towards others? Without the insight of Christ's examples and teachings and without the will to be sweet spirited as opposed to mean spirited, humans may behave ignorantly and arrogantly, cowardly and fearfully. Giving in to their own selfish desires, ignoring their destructive behaviours and/or behave with intellectual, spiritual and emotional harm towards others under the pretext and illusion of being and doing 'good' from participating in self-righteous behaviours and value judgments, in turn increasing one's sense of perceived but distorted sense of self-esteem and self-worth.

Through the informed knowledge of that which is necessarily required of Self, and with the will to succeed and live a balanced, generous and compassionate life. And with the addition of spiritual strength emanating from intuitive reflective spiritual discernment, we can surely carry Self up the gold laden, but steep obstacle ridden path of relational love, hope and charity manifesting in love for Self and neighbour. Acts of charity are one of the greatest contributions humans can make to society. Charity respects others' rights. Charity, by definition, requires the practice of responsibility, accountability,

justice and compassion. Charity alone can make humans capable of all else. Charity inspires a life of integrity, a life of self-respect, a life of self-giving and a life of self-loving, which by definition, cannot but manifest in any other way than a life that radiates respect, reconciliation, acceptance and compassion for Self and others.

In Christ's words: Will You Gain or Lose Your Life?

“Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it”.

(Luke 17:33, Mat 10:38-39 and Mark 8:34-37)

In this verse, it is possible that Christ is talking about how we might want to save ourselves in this life by acquiring ‘physical’ comforts and a life experienced as blissful through the acquisition of material goods and positions of ‘status’, often acquired at the expense of more vulnerable others.

On the other hand, the idea of losing one's life a metaphor when generous and selfless towards others at one's own personal and material expense, and in the process, gaining a sense of personal, emotional and spiritual satisfaction attained through the acts of selfless charity and compassion towards others.

However, if we decide to pursue emotional, ‘physical’, spiritual and intellectual selfishness and destruction against others creating sadness and depression for the sake of satisfying our material well being by way of selfishness, self-absorption and self-centeredness, we will, in the process, feed and massage pride and arrogance only to regret later when undertaking personal self-reflection.

This drive for material extravagance and status will not only make selves unhappy but will never quench our inner thirst for spiritual and personal fulfillment and the equilibrium of sense of peace and personal well-being.

This base instinct for the need to gain our life on earth denies the presence of spirit and to that which will live eternally. We will lose our life on this earth because our selfishness is ego-centric and often results at the expense of others' rights and dignity.

So we diminish not only our own dignity and that of others, but also our emotional, intellectual and spiritual awareness. We lose the ability to become and be the best person we can, whilst making life

uncomfortable for others whilst living on this earth.

Thus, is it not wiser to lose material selfishness but to gain your personal integrity and dignity here and in the moment?

Philosophy of Relational Love/ Compassion

If the Creator exists and Christ is the Creator/God then Jesus' mystical relational love is a reflection of God's mystical relational love and therefore the ultimate epitome of love. Jesus' examples, teachings and behaviour must be then the personification of pure and perfect mystical relational love. This is a perfect love, which humans strive to attain, strive to emulate, strive to give and strive to receive. But although it does exist, a perfect love that is unconditional is as elusive as the pot of gold at the rainbow's end, because humans are, by definition, imperfect. So what does it mean to love? Love, love, love, what makes the world go round is love. The word love and its meaning can have flowery and superficial connotations.

So what is love? Does the meaning of love include intimate 'physical' acts mixed with the associated cognitive and emotional responses that we may relate to and term romance, or relate to and term lust, or relate to and term friendship, or can love be a combination of these. Can the meaning of the word 'love' be distorted and corruptly perceived through interrelational misuse and abuse? Does pure unconditional love exist? Has Self ever experienced the phenomena of the thoughts and feelings that Self would imagine would relate to the characteristics of unconditional love, maybe even within a dream? Has Self ever experienced what they envisaged to be unconditional love, from another human being? What are the cognitions and emotions experienced as an outcome of unconditional love? Is the level of love from a personal pet, such as a dog may provide its owner, unconditional? So are there different levels of love given and received? Are there different levels of unconditional love? The meaning of the word love can have many different meanings for different people as a consequent to the mix and interaction of the unique Self's higher constructs interplaying with the unique Self's past and present experiences. So in human terms the meaning and definition of the word love is complex and varied. Love

for Self and others can mean having value, dignity, respect, compassion and acceptance, etc.

What is it to love another with a perfect and unconditional love, experienced towards the 'perfect' end of the 'love' continuum? What does it mean to love Self and others? Unconditional love like forgiveness does not come naturally. But is essentially learnt and expressed by way of consciousness, through cognitive, emotional, speech and behaviour choices. Love may be defined as choosing to help another person attain something they need, albeit companionship, respect, encouragement or informed information. Love is choosing to support others in growing to their potential without expecting anything in return. Loving others is the reverse and opposite of hate and indifference. Rather than consciously seeking to destroy another, the one who loves is working with the principles of compassion and hope to foster the development of friendship, goodwill and wellbeing with and within another. In this definition, love is an act of the will just as hate and indifference are acts of the will. Consciously loving others helps to keep the act of indifference in its rightful perspective. Loving others allows healing to occur as a manifestation of the feelings of personal dignity, esteem and wholeness. Love for others can lead to a deeper understanding of the spirit of 'God', as we are spiritual brothers and sisters connected to the spirit of the Creator. Unconditional love, experienced as a sense of inner contentment and peace.

There are at least three substantial components to the definition of the act of love. The first could be the personal skills needed in helping others to grow to their potential. The one who loves is required to love unconditionally, without judgment or the need for self-gratification. The one who loves needs to consider the psychological assets and strengths of the other and determine how best to foster another's potential through self-empowerment. Sometimes this is achieved by teaching some form of skill and mastery, and at other times by listening quietly as the other seeks to find Self. At still other times, it may mean setting limits and boundaries as the other ventures down a possible path of mindless personal destruction. With each step in this process, the one who loves continues with the personal growth in their own life and is careful not to be domineering or oppressive, but to act as a catalyst in helping the other seek their goals.

The second component requires that the one who loves must expect nothing in return. In this time and age for self-gratification, this may be difficult. The one who loves is there only to facilitate and enable the other. Personal efforts are given freely to the other with no strings attached and without reservation. It would be rewarding if reciprocity occurred but often it does not and is not the motivation for one's love. Nothing can be expected in return from the other except for the satisfaction of knowing and experiencing that one is giving unconditionally of Self.

The final component concerns the 'physical' and psychological well-being of those in relationships. A toxic relationship, where either party is being 'physically' harmed, verbally denigrated, and where personal growth and needs are neglected, is not a caring and loving relationship. One is required to try to love one's neighbour as one loves one's Self. And so the person who loves cannot neglect their own personal needs necessary for one to love one's Self. Abusive relationships obviously do not meet the basic characteristics for love, of safety, health, and well-being, and such relationships require psychological and spiritual support through therapy or should not continue. In such cases, discontinuing the toxic relationship may be the most caring thing to do, as the presence of a relationship without love fosters the encouragement of human pain and misery, and inter-relational acts considered malevolent, destroying the very growth expected from a loving relationship. True love results in increased personal growth and self-esteem, and not the reverse.

A graphic example of these negative dynamics of the love-relationship, where the one who wants to love is stifled and thwarted to act, may be encountered in the forms of destructive behaviours and relationships associated to those described by the term Domestic Violence of 'physical', sexual and psychological abuse and 'battered wife (partner or husband) syndrome'. Where the woman or man, is physically, and/or emotionally harmed, and yet, is unable to leave such an abusive relationship. The inability to leave an abusive relationship can be complex and may involve a number of different reasons. The reasons that prohibit the harmed (abused) leaving the perpetrator are many. And include a distorted and false sense of "love" for the abuser, or that the victim is to blame, or an intense fear of the abuser to inflict grievous bodily harm, or a lack of confidence in the judicial system and/or a need for financial security. And a real

but distorted sense and need for “emotional” security as a by-product of feelings of loneliness from isolation and oppression.

The same could be said for people in co-dependant relationships, where a person is subconsciously activated because of their feelings of worthlessness, low self-esteem and emptiness, which feelings are reduced, temporarily, by the sense of being needed and wanted. This need to feel wanted often prevents the leaving of a toxic relationship. And the cycle of pain through relational destruction can also perpetuate through the threat and reality of ‘physical’, financial and emotional abuse. Genuine concern for the welfare of others is an abstract concept, but becomes tangible and meaningful in selflessly specific interactions with individuals. In seeking to love people, we make the concept/abstract a reality. We eschew potential loneliness and indifference that comes from alienation and ‘cut off’ from others. Remember, if people do not always remember what you said or did to them, they will always remember how you made them feel.

Can we, through individual and collective free-will, choose to live in peace, kindness, compassion and reconciliation with one-another? Can we rise above the quagmire of destructive selfishness, and move towards the higher transcendent characteristics, constructs and qualities defining unconditional relational love? Can we behave in the ways of the Way, and the truths of the Truth, and the life of the Life? This is, can we live by the behaviours and attributes that epitomize the person called Jesus Christ, the person who claimed to be the Son of God? Jesus Christ, the person who, by definition, is the Creator, if the Creator did indeed become the divine and human person called Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 8

THE CREATOR’S INFINITE MYSTICAL RELATIONAL LOVE and COMPASSION

The Creator’s Acceptance

The Affects of Transgressions

The Creator’s Mystical Relational Love

**The Creator’s Infinite Compassion and the Cruel Trick of
‘Physical’ Death**

Christ’s Love and Forgiveness

The Myth and Metaphor of Hell and Satan

The Creator’s Acceptance

If God created humankind and the Creator’s desire for humans is for humans to love others as one loves one’s Self, then surely the Creator also wants people to live a full and free life that encapsulates and encourages such sentiments of psychological goodwill and well-being. When we were younger, when we were growing up, we all experienced less than constructive or more constructive defining moments, and ‘good enough’ or ‘not good enough’ experiences from pivotal and significant others in our lives. Some of us, through these defining experiences and examples from significant others, may have been subliminally or personally informed that the Creator cannot and does not exist. Others may have been informed with an attitude of indifference, that the Creator may or may not exist, and yet others, informed that the Creator is loving and merciful. Yet, others, may have learnt the Creator is a very strict judge, and we will have to account for every idle word and every transgression or fault committed. We may have been taught to pray, “Our Father who art in Heaven ...etc.,” and actually look upon the Creator as a loving and merciful Father. Others may picture God as a dictator or tyrant, who sits on His throne in Heaven with an adding machine, doing nothing

all day but totaling up sins and offences. We may think He is impatiently waiting for the day when we will come before Judgment, where He will show the black record of faults, so that He may cast us into Hell with Satan.

Past personal experiences for a particular individual colour and shape one's ideas and beliefs about what is real or perceived to be real, or not real, about a particular subject matter. But Self's consciousness, intellect, cognition, emotion and freewill are the spiritual precursors for modifying such beliefs, interacting with informed knowledge and an innate intuitive and discerning spirit.

But such fearful images of a Creator surely cannot be a true picture of God. Yes, we can conceive that the Creator is Just, Powerful, Wise and Majestic, but the overall theme of the Scriptures when interpreted in context declares that His mercies are huge and of an indescribable magnitude. As the following scripture rightly says, and in support of the general theme of love, compassion and forgiveness expressed in verses in both the New and Old Testaments:

"Thy mercy is great above the Heaven".
(Psalms 107:5)

"The Lord is sweet to all and his tender mercies are above all His works".
(Psalms 144:9)

As we have explored in the above chapters, about the miracles of the Universe, which are indeed magnificent and almost incomprehensible to imagine, so perhaps the Creator's compassion and love may be as enormously vast and as equally magnificent and incomprehensible. Often 'good enough' parents will overlook, forgive and forget, much their child may do that is wrong, whilst still loving them notwithstanding their faults. If 'good enough' human parents can be understanding and accepting, cannot the Creator be far more accepting and understanding? For who has instilled in humans the innate gifts of consciousness, freewill, intellect, cognition and emotion, the attributes required for acceptance, understanding, compassion, mercy and justice, but the Creator.

As Scripture interestingly states:

“God is light, in Him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with Him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”
(I John 1:5-9)

It is said that the Creator’s compassion and understanding are as infinite as the Spirit is infinite. If Self acknowledges Self’s shortcomings and imperfections, weaknesses and limitations, Self is naming and claiming these, and in so doing, casting aside Self’s pride and arrogance and opening the way for personal change. To change something considered maladaptive and undesirable within Self it is critical that it be named. When Self names and acknowledges Self’s imperfections, weaknesses and limitations Self can then claim them. When imperfections, weaknesses and limitations are both named and claimed it is then that they can be changed. As an analogy, if there is something we do not like about our house, but can’t pin point what it is, then we can’t do anything about it. But upon reflection, if we understand that it’s the colour of the paint in the rooms that is annoying us, we can then decide to choose to change the colour that is not suitable, because we have understood, acknowledged and named that which needs changing.

But although we may consider ‘God’ to exist as the Creator of the universe, Self needs to be mindful that just as children grow up and leave their parents and become independent, so do humans. As conscious, intellectual, emotional and spiritual individuals, humans develop and mature, and become independent. That is, the Creator’s will and love has created humans to be unique beings, to be individuals with unique personality, but with this independence comes accountability and responsibility as the defining essence of the gift to humans of human integrity, dignity and sovereignty. It is also conceivable that the Creator allows individuals the choice and right to or not to enter, into any particular personal relationship with Him, without the fear or threat of any impending retribution or punishment.

