

I Am the I AM

Know that you and God are One

By

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PREFACE

Our civilization is undergoing many changes both in the material world and understanding the concept of spirituality. Our structured religions are leading many believers to have doubts about whether their teachings are true or not. We have seen patterns throughout history where religions have been established and their beliefs thoroughly ingrained into their congregants, only to come full circle after many generations to find fewer people involved than when they started. Today, more than ever, people are questioning values and beliefs, which are being taught to them by their religion. They are finding that the empty feeling deep within their spiritual self is not being fulfilled by traditional teachings. We are growing hungry for satisfying information to feed us and help us evolve in the direction we feel we should be going and we will seek that guidance no matter where the journey may take us.

A term that was being used during the late 1900's and into the 21st century, is the philosophy referred to as "New Thought" or "New Age". We do not give ourselves the credit we deserve by using these terms. We should pride ourselves in seeking and recognizing the *old* philosophies, thoughts, and ideas which civilization has been based upon since the beginning of time. Today's "new" religions are, in fact, rooted in concepts and precepts that were well established long before these terms were even thought of.

Since the word “New” denotes something original as not existing before it could possibly be an incorrect word to define this form of thinking. Unfortunately, mankind typically has an aversion to anything new, we are not creatures who accept change without resistance in some form or another. Difficult as it is for us to accept changes in our physical surroundings we are even more stubborn to acknowledge adjustments to our spiritual beliefs.

Scientists build upon previous systematic knowledge to advance the understanding of the physical nature that surrounds us and practicing believers of “New Thought” build upon previous ideas concerning GOD and the spiritual nature that surrounds us.

The purpose of this book is to show the common roots of today’s philosophies through examination of historically great thinkers. Prior philosophers, as they put forth their own thoughts felt the need to remind their readers that even they were reiterating teachings from ancient times. The great philosopher Plotinus, of the 3rd century, states, "***This doctrine is not new; it was professed from the most ancient times, though without being developed explicitly; we wish only to be interpreters of the ancient sages, and to show by the evidence of Plato himself that they had the same opinions as ourselves.***"ⁱ

One of the main reasons we don't recognize these past connections is because they were written from a mindset that we cannot connect with in today's society. The majority of chronicled philosophers spoke in a form which was understandable (to those who wished to comprehend it) for their given society. I desire with this endeavor to modernize and clarify concepts previously rendered by many a great thinker and further hope that the reader will find himself at least contemplating possibilities that are put forth here.

“There is nothing new under the sun”.

A little background history on myself is important here to explain what my background is and where I am coming from. I was born a catholic, raised a catholic, I went to catholic school, an altar boy, in the choir and finally pre-seminary studies. Just 6 months away from enrolling at the seminary a voice came to me and said, “This was not for you.”

It took me almost 15 years to start thinking about my spirituality again. Originally, I felt like I was being left out to flounder on my own, abandoned and very angry. Gradually I started reading more positive affirmation type of books that did not focus on any one religion. Eventually I did read many religious and philosophical books from all religions and I started to see a pattern in their teachings.

Identifying just which civilization held the cradle of knowledge in regard to belief in one GOD cannot be established without doubt, I believe this was happening all over the world, but I can only focus on the path that has provided us with information that establishes our current belief. We can speculate that cultures, such as the Egyptians who had beliefs in multiple gods, was starting to change as early as the Egyptian Pharaoh Akhenaten (1367-1350 BC). We also know that the Jewish religion had in place their belief in one GOD long before the recorded history of the Greek philosophers.

Western philosophy, as it has come to be defined, is rooted in the first learned men of ancient Greece. History has established the time during the sixth century BC as the point in which western man started to cast off their belief in societies many gods, which ruled over the earth and the heavens. Great men like Thales, Anaximander, and Xenophanes put forth their ideas about the universe and its creator; the majority of these, being radical points of view, to their current day's views

This process continued for several centuries to come, but these ideas came at a high cost to those who dared put them forth.

Socrates was sentenced to death for teaching these subversive theories to the young of Athens but the foundation had already been laid for today's Western philosophies.

I keep using the word Western because our European ancestors gave little credence to the philosophies or religions of what they termed the Far East. They believed that their philosophies were the only truths that mattered.

I do not intend in any way to take away the great depth of knowledge we owe to any of the learned men who have contributed to our way of believing in GOD, but I do wish to enlighten the reader about what influenced their perceptions. Our ancestors, of ancient Greece, traveled great distances in the pursuit of knowledge. Many of them visited Egypt, a civilization well established by the time of the Greeks arrival, which had their own beliefs in religion and science and yet little or no credit is given to them. The men of old even traveled to India and Asia in search of knowledge, and even these philosophies are rarely mentioned. I believe some of this lack of credit is simply because very little of what helped to mold the ideas of our ancestors exists from that era and many would choose to not speculate on this subject. One can't help but see other cultures influences upon our writers as you read their biographies on what they studied, read and who they were educated by. Even though there may be no documented connection I choose to use other enlightened sources, whose writings could have been very easily introduced to our forefathers, in my book, I feel that they should be given their rightful place in the development of our current day thought.

One example of how others have played a role in influencing a writer is the renowned philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson. He was a Unitarian minister and had knowledge of the Bible, but did you know he studied the Sweden born philosopher Emmanuel Swedenborg. Emerson was also surrounded by others such as Carlyle a Calvinist, Hawthorne a Puritan, and Alcott who studied Iamblicus and Boeheme a Christian Gnostic and Hermetisist.

Emmerson writings, along with all other philosophers and thinkers, are shaped by enormous amounts of information gathered throughout their lifetime which helped to mold their individual beliefs.

Science has also played a role in developing our concept of "New Age Thought." The sciences I am talking about is not the physical sciences but the mental sciences, the application of structured thinking.

During the period of the sixth century BC, man was beginning to question the "GODS", who they were and what they stood for. There were those that started to rationalize the underlying foundation of the universe and man and saw fallacies in leaving all things to the whim of some great source. Scientific thought was being applied to all aspects of their lives, a revolution against just believing and not questioning was beginning to take hold. This was a glorious time for great thinkers and philosophers who dared to go against the "Status Quo."

Many centuries continued producing more learned men each one defining their own concepts and redefining others. Man had developed a scientific belief in GOD. **But then this mode of thinking faded from recorded history!** A new religion was being established completely replacing the many gods with the one GOD and man was again indoctrinated into the process of pure belief and science was forced to take the backseat again for several hundred years. It wasn't until the 15th century that man again started to question his beliefs and attach scientific principles to his surroundings. Prior to the early 1900's man had only limited access to information regarding philosophy or theology it was mostly accumulated by who you knew and what the local bookstore or library carried. It was impossible for even the learned institutions to know the tremendous volumes of work published unless they sent persons abroad to every country. The average individual was held captive by what others thought was important by what they kept on their bookshelves. There were always the traditional works around to be studied such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle but only a handful knew of Kant, Boheme, and Quimby just too name a few. Only within the last few decades, with the information age, have we been able to seek out and obtain even the most abstract materials that we desire to read.