In the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11), the father always loved the son regardless of the son's actions and relationship with his father. The father acknowledged the son's independence and integrity, but was always open to the prospect of the son renewing a positive relationship between them. Jesus teaches us that the Creator is also an unconditionally loving 'Father', always waiting for a voluntary return. Jesus also tells us in the parable of the lost sheep (Matt 18:12), that it gives the Creator more happiness at that particular moment to find just one who strays than do the others that have not strayed. This does not mean we need to stray to command a relationship with the Creator, but rather, perhaps illustrates the power of the Creator's will and desire for a voluntary but private and intimate relationship, whilst respecting the integrity and sovereignty of all peoples' individual rights as independent beings.

Once we have named and acknowledged imperfections, weaknesses and limitations and recognized their capabilities for inter-relational destruction, thus providing the chance to choose to change, we need not be over scrupulous and persevering, constantly worrying about the past. All human transgressions can be forgiven, cast aside as far as the East is from the West, because of, and by, the Creator's infinite mystical relational compassion. We can believe that all human indiscretions are obliterated from the Creator's mind vanishing in the blood and humility of Christ's suffering and death. If the Creator forgets human imperfections, why should Self be so hard on Self by constantly recalling such imperfections, perhaps perpetuating residual feelings and thoughts of shame and guilt as a consequence of self's flaws? Let us not doubt the Creator's mercy.

As Scripture again reminds us:

"I will not remember thy sins"

(Isaiah 43:25)

Also:

"You, Lord, are compassionate and gracious slow to anger and abounding in love. You do not treat me as my sins deserve or repay me according to my iniquities. As far as the East is from the West, so far have you removed my transgressions from me."

(Psalms 103:8-12)

Isaiah, prophesying about Jesus Christ, says:

“He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve, to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendour”.

(Isaiah 61:1-3)

The Hebrew Scriptures also remind us that God is:

“Compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He does not treat us as our sins deserve”.

(Psalms 103:8-10)

If a child is afraid of his/ her parents, he/ she will not trust them nor will s/he confide in them his/ her feelings, thoughts, problems, concerns, anxieties and hopes. He or she may live under the same roof, but will grow emotionally apart from his/ her parents without a loving, happy and intimate relationship. Such an interpersonal relationship is not the normal definition and prerequisite for a child's healthy psychological and spiritual well-being and development. The child out of fear, frustration and anger may run away from home, destroying this unique foundation of healthy interpersonal familial relations required for the development of personal psychological adaptation and identity.

If Self is afraid of the Creator, Self will not recognise the Creator's intrinsic ability to understand the Creator's creation, nor will Self consider contemplating the communication of Self's thoughts, desires, strengths, weaknesses and problems to ‘that which nothing greater can be thought’. Self may be independently living in this world, but Self may potentially live without consciousness of voluntary spiritual intimacy, and thus, productive spiritual awareness and personal self-reflection. Instead, Self may consciously and voluntarily transgress ‘goodness’, thrusting Self into an existence of unhappiness and discontentment. Alternatively, Self can genuinely love and accept Self and others notwithstanding self's and others imperfections, weaknesses and limitations, because Self can appreciate and understand Self to be intrinsically precious, sovereign and unique. Self can genuinely love Self and others and in so doing,

love Self and the Creator, because the Creator is in Self and in others. But this love for Self and others will not be a love that emanates from the fear of any anticipated or impending punishment and retribution or an eternity in Hell that may be unleashed upon a Self that does not love. But Self can potentially love Self and others because the Creator has first loved Self and others without conditions. Self can love Self and others based on the freedom of choice, being a function of freewill, and not out of a belief and faith predicated on fear, being a function of coercion and punishment. The act of love that arises out of fear is but an involuntary love, a token love, and essentially, inherently meaningless. However, although to love out of fear may prevent others from being hurt, and so may be considered better than not loving at all, it has the tendency to prohibit the personal and spiritual growth necessary for Self to live a full life, to live an authentic and satisfying life through the act of loving voluntarily.

Affects of Transgressions

Words used in a religious context such as 'sin', 'transgression', 'bad', 'evil', 'wrong', 'less than good', 'imperfect' and 'maladaptive' have been misused and abused for centuries, by implying arbitrary spiritual judgments and coercion that conjure up fear, so manipulating religious beliefs and behaviours of obedience of the 'spiritually' vulnerable by the 'spiritually' powerful. But the author has chosen to use these particular words in this book to emphasise and describe human behaviours that may be defined as the thoughts, feelings, attitudes and behaviours that in some real or perceived way psychologically and physically hurt another human being, including one's Self.

Evidence of hurting Self may be experienced when we feel uncomfortable from an inner personal sense of guilt and shame manifest from the negative consequences that result as a reaction to transgressing the intended purpose of the 'physical', spiritual and moral laws, plan and design of the Creator's universe. The psychological symptoms from doing less than good through such activities as expressing and articulating unkind thoughts, feelings and behaviours, described by the meanings of words such as malice, hypocrisy, deceit, envy, anger, hatred, jealousy and slander etcetera.

(Titus 3:3, 1 Peter 2:1) can often manifest as the experience of guilt and shame and an inner feeling and sense of psychological pain. The maladaptive behaviours which people may choose to ‘act out’ can be destructive to both Self and others, as they are materially incongruent to God’s design, order and plan, and therefore the Creator’s desire and will for humans made as beings in His image. We have probably all committed in our life transgressions against others, such as, discord, jealousy, rage, selfish ambition, dissensions and envy” etc., (Galatians 5:19-21). These can be normal human thoughts and emotions, but how they are acted upon or contained, will impact directly on the way others are affected. From such inner most thoughts, feelings and behaviours, both antagonist and protagonist can testify to having experienced negative spiritual and psychological consequences, which have the potential to impact destructively on both party’s ability to enjoy life to the full. All people deserve, as a right, to be special, unique and precious who can live life to the full, whatever this may mean to the individual. We are human beings with the higher transcendent qualities and characteristics to consciously think, reflect and feel about our behaviours, attitudes and experiences, which are personally shaped and formed through Self’s sense of personhood and spiritual and psychological self-image.

The effects of, ‘less than good’ behaviours, perpetrated by people upon people, can have far reaching ramifications for both the perpetrator and the victim. Just like the domino effect, it only takes one domino, to affect an infinite number of other dominos. And we can imagine the impact of our actions when illustrated by the analogy of the increasingly widening ripples of water occurring from the result of one stone being thrown into a calm and serene pool. And the massive tsunami generated from an under-water earthquake. So maladaptive behaviours, which we may choose to execute on Self and others have many destructive qualities and have the potential to affect many people, including Self, those we encounter, and the people who we and they, may in turn, come into contact with.

Why is the devastating impact of transgression so insidious and pervasive? Because ‘sin’, expressed as less than good, being that which is hurtful and painful behaviour from one person to the other, formed from the consciousness of free will and choice, promotes the festering of a sense of inner worthlessness, shame and guilt in the victim. Feelings of the victim may include feelings of self-

inadequacy, discord, and disquiet. These are experienced, because less than good behaviours from the one to the other are acts of spiritual abomination and incongruence, distorting the rightful and proper functioning of one's intrinsic essence of being, spirit and humanness as the higher transcendent qualities and characteristics from whom humans were made, and for which they are intended.

These transgressions against Self are an affront and aberration to the truth of the soul, and to the truth of the spirit manifest in conscious cognitions, feelings and emotions, and have the potential to adversely change Self's nature, identity and personality. This less than useful alteration to our cognitive, spiritual and emotional functioning can subsequently change one's behaviour in an escalation and cyclical process. Acting negatively onto not only the personality and spirit of Self, but onto the personality and spirit of the individuals who Self comes into contact with, and so in turn, the individuals the other comes into contact with. This ricocheting and domino affect occurs with dramatic, reverberating, and adverse repercussions for Self and others.

This negative psychological process may ultimately have a strong influential impact on the way Self views Self, and others, and can affect the future manner in which we live and act out our lives here on Earth. This spiraling negative process from the perpetrator to the victim, from Self to the other, from within one to another, will accordingly affect and impact heavily upon the spirit and psyche of all involved. Hence, it is a fundamental and imperative need and requirement for all humans to do good things to others in the spirit of love and generosity. To do good things to others starting from the very important child-parent relationships we all experience, and which are a necessary part for the healthy psychological development into adulthood and throughout life. Although infancy and childhood are the initial and originating building blocks for an individual's personal and spiritual well-being, we need to remember that it is never too late for anyone to start loving others and/or to start loving others more such is the power of love.

The effects on us of transgressing can potentially reduce Self to personal and spiritual incompetence in the situations and activities that encompass our life which may require us to act in a diligent and dignified manner. Ongoing acts of "doing less than good", can precipitate, pre-empt and predispose Self into acts of further

transgressions against Self and others as we become desensitized from the perpetuating destructiveness. The escalation of negative behaviour in turn may drive one to desire endorphin producing activities of promiscuity, drugs and alcohol as defenses and aides to help block and numb the painful feelings of guilt, shame, worthlessness and hopelessness, brought about by doing to others that which was not intended. These psychological pseudo aids and defense mechanisms may occur in not only the transgressor but also the transgressed as the victim's way of pain reduction creating further complex issues and problems.

These pseudo aids and defense mechanisms are, needless to say, compensatory indulgences inappropriately used to facilitate self-healing. These activities may initially help filter and numb the unpleasant and depressing feelings and thoughts brought about by the experience of emotional pain in both the transgressor and transgressed. But they are really only a temporary and superficial solution to the internal spiritual and psychological pain being experienced by one as a result of doing that to others which one is not ideally made to do. So the root causes and sources of any internal spiritual and psychological pain manifest in the feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness, guilt, grief and helplessness needs to be addressed within the realms of inter-personal and intra-personal relationships.

Our indiscretions and transgressions against Self and others may cause us to lose our sense of Self, lose our sense of dignity, lose our sense of worth, lose our sense of reality, and lose our sense of appreciation of Self and others, as unique and special beings. In short, our sense of spirit and psych may become distorted, disorientated and confused until we counter and stabilize by living life with compassion. This is, living life for which humans were ultimately made, 'perfectly' achieved through living life with compassion for Self and others. This does not mean that we should, or can be perfect, as it is impossible to be perfect in an imperfect world. But it means to live life to our fullest potential, as best we can, with whatever resources we have, including the giving of dignity, respect and encouragement to all people for their betterment, whilst, also continuing to strive for self-betterment. Perhaps this, in reality, is all that is required. In this way, we can potentially will to live life to the full in harmony with Self and others.

The Creator's Mystical Relational Love/ Compassion

Christ offers a solution to the problem of human imperfection, limitations and weaknesses that may transpire into interpersonal destructive transgressions. He removes the burden of human guilt and shame. He reverses and changes despair into hope, and He provides the spiritual and psychological power to live a victorious life. Importantly, we do not need to burden, overwhelm, and demoralize ourselves with the concept of a world that Self may perceive to be dominated, controlled and powered by acts of evil, or believe in a supernatural being of absolute evil (Satan/devil). As victory over all these 'evils' including, "world malevolence", has already been achieved through Christ's life, suffering, death and resurrection. The salvation of the world, has been guaranteed by, and through, Christ's death and resurrection.

(Rom 6:4, 4:25, Eph 2:4-5, 1Pt 1:3)

God's love for the world:

"For God so loved the world that He sent his only begotten son."

(John 3:16)

God's ultimate sacrifice:

"And greater love than this no man has, that he lay down his life for his friends".

(John 15:12)

So the Creator perceives and experiences all humans as His friends, His children, His sisters and brothers. With a love such as this, is there any reason to be afraid of the Creator/ 'God', to be afraid of punishment, to be afraid of evil? With a love such as this is there any reason to believe in and/or be afraid of the concept of a supernatural being of absolute evil.

Let us remember why we humans can truly love:

"We love Him because He first loved us".

(1 John 4:19)

So if we choose to relate to the Creator it would be helpful if

we understood who the Real 'God' really is so that we can relate to what the Creator in essence means and represents, rather than relate to the Creator because we are scared and fear Him. 'God' the Creator never intended retributive and threatening ultimatums towards "sinners" in which non-compliance to His laws would result in the excruciatingly painful and eternal destiny of Hell with Satan, which many people may believe, where the pain of fire burns forever. We love because Christ's teachings, examples, and life on Earth were given to us for our benefit. God's teachings, examples, and life on earth through Jesus are something good for us to copy, follow, achieve and aspire to. We love because of love, and out of knowledge that this loving life of Jesus shows us THE WAY, THE TRUTH and THE LIFE. We need not despair, for God knows our weakness and human frailty. 'God' knows that the times in which we live are 'peppered' with the obstacles of human selfishness, hatred, and pride, as they were in His time. He knows how difficult it is to do, that which is 'good'.

For it is said:

"He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust".

{Psalms 102:14}

The Creator knows and 'understands' all of these things. Perhaps all the Creator wants and asks of human beings is to make every effort to avoid hurting others, and emulate in trust, His mercy and compassion, as exemplified and taught by Christ.

The Creator's Infinite Compassion and the Cruel Trick of 'Physical' Death

Is it conceivably possible that the Creator who has brought forth billions of Galaxies and trillions of Stars; who has created animals that are programmed to kill - to eat - to live, where animals kill animals, humans kill animals and sadly humans kill humans, is a Creator we should unnecessarily fear? To digress, this necessity for animals to kill - to eat - to live, design of creation, which has been used as an argument to question 'God's' motive and the general definition of an all loving and all good Creator is more complex than

it at first appears to be. We see pictures of writhing and screaming animals in their death as they kill each other for the food they need to live, as they fight and kill each other to protect their territory and young. But we tend to project our own human experience and imagination of pain and suffering onto these animals, perhaps unnecessarily embellishing the pain that these animals may experience in death. It is widely known that human females, when giving birth, experience much pain, but do animals giving birth experience similar pain without the constructs of consciousness, self-awareness, meta-cognition, thought, and emotion? Some research suggests that possessing the construct of mind increases the experience and awareness of pain. So we really do not know the extent of an animal's experience of pain, but we do know that mammals are designed with the hormone adrenaline and the polypeptide opiate endorphin, which are natural 'physical' pain relievers blocking pain receptors in the brain.

In humans when extreme threats of personal harm are perceived, neurons in the brain release endorphins, which then inhibit the release of the pain-signaling neurotransmitter called substance P. This results in pain signals being 'blocked' from reaching the higher 'levels' of the brain. Thus, soldiers who are severely wounded in battle, may not actually feel any pain until they are safely out of the battlefield situation and in the hospital many hours later. In such a situation, the brain's powerful painkillers are activated to prevent pain signals interfering with escaping from the severe threat. 'Physical' and emotional pain is also a protector factor in that it rings the warning bells that something is not right or healthy 'physically' and/or emotionally with us. We may often try to understand creation from a human perspective and intellect, but the Creators' intellect by definition and virtue of creation is that which nothing greater can be thought. This is not to deny human suffering and minimize pain humans can experience, but this is perhaps how the Creator has designed humans with the capability and purpose to experience life through both extremes of 'physical' and emotional pain and 'physical' and emotional pleasure.

Is it conceivable that a 'Power' who has designed nature with killer floods, killer earthquakes, killer tsunamis, killer volcanoes, killer bacteria and cancers, and killer illnesses. And a 'God' who has also orchestrated the intrinsic and intricate complexity of humans

through evolution, with consciousness, cognitions, emotions and freewill. And who has designed humans with such a short lifespan from birth to death – although each hour and day of this short life can feel as if it's eternal if we are bored, depressed or stressed – is a 'Force' that people should unduly worry and angst about at the contemplation of their own death? And at the time of their own physical death? Is it conceivably possible that a Creator who created life, and humans that experience the living of life. And a Creator who created physical death, the cruel trick of death, a death without which humans have any natural power and control over, the human physical death, a horrendous tragedy that ends an individual's 'physical' life here on Earth. The end of an individual's life through death is the cause of much human grief and psychological pain and suffering among relatives and friends. Human death, a death that invokes the horrifying prospective of the possible inevitable transition into the unknown world of the 'afterlife' is the architect of a Creator who would not possess unconditional love? Is the architect of a Creator who would not have infinite compassion, and judge infinitely justly? The Creator of human sickness, pain, suffering and death, a 'God' who made such human experience, would be a Creator who would not be infinitely sympathetic?

Is it conceivably possible that a Creator who created human consciousness and as such the ability to anticipate the reality of one's own eventual 'physical' death as being frightening through contemplation of the unknown of one's personal death and the death of those we know and love. The death of the body, an inevitable reality for everyone in which no human has any say, authority, power or command over, would or could infinitely condemn humans for their imperfections? Is it conceivably possible that a Creator, who, through the creation of human 'physical' death has forsaken the ultimate 'physical' earthly independence of a human being. A 'God' who has through design, order and plan, created the limited and mortal 'physical' existence of every creature and individual on this planet, and as such, has potentially and indirectly been the catalyst for human distraught through emotional and cognitive suffering of Self and others, would look malevolently upon inevitable human imperfections and vulnerability?

Is it conceivably possible then, that this Creator, having created and designed a complex mysterious human existence, could then turn

around and be meticulously petty and strict towards those who have fallen short of perfection and the glory of the Creator? No, No, No, this image of such a petty, strict and vindictive Super Natural Being is not conceivably possible in and to this mind. It is more likely that in life, and in the afterlife, we will be far harder on ourselves and critical, than anyone else will, including 'God'.

We may have personally experienced the tremendous loss and grief from a loved one's death, a loved one gone forever, as if an extinct dinosaur. But having said this, the cruel frightening and scary thought and anticipation experienced by many contemplating one's own death, or a friend's death, is of course mightily mitigated by one's belief in the reality of a Creator. In the belief in the reality of a Creator, because something can't be made from nothing, and in the reality of an intelligent, benign and spiritual 'God', because human consciousness, emotion and cognition are, by definition, something uniquely and transcendently wondrous and mystical that cannot be visibly seen, and yet cannot be made from nothing. The fear of one's own death can be mitigated by the informed belief of the reality of Jesus Christ as the Son of the Creator, because the Creator also allowed His Son to suffer and 'physically' die. So the Creator's creation of human immortality may inevitably be expressed and experienced in the reality of the Son's Resurrection.

The resurrection of Christ allows the belief, and represents the phenomena, that Self, that is, individual human consciousness, personality, spirit and soul – and thoughts, emotions, attitudes, values, beliefs, behaviours - can never die, can never be extinguished, but will live on forever. The fear of one's own death is mightily mitigated in the belief in the reality of one's real but invisible essence of one's being, because the Self's personality, spirit and soul can only be definitively and infinitely experienced and expressed as an invisible entity, a spiritual invisible entity, providing evidence for the possibility of one's immortality. Which together with the evidence of the Creator's creation and Self's inherently intrinsic value and uniqueness as a sovereign and sacred person, provide the conceivable possibility of the reality of Self's immortality. To further support and consolidate the viewpoint of the Creator's infinite compassion is may be evident in the following evidence. We read in the New Testament that one day the 'pious' Pharisees brought to Jesus a woman taken in adultery, waiting to hear Him say that she should be stoned to death as

the law commanded.

But Jesus said:

“If any one of you is without sin (no degree of severity mentioned), let him/her be the first to throw a stone at her”.

(John 8:7)

Christ’s comments suggested to the Pharisees that their hidden sins of pride, arrogance and self-righteousness were just as significantly debilitating as the woman’s sin of adultery. Christ’s response to the woman was quite gentle. He didn’t say to her, “Aha! These men caught you in the act. You know what the Law says about adultery. Confess what you’ve done, you wicked woman”.

Rather, He turned to her with compassion, and asked:

“Has no-one accused thee?” When she replied, “No-one, Lord”, He answered, “Then neither will I accuse thee. Go now and leave your life of sin.”

(John 8:11)

Another woman who was known for her ‘promiscuous’ lifestyle received similar caring, non-judgmental and compassionate treatment from Jesus Christ. Although Christ knew that the woman at the Well had had five husbands and was living at that time with a man she had not married, the Lord did not act shocked, and He didn’t shame or condemn her. Instead, he shifted the emphasis from her sin to the living water of the new life that He could give her. In Christ’s non-judgmental and compassionate love, this woman was able to change. She found her individual personal identity, purpose, and worth. She found truth, love, hope and peace. In Christ, she found forgiveness and compassion for all her faults. In Christ she found happiness, fulfillment and meaning to life, which she had been so desperately searching for.

These wonderful parables about Jesus’ understanding and compassion, and His relationship with vulnerable humans as expressed through the messages and comments made to these women, as recorded in the New Testament can be extrapolated to the male gender, and other races and cultures. Therefore, these teachings are equally relevant to all peoples living on this Earth, including males

who may be arrogant and proud and/ or vulnerable and desperate. And didn't Jesus tell His disciples that they must forgive the transgressions made against them seven times seventy?

The disciple Peter asked Jesus:

"Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me, up to seven times?" And Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times".

(Matt. 18:21-22)

It could perhaps be deduced and implied from Peter's encounter with Jesus that Jesus' reply should be interpreted metaphorically and that Jesus would forgive transgressions and indiscretions a million x million if we asked Him, wouldn't He? It could be considered then that Christ's/ God's mercy towards humans is infinite. His mercy then is greater than the greatness of the miracles of creation. His mercy is as great as "that which nothing greater can be thought".

Christ's Mystical Relational Love and Compassion

The general theme of love described throughout the New Testament comes to us in stories of Jesus' mystical relational love, compassion and reconciliation (forgiveness) for those He lived with, and came into contact with, during His time on Earth. He forgave His close disciple Peter, for denying any knowledge of Him three times and He forgave the other apostles for running away. He extended His relational love and compassion to the woman at the Well who had had five husbands and was at the time living with another man in an unmarried state.

In the Gospel of James (2: 25-26) we read how James, the brother of Jesus, extends the hand of reconciliation to Rahab who was sometimes promiscuous:

"In the same way, was not even Rahab, the prostitute, considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent

them off in a different direction? As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead". (James 2:25-26)

The word 'prostitute' is overly derogative because it is often used with the meaning to label, define and measure an individual's personal identity, self-worth and sense of being, rather than used to describe a person's particular behaviour, a behaviour which is no different in value to the particular behaviour of a 'client'.

In terms of infinite compassion for humans, Christ asked the Father to forgive those who killed Him:

"Forgive them Father for they know not what they do".

(Luke 23: 34-35)

Perhaps the most decisive and poignant message derived from the "Passion Of The Christ" is that the Creator potentially wills to unconditionally love all peoples notwithstanding their personal transgressions, or their political, cultural, ethnic and religious persuasions and affiliations as explicitly exemplified by Jesus Christ's outcry, "Forgive them Father, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23: 34-35).

This was an outcry to the Creator by Jesus Christ on His death cross, having been psychologically humiliated and 'physically' abused. A sublime supplication to the Creator from the Son after being jeered, insulted, spat upon, punched, beaten, scourged, crowned with thorns, nailed to the cross and speared, such that He was fatally wounded by Roman soldiers, Gentiles, Jews, Pagans, Elders, Teachers of the law and Chief Priests. The crime of torturous 'physical' and psychological brutality leading to a person's suffering and death, no human being deserves, let alone the innocent Christ. Yet, regardless of their behaviour, Christ pleads to the Creator to forgive these perpetrators for the actions that precipitated His murder. And if they were not practical partakers in His death, forgiveness for their vicarious and voyeuristic complicity including both individual and collective transgressions as an outcome of their destructive, obsessive and irrational cultural, political, ethnic and religious beliefs.

No, they did not ask their 'God', or anyone else to forgive them, for their abominable barbaric behaviours. And no, they did not believe in the sacredness and dignity of humanity. They did not

believe in Christ as an innocent human, or Christ as the Son of the Creator. Yet the Creator forgave them. Yes, by all accounts we can acknowledge the fact and believe that the Creator forgave all these people. They were forgiven despite them not believing, and they were forgiven despite them not asking to be reconciled. We can rest assured that the Creator forgave all of them through and because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

“Forgive them Father for they know not what they do”.

(Luke 23: 34-35)

Vulnerable human beings may find encouragement, solace and inspiration within the meaning of the following wonderful and beautiful verse of 1 Corinthians 1:27-31. But perhaps the sentiments and messages within this verse and others are also very relevant to those individuals in society who are overwhelmingly self-absorbed and self-obsessed manifest in the characteristics of selfishness, greed, arrogance and pride. All humans are imperfect, with personal limitations and weaknesses. But it is those personal imperfections, limitations, and weaknesses, that contribute to humans psychologically and ‘physically’ harming and hurting others, and which requires urgent personal attention.

1 Corinthians 1:27-31, reads:

“God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things and the things that are not, to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before Him. It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus...Let him who boasts boast in the Lord”.

In Psalm 51: 1-7, we read the prayer of forgiveness and joy of David after he had committed adultery with Bathsheba:

“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love, according to your great compassion, blot out my transgressions wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin”.

We too may choose at some point of time in life to reconcile with the understanding and merciful Creator, by privately acknowledging in humility, and with remorse, Self’s personal acts of

transgressions and imperfections, as David did.

We read in Psalm 103:2-4 about David's proclamation:

"Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits, who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion".

The 'God' or Creator we have explored and possibly discovered this far, must be possibly considered from all the available evidence, a 'God' that possesses the attributes and characteristics of an unconditional mystical relational love, mercy and compassion of reconciliation, and not a 'God' motivated by revenge, hate and retribution.

The thief Dismas, turning to Jesus on the cross, said:

"Lord, remember me when thou shalt come into thy kingdom" and Jesus responded: "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise".

(Luke 23: 39-43)

The Myth and Metaphor of Hell and Satan

We read a rather frightening message in a verse written in the Gospel of Mathew:

"The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day-of-judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

(Mathew 12:35-37)

So where does the reality of the concepts of Hell and Satan fit into the real world and universe? Where does the reality of the concepts of Hell and Satan fit into the spiritual world? How does peoples' belief in Hell and Satan fit into the story of the unconditional mystical relational love, intelligence and power of a Creator? Hell is described as eternal post-death punishment. In Christian and Islam

theology, Hell is an eternal place of punishment, but Judaism does not propose such a punishment as the word Hell only appears in the New Testament. In Buddhism and Hinduism, hell is considered a transitory stage in the journey of the soul.

But in contrast to the place called hell, in Christian, Jewish and Muslim theology 'Satan' and 'Devil' are the names given to that concept traditionally said to be the supreme spirit of evil, the supreme spirit of the anti-God/ or Christ. Essentially then, the meanings of the words 'Hell' and 'Satan' become juxtaposed, or symbiotic, just as 'a pea in a pod'. We imagine a Devil called Satan in a place of pain called Hell, and Satan the Devil, who has the flexibility and powers of the Creator/ or 'God'.