Every time one considers something to be a likelihood, he or she opens themselves up to a whole new world of understanding, allowing them to think about additional possibilities, not just for one arena of thought, but for all areas.

Mankind has allowed the structured religions to do the thinking for them when it comes to knowing GOD, he has forgotten or does not know how to connect directly with the essence of GOD. Each person has at their disposal access to tremendous amounts of written material on how to know and love GOD, but we don't generally draw upon the greatest source that is available to us and that is the mind of GOD itself.

Mankind has tried to classify GOD with many descriptions and labels: Father, Mother, Allah, Jehovah and numerous others. Each culture and civilization give its own identity to the highest spiritual being they pray to. What each person must keep in mind is that these names defer to the same entity which we call SPIRIT.

CHAPTER 1

HOW OUR WESTERN BELIEF SYSTEM WAS CREATED

Prior to starting down the road with the discussions on various subjects, I wish to enlighten the reader on how western religious thoughts have been formed throughout the centuries.

When I originally started to write this book all I wanted to discuss was philosophies, about GOD, that had been handed down and expanded upon by some of the greatest thinkers of their time. It became apparent to me, as I proceeded to put my thoughts down on paper, that my interpretations and selections from these individuals would turn off many a “Christian” reader unless there was some possibility that I might be able to show some common threads across these divisions of philosophy. I also hoped that I could get the reader to look at how their own beliefs had been established.

I will state again and again that this book does not come as the destroyer of Christian theology to convert you away from your belief on the contrary I only wish to enlighten the reader to other possibilities which I hope will renew and enhance your chosen faith.

All religions and concepts of GOD hold the basic tenants of truth;

1. Love GOD

2. Love Your Fellow Man

all of the rest is the form in which they are practiced.

I do believe that no one religion has the right to forcibly impose their beliefs on any other individual. GOD gave us the free will of choice and nowhere should this be practiced more strongly than in ones' belief in who or what GOD is and what he or she represents.

Everyone has the right to discuss their own personal beliefs, but I pray that their beliefs are their own and not someone else's! **Think for yourself, people!**

Today's individual looks to the current doctrines or dogma currently in place for his given choice of belief system. The practicing "Christian" whether they be Catholic, Baptist, Presbyterian, etc. holds to the edicts laid down by the Catholic church many centuries ago each with their own variations and differing opinions on certain subjects but still holding to the underlying precepts.

Along with the Christian religion we have a group today being called "New Age or New Thought", whose philosophy has been called many things in the past from paganism to metaphysical.

First a brief set of definitions needs to be established;

Chris·tian (krɪˈtʃɪən) noun

1. One who professes belief in Jesus as Christ or follows the religion based on the life and teachings of Jesus.
2. One who lives according to the teachings of Jesus.ⁱⁱ

pa·gan (pāˈgæn) noun

1. One who is not a Christian, Muslim, or Jew, especially a worshiper of a polytheistic religion.
2. One who has no religion.
3. A non-Christian.
4. A hedonist.

tran·scen·den·tal (trānˈsɛn-dɛnˈtəl) adjective

1. Philosophy.
 - a. Concerned with the a priori or intuitive basis of knowledge as independent of experience.
 - b. Asserting a fundamental irrationality or supernatural element in experience.
2. Surpassing all others; superior.
3. Beyond common thought or experience; mystical or supernatural.

A dilemma in today's western concept is one is either a Christian or a Pagan, yet if you ask any "New Thought" or "New Age" or "Religious Science" or "Transcendentalist" or etc. if they believe in Jesus every one of them will say emphatically "YES"!

If you ask each of these groups if they believe in the "Love of GOD" and "To Love Their Fellow Man" again they will say a resounding "YES"!

Is there a difference between the “Christians” and the “Other believers in Jesus”? There isn’t but the form of belief chosen by the “Christian religions” was laid down long before you and I were even born and, yet this form is followed without question by the majority without even the vaguest idea of how it was established.

In the words of Justin Martyr, an early church father, *“We have been taught that Christ is the first-born of God, and we have declared above that He is the Word of whom every race of men were partakers; and those who lived reasonably are Christians, even though they have been thought atheists; as, among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus, and men like them;...”*ⁱⁱⁱ

THE EARLY DAYS OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

In ancient Greece, there were two individuals that impacted the difference in thought between the “Christian” religions and the “Others” they were none other than Plato and his student Aristotle.

Plato was born towards the end of the fourth century BC in Athens, Greece. Being born to a wealthy and upper-class family he could take advantage of the education afforded to someone of his position. There are some who believe that from an early age Plato was already inquisitive about philosophy.

When he was about twenty years of age he became a student of Socrates, this would have an everlasting effect on how he viewed the world around him. Upon the death of Socrates, he traveled the Mediterranean which included visiting Egypt. Since there is no actual diary providing exactly what he studied during his trips one can only assume that he absorbed the differing philosophies and religious practices from various cultures.

When Plato finally returned to Athens he founded the school known as the “Academy.” Here Plato taught and expounded his ideas to the students that attended there.

Plato was not only influenced by his travels abroad, but he was also enlightened by his own countries early philosophers. There is very little written work left by his predecessors but many of their thoughts and ideas live on in Plato’s writings. Parmenides who firmly believed in the unity of all things as One and Heraclitus who believed that everything was in “flux” or constantly changing and flowing can be found in Plato’s dialogue Timaeus.

Aristotle was born at the beginning of the third century BC in the northern part of Greece known as Macedonia. His first area of training was in medicine then he later went to Athens to study under Plato. Aristotle spent almost twenty years at the academy observing and listening to Plato’s and other teachings.

In the latter years at the Academy, Aristotle did teach some classes on the subject of Rhetoric (discussion by the use of observation) which contrasted the way Plato taught which was Dialectic (discussion by the use of reasoning) in other words Plato included man's ability to use abstract reasoning in order to discuss a subject where Aristotle believed that observation was the primary focus.

Aristotle did not necessarily disagree with Plato's concept but placed it second to his own beliefs in defining things.

One example of this is in how each defined the concept of the soul.

One of Plato's quotes about the soul was, "It would be an unworthy thing to liken it to any nature which exists as a part only; for nothing can be beautiful which is like any imperfect thing; but let us suppose the world to be the very image of that whole of which all other animals both individually and in their tribes are portions."^{iv}

Here Plato is alluding to the possibility of all things are part or portion of the whole, the whole being God Itself. He also brings forth the notion that these parts or portions must be beautiful by themselves since God is perfect.

Aristotle is difficult in trying to pin down where he believed that the soul came from.

"But it is not possible that either unity or being should be a single genus of things..."^v

Aristotle believed, “While assigning reason to the soul of humans, Aristotle describes it as coming from without, and almost seems to identify it with God as the eternal and omnipresent thinker.”^{vi}

The term “without”, as defined by Webster’s 1913 dictionary means, “.. out of; not within; separation from; independently of;...”

Plato believed in the unity of all things and Aristotle believed in the separateness of all things.

The difference can be best defined with the following quote, “But the fact always remains that, whereas Plato regarded matter also – that is to say, space – as the creature of universal mind , and so was a monist, Aristotle distinguished matter – that is to say, potentiality – from supreme mind, and was therefore a dualist”^{vii}

There are many different definitions of Monism and I am using an older definition Webster’s 1913 dictionary, because this came the closest to the tone of the book. It defines Monism as, “**That doctrine which refers all phenomena to a single ultimate constituent or agent; - the opposite of dualism**”, and Dualism as, “**State of being dual or twofold; a twofold division; any system which is founded on a double principle, or a twofold distinction**”.

To the reader at this point you are probably wondering why I should be explaining the conceptual differences between these two great philosophers and what it has to do with western religious thought; I hope the following will be able to answer this question.

FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF JESUS

The founding Christian “Patriarch’s” or “Father’s” relied on their knowledge of early Greek philosophers such as Plato’s writings in order to put substance and form to the teachings of Jesus.

“**Christian** thinkers, almost from the beginning of **Christian** speculation, found in the spiritualism of Plato a powerful aid in defending and maintaining a conception of the human soul which pagan materialism rejected, but to which the **Christian Church** was irrevocably committed.”^{viii}

They developed doctrines based more on man’s spiritual intuitiveness about GOD rather than the bible’s teaching of man’s oneness with God.

In order to put forth my case I will be relying heavily upon quotes from previous authors, although I may be adding footnotes from time to time it would be impossible for me to expound upon these individuals more eloquently than the original authors.

Justin Martyr

[A.D. 110–165.] JUSTIN was a Gentile, but born in Samaria, near Jacob's well. He was well educated: had travelled extensively, and seems to have been a person enjoying at least a competence. After trying all other systems, his elevated tastes and refined perceptions made him a disciple of Socrates and Plato. He climbed towards Christ... What Plato was feeling after, he found in Jesus of Nazareth. The conversion of such a man marks a new era in the gospel history. The sub-apostolic age begins with the first Christian author, —the founder of theological literature. It introduced to mankind, as the mother of true philosophy, the despised teaching of those Galileans to whom their Master had said, "Ye are the light of the world."^{ix}

Justin in his writings declares that Plato owes his doctrine of God to the teachings of Moses, which he learned while he was in Egypt. Justin is affirming several of Plato's writings, as maybe not being the actual word of God spoken to Plato but at least the essence of his teachings coming from none other than one of the greatest writers of the Old Testament.

In a chapter entitled, "Plato's obligation to Moses", Justin states "... *that Plato borrowed his statement that God, having altered matter which was shapeless, made the world, hear the very words spoken through Moses,...*"

Many theologians will argue that Justin Martyr turned away from his Pagan ideas completely during his writings for the early church, but if one cares to look closely at these writings they can still see the underlying influence from his previous learning's.

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

“[a.d. 153-193-217.] The second century of illumination is drawing to a close, as the great name of this Father comes into view, and introduces us to a new stage of the Church's progress. From Britain to the Ganges it had already made its mark. In all its Oriental identity, we have found it vigorous in Gaul and penetrating to other regions of the Weir. From its primitive base on the Orontes, it has extended itself to the deltas of the Nile; and the Alexandria of Apollos and of St. Mark has become the earliest seat of Christian learning. There, already, have the catechetical schools gathered the finest intellectual trophies of the Cross; and under the aliment of its library springs up something like a Christian university.”^x

Alexandria of Apollos is the Egyptian city of Alexandria where the great library was created. Alexandria was considered to be the intellectual capital of the known world. Here the Greek philosophies flourished founding many schools of religious thought such as Gnosticism and neo-Platonism.

Clement was well studied and versed in Greek philosophy and history which shows in several of the books he wrote. Throughout his writings he both agrees and dismisses many aspects of the discourses provided by these ancient teachers.

In the following quote Clement borrows from Thales of Miletus, considered to be one of the Seven Sages of Greece, and expands upon his aphorism "Know Thyself."

"It is then, as appears, the greatest of all lessons to know one's self. For if one knows himself, he will know God; and knowing God, he will be made like God, not by wearing gold or long robes, but by well-doing, and by requiring as few things as possible."^{xi}

Here Clement blends the quote of Thales along with the quote from Jesus, "... **the kingdom of God is within you.**"^{xii}, for once man truly knows what lies within his conscious mind he will justly find the kingdom of God within and will act accordingly.

Following Clement quotes another ancient Greek Philosopher, "*Heraclitus, then, rightly said, "Men are gods, and gods are men." For the Word Himself is the manifest mystery: God in man, and man God.*"^{xiii}

In the above quote Clement is reaffirming the saying of Jesus "... **I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you.**"^{xiv}

Origen of Alexandria

Origen was born approximately 185 A.D. and was thought to have been born in Alexandria. History states that he was born into a Christian family

“Origen of Alexandria is considered one of the greatest of all Christian theologians. As a philosopher, he is famous for composing the seminal work of Christian Neoplatonism.”^{xv}

“**Neoplatonism** (also **Neo-Platonism**) is a school of **philosophy** that took shape in the **3rd century** A.D. Based on the teachings of **Plato** and the **Platonists**, it contained enough unique interpretations of Plato that some view Neoplatonism as substantively different from what Plato wrote and believed. Neoplatonists generally prefer to say what they advocate was previously taught by Plato. The prefix "neo" (**Greek** for "new") was only added by modern scholars to distinguish between the two, but the practitioners of the time simply called themselves Platonists.”^{xvi}

“Neoplatonism is a form of **idealistic monism**.”^{xvii}

Origen wrote many books concerning the understanding of the Bible and God, in one of his books called “**De Principiis**” he makes the following statement about what God is, “*God, therefore, is not to be thought of as being either a body or as existing in a body, but as an uncompounded intellectual nature, admitting within Himself no addition of any kind; so that He cannot be believed to have within him a greater and a less, but is such that He is in all parts Monas, and, so to speak, Enas, and is the mind and source from which all intellectual nature or mind takes its beginning*”^{xviii}

“**monas** - a singular metaphysical entity from which material properties are said to derive”^{xix}

Enas - is best defined as meaning “One”.