Perhaps in our minds we are able to reduce the power of the human meaning of the word Satan to that of the meaning given to the word Satan by Jesus, when He called the apostle Peter, Satan. If Satan was in fact an eternal and supreme spiritual reality, it is most unlikely that Christ would have used such language on any human being, let alone on His apostle Peter. Peter the imperfect 'rock', upon whom Christ wished to build His church.

“But when Jesus turned and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter. “Get behind me, Satan!” He said. “You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men”.
(Mark 8:31-33; Matthew 16:23)

Yes, Jesus called Peter, Satan. If Satan actually existed as some eternal and infinite evil supreme super natural spiritual being, it is inconceivable that the extremely influential Christ would have labelled, branded, maligned and aligned Peter by associating and stigmatising him with such a dire and horrendous entity. Furthermore, considering the fact that the word Satan is written 15 times in the Old Testament, particularly in the book of Job where Job explores his afflictions with regard to his relationship with God. So we are unsure what meaning the apostles drew from the word Satan. The people of that time feared far more God's wrath and punishment, which to them comprised of the existence of an eternal Hell. Their fear of Hell essentially being a place where one would burn forever in the flames of a fire that would never extinguish with a spirit called Satan, rather than fearing alone, a spiritual being, called Satan. So if the meaning

of the word Satan didn't unduly concern them, God's ability to throw them into Hell to be eternally burnt forever, by fire, did. From this powerful scripture verse we may extrapolate the meaning of the word 'Satan' to being a metaphor for acts of human indulgences, imperfections and indiscretions.

Moreover, if Christ was/is truly the Creator, then His crucifixion, death and resurrection has not and cannot have been in vain. But rather, has been unequivocally and categorically without a whisper of doubt, transcended all transgressions, winning victory over all that which may have been perceived as originating from any super natural and supreme evil being. We may consider believing that the events pertaining to the sacrifice and resurrection of Christ have opened the gates of 'heaven' for all peoples, regardless of their imperfections, regardless of their beliefs and regardless of their attitudes.

Finally, it is surely intellectually and spiritually inconceivable that an all-good, all-powerful and, all-knowing Super Natural Being that we may term 'God', or the Creator, the Creator of all that exists, and is 'that which nothing greater can be thought', can create and allow to exist such an entity as, His absolute antithesis. Can allow to exist an intrinsically eternally evil Super Natural Being that has limitless and unrestrained evil powers and influence. Yes, another Super Natural Being, but a Being who is in essence, intrinsically and inherently evil. A Being who is the direct opposite, converse and reverse to all that which the Creator stands for. A Creator, who by definition, has an unfettered and uncompromising transcendent influence and power over all that Is, over all that exists, and over everything that ever was, and over everything that ever will be. It is also surely intellectually and spiritually inconceivable that an all-good, all-powerful and all-knowing Super Natural Being, being the Creator of all that exists, and is 'that which nothing greater can be thought', can create, and allow to exist, such an entity as a place called Hell. A place called Hell, a word meaning a horrific place where the flames never go out, where the fires burn the skin and body forever, and where the spiritual pain continues unbearably forever.

So we can consider that there can be no place in Self's thoughts for a place called Hell, and there can be no place in Self's thoughts for a supreme evil spirit called Satan. In the authors mind, the conventional and traditional beliefs and conceptual meanings of 'Hell'

and ‘Satan’ in terms of the eternal punishment of fire, and the supernatural power of the ‘devil’, is not spiritually, intellectually and/or rationally conceivable.

With the above sentiments in mind, and with information espoused by philosophers and theologians together with Self’s innate consciousness, common sense, and a reflective introspective and intuitive spirit. And with the knowledge from the gifted mediums and afterlife channelers, John Edwards, and George Anderson of New York, and which the film *The Sixth Sense* (1999) was based, and whose credibility has been tested at Universities. We can consider permitting ourselves to believe that any judgment in the next world is not one where we are banished to isolation, to suffer forever in the fires of a Hell, with a devil, called Satan. But any such judgments and purification required are rather more likely to be of the dimension of a conscious emotional and spiritual experience whereby Self personally, through emotions and thoughts, experiences any ‘physical’ or psychological distress, trauma and pain Self may have inflicted on others. Such a consciously purifying process, and most likely, cognitive and emotionally ‘painful’ experience, may be voluntary in accordance with the dignity and sacredness of Self as an independent and sovereign Being. A voluntary process of personal ‘purification’, where Self well no doubt choose to acknowledge past transgressions and repair any damaged interpersonal relationships, for the enhancement of Self’s conscious and personal satisfaction, self-awareness and self-improvement.

The idea and image of a ‘Hell’ and ‘Satan’ may indeed be a metaphor that adequately expresses the evil of the horrors and pain inflicted through the choice of behaviours visited upon humans by humans. But spirits called Satan (the devil) and places called Hell could be said to be essentially biblical metaphors to describe humans’ choice to behave evilly. Words like Hell and Satan, have been given literal meanings, creating myths invented and given credibility and life through their misinterpretation by preachers’ over-zealous interpretation of the stories in the Bible. These stories have given power and authority to the writers and the priests as they describe how God’s anger from human disobedience, and sin, will be expressed in harsh and unforgiving punishments. Therefore, these threats of eternal psychological ‘afterlife’ pain inflicted by a Creator should not be taken seriously. To the authors mind the human concepts of Hell

and Satan do not, and have never existed, for 'God' is Absolute Mystical Relational Love. 'God' is Superior and 'God' is Greater than having to rely on and resort to "scare tactics" to enforce and coerce a specific line of human behaviour from the threat, and subsequent fear, of Self's personal eternal damnation authorised by the Creator. Sure, humans can behave selfishly, destructively and even, "evilly," but God does not send people to an eternal place called Hell with a spirit called Satan.

Apart from being a biblical or religious metaphor turned myth, rationally the concept of hell does not fit into the character of a 'God' we that we could understand and relate to or would even want to know. Further, the idea of Hell is, by definition, conceivably simplistic, gratuitous and convenient as a spiritual 'tool' used for spiritual abuse and the oppression of Self. The concepts of Hell and Satan are spiritual 'tools' that can, have been and are, used as leverage for personal compliance and conformation to cultures, cults and religions. If the eternal fires of Hell did exist, all people would intellectually, spiritually and emotionally suffer, if indeed Hell was a reality, because if a son, daughter, sister, brother, wife, husband, partner or friend were to be eternally punished in the fires of Hell, wouldn't this also represent eternal excruciating pain for everyone relationally connected.

However, having said this, instead of being sent to Hell send ourselves to a place of "just purification" - through our actions on Earth - where we experience temporarily, the 'physical', cognitive and emotional pain and suffering we have inflicted upon others. Although, there may possibly be a position or place, after death, away from the love and light of the Creator for those who wish to remain isolated, proud, arrogant and full of their own self-importance. There may be people who wish to go to a place without the good, a place without the truth, a place without the mystical relational love of the Creator. But if this stubbornness and arrogance exists it can only possibly be conceived as being short term and temporary, until the unconditional mystical relational love, compassion and light of the Creator is experienced, and thus, personally desired and willed by Self though free choice.

However, the beginning of the afterlife may also be the time and place to have the chance and experience to change and shape aspects of Self's personality from what one was, to what one wants or

wishes to be, in light of experiencing first-hand the reality of the Creator. If we have been partially selfish and destructive, we will understand what our potential may have been. We may more fully realize and understand how we could have behaved differently to Self and others. We will see and understand what our true potential could have been, and this understanding will be personally challenging in itself. We will ask ourselves, “Why, why, why did I feel, think and behave like “that” towards “this” person,” and “Why, why, why didn’t I feel, think and behave like “this” towards “that” person”.

So Self should never, without reflection and thought, do anything - if ‘physical’ death should unexpectedly visit upon Self tomorrow or in the next week – Self would regret. After Self’s ‘physical’ death previous selfish and inconsiderate behaviours may be now exponentially experienced by Self’s Self, because these past experiences will incongruently contrast strongly with the mystical relational love inherent in the experience of life on the “other side”. The “other side” being the personal real time experience for Self must also include experiencing that which must be inherently fulfilling and satisfying regarding intra-personal and interpersonal relationships between Spirits. But the spiritual difference between what Self was and what “is now” (in the afterlife) may necessitate the need for Self to be personally ‘purified’ proportional and parallel to any anguish and pain that may have been caused by Self to others. This personal experience of Self’s self reflection and assessment will most likely be embraced warmly as a function of the essence of creation through the internalization of the informed experience of the reality of the Creator. This may in turn, allow Self to become consciously authentic, but without changing the intrinsic dignity and essence of Self, Self’s sovereignty and Self’s personality, but for the better.

But it is never too late in this world to change, to have a change of heart, to have a change of attitude, to change Self’s perceptions about Self and how Self treats others. Realistically, if we wait till we ‘pass over’ to change (if we need to), it may take longer and be more painful in the next world, than it would on Earth, to work through Self’s personal transgressions, such as pride, arrogance and selfishness, etc. It may take “eons” - only the Creator truly knows - in the worst cases of abuse to others, to reconcile one’s spiritual and personal attitudes that enable the Self’s spirit, soul, and personality the chance to choose to partake in personal reflection and thus, self-

awareness and personal 'purification'. The Other Side, a place of personal consciousness, where Self grows is in 'tune' with the 'tune' of the Creator's kingdom. The Other Side, a place that amplifies Self's personal consciousness, for the capacity to acknowledge the true spirit of relational love and compassion over and above a personal spirit of selfishness, meanness and ill will.

Believe it or not, being in this 'world' on this Earth may be the best place to come to terms with Self, to work through Self's deficits and shortcomings, to learn to do 'good', to be kind, and be compassionate towards others. This is because this world can be so difficult to live in with its many challenges and stressors. But changing Self in this world is perhaps also more rewarding, because we have not yet seen the Absolute Truth, we have not yet seen the Absolute Light of the Creator. We have not yet seen the Creator face to face and at first hand. Nevertheless, whichever 'side' we're on, Heaven or Earth, it must be considered that the Creator still gives us the chance to change, grow and reconcile with Self and others, which likely, everyone desires, notwithstanding that desire may possibly be subconscious, deeply hidden and/or resistant. But the choice to change, the chance to change to do better, the decision to change to improve, is always one's own to make. Christ's life portraying His teachings of compassion and forgiveness, was not driven by force or coercion, to compel others to comply with Him. But based on mystical relational love and understanding as the motivation for voluntary personal change. We have evolved with a brain that allows us to experience the gift of consciousness, intellect, emotion, freewill and choice. Enabling us to contemplate the existence of a Creator and voluntarily behave as we choose to.

We are now able to make the decision to love Self and others, because we have been loved. Perhaps because we are loved, firstly, by the Creator through the creation of the universe and creation of the existence of the sacredness, dignity and sovereignty of human existence, and secondly, mystically relationally loved by Christ Jesus' (Son of the Creator) birth, life, death and resurrection. Through the existence of Christ's birth, life, death and resurrection we have the potential to experience knowledge of the Way, the Truth, and the Life, being that which is unconditional compassionate, and being that which gives hope and confidence in Self's immortality. Through Christ's sacrifices, miracles, examples and teachings we can perhaps

understand more fully the way, the truth, and the life of living life to the full. Through Christ's life we can perhaps experience the essence and meaning of the words 'unconditional love' as a reflection of the mystical relational compassion of the Creator. Through Christ's miracles, examples and teachings, we can perhaps experience the Creator's mystical love for Self, so that Self in turn can love Self and others, so that others can also love themselves and so, others. Because they have first been loved by Someone and/or by someone.

CHAPTER 9

WHY PAIN AND SUFFERING?

Mystery of Suffering and Pain
Insight to 'God' the Creator
Order and Design Cause and Effect
Scripture and Suffering
Puppets on a String
Meaning from Pain
Pain and Relationships

Mystery of Suffering and Pain

In light of the above information in which has been discussed the description and concepts of 'God', which may have allowed the intellectual and spiritual experience to internalize in some small way 'God's' incredible and fathomless love and forgiveness for humankind, it now seems appropriate to explore the reason and meaning of the perceived contradiction of human suffering. This investigation into suffering may thus help to disabuse the frequently held notion that the two verbs, "His love," and "our suffering," are irrational and contradictory in terms and diametrically opposed in meaning.

So then, how do we answer this age-old existential question about the reason and meaning of suffering? Is there a rational answer to why humans experience pain or is it a mystery, and/ or the Creator's idea of a sick joke or weird sense of humour? We are surely mystified and often shocked by the magnitude of suffering, pain and tragedy experienced by humans in this world. We are justifiably mystified, by the incongruence associated with the concept of a loving God, a benevolent Creator who seems to allow painful human experiences of suffering. Human suffering from horrendous barbaric and bloody wars, including World War II, where alone, up to 70 million people were killed, many of them civilians, but soldiers too.

Soldiers, who are trained to kill, and who are trained to be killed are human beings too. We are psychologically distraught, by 'life taking' killer famines, devastating floods, and catastrophic diseases, such as the Spanish Flu, which killed up to 40 million people. We are psychologically devastated, by the human destruction from killer earthquakes and tsunamis. We are psychologically mortified, by atrocious and indiscriminate acts of violence, rape, murder, robbery, despot dictators, corporate and individual fraud and involuntary accidents, which all prevail without any evidence of God's intervention or concern.

And why would a loving God, allow also to exist, inter-relational and intra-relational pride, arrogance and violence, personal greed and selfish gratification, arbitrary sexual abuse and ethnic and racial discrimination and cleansing. Why would God allow all the pain and grief that accompanies such impropriety? Indeed, we could go on and on, describing the acts and events that cause pain and suffering to humans on this planet. The suffering in the world caused by people to people may rightly stifle and/ or contradict our belief in the existence of a 'God', let alone our belief in the existence of a loving 'God'.

But as humans in search for the truth, and who may believe in the possibility of the existence of a God, we want to know why this God allows people to suffer such psychological trauma, such emotional and physical agony and grief.

It is interesting to note, that if we have decided we do not believe in a 'God' for what-ever reason, or because of the dilemma of the contradiction of a "loving God" in relation to human pain and suffering we may, or may not, have the problem regarding the question of the existence of a 'God'. Because this belief in a 'God', may be predicated on the belief of a 'God' who is by nature or by divine reason indifferent to human suffering. But if we do not believe in a 'God' solely because of our incomprehension to the existence of human suffering, we would not now have the need for this question about a 'loving God' allowing human suffering. Now that we do not believe in a 'God', we have no Creator to blame and who could we be angry at?

If there were no Creator, no Designer, and no intrinsic Order of and in the world, life would be nothing more than a random collection of meaningless events and fate that just happens. There may be no

such thing as the concept of fairness, no such concept as truth, and no such thing as a sense of love and compassion, or goodness and badness. There would be no absolute values and no ultimate purpose to life and living. Life may be a futile existence without reason and ultimate purpose. We could not feel angry or bitter at a non-existent 'God'. We would live life as if we will live forever, forgetting that every day may be our last. Or we may live life as if it were our last day. We may behave in a way that would gain us as much as we could get, to satisfy our desires, needs and wants, bringing us pleasure, despite such behaviour being at the expense of others, whilst disregarding the negative affects of our gratuitous actions upon others. And when we are eventually dead and buried, or cremated, that would be the end. There would be nothing more and nothing less, for there would be nothing else. There would be no consciousness, personality, thought or emotion. No accountability or responsibility would be expected or required. There would be no experience of love, no spark of light, no feeling of spirit, no memory of life, no experience of past, present or future, there would be absolutely nothing and no existence at all

But we are human beings with invisible, but real consciousness, thoughts and emotions and may believe that we (spirit and personality) were made in the image and likeness of the one who created. We want to believe in the ability to possess these unique and innate qualities and characteristics with their specific higher transcendent purposes as the core and essence of Self's unique and special consciousness, awareness and being. Therefore, we want to believe in a 'God' and Creator, we want to believe in a 'God' and Creator of truth, justice, mercy, love and eternal immortality. So as part of our informed journey to finding evidence of God's existence we seek a rational answer to this cognitive dilemma caused by the incongruent and contradicting concept of a "loving God" as creator, and the pain and suffering experienced by the created. We too will experience pain and suffering at some point in our lives and we want rational and sensible answers that are compatible with our belief in the possibility of a fair, just, caring and loving 'God' and Creator.

Insight to 'God' the Creator

But unfortunately, it is true. Thousands and thousands of people die every year through the natural disasters of floods, volcano eruptions, earthquakes, tsunamis, accidents, diseases and illnesses. Millions of people die every year through malnourishment and starvation. Hundreds of thousands of people die every year from wars, genocide, ethnic and religious cleansing and arbitrary violence. Yes, millions of people die in one-way or another, through the voluntary hands of humans, or through the design and order of God's creation of the Universe, Solar System and planet Earth. Human beings are, as is all creation, including the universe, designed and ordered to have a temporary, limited, and finite 'physical' life. We will all die sooner, or later. People leave the face of this Earth, leaving their friends, relatives, and families to mourn and grieve the trauma and distress of their death, and their physical extinction from this planet. 'Physical' death is visited upon humans indiscriminately. 'Physical' death can 'cut' people down at any time, in any place causing devastating sadness, grief and trauma to friends and family. But remember the universe is made from atoms which consist themselves of subatomic particles of energy. All existence is made from atom-energy, which when our body 'dies' means that the atoms are restructuring their energy resulting in a change in their intrinsic function.

Can we gain insight to 'God' from suffering and pain? If we believe in a 'God,' in a Creator, as the provider and designer of life, then we can rightfully blame the Creator, placing the event of death right at the feet of 'God'. So how can we reconcile 'God' with love and creation, with the trauma, suffering, pain and tragedy of abuse, suffering and death? Perhaps we can reconcile 'God' and these events by asking about what inferences can be made from the perceived incongruity of 'God' and the experience of grief and pain, of life and death, of living and dying, of existing and not existing, of being alive one minute and dead the next. Perhaps we can infer from the diabolical harm towards children and humans from acts of rape, violence and murder, the Creator does not intervene in human choice, and human freewill, no matter how sick, evil and depraved these actions are, no matter how much pain and suffering is caused by these

human choices. From this mysterious relational experience between 'God' and humans, perhaps we can anticipate 'God's being, God's truth, God's essence and God's will in the potentiality of the sacredness and integrity of human independence, freewill and sovereignty that has been bestowed on humankind.

Perhaps we can infer from the reality of human 'physical' death that human life, by design and order, is relatively short within the context of the timeframe of creation, the planets, solar system and universe. We can infer that generally, although we perceive life and humans to be precious, 'physical' death is inevitable and often comes unexpectedly causing much distress and sadness. We can infer from the inevitability of human 'physical' death that life on Earth, was not designed intended to be a permanent and infinite state but temporary and relatively short. We can infer that the Creator's intentions are often not the same as ours, and the Creator's ways are often not our ways.

It could be said that most people, given the opportunity, given a comfortable and satisfying life, would much rather live longer, perhaps live life forever without growing old, without getting sick, without ever dying, driven by the fear of 'physical' death, the fear of the unknown, and the fear of the loss and cessation of consciousness and Self. But this is obviously not the Creator's idea, will, or design and order of creation, and perhaps through belief in the birth, death and resurrection of Christ, we too can have some significant insight into the 'mind' of 'that which nothing greater can be thought'. Through the acknowledgment and awareness of the design and order of creation, and the reality of Christ's resurrection, we may perceive the possibility of the immortality of Self and therefore, Self's consciousness and personality, as the defining reason for human creation. And from this insight, allow Self to unshackle the burdensome chains of personal fear driven by misinformation and innocent ignorance manifest through Self's thoughts and emotions regarding personal annihilation, obliteration and disintegration.

So at face value, from a human perspective, we may also infer from the event of human 'physical' death, where humans are born, build a life and then grow old and die, that the Creator is unkind, malicious, unjust and irrational. But if we can delve a little deeper into the Creator's mind, if you will, into Gods intentions of design, order and plan, we may come to realize that conception, birth, life and

death is really just the beginning of Self and Self's conscious existence. We may come to appreciate that it is only the 'physical' body that grows old and dies, and not the invisible spirit, a spirit characterised by Self's consciousness, awareness, thoughts, emotions and personality. We may have personally experienced that our invisible spirit never grows old in relation to our chronological demographic age, but always feels younger, but it may become depressed or tired, and the spirit can undoubtedly mature with knowledge through the time of life's experiences, but is yet, also immortal whose existence is eternal and will live/ exist forever on.

The concept and idea of the immortal invisible spirit's life after 'physical' death may be supported by not only the evidence depicted in the events of Christ and His 'physical' death and spiritual resurrection, but by the definition of spirit, and personality, etcetera. The Creator Himself allowed His Son to experience 'physical' death and the pain, suffering and humiliation inflicted by others, but not to personally and spiritually perish. Christ's invisible and immortal consciousness, spirit and personality rose from death, rose from the dead, a spirit and personality embodied by a glorified body. This may give us hope and optimism of the existence of a life after 'physical' death if we so choose to consider in the reality of such an experience.

Design, Order and Plan, Cause and Effect

When we go in search for the answer to the question of 'God' in relation to pain and suffering, we come to realise that because the world was created with the phenomena of design, order and plan, there is a result and reaction for every action and a consequence for every deed and behaviour. The affect of this design, order and plan of creation is primarily the cause of the natural tragedies and disasters we experience in catastrophes such as diseases, epidemics, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis and volcano eruptions. However, there is not a lot we can do about natural disasters that cause catastrophic havoc and chaos, suffering and death. Although through science, we are slowly gaining the upper hand through control, prevention and intervention with new remedies, resources, medicines, ideas and concepts, and the improved ability to pre-warn of impending disasters and diseases and

advanced strategies to immunize against these.

The design, order and plan of creation, is primarily the cause of, and the reason why 'human made' suffering has such an influential psychological impact on people. Indeed, not only do the consequences of the dynamics of creation influence the 'physical' world of atom-energy with all the "acts of God" we experience with their particular repercussions, but the consequences of a world created with "design, order and plan" also carry through to the metaphysical and spiritual world in terms of our psychological well-being and interaction with others. But there is one big difference; natural disasters that cause pain, suffering and death, are usually involuntary and uncontrollable. They are not relationally vindictive or malicious. Whilst, human behaviours causing pain, suffering, and death, are more often voluntary and controllable acts that are relationally vindictive and essentially personal. Once we humans choose a certain course of action or behaviour the principles of cause and effect take over at will with regard to the suffering of others caused by such behaviours.

We are either directly or indirectly responsible for the course of actions we decide to embark on and therefore responsible for the consequences of harm or well-being that inevitably result from these 'human made' actions of doing good, or less than good, to others. So as people with freewill and choice we control and have power over our actions and therefore the ability to cause happiness or unhappiness for Self and others. This is, we have the capability to cause hurt in another person, who like us, has a fundamental essence to their being, an essence, which consists of consciousness, thoughts, and feelings. It has been said that "hurt people", "hurt" people – because they live the way they have learnt - but although this may explain some peoples' maladaptive actions it is in no way an acceptable excuse to justify the continuation of an escalating spiral of human destruction and devastation.

We need to take hold of our senses and with the support of others, pursue counseling if need be, and be determined to choose, that which is good for Self and others. Otherwise, we will surely feel less than 'good' within, and experience the pain and suffering inflicted by us upon others as part of our personal purification when in the next world of the afterlife. As an alternative to the chaos caused from the destruction of others, let us instead choose to learn to love others. Can

we learn to love Self so that we can love others? Because loving others is predicated on loving Self and loving others is about others loving us, and others. If we have never been loved and so can't love Self or others, perhaps we can begin to think about loving because the Creator has loved us first.

'God' loved us first, firstly, by creating creation and creating the existence of human beings with consciousness, and secondly, by creating their immortality evident through the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of the Son of 'God'. Perhaps we can love Self and others because without love there is nothing. Without love, life is nothing. Without love, would there be anything left in life, but sadness, isolation and despair. Perhaps we can love because we can relate to Christ as the Son of God, and therefore to His teachings. Because as Jesus said, "What you do to the least of these my brethren (sisters and brothers) you do to me". So everything we do to another person, whether it be based on kindness, hatred or indifference, whether it produces pain or joy, we are in fact doing it to the Creator, because, we are all made through and by God, in the Creator's image and likeness of soul and spirit.

Scripture and Suffering

Christ says in the Gospels that natural tragedies including disabilities also show the power and majesty of God and are in themselves not a result of transgressing or doing less than good. Christ also uses pain and suffering to emphasise the reality of human spiritual existence.

When the disciples asked Jesus why a certain man was blind, Jesus answered:

"So that the power of God's work can be displayed in him and not because he or his family has sinned".
(John 9:3)

We often see in those with disabilities the gift to strengthen their other senses that compensate for those that are of little use. Disabilities can encourage people to excel in areas where others

haven't dared to explore. So God's gift to humans is diverse, none of us are the same, we are all unique, different and imperfect, and all have our own personal journey to travel in this life, to do the best (with the support of others) we can with what we have been given. In the Gospel of Luke we read about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with that of their sacrifices and where Christ said:

“Do you suppose these Galileans who suffered like that were greater sinners than any other Galilean? They were not I tell you, no, but unless you repent you will all perish as they did.”
(Luke 13:1-5)

Although this statement seems to be a very harsh one if read literally, Jesus Christ is perhaps saying in a metaphorical way that unrepentant sinners will suffer in a way that humans perceive death as being painful. The human perception of death, the experience of 'physical', intellectual and emotional suffering, envisaged to be perhaps experienced at one's death. And so, this perceived experience of pain at death may be revisited as a response to doing harm to others, and include, in the next life, the propensity to experience for ourselves, the pain we have caused others to suffer.

When the tower in Siloam fell on 18 innocent people killing them, Jesus said to His disciples; “Do you suppose that they were more guilty than all the other people living in Jerusalem? They were not I tell you, but unless you repent you will all perish as they did”. This verse seems to carry a similar message to the above aforementioned teaching. Here we could also interpret that Jesus recognizes, by inference, that the 'physical' suffering caused through disabilities and death is not a punishment for any fault or 'wrong-doing'. Jesus is espousing that there is another 'life' to consider, other than the visible and tangible 'life' we encounter and experience. A spiritual-psychological life manifest through consciousness, personality, intellect, and emotions, and impacted upon by the imposition of others' behaviours. An inferred subtle message may also be that there is life after 'physical' death where people will continue to live in a spiritual state of immortal eternity, as opposed to existing in this present earthly state.

The same sentiments about there not being a correlation between suffering imposed by God because of 'sin' are told in the Old

Testament's story of Job, which protests against the belief at the time that prosperity was a sign of God's favour for good living, and that trouble and adversity were the sign of God's judgment upon bad living. However, as we have perhaps discovered on our journey in the quest for information, transgressions against others and Self create their own pain and suffering, because of the laws of cause and effect that are affiliated to the unique design, order and plan of the Creator in this world.