In the preceding section I have tried to produce some samples of how the early Christian doctrine was beginning to take shape. There were many early church fathers who did not agree with some of the positions which I provided above, in fact in the following centuries there was great debate among the bishops that some of them were down right heretical and should be expunged from any church doctrine. It would take many more pages of information to speak about those proceedings and this book was not designed to attack the Christian religion, all that I am trying to layout before the reader is that many of the teachings of so called “New Thought” religion, being taught today were accepted by early Christian writers.

“The period extending from the beginning of **Christian** speculation to the time of **St. Augustine**, inclusive, is known as the Patristic era in philosophy and theology. In general, that era inclined to Platonism and underestimated the importance of **Aristotle**. The Fathers strove to construct on Platonic principles a system of **Christian** philosophy. They brought reason to the aid of Revelation. They leaned, however, towards the doctrine of the mystics, and, in ultimate resort, relied more on spiritual intuition than on dialectical proof for the establishment and explanation of the highest truths of philosophy.”^{xx}

ARISTOTLIAN POINT OF VIEW

*“Aristotle defines his philosophy in terms of **essence**, saying that philosophy is "the science of the universal essence of that which is **actual**". Plato had defined it as the "science of the **idea**", meaning by idea what we should call the unconditional basis of **phenomena**.”*^{xxi}

Aristotle believed that everything could be put into a category based upon “logical reasoning”, defining a process to justify the existence of something rather than “conceptional reasoning”, where the human mind creates ideas which speculate on such existences.

Between the 4th and 9th century A.D. Aristotle’s writings were beginning to reappear and be taken notice by several of the authorities within the Christian religion which culminated in a period called “The Scholastic Period.”

The church was now trying to reconcile God through a more deductive form of reasoning.

During the early part of the Scholastic period the writings of Aristotle were very limited and vague and led to certain teachings within the church which were later condemned.

It is ironic that the full context of Aristotle's writings was not brought into the church's repertoire of teachings until after the crusades had begun and the church had to deal with the concepts of Muhammadanism. The Arabian along with the Jewish nations had full and complete translations of Aristotle and were the ones to introduce these writings to the Christian community.

“Thus Aristotle, after being suspected and condemned, was placed on the same level as Augustine and came to be regarded as the forerunner of Christ in matter of nature, as John the Baptist had been in matters of grace.”^{xxii}

It needs to be noted here that in fact significant thinkers within the church did not accept the Aristotelian concepts as the basis for defining Christian dogma. In true church tradition though, traces of confrontational thoughts were removed from any future teachings.

“It may be described by saying that it is a system of Moderate Realism and Moderate Intellectualism. The Realism consists in teaching that outside the mind there exist things fundamentally universal which

correspond to our universal ideas. The Moderate Intellectualism is summed up in the two principles:

- all our knowledge is derived from sense-knowledge; and
- Intellectual knowledge differs from sense-knowledge, not only in

degree but also in kind.”^{xxiii}

First let us look at the Realism aspect of their system;

The mind belongs to the physical body.

There are things which exist apart from the physical body which pertain to the foundation or basis of what we may believe.

Here they have separated the physical aspect of man from the rest of the universe and have created an additional grouping of things which have an influence upon our being.

Although they have not specifically mentioned God here one must assume that God falls into the second part of the definition since a basic concept of scholasticism is that man is separate from God.

Now to the Intellectualism aspect of their system;

The only knowledge, obtained within our physical mind can only be gathered through the physical senses.

Intellectual knowledge, knowledge obtained by our soul, can be separated into types and varying degrees.

Before I attempt to put the above definition in layman's terms I need to explain one of Aristotle's fundamental beliefs and that is the soul and the physical bodies are separate forms of the same thing but that one must have the other to exist. The fundamental principal of Aristotle's Theory of Knowledge is that intellectual knowledge can only be obtained through experience i.e. our senses.

It was the belief of the Scholastics that the only way that man, in his physical form using his physical mind, could obtain any knowledge was that it could only be learned through seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting or touching, in other words our five senses this belief was in the true following of Aristotelian tenants.

This effectively meant that man was born with no knowledge of God or the world around him and he could not obtain it unless it was through experience gained using our natural senses.

Now since man is considered as a separate entity from God, then the physical being as we know it cannot have "**the kingdom of God within**" because we cannot see, hear, smell, taste or touch him.

Affirming this train of thought running through our society today is that if you are hearing voices, such as God talking to you, you could be considered certifiably crazy.

Now the reader needs to understand that the height of the Scholastic period was between 1200 and 1300 A.D. and the dissemination of information was not through the printed book, the Gutenberg Bible was not printed until 1455, but through verbal communications.

It was also the policy of the church, now that the average layman was not allowed to read any of the Holy Scriptures and that only a member of the clergy could relay this information to an individual.

One must also understand that since knowledge of God can only be obtained through the senses and since a person can only learn the Holy Scriptures from the church then one must accept the dogma or church philosophy on faith alone since it is only the church which is divinely inspired.

Now to comprehend the second aspect of Intellectualism “knowledge obtained by the soul”, the reader needs to remember that the Scholastics, through the definition of realism, defined body and soul as two separate forms of the same entity. Relying on the concept that the body and soul are separate, this ordains that the soul is dependent upon a physical body to obtain knowledge.

Here again the individual’s soul must rely and accept without a doubt what the church was teaching them!

The Peak of the SCHOLASTIC Period.

The culmination of the SCHOLASTIC period was during the time of St. Thomas Aquinas, he was probably the greatest theologian/philosopher who influenced the Christian church and its' dogma, which has lasted for almost 750 years and is still instrumental today in supporting Christian philosophy.

Thomas Aquinas was born approximately 1225 A.D. near Naples Italy. He was recognized at an early age for his intelligence and devotion to a religious life and was made a friar in the "Order of St. Dominic" (Order of the Dominicans).

During his short lifetime, of fifty years, he wrote more than sixty works associated with his beliefs in God and the Christian church. His brilliance and love of the church was considered unmatched by many of his peers and he was always in demand to give lectures on his beliefs.

It would be impossible to go into detail about just exactly what St. Thomas Aquinas wrote; his works must be studied by all Christians if they truly wish to understand just why they have been taught their beliefs by their churches.

So where does all this information leave us?

I have the greatest admiration for all the philosophers and theologians of the Christian faith **and** all of those who have opposed their beliefs, in other words anyone who has the conviction to put down in print their beliefs and subject those views to public scrutiny deserves the right to be heard and not ostracized simply because one does not agree with them.

There is a great irony when one publishes a book that they already know what belief they wish to support before they even start it. To put it bluntly all authors, have an agenda to support their beliefs otherwise they would not write their work in the first place, **present company included**.

Case in point, many of St. Thomas Aquinas's works were written at the request of the Pope to support current church doctrine so the end was clear before it was even started. The question must now be asked, "Is this work a support for Church dogma driven by inspiration from beliefs inspired by God or from man's decision on what others should believe"?

It is the opinion of this writer that an individual's belief should not be written so strongly in stone that one is incapable of being open to other possibilities, our beliefs should be a work in progress and this can only be accomplished by continuous discussion and reading.

Change and tolerance is at the heart of our existence.

Case in point again St. Thomas Aquinas. One of the great works of his was the “**Summa Theologica**” which was left incomplete at the time of his death in 1274. The following is a little lengthy but all of it needs to be quoted to make a point.

“When doubts intruded upon his investigations, he interrupted them to seek enlightenment in prayer. The fact that the *Summa Theologica* was left incomplete was not due entirely to want of time. In the *ACTA* we read: ‘The witness – Bartholomew of Capua – declared that brother Reginald, seeing that the holy doctor did not continue the third part of the *Summa*, after the question dealing with the sacrament of penance, asked him why he had stopped this great work, which he had begun for the glory of God, and which would enlighten the world. St. Thomas, filled with the thought of having soon to appear before the Supreme Judge, replied that he could not continue: that all he had written so far appeared to him to be nothing in comparison with the wonderful things that God had been pleased to reveal to him recently.”^{xxiv}

It is obvious in the above quotation that St. Thomas had evolved beyond all of his previous thoughts and words and that God had revealed to him greater *things*, albeit no one knows just what these *things* were.

This is exactly what I am talking about; regardless of what path you follow there is always a possibility that there are some “greater things” either in written form or through personal reflection that can advance us along our path to God.

CHAPTER 2

UNIVERSAL MIND

"God, then, is the Infinite Spirit which fills all the universe with Himself alone, so that all is from Him and in Him, and there is nothing that is outside."^{xxv}

Ralph Waldo Trine

Throughout the ages man has questioned what lies behind our physical reality. Each generation has tried to define, through their level of understanding, how the universe and man were created. Ancient civilizations created what we would call, legends and myths to satisfy their inquisitiveness. Scientific man does not accept these stories since there is no physical proof to substantiate them. No proof no belief!

Is it truly any different today than it was 10,000 years ago?

We have developed our physical sciences enabling us to justify what our beliefs in creation are. The science of astronomy allows us to peer into the deepest reaches of space, back in time to the formation of our universe. The science of mathematics lets us postulate back to a trillionth of a second after what we have determined as the Big Bang, but these sciences can still only go so far. With all our knowledge, we cannot say what created our universe.

The scientific man will state that it is only a matter of time that we will develop the necessary knowledge allowing us to look even farther back.

But there is still no actual proof how the physical aspects of our universe began and yet we only believe in what the scientists tell us!

No matter how close we come to the original point of creation, the question will always be,

What created that first original point of matter or energy?

IN THE BEGINNING

In ancient Egypt there lived a man, or myth, called **THOTH**. The Greeks gave him the name of **Hermes**. There is a tremendous amount of speculation as to whether he actually lived, but most archeologists will tell you that there is always some truth behind myths and legends.

Hermes was credited with educating the Egyptians in writing, science and several other social arts, he was even elevated to the status of a god for all that he created. Whether he be a single embodied spirit or the accumulation of many, several philosophy texts have been attributed to him.

The Hermetic texts have been studied, or at least read, by most philosophers from the beginning of our civilized society. His statements ring out with subtlety in a large majority of works written about philosophy.

Man, or Myth "**Truth is Truth**" no matter where or how you find it.

Our religions teach us that GOD is everything, and there is nothing outside of GOD. GOD cannot physically separate himself into two, then there would be something outside of GOD, so everything which exists must be a part of GOD. There are no boundaries for GOD. GOD always has been and always will be. GOD has no beginning and will have no end. There is nothing greater than GOD is and nothing lesser. Nothing can be added to GOD and nothing can be taken away.

This was the view of an ancient Hermetic group, those who followed the teachings of Hermes. This sect took Hermes words and created certain Maxim's from them (a Maxim is a saying that is widely accepted on its own merits), which defined the core values that Hermes spoke of.

There is a Hermetic Maxim which states, **“The universe is mental held in the mind of the ALL.”**^{xxvi}

Hermes believed that the “ALL” or GOD as we call him created everything that exist through mental manifestation, he literally thought the universe into existence.

Several eastern religions believe that **Brahma** is the cause of the universe, created and destroyed each day through manifestation.

“At the beginning of Brahma’s day, all living entities become manifest from the unmanifest state, and thereafter, when the night falls, they are merged into the unmanifest again.”^{xxvii}

In the western philosophy, this concept was thought about as early as the sixth century B.C. by Xenophanes, one of the first Greek thinkers to put forth the notion that all things were created and are moved through thought.

“But without toil he swayeth all things by the thought of his mind”^{xxviii}

As previously stated nothing can be added to **God** and nothing can be taken away, so what does that leave to explain our existence? If **God** cannot remove part of itself to physically create us or if **God** cannot take something from somewhere else, then what were we created from?

When a person sleeps, and has a dream that individual creates a mental dimension. Nothing has been physically added to or taken away from the dreamer, but they have the ability to manifest a whole new universe in which a separate, distinct set of beings and circumstances exist. Even when an individual is awake they are constantly dreaming and creating scenarios that they could possibly go through during their waking hours and still nothing has been added to or taken away from them.

GOD has created us through the same way we create our own worlds, with **His mind**.

Everything is a mental manifestation of God, for it to exist, God had to create it and he created it through thought.

THE ESSENCE OF GOD IN US

There is another Hermetic Maxim that states, “ **While All is in THE ALL, it is equally true that THE ALL is in All.**”^{xxix}

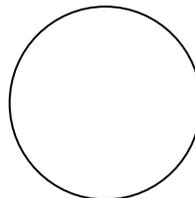
Hermes believed that “**no one individual name**” could capture GOD’S identity. He deduced that to truly identify the spiritual entity encompassing all that there is, both in our physical universe and the infinite mind, he chose to call it “**THE ALL**”, which stood for everything that is.

I am going to modify the above quote for clarity within our western name for the ALL which we call GOD or SPIRIT.

“While All is in SPIRIT, it is equally true that SPIRIT is in All.”

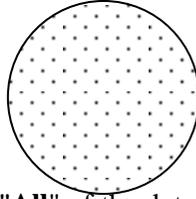
In the simplest of terms' think of GOD as a giant circle, GOD is not bound by anything; I am using this analogy to make a point.

SPIRIT



Within that circle imagine millions of dots representing all aspects of the universe: people, animals, trees, planets, etc...