Puppets on a String

But why doesn't the Creator intervene and prevent the horrific and painful accidents and tragedies originating from both natural disasters and voluntary human behaviours in our daily lives? Firstly, there appears to be no concrete evidence to suggest that God intervenes in any way on a daily basis to prevent suffering in the world. There is enough evidence to entertain the possibility that 'God' created the universe, and created it for a specific purpose by His will, and through His "word", designed, ordered and planed through cause and effect. And the outcome of the dynamics of the process creating the characteristics of evolution, including, consciousness, personality, free will, together with the possibility of the Incarnation, and thus, the resurrection.

These phenomena must be, in and by themselves, sufficient evidence for the answers, as they have been considered by 'God' to be the ultimate and necessary intervention required by the Creator for humanity. Without the threat and reality of pain and suffering, we may live life in total comfort, in utopia, without the need for developing our strengths and acknowledging our weaknesses with regard to interpersonal relationships, or even the need to develop interpersonal relationships, or the activity of intra personal self-awareness, and retrospective and real time personal reflection.

Further, without knowledge of the resurrection we would perhaps be unable to conceive the possibility of an immortal afterlife. Apart from humans being conscious and independent individuals, as opposed to animals or robots, would there be any other way humans could experience emotions of pain and suffering, thereby appreciating also, the cognitions and emotions of joy and happiness? Would

humans ever be able to grow and develop as conscious, spiritual, emotional and cognitive beings made for greater things, than existing as inert biological entities living life in this world, without pain and suffering?

If the Creator intervened in our daily lives, interfering with those gifts of consciousness, cognition and emotion, would there be any need for the ability of our being to make choices and for humans to possess the power and freedom of free will and choice? Without consciousness, cognition, emotion and freewill, wouldn't we be incapacitated as if puppets and plastic dolls that are unable to learn from experiences, that have no feeling, that have no sense of Self? We would be inanimate, as good as dead, unable to appreciate Self and life, unable to learn and grow from Self's and others' mistakes. Without these 'gifts' of freewill and choice, of consciousness, we would be living in a vacuum, a static equilibrium, unable to think or feel, unaware of any feelings, pleasant or painful, unable to choose not to inflict suffering on others and unable to choose to do good to others. We would be unable to exercise the higher transcendent virtues and qualities of goodness through the characteristics of relational love, reconciliation and compassion. We would be individuals who could not enter into beneficial, productive and significant relationships with others, including Self, and the Creator.

However, much suffering could be avoided if it wasn't for human vices, vices of greed, hatred, jealousy, selfishness, arrogance, and pride. Ultimately, sadly, it is men's and women's ability and desire to choose wrong and evil over 'goodness' that perpetuates much of humankind's suffering. Evidence may suggest that 'God', through Jesus Christ, has taught us what 'God' is like and what He wants us to be like, as people made in His image and likeness, made with 'His' transcendent qualities and attributes.

Meaning from Pain

No matter how you look at it, meaning cannot come from the pain and grief suffered through the knowledge of children and loved one's, being abused and murdered, except for the realization that humans have the ability to treat other humans in ways that are far

worse than the ways animals treat each other. And that humans have an inner strength that they realise they never possessed. However, in less traumatic experiences of suffering there may come meaning. In the parable about the blind man, Jesus shows that suffering can provide new perspectives on life in the way we look at the world and ourselves. Without life's contrasts and challenges there would be the risk of living in an emotional and intellectual vacuum, a plane of spiritual boredom without the opportunity for personal development.

If we had never seen or experienced disabilities in Self or others, like sickness, it is likely that we would not appreciate the gift of health. If we had never experienced blindness in others we would never know the existence of the ability of those who are blind to deal with the pain and inconvenience of not seeing, their courage and tenacity, and their ability to compensate through the heightening of other senses. We would be unable to appreciate in those with disabilities the ability to live in courage and bravery rising, above and beyond, their adversity. If we had never experienced or seen hunger, we would not appreciate a satisfying meal and the gift of food and water on the table. If we had never been 'physically' or emotionally sick we would not understand or appreciate our health and the gift of a healthy mind and body and the realization that humans are materially and in essence fragile and vulnerable with a 'use by date', so to speak. If we had never been lonely, perhaps we would never appreciate the companionship and friendship of others and the need for others' support thereby realizing the fact that we are social beings. If we have never had a "bad" day, we would not appreciate a 'good' day and the contrasting difference between the two contributing to personal and psychological well-being.

It seems that perhaps we can only appreciate the wonders of creation and the Creator because of our personal perception of the world from the experience of all the contrasts, challenges, joys and pain it has offered and dealt to us. We can only really comprehend others' pain if we have ourselves, also experienced pain, and through this adverse experience, we can acquire the virtue of compassion. As survivors of suffering, we become wounded healers, as our own suffering brings forth compassion. Through the experience of pain comes the ability to radiate genuine empathy, support, love and friendship to the sick, aged, helpless, lonely, depressed, oppressed and

exploited, just as Jesus did 2000 years ago. Just as Christ still does today, through the spirit of His followers and the individual and collective behaviours and attitudes of love they disseminate.

Suffering and pain also sharpen our awareness of happiness. We are much more joyous about the things we regain that were lost than if they had never been lost. It is with special joy that we hear how the lost sheep is brought home upon the exultant shepherd's shoulders. And when the storm tosses the sailors from side to side and threatens to wreck the ship, all are pale with the threat of death. But as the sky grows clear and the sea calms all are much more wild and ecstatic with exultation than they were before the fear. When a friend is sick and his/her pulse threatens danger; all who want him/her to be better feel as if they shared his/her sickness. He/she begins to recover, though he/she cannot yet walk as strongly as before there is more joy than there was when he/she was still well and could walk properly. We have seen this emotion in the story of him who had been dead, and brought back to life. We have seen it in the story of him who had been lost, and found. So we could say that perhaps, universally the greater the experience of pain potentially the greater the experience of joy.

A New Zealand woman, and film producer, who was viciously attacked and beaten by an intruder in her home, says that suffering and pain can be likened to the pearl syndrome. When an oyster incurs an irritant, like from a piece of sand, it turns it into something beautiful, a pearl. She says that when bad things happen, we have to take hold of them and turn them into something that is the reverse of what they are. Otherwise, Self may not move forward but become depressed or bitter and twisted. Instead, Self needs to attempt to move forward by turning bad experiences into good experiences and not dwell on things past, but on Self's ability to be creative, artistic, industrious or simply 'just being' with extreme personal challenges. Through pain and tragedy comes the ability to acknowledge the gift of life, comparing the contrast of pain with the gift of potential joy and happiness expressed through the gift of human emotion and intellect that can identify the differentiation of thoughts and feelings about good and bad experiences. Negative things happen, but we could die tomorrow, so we should concentrate on the positive things.

Heather Gemmen, 33, in her book *Startling Beauty*, tells of her horrific, filthy, petrifying ordeal at being savagely raped in the

dark with a knife at her neck by an intruder in her own bed, while her husband was out at an evening meeting. But the rape had left her pregnant and a morning-after pill she had taken on hospital advice had not worked. Although Heather is fervently anti-abortion, she could not tolerate the thought of having her violator's baby. Her husband wanted her to have a termination and, after days of agonising, she agreed. Privately, she could not bear the thought of killing the innocent by-product of a terrible crime. In desperation she tried to find parents who would adopt the baby, but the thought of another couple carrying away her own flesh and blood brought the lightening-bolt realisation that she had to keep the baby. The value in the decision to keep the baby is, underpinned by the fact that, because Heather's attacker was black and she is white, Rachael is of mixed race. Heather describes Rachael's existence as having a healing power. She wants other victims (survivors) of rape to know that rape need not be the end of their life; that beauty can come from ugliness. Rachael says to her mother, 'I'm so sad about what that man did to you', and Heather says, 'Yes, it is sad, but I'm so glad I have you'.

It is a paradoxical enigma that these real human life experiences are evidence that perhaps it is very possible that good things can come from bad/ evil things, that good can be made from bad/ evil, and that something bad and evil can be turned and become something good.

Pain and Relationships

David Watson an English preacher, healer and cancer victim, says, that in suffering maybe God is trying to tell us something, perhaps trying to give us a chance to get our lives in order, to consider new perimeters and horizons, to grow and develop and make adjustments, to put wronged relationships right, to put our house in order.

Mary Magdalene is a good example of how one's personality and psychological well-being of 'physical' and emotional torment can be changed, reinvented and redefined through the love and support of others who have a genuine and unconditional concern. Her psycho-spirituality was 'crippled' by the possession of seven 'demons' which were cast out by Jesus (Luke 8:2). Although the meaning of the word

“demons” is most likely a metaphor, or misunderstanding by the writers in relation to perhaps depression or a defense mechanism resulting from the distress from being chastised, discounted, persecuted and minimized, because of her standing as an unmarried woman in the culture of the community of those times. Another example of psycho-spiritual change is from the Samaritan woman at the Well (John 4:7-42) who had lived with many husbands and men, and who may have been a slave to the devotion of false intimacy.

In Jesus, however, she found a new dimension to life, a potential dimension that was dormant while her limited human Self struggled for personal and spiritual ‘love’ by fulfilling her immediate emotional and ‘physical’ needs through spontaneous and superficial carnal encounters. But through her encounter with Jesus, her perception and experience of love, trust, compassion and genuine relationship, exceeded that experienced by her from the instant pleasure and satisfaction that she endeavoured to procure from the act of repetitive superficial ‘physical’ intimate encounters. It may be that her experience of true love and trust from the One who loved her first was far more inspiring, rewarding and meaningful. The love she experienced from this interrelationship with Jesus was significant enough to be internalised and processed within, fostering a personal, emotional, intellectual and spiritual sensitivity that realized and quenched her thirst of that which she had been seeking in ‘physical’ encounters and of that which she was intended and made.

This spiritual and relational experience of love sourced through her interpersonal relationship with the perfect love and compassion of Jesus, was the basis upon which she was able to recognize and identify within, a sense of inner peace and joy. From the interaction of Jesus’ mystical relational love, acceptance, compassion and forgiveness for her and all that she outwardly represented to Him, she was able to instill in herself the desire and ability to attain the higher transcendent qualities and virtues required for peaceful living. The experience of this authentic relationship between herself and Jesus fostered within her the ability and need to feel worthy, confident and independent, thus building her sense of dignity and self-esteem. Further, from this experience with Jesus, she identified within herself a new sense of integrity and an increase in her capacity to love, accept and forgive herself, and others. She also found within, a spirit of genuine intimacy, warmth and care, for Self and others. These newly

found virtues of doing that for which she was made replaced the debilitating spiritual characteristics of guilt and shame generated from the residue of past experiences. Of course, these personal experiences of transformation from these women's personal encounters with Jesus obviously would apply to men as well.

No matter how you look at it, you cannot extract an ounce of good from the blatant abuse and murder of children and humans. The only thing we learn from these abominations is the realization of how bad humans can treat other humans, acting worse than the animals they evolved from. However, in many instances of tragedy and trauma good can come from bad, and so a depth of personality and sense and awareness of spirituality can come from pain and suffering. This is because pain and suffering can emanate the process that drives the strengthening of attitudes characterised by courage and integrity, and as a result, growth of the spirit, which allows the discovery of new perspectives on living life that may include the psychological characteristics of compassion and reconciliation.

Pain and suffering can have the potential to transform personal arrogance and pride into humility and emotional and spiritual integrity. From the perceived sense of personal meaninglessness and psychological frustration from the experience of pain comes the desire to search for an answer to alleviate the state of spiritual and 'physical' trauma and alienation. Ultimately, the inevitable transformations arising from that which is 'less than good' and that which is painful, has the propensity to transform into personal development and spiritual refinement, strengthening a loving relationship with others and perhaps also with "that which nothing greater can be thought". The power of belief, and having an authentic relationship with the Creator is illustrated by Augustine, when he says of his pain:

"My best friend died and my heart was black with grief. The things we had done together were sheer torment without him, my eyes were restless looking for him, but he was not there. I hated all places because he was not in them. But blessed and happy is the man that loves thee, O God, and his friend that dwell in thee, for he alone loses none that is dear to him if all are dear in God who is never lost," (Sheed & Ward, 1978, page 53).

Without the unique and specific dimensions that activate one's

personal spiritual resources for a belief and hope in an eternal immortal after life, particular problems of our existence related to our existence here on earth could fill us with despair. Indiscriminant pain, suffering and death in this world could easily be experienced as infinitely and desperately tragic if there were ultimately a final and definitive cessation of Self and Self's consciousness at the point of 'physical' death. Pain and suffering in this world would be unbearable if there was an arbitrary termination of all emotions and thoughts, an arbitrary termination of Self and Self's consciousness and personality when 'physically' dead and buried. Our response to pain, suffering, and death could be exacerbated by, the thought and concept of a meaningless and temporal life without immortality. And with which particular perception, we would perhaps be impelled to savor the pleasures of the world, and to save ourselves, at the expense of the consideration of others, together with all the imbibed pride, arrogance and selfishness needed to achieve such ego-centered goals. Sadly, resulting from wanting to save Self in this life, possessing all the perceived material pleasures of this world, the end would come justify the means; and human beings would become used and abused as the tools and the means to attain such a materially desired end.

But perhaps we do believe in a Supernatural Being, a 'God', a Creator, and so with this belief perhaps come a belief in a life of hope, a life of meaning and a life of purpose. Needless to say, humans were not made to be used as a means towards an end, but are perhaps beings made in the image and likeness of 'God' who possess the gifts of reason, emotion, and free-will as a function of the dignity bestowed them. All people therefore, have the natural right to be recognised as unique, free, and independent beings, with the integrity to be both responsible and accountable juxtaposing individual rights. So it makes good sense that all humans owe to one another a duty of respect and care through acceptance, respect and non-judgement with regard to each other's personal differences and individuality, including cultures and beliefs. Rather than being fearful and threatened by the differences and diversities in and of others, choose to personally celebrate and embrace any differences by interacting with others in and with 'love' and compassion and thus subsequently honouring and respecting the sacred integrity of every individual. Choosing to live in 'love' and compassion towards others, perhaps in the same way Christ 2000 years taught, exemplified through His

flawless teachings and examples as recorded, sometimes less than flawlessly, and read in the Bible. And choosing to live with others with a sentiment and mindset guided and framed by 'love' and compassion as exemplified by Christ first mystically relationally loving humans. Indeed choosing to live life by living with 'love' and compassion for not only others, but for Self, as the Creator may well have communicated by the following sentiments; "Doing to others as you would have them do to you", and, "Love others as you love yourself", and, "Love others as I have loved you".

Indeed, the centering of Self, where Self looks and reflects within Self's consciousness, personality, attitudes and values, with self-pride, acceptance and love, notwithstanding self's ability for imperfection, but instead embracing imperfections as being the inevitable part of the human condition from having evolved from primate. But also acknowledging Self's ability as a unique intelligent and autonomous being to choose to improve on Self's thoughts and emotions, and thus, Self's attitudes, values and behaviours as a manifestation of being an intrinsically feeling thinking person with freewill and choice. So that ultimately, when we perceive other people, when we perceive other human beings with Self's consciousness, with Self's eyes, with Self's emotions, with Self's thoughts, and with Self's 'heart'. And when Self looks into another's eyes. When Self looks at them externally, and perceives others as mere superficial veneers. Or when Self looks at their existence through Self's frame of reference, rather than Self internalizing, projecting and overlaying these personally perceived attitudes, values and judgments onto how Self feels and thinks others should be and exist in relation to Self, can Self look without Self's judgmental, expectant, preconceived mind's eye. But look beyond a person's particular shaped body, or particular looking face, or particular position or status, or particular culture, or particular gender, or particular religion, or particular race, or particular skin colour, or particular ethnicity, as is expressed and exhibited in life. But instead, whilst being respectively mindful of the potential impact of these many varied experiences upon people, acknowledging the potentially intrinsic relevance such experiences may have had on an individual. Look instead at another, through, above, and beyond these multi diverse differences in others, by way of the deliberately chosen, honed

and developed attributes of Self's intrinsic Spirit of goodwill, patience and kindness.

Can Self look transcendentally at and through others without personal judgment, look transcendentally at and through people with different attributes and experiences? Can Self look with Self's mind, spirit, emotion and intellect, through and at people with understanding and compassion. Can Self look with Self's mind, spirit, emotion and intellect, through and at the real Person, the real Personality, the real Spirit, and the real Soul within an individual's 'physical' exterior and perceive the real Person, the real Personality, the real Spirit, and the real Soul notwithstanding an individual's personal experience and personality and subsequent expression of? Yet, can Self also celebrate, embrace and acknowledge the unique differences in others as being the partial essence, identity and integrity that makes another and is thus, by definition, inherently personally sacred.

Can we perceive other human beings as being real Spirits with real thoughts and real feelings as a consequence of their humanness, and being, being in part 'that for which they were intended and made', being in part the ultimate outcome of the process of an individual's evolution as a manifestation of the "word" of the Creator?

And finally, if one's life one day turns upside down, and the pain becomes unbearable, and when there seems no more hope, and when one feels unloved and seems to have lost control, when one just wants to lie down, give up and die. Maybe we can help prevent such pain and suffering, maybe we can help prevent the addictive crutches to life being the crutches of life that are perceived to lessen the sometimes painful experiences of life. Maybe we can help Self by not being too embarrassed or ashamed of asking for help and obtaining genuine support from the community, family and friends. For everybody needs somebody sometime who is essentially genuine, honest and trusting. Maybe Self can let Self meditate and reflect upon Self by listening to Self's thoughts and emotions within the consciousness of Self's Spirit, Soul, 'Heart' and 'Mind' thus effectively consciously centring on the reality of Self's consciousness in relation to Self's Personality and sense of Being whilst intrinsically accepting and affirming Self as Ok.

If we have enough information to believe in a Creator, and believe in the Christ, perhaps we can self-advocate by understanding and feeling the genuine relational love and compassion that the

Creator incarnate - the Christ – gave personally to humans and perennially continues to do so, day to day, moment to moment and second to second. So that Self can both ‘love’ and accept Self and others, without any overburdening feelings and thoughts of guilt or shame brought about by Self’s limitations and imperfections as a human. But instead, strive to continue to both improve as a person and ‘love’ and accept Self and others as Self would want and wants to experience being accepted and loved and/ or has experienced being accepted and loved.

The author hopes that by sharing this extensive research, material, information, and the subsequent insights and perceptions, this may provide, in some way, considered guiding evidence and rationale, both through the uncharted waters of life, and the uncharted waters of ‘physical’ death - the change in structure and function of our atom-energy. And possibly provide some guiding evidence and rationale to the possibility of a Creator’s existence, and some guiding evidence and rationale to the possibility of the existence of the Creator’s Incarnation, and some guiding evidence and rationale to the possibility for the existence of a Being, a Being which is ‘that which nothing greater can be thought’.

However, ultimately, life on earth and ‘physical’ death, presents Self with the undeniably unequivocal cognitive and emotional mysteries that includes questions around the uncharted waters of the imminent and very real experience of Self’s future life and ‘physical’ death – change in structure and functions of our atom-energy we call a body or anatomy. Finally, this book will close with a few thoughts and ideas on the dynamics of prayer.

CHAPTER 10

PRAYER

Dynamics of Prayer

Dynamics of Prayer

It is perhaps appropriate to end this book with a final Chapter on the dynamics of prayer. Prayer is the name used to describe the event of a human's communication with a Supernatural Being, Creator or 'God'. Prayer is a private, personal and intimate internal interaction and communication between the realities of two spirits, this is, between the created and the Creator. There are numerous types of prayer expressed in all shapes, forms, languages and sizes. Prayer can be vocal, silent, or loud, or expressed in quiet meditation through thoughts, feelings and imagery. Prayer can be conducted individually, or within a group, or through community that encourages a sense of spiritual, intellectual, emotional and 'physical' belonging, solidarity and friendship.

Prayer may be personal, intimate and creative, yet also focused on the structured and traditional prayers, as when one reflects and meditates on the 'Lord's Prayer'; which reads:

"Our Father, in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the Power, and the glory are yours, now and forever".
(Matthew 6: 9-13)

Prayer, in part, may be defined by the characteristics of individuals who think and feel for those strangers, friends and relatives who have lived on earth and died, celebrating their existence and remembering and acknowledging their life here on earth being unique and special, however 'bland' or 'successful' they and others

may describe it.

Prayer may involve the celebration in remembrance of Christ's Last Supper. While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

“Take and eat; this is my body.” Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins”.

(Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:12-25; Luke 22:7-20)

Prayers can consist of requests to ‘God’ for anything and everything. Personal requests from the divine may be relatively frivolous, or more serious, or used to worship, to give thanks, or to invoke individual, communal and/or international peace and harmony. Perhaps prayer is the personal intellectual and emotional sense that allows the acceptance of being responsible and accountable for one's actions, thoughts and feelings, whilst acknowledging the Creator's respect for human integrity, independence and sovereignty manifest in the creation of human consciousness, intellect, emotion, personality and freewill. Therefore, prayer may include one's most intimate, private and innermost thoughts and feelings manifest and expressed through one's unique personality, freewill and life experiences. Perhaps prayer is about meditating and reflecting on life, Self and relational love. Where reflective prayer may enhance Self's acknowledgment of Self, life and relational love experiences through Self's personal self-awareness, self-consciousness and sense of responsibility and accountability. Where Self meditates with an intuitive reflective spirit on Self's past experiences learning about Self in conjunction with informed information. Where perhaps prayer may be about being personally reflective, encouraging personal ‘growth’ through self-awareness of Self's strengths and weaknesses and the challenges that arise out of Self's motivation and practice towards personal improvement. Personal improvement acquiesced from personal awareness of Self's characteristics and personality.

Prayer may be simply living life where life is love, and love is life, where everything living is loved, and everything loved is living, because it is infused with and contains the Word, the Soul and the Spirit of that, which may be considered absolute LOVE. Perhaps

prayer is synonymous with having 'faith' and 'trust' in the nature of creation, where creation, is created, with a particular nature and where, this nature is the particular creation of the Creator. Trust and faith in the Creator's nature and characteristics of creation where the Creator gives birth to life, yet who also dictates death – or when one's atom-energy will change in structure and function which humans term 'physical' life. But who also may be considered to be the master architect, intentionally endowing the creation of human life with the construct of Spirit. The Spirit of Self, where Self can never die, but exists forever in immortality.

Perhaps prayer is a conscious belief in the nature of life, whereby life's nature in essence, is the product of creation's evolution and evolution process of creation is the willed and desired design and order of the Creator. Prayer, a belief in the particular nature of life and creation; whereby the particular nature of life and creation is a reality, a reality made by the Creator from the creation and evolution of sub atomic particles. Sub atomic particles, which at their very origins could not have been made from nothing, but by something transcendent, something that can possibly be defined as, 'that which nothing greater can be thought', something that we may wish to call a Super Natural Being or 'God'.

Perhaps prayer is about life and about relational love, where living life is about loving and loving is about living life, and where both living life and relational love are constructive because they are about learning about Self. Where Self is conscious with the ability to be self-aware of Self's strengths and weaknesses. Living life with intra-personal and interpersonal relational love where Self can give Self permission for self-acceptance for Self and others. Where Self can aspire to the goals that are personally constructive including intra-personal and interpersonal reconciliation, patience and tolerance.

Prayer is perhaps about learning to accept Self's imperfections in Self, in others, in those that are 'physically', emotionally and intellectually challenged and disabled, and in those that are maligned, disenfranchised and marginalized. Because the Creator mystically loved, and mystically loves, mystically valued, and mystically values, all peoples equally. So we too, through this example and information, may decide and choose to become voluntarily sensitized to the plight of those who are disadvantaged. So that we too, may decide and choose to celebrate voluntarily the diverseness of those who are

different, and those who aspire to different beliefs, values, cultures and religions.

Perhaps prayer is about the belief in Self, a belief that there is a time in everyone's life where one reaches a point of cognitive, emotional and spiritual awareness. Where one reaches a psychological precipice, or the edge of a psychological cliff, where Self decides and chooses to make decisions and choices that will make everything that was ever bad or wrong in one's past, now good and right. And the positive philosophy that relates to the idea that where one who has made a wrong decision in life, one can decide to make that wrong decision right. Where there are particular moments in life that one decides to put one's past life's indiscretions in the past, so as to be forgotten and not remembered, to start again, to move on, to start from the beginning and to start life afresh.

It has been the author's personal experience and the experience of others that prayer is almost never answered in the way that is expected or hoped. Therefore prayer has often been considered to be a waste of time, or without efficacy, or it has been considered that 'God' does not listen, or that 'God' does not want to help, or that 'God' does not exist. People pray but still eventually 'physically' die, people pray, but still succumb to cancer, people pray but still die from natural disasters. So perhaps prayer is not so much about personal 'physical' well-being as it is about cognitive and emotional well-being, and as such, being that of the invisible and spiritual. It has been the author's experience that acknowledging the possibility of a Creator's existence, and the possibility of the Creator's relationship with Self, in times of adversity and joy, has the potential effect of instilling a significant sense of personal inner strength and courage - albeit ever so subtle - over the fear and vulnerability of the specific moment. Imagining, meditating, and reflecting on the mystical relational love of the Creator can give one the strength to change things that one has control over, and come to terms with any changes that may instill anxiety, and help one to accept that which cannot be changed, but which is nevertheless causing grief and consternation. The content of the Serenity Prayer seems to reflect this experience, so for some, may be considered an appropriate form of prayer or meditation. The Serenity Prayer reads; "God give me the strength and serenity to accept the things I can't change, the courage to change the things I can change, and the wisdom to know the difference".

New psychological research in relation to the effects of prayer, has found that thinking good things about another person, meditating or praying over someone who is sick does not have a statistically significant effect for increasing the speed of recovery from illness, or heart surgery, etcetera. If these results are repeated and the studies shown to be methodologically valid and reliable, then perhaps prayer can not influence in some way the intensity and direction of some human events. Many people will attest to the power of prayer and this may be individually so, but at the end of the day, 'God' has the final call about what will happen. The Creator predominantly does not choose to intervene in any specific way in natural disasters, accidents and illnesses. Hey, this is how the universe is created, it has been created temporarily, it is not permanent. Just as the sun will eventually burn out of fuel, so the human body ages and eventually dies. However, the jury is still out on the power of prayer and its influence on the body and mind and the interface between body and soul, mind, spirit, intellect, emotion and personality. But, ultimately, prayer is an inherently personal interaction and communication between Self and who Self perceives Self's Creator or Higher Power to be. Perhaps prayer is not only what one would think prayer to obviously be, but is also the particular mode in which Self lives one's life in terms of benign and compassionate thoughts, emotions, behaviours and contents of speech, directed as being that of the truth manifest between the interface of Self's freewill, personality and Will of the 'Creator'. Maybe it is possible that prayer has the ability to communicate with another's spirit and soul, either directly through, for example, spiritual energy of the spirit, or indirectly via the Creator.