SPIRIT



We will call these dots “the **All**”, "**All**" of the dots are within GOD and it can be said to be an individual portion of GOD.

Ralph Waldo Emerson was a noted essayist during the 1800’s. In 1836, he wrote a piece called “NATURE” where he extolled the virtues of experiencing nature to its fullest by embracing with one’s heart rather than just watching it through a window while passing it by. Emerson felt that this interaction with nature allowed him to meld with it.

“In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life - no disgrace, no calamity (leaving me my eyes), which nature cannot repair. Standing on the bare ground - my head bathed by the blithe air and uplifted into infinite space - all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or parcel of God.” ^{xxx}

Each soul is a divine parcel of GOD. Within each of us is the pure essence of GOD. We have at our disposal, if we so chose, his pure love, kindness, compassion, etc., everything that makes up the good of GOD.

UNLIMITED KNOWLEDGE

Edgar Cayce lived during the last part of the 1800's and into the middle of the 1900's. Cayce was given tremendous powers of prophecy, which he received during a sleeping state. Cayce could connect or channel with the universal consciousness and give readings concerning a wide area of topics. During these readings, whether they were for an individual or a group, he would speak truths that could be applied to all individuals.

Edgar Cayce states, **”The mind of God the one total life energy with it’s universally evolved portion called mind, in all its forms, all its stages of development and all of its self-conscious, individual viewpoints, including ourselves.”**^{xxxix}

All minds are connected to one source. The Universal Mind is GOD’S which is infinite in nature.

Ernest Holmes put forward, **“The Universal Mind contains all Knowledge.”**^{xxxix}

Everyone can draw upon an unlimited amount of knowledge and energy. When we learn to access it, **all things are possible.**

Thought is a creative process with powerful outcomes when a person realizes their personal connection with GOD. Using GOD as the creator of the thought puts an indefinable power behind it. This is no easy task. The term's faith and belief are what we use to show our knowing of GOD, I know that this is not all that it takes to accomplish this. One must know the reality behind "knowing" so that it becomes second nature to us and only then can we utilize this enormous power that we have. Doubts easily enter our minds whether directly or indirectly as actual doubts or repeatedly asking for the same thing.

During the 14th and 15th centuries the human mind began to seriously question again what his religious beliefs had been grounded in. He could see the happenings of nature all around him and he could attach scientific principles to them, he felt that he could apply the same concept to his religious philosophy. Man, then re-embarked on the journey of merging religion and science.

In the mid to late 1700's a learned Philosopher, Immanuel Kant, questioned how we justify the reasoning behind our beliefs. Kant realized that even though we may believe something, unless we experience it we will retain questions about that belief which doubts may sprint from.

He states, **"It begins with principles, which in the course of experience, it must follow, and which are sufficiently confirmed by experience."**^{xxxiii}

Dr. Phineas Quimby went even further in making the connection between belief and knowledge he felt that a belief could hold an error within it while knowledge was rooted in the experience of wisdom.

"There is a vast difference between a belief and knowledge. Knowledge is wisdom and contains no belief. A belief is error. The only way to detect them is by their works or fruits."

Dr. Wayne W. Dryer has written many books on spiritual evolverment, in his book "Wisdom of the Ages", he breaks down several aspects of spirituality. In a section entitled "**Knowing**", he states,

"Knowing is a term reserved exclusively for direct experience, which means an absence of doubt."^{xxxiv}

The experience or knowledge the three previous authors are speaking about is provided to us each day, right under our noses, but we fail to recognize them because we are caught up in our material existence.

No matter how much knowledge we amass about GOD, we still must consider how we sense the presence of GOD within.

Jonathan Edwards was an early philosopher in American history, during the mid to late 1700's. He summed it up quite nicely when he wrote,

“Thus there is a difference between having an opinion, that GOD is holy and gracious, and having a sense of the loveliness and beauty of that holiness and grace.”^{xxxv}

When Jesus performed each of his miracles he knew instinctively that they would be accomplished through his connection with GOD.

“Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.”^{xxxvi}

Being one with GOD gives you unlimited power in thought creativity, if GOD can create everything that exists, through His mind, then think what you can do with your everyday life.

There is one thing that you must remember to use the tremendous power of thought that you have access to,

“Use it for the sake of others, not for your own selfish purposes and perform these actions with no expectation of rewards in return”,

then you will fully realize its great potential.

MENTAL CREATION

Edgar Cayce stated:

“In the flesh and in the spirit, mind is the builder.”^{xxxvii}

“Thoughts are things; the mind is as concrete as a post or tree.”^{xxxviii}

A musician has a tune mulling around in his head. Depending on the person he may sit down at a piano and start playing the keys to the notes, which are playing within his mind, he may write them down on a score pad. What he is doing is giving substance to what is happening in his mind. The notes now have a physical reality in both audible sound and written form. His thoughts have now become concrete in our world.

How easy it is for us to comprehend the physical process of transferring a thought from our mind to a piece of paper or through physical action and yet our thoughts are much more powerful than this.

MANIFESTATION

Manifestation is the creation of both physical and mental situations using the power of thought.

Ralph Waldo Trine, a great thinker of the 19th century, puts forward the idea that,

“The fact that thoughts are forces, and that through them we have creative power, is one of the most vital facts of the universe, the most vital fact of man's being”^{xxxix}

It has happened to each one of us at some time or another that we wish for something to happen and then it does.

Maybe it was the time when you were thinking about calling someone and then that person calls you or you have a deadline on a project but there is some problem that you can't grasp hold of then through some ordinary process such as sleeping you wake up with the answer.

Small things happen to us each day because we thought about them but we don't put two and two together. These fleeting moments are simply passed off as coincidences or just plain old luck.

WHY THINGS HAPPEN

A principal of natural law, which underlies both our physical and mental reality, is the principle of "**Cause and Effect**". Everything that happens to us is driven by this law; no if, ands or buts about it. A person "shall reap what they sow".

Each event in our lives is driven by how we set it up through either our physical or mental actions. We can create both positive and negative results. Truthfully and honestly think back on your life to a specific moment and look at what led up to it. What was the chain of events? Most times we can track back to specific actions preceding the event.

There are some events which happen in our life which cannot be traced to any actions caused by us. I will speak more about this in following chapters.

Our mind does create "Effects" the same way our physical actions work; we can manifest with our thoughts what we wish to happen.

People today are caught up in the drudgery of their everyday lives. They don't like going to work, whom they live with, or some other aspect of their life. When we are in these situations we are constantly thinking negative thoughts, what we don't realize is these thoughts are only making matters worse. Our mental actions are spilling over into all aspects of our lives. This easily becomes a vicious circle. The "effect" of us being miserable is "caused" by our negativity and the "effect" of our negativity is "caused" by what we perceive as miserable circumstances. Your thoughts are creating your life; it is time you realize this.