Perhaps prayer could be considered to include both explicitly and implicitly reflecting upon Self's experiences and knowledge of Self in relation to Self, others and the world in terms of Self's personal weaknesses and strengths, and thus, personal acceptance and improvement. Prayer may constitute living life to its fullest potential, living life in relational acceptance, compassion and reconciliation and living life in interpersonal peace. Perhaps prayer is having the knowledge that gives the confidence, faith and belief that we are, notwithstanding our imperfections, OK. Knowing that although imperfect, we are acceptable, and that happiness flows from within, all things being equal - i.e. you are not dying from emotional or 'physical' pain - and that happiness is not a product of material assets,

but of meaningful relationships whilst also striving for betterment. Perhaps prayer is appreciating the miracle of creation admiring the beauty of a flower, or the sacredness of humanity, where the miracle of human evolution and the miracle of creation, with all its imperfections, were necessarily, designed, ordered, and planned 'perfectly' by the 'Perfect One'. Where the 'imperfections' (defined by human perspective and perception) of creation have been designed so 'perfectly' that it would be more mathematically probable for a Jumbo Jet airliner to be built by random chance from a whirlwind winding over the debris of a junk yard than it would be for the universe to be created indiscriminately, from chance or chaos.

Perhaps prayer is contemplating the idea that human 'physical' death, rather than being shocking, traumatic and terminal, is in fact the Creator's perfect ending to the miracle of 'physical' (atom-energy) human existence through the design and order of creation, evolution and nature, this is, in fact the beginning of Self's transcendent transition into the next life. The particular nature of creation being the mechanics of creation for the transformation of human 'physical' life from the 'physical' world of human existence, to the spiritual, angelic and '*****' world of the human Spirit, as only the Creator truly understands and knows. Perhaps prayer is a personal reflection of the knowledge and understanding of the miracle of the creation of humankind through evolution, and the endowment of Self's transcendent immortal consciousness and personality, being uniquely sacred and sovereign, and which, by definition, can never die. Perhaps prayer is about faith, not a blind mindless hysterical faith, but an informed and educated faith underpinned by the interaction between objective knowledge and spiritual intuition. Perhaps prayer is contemplating the notion that it is as easy, or as hard to believe in the miracle of 'God', a Creator, as it is to believe in the miracle of the existence of creation and the miracle of the existence of human beings.

Perhaps prayer is the spiritual and intellectual energy that allows the wisdom and understanding that 'God', the Creator, could never bring forth such life, such sacredness, such complexity, such wonder as defined by the unique and special characteristics of human beings. Human beings who have been created with the incredible capabilities of consciousness, thought, emotion, intellect, personality, spirit and freewill, who have attitudes and values and who experience

personally unique thoughts and feelings such as relational love, happiness, sadness, joy and anger, etc. Including the trials and tribulations of relationships, and the positive and negative experience of friendships, whilst living on a round green, brown, and blue 'rock' in space, where they were born, where they will live, and where they will die. To just be forgotten, to grow old, to get sick, and die, to just be wasted, forever to exist no longer. With all individual human personal experiences vanishing to the gasses of the cosmic atmosphere in the universe, and the unique and individual human intellectual, cognitive and emotional existence of experience just ceasing to exist when the 'physical' body dies, and the universe finally extinguishes, its self to exist no longer.

Perhaps prayer is the inner spiritual reflection that drives the discernment of a particular faith that instills the comprehension to conceptualise the profound magnificence of the Creator of the universe. Thereby allowing the extrapolation of this conceptualisation of such Mystery and Complexity, and such Might and Power to the reality of 'God' the Creator, which albeit only in part, can be defined by Self, but nevertheless can be defined. Prayer, a considered faith, that allows the comprehension of insight to internalize an image of 'God' the Creator that would allow 'His' Son to 'physically' die on a cross in emotional and intellectual anguish, embarrassment, humiliation and pain. And as such, incur the ultimate degradation from the human race as the ultimate sacrifice for the payment of all dues owed by all humans. Prayer, perhaps a considered discerning and intuitive faith that allows the comprehension of the resurrection of Christ as being the ultimate miracle that has the potential to provide the ultimate source of hope for all humankind. And for setting the precedence for human immortality, culminating in:

- The continuation of intimate and personal human life
- The continuation of intimate, personal experiences
- The continuation of intimate personal human thought
- The continuation of intimate and personal human emotion
- The continuation of individual human consciousness that embody the continuation of Self, Self in essence being Spirit

A Simple Prayer When Times Are Tough

You know where we are at Lord.
You know we are broken and can't handle this anymore.
You know the pain and grief we are suffering.
You know our depression, our desperation, our despair.
You know our hopelessness, frustration and confusion.
You know we need the weight off our shoulders.
You made us as an autonomous being and we now need you to share
in this burden.
You know we need your help.
You know we need the help of those who give your love unselfishly to
others.
You know it is hard enough to know you God.
You know it is hard enough to believe in you God
You know we need to experience your love, today, right now, You
know we need the love of others, others that can love us because they
have first been loved by you.
You know that God, you know us!
You know everything!
You know you can help us carry on and live life the best way we can
with the support and help of friends, family and the community.
You know we need to love and forgive Self, and others.
You know we need to live in love, in peace, and in harmony.

Another Simple Prayer

That we too Lord,
because you first loved us,
may become witnesses to others,
witnesses to the Spirit , to the Word and to Jesus
witnesses of Faith, of Hope and of Love
witnesses to others through our entire life,
witnesses to all those we meet,
witnesses throughout the new millennium and beyond.

Finally, I would like to share with you a collection of philosophical and spiritual Phrases, Poems and Lyrics from a variety of (unknown) authors discovered over the years and which for me have been somewhat thought provoking and emotionally stimulating.

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks
you to give the reason for the hope that you have.
But do this with gentleness and respect.
1 Peter 3:15

The Rev Dr Norman Vincent Peale author of the best
selling book *The Power of Positive Thinking* when asked,
“What is a successful person?” said, reiterating his
teachings of a lifetime. “A successful person is one who is
well organized, who has some purpose in life, who is
master of himself, who has self control, who has direction
and who has love in his heart. I believe Christianity can
make that kind of person.

The Golden Rule of Love
Is
Kindness in the home
Honesty in business
Courtesy in society
Pity towards the unfortunate
Help towards the weak
Resistance towards the wicked
Forgiveness towards the penitent
Congratulations towards the fortunate
It is a
Human responsibility to give this love
and a
Human right to receive this love

For every dream that fades away,
A new one grows.
For every star that falls to earth,
A new one glows.
For every receding tide,
Bright seashells on the sand are left behind.
For every sun that sets,
There's a sunrise.
For every song that ends,
There continues sweet refrains.
For every joy that passes,
Something beautiful remains.
And in a land we cannot see,
There's a place of hope,
And a place of love,
It's called eternity.

Friendship is a priceless gift,
That cannot be bought or sold,
But its value is far greater
Than a mountain made of gold.
For gold is cold and lifeless,
It can neither see nor hear,
And in the time of trouble,
It is powerless to cheer.
It has no ears to listen,
No heart to understand,
It cannot bring you comfort
Or reach out a helping hand.
So when you ask God for a gift,
Be thankful if he sends,
No diamonds, pearls or riches,
But the love of real true friends.

The heart in its hardest trials,
Can gain the purest joy of all.
And from the lips that have
tasted sadness,
The sweetest songs may fall.
For peace comes after suffering,
And love is the reward of pain.
So after earth comes heaven,
And out of loss comes gain.

When the night has been too lonely
And the road has been too long,
And you think that love is only
For the lucky and the strong,
Just remember in the winter
Far beneath the bitter snows,
Lies the seed that with the sun's love
In the spring, becomes a rose.

Life is but a stopping place,
A pause in what's to be,
A resting place along the road,
To sweet eternity.
We all have different journeys,
Different paths along the way,
We all were meant to learn some things,
But never meant to stay.
Our destination is a place,
Far greater than we know,
For some the journey's quicker,
For some the journey's slow.
And when the journey finally ends,
We'll claim a great reward,
And find an everlasting peace,
Together with the Lord.

Life is eternal
And love is immortal
And death is only a horizon
And a horizon is nothing
Save the limit of our sight.
Look to this day, for it is life,
For yesterday is already a dream
And tomorrow is only a vision.
But today, well lived,
Makes every yesterday a dream of happiness,
And every tomorrow a vision of hope.

AUTHOR

I would like to share with you the motivation and inspiration for this writing besides that which I have already expressed in the aforementioned forward. Although growing up in a loving 'Christian' family and environment, the realization occurred after leaving school at 17, hitchhiking around New Zealand solo – on the road for months - at 17, and then joining the NZ Prison Service at 21, that philosophical and scientific knowledge desired about proof of God's existence was wanting in addition to my existing faith. Around the age of 20 there was an inquisitive and innate desire to learn more about "faith" and 'God'. And how such a belief may be clarified, justified and strengthened. The existing belief in faith I had at the time did not seem to inspire any particular incentive to improve myself dramatically as a person. The notion of not 'growing' as a person was supported somewhat by activities which did not reflect, in particular, any attitude or intention for personal betterment, at least as much as perhaps one could have expected and wished for. My personal belief was that this spiritual inertia was the result of a lack of fundamental knowledge and understanding of the transcendent reality of the Supreme Being in relation to Self and therefore a corresponding lukewarm and superficial relationship with the Creator. This seemed to be the predominant and determining factor for this essentially intellectually and emotionally static and limited spiritual day-to-day existence. Upon reflection, an intellectual and informational vacuum could more than likely have been the cause for this so-called spiritual ambivalence. I decided that more facts and information that would provide evidence to underpin an understanding for the reasons, purpose and meaning of life and existence of a 'God' and Creator were required. To resolve this informational drought and spiritual vacuum I perceived myself to have I deemed it necessary to become a student of Theology and Psychology as the basis for the first step in the search for the answers to these enduring existential questions. It is now my pleasure to share this information and personal insight. May living your daily life of trials and tribulations be interspersed with inspiration, vision, hope, peace, love, warmth, courage, joy and happiness.

Stephen Clark B.Theol Grad Dip Soc Sci B.Psych. (Hons)

Prayer of Apology

‘God’, through Jesus, you are the perfect and ultimate identifier, counter and collector of all an individual’s – no matter what status, power and position they hold - life of behaviours, thoughts and emotions towards Self and others. These behaviours, thoughts and emotions involve any rubbish regarding individual’s illegal acts, and the rubbish of human acts that intentionally and unintentionally hurt others in one way or another.

Supreme Being, You are also the Perfect One that enables every human being, beings that will inevitably and eventually enter the ‘other-side’, travelling to another dimension - to reflect on their past life of behaviours, thoughts and emotions that have been both productive and harmless, and destructive and harmful, to others whilst living life on earth.

You are the Perfect overseer of this personal self-reflection and self-judgement, so that perfect justice is perfectly served by Self through the increase in self-acknowledgment and awareness of both destructive and productive behaviours, thoughts and emotions manifest in apologetic reconciliation, where appropriate, and expressed through an overall improvement of Spirit - consciousness, attitude, esteem and knowledge - being a satisfactory outcome.

I reflect every night on all past behaviours, thoughts and emotions in my life that have selfishly or unintentionally hurt others, and apologise to these people through you, ‘God’, and your Son, Jesus Christ. These frequent and personal reflections and acts of apology are carried out in the full awareness that no human action is greater or more powerful than that which is through You – The Supreme and Super Natural Being.

Amen

Back Cover Pictures

The Milky Way

The Milky Way is only one galaxy of about 100 billion galaxies in the universe. The Milky Way is the galaxy within which human beings reside. There are over 100 billion stars in the Milky Way, the Sun being one of those stars. The Milky Way is so vast that light, traveling at the speed of light, takes not 10 years, not 100 years, not 1,000 years, but 100,000 light years to traverse it!

The Star Betlegeux and the Sun

This picture demonstrates the enormous and immense size of some of the stars in the Galaxy of the Milky Way and Universe. This star is a super-giant called "Betlegeux" situated in the Orion Sword. Betlegeux has a diameter of 220 million miles and its size is seen here in relation to the Sun's diameter of 1 million miles. The Sun has a diameter of 1 million miles and the Earth has a diameter of just 8 thousand miles.

The Rainbow

The Rainbow is an amazing reality exemplifying the wonderful and complex creations in the universe. The Rainbow, throughout time, has been regarded as magical and capturing the imagination of all peoples. We have the saying synonymous with the paradoxical enigma of such existence, "The pot of gold at the end of the Rainbow". Perhaps the colours of the rainbow are symbolic and analogous to the beauty, strength and synergy of human diversity, illustrated by the electromagnetic spectrum, which creates light from its many diverse colours.

Planet Earth

The American astronaut James Erwin, said after viewing the Earth, the Moon, and the Galaxy simultaneously, as his spacecraft traveled back to Earth between the depths of outer space and the Moon, that he had just seen the world as 'God' sees it, and that 'God' must love humans very much.

Snow Geese

Here is an example of one of the Creator's beautiful living creations. The swans (Snow Geese) of Hokkaido in northern Japan, are born in Siberia, but migrate every year to their island sanctuary in Japan, when the Russian winter becomes too severe. They keep themselves warm with the 'blanket' of snow.

GOD
AND DECODING INTELLIGENT DESIGN:
EVOLUTION, SPIRIT, SOUL AND SELF

Volume 2

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