First begin by understanding who you are and what your relationship with GOD is. Then you must create a "**positive mental attitude**", a phrase coined by Norman Vincent Peale, to remove the negative thoughts from your mind, when you start thinking positive then positive things will happen.

We lack the confidence needed in ourselves to turn around our life, ground yourself first in GOD know that you are goodness and love, make yourself feel good, believe in yourself.

Society has raised us to doubt everything around us to the point that we believe in nothing. Man must overcome his doubting process; he must start to tear down the walls that are holding him back, limiting his possibilities.

MEDITATION

To the western culture the word meditation conjures up images of individuals sitting cross-legged with their hands folded in front of them, incense burning around them while they chant in a strange language. Yes, this is one form, which can be used, but not the only one. First, we must understand what meditation is and the purpose of it.

Meditation is the act of isolating your mind from the everyday thoughts that bombard us. Some forms of meditation will teach you to clear our mind so that you will be more receptive to the universal mind others will teach you to focus on specific thoughts, which help to separate out extraneous thoughts. There is no right way for all individuals; the point is to use this process in your everyday lives.

One can go to a meditation class on a regular basis for them to become more grounded in their mind, but this just doesn't work for the average person in today's western society. We must learn how to accomplish this given what we must work with. Each small step will grow to its full potential as you progress.

You are now saying, "I can't set aside a half an hour or even an hour I have too many other things to do". There is no specific set amount of time you must set aside to start reaping the benefits. All I am asking is just start the process and it will take care of itself.

Do not set limits upon yourself for how long you must meditate, time will take care of itself and grow as you do. If you begin by setting time limits and you do not reach them you will be setting yourself up for disappointment, this is not what meditation is about. Remember that this is an ongoing process and will never end, but only expand as you progress.

I am going to talk about what the purpose of meditation is for a moment. This ball is in your court only you can determine what you wish to accomplish by it. I will give you the general accepted purpose for it, but you must create your own path.

The purpose of mediation is to open your mind and become one with the universe.

That's a mouthful and what a grand achievement when you are finished. This is the goal but we must take baby steps to get there, again do not set your sites too high in the beginning, which can only frustrate your development.

Realize also that meditation and prayer work together to allow for the individual connection with GOD.

In one of the many books analyzing Edgar Cayce's trances, "Edgar Cayce on Religion and Psychic Experience", the author could piece together one of Cayce's fundamental concepts.

"Meditation ought to follow prayer, as the time for a movement in consciousness, a shift in values, a quickening of some needed center within."^{xl}

Use prayer, to the Father, as the request mechanism for the help you need in a specific area, then follow that with a period of meditation. The meditation time is not to give you the answer to what you just requested, although this may happen, but it is the time to allow yourself cleansing of the obstacles that may be holding you back. These obstacles can be any number of things from worrying about what bills you may need to pay, an instance where someone may have wronged you or feelings of hatred or judgement of others you harbor deep inside.

How to begin

My suggestion would be that your first step is just try to relax. Start with breathing, take even just a minute of your time and focus on this. Sit, stand or walk however you want to do it but just breathe in and out deeply and consciously. Do not push your lungs to the extreme of hurting, slowly inhale and count to five then exhale and count to five. This is no easy task although it may sound relatively easy.

We live in a fast-paced world and I know you will find that when you attempt this you will want to rush the process and quickly breathe and count. Slow down and focus, eventually you will find your breaths and counting lasting longer and longer. Once you have learned the process of controlling your breathing with the counting, practice it without the counting, if you feel that your mind is starting to wander, and your breathing is becoming faster refocus yourself and return to your counting.

This is what you're doing to yourself. First by focusing on your counting you are disabling extraneous thoughts from taking hold within your mind, you are literally isolating yourself from outside influences. Second the breathing is regulating the blood flow in and out of the brain along with the rest of the body this allows you to stabilize your mental and physical self and begin to relax.

The above process is probably the hardest thing you will ever do in your life but once you learn to relax you are well on your way to a much more productive and fruitful life.

Remember "Cause and Effect", relaxation has an aphrodisiac effect, the more you get the more you will want, over time being relaxed will cause you to find the time needed to extend that feeling.

Do not trick yourself into rushing past this process, it cannot be skipped this is the foundation for the rest of your life.

Take your time and be patient with yourself I cannot stress this enough.

Patience is the cornerstone in every aspect of your life once you realize this all things are possible.

There are many good books and classes on how to proceed next with your meditation, what I have attempted to explain here is only the beginning, but it is the most important aspect of meditation.

When you meditate, you are opening your mind to the universal consciousness, which envelops us; this will enable you to truly manifest your thoughts and actions for the good of others and yourself.

Plato wrote the book or essay entitled “PHAEDO” about a conversation between Socrates and his followers, while he was in prison awaiting his execution. In it Socrates states,

“And thought is best when the mind is gathered into herself and none of these things trouble her-neither sounds nor sights nor pain nor any pleasure-when she has as little as possible to do with the body, and has no bodily sense or feeling, but is aspiring after being?”^{xli}

EVERYDAY ACCESS

The act of connection with the universal mind is not limited to meditation; this can be accomplished at any time. When you have even a moment affirm what you want to be a part of.

Paramahansa said,

“Along with periods of meditation you should think day and night of GOD.’ Door of my heart, open wide I keep for Thee.... Night and day, night and day, I look for Thee night and day”^{xlii}

There is never a time when GOD is not with you, he radiates all around you and we must recognize this and acknowledge it.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

You may be asking how all the above sections tie into manifestation, what each of these subjects do is to place your mind in a GOD like atmosphere. Each time you do something good for others you are raising your own consciousness to a higher standard allowing you to break the shell that surrounds you. Realize also that this transformation is not only affecting you but everyone you meet and the whole of spiritual consciousness.

Our society is based upon observing the behaviour of others and using what we see and feel to a greater or lesser extent. We are shaped each day by the actions of others. You know when you meet a person who has a happy personality some of that feeling rubs off on you which allows you to let down your guard and enjoy the moment, this person can be you on a continuing basis.

Manifestation works on both a conscious and subconscious level underneath you are projecting you're feeling about yourself to those around you and their subconscious mind is picking this up and they in turn are treating you just how you want to be treated. Your projection the "cause" is creating the perfect "effect".

All the above discussions do not mean that you must give up everything about yourself and become a hermit and only meditate on GOD the rest of your life. Buddha himself realized that we must strike a balance within ourselves and not go to the extremes of living.

Man will not be able to access the power of GOD, if GOD is not your primary focus!

When Jesus said,

"... It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of GOD"^{xliii}.

He did not mean that a person of wealth does not have access to GOD, what he meant was that the rich man who places more concentration on the material riches of the world and not on the riches of heaven could not enter.

Ground yourself in GOD each morning and you will be amazed at the results, you will achieve that sense of knowing that you are one with GOD.

CHAPTER 3

GOD'S IMAGE

“So God created man in his own image...”^{xliv}

One of the hardest concepts to grasp is that we were made in God's Image.

The quote above does not mean a physical image, which is what first comes to mind, but the image of what He stands for: love, compassion, and forgiveness.

GOD created us with everything that He has.

The first truth each of us must come to terms with is, what is the image of GOD that we believe in?

Are you afraid of GOD? Does the mention of GOD bring fear to your heart?

Do you only worship GOD for fear of the alternative of burning in hell for all eternity? Is your life spent worrying that you are a sinner always have been and always will be?

Do you believe in the Second Coming and only a chosen few will go to heaven, so you had better worship GOD lest you be left behind?

Do you honestly think that the devil is lurking at your door ready to take your soul away?

Do you believe that GOD is going to damn others just because they don't believe in GOD the way you do?

OR

Do you truly Love GOD just for the fact that he is good and loving?

Do you believe that GOD loves everyone and everything and expects nothing in return?

Do you believe that you have free will and are not controlled by GOD?

Do you believe that GOD accepts prayers and worship from all religions that do him honor? Are you kind to others in the name of GOD without expecting anything in return?

Do you stop short of judging others?

I can continue giving questions in either of the paragraphs above and you may find you fit in one if not both areas but that does not answer the real question.

Why do you believe in your image of GOD?

Is your belief grounded in a true understanding and communion with GOD by looking at all aspects relating to GOD or is your belief only based upon what has been told to you by others and being the lamb that follows?

Can God truly be assigned the individual attributes that make up man himself? Does he really get angry, jealous, and vengeful when he is touted as being all great and merciful? He has no need for those negative human emotions.

In the early days of the ancient Gods, man gave them control of their everyday life, but he could not fathom a power without form. Since man could only associate to his connections with other humans he assigned personal attributes to the Gods based on observations of his fellow man.

The Gods were given all the desirable and undesirable qualities of humans. They could be loving and forgiving but they could also be cruel and petty, even though most religions have replaced the many with the one, the generally accepted opinion of his image is no different today than in ancient times.

Man's view of GOD must change!

Origen was one of Christianity's early fathers who was born in or about 185 AD. The following is what he believed,

“Now all these passages where God is said to lament, or rejoice, or hate, or be glad, are to be understood as spoken by Scripture in metaphorical and human fashion. For the divine nature is remote from all affection of passion and change, remaining ever unmoved and untroubled in its own summit of bliss.”^{xlv}

I view God as a Fatherly/motherly figure and I as his child I choose to believe in him as the best possible parent one can have.

He is always watching over me, giving me guidance when I need it, allowing me to make mistakes and learn from them but not berating me when I do. My Father gives me as many chances as I need to get things right. He does not hold me back but encourages me to try different things. He gives me free will to choose my own path but never leaves my side.

My God is nothing but pure goodness and love!

The SOUL

Before continuing with the description of GOD'S image we need to try and understand what GOD created, this thing we call "The Soul." Just exactly, what does the SOUL consist of? Early man took notice of all things that surrounded him and recognized the life force that permeated from them he stood in awe and began praying to them. He had no concept of death all he understood was things were alive and moving and then they were not. Slowly he began to realize that everything followed a course from beginning to end whether it be the cycles of nature or his own life from birth to death. Something must have caused a spark in his thinking that the life force that left a physical body, when it died, continued in some form or another. Anthropologists speculate that our early ancestors believed that the essence of a dead animal could pass into a human being upon their eating them,

even today these acts are still practiced by some tribes; there are tribes today that still eat parts of men which they have killed in hopes of absorbing their soul.

During some point in time man began to think that the human body continued, after death, in another form and this is when he began to bury the dead along with their private possessions.

What a marvellous and spectacular thought to comprehend an afterlife! What divinely inspired them to think of such a thing?

There are many varied definitions out there concerning the soul, but the concepts I will be discussing will be the “spiritual essence and free will” of man.

It cannot be determined when the idea of the soul being separated from the body took hold in man’s mind, but ancient texts show that it has been around since the beginning of religious writings.

Ancient Egyptians understood the separation of the body and the soul and believed that one’s soul or AKHU would leave the body and travel into the afterlife.

Budge points out this idea from various texts;

“Soul to heaven, body to earth. (V Dynasty)”^{xlvi}

“Thy essence is in heaven, thy body to earth. (VI Dynasty)”^{xlvii}

Here we have man distinctly attaching the soul to a much greater and divine essence of nature.

There are many theories that all souls were created in the beginning and none have been created since and many others that believe the physical man is created first and then the soul is created for it.

Regardless of which point of view you choose to believe it is accepted by most, who believe in GOD, that the soul is continuous and everlasting. This concept has roots stretching far back into man's history.

Hermes states,

"1. [Hermes:] Concerning Soul and Body, son, we now must speak; in what way Soul is deathless, and whence comes the activity in composing and dissolving Body"^{xlvi}

In the Indian Upanishads, written between 800 – 400 B.C.E., a religious set of books relating to the India Vedas, it states;

"That soul is not this, not that.

It is incomprehensible, for it is not comprehended.

It is indestructible, for it is never destroyed.

It is unattached, for it does not attach itself.

It is unfettered; it does not suffer; it is not injured."^{xlix}

The Phaedo, written by Plato (360 B.C.E.), states,

"It is clear, Socrates, that the soul is like the divine, and the body like the mortal." "Now consider, Cebes," he said, "if from all that was said by us it results that the soul is most similar to the divine and immortal and intelligent and uniform and indissoluble.."¹

In the Gospel of St. John Jesus proclaims,

” Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.”^{li}

Origen (185 - 254 A.D.) says,

“For God deals with souls not merely with a view to the short space of our present life, included within sixty years or more, but with reference to a perpetual and never-ending period, exercising His providential care over souls that are immortal, even as He Himself is eternal and immortal. For He made the rational nature, which He formed in His own image and likeness, incorruptible; and therefore the soul, which is immortal, is not excluded by the shortness of the present life from the divine remedies and cures.”^{lii}

Each of the above quotes stretches across almost 2,700 years of man’s thinking expounding on their concepts of what they considered the soul to be a part of and its everlasting quality, and they all carry the same thread of thought.

The soul, which GOD created, is continuous and immortal just as our Father is, we are created in "**His Image.**"

Recognizing the Image of GOD in Man

Johann Gottlieb Fichte defines the image of GOD in man as,

"in the conduct of each individual there may be manifested purely that form which the Divine nature has assumed in this particular individual; that each individual may recognize GOD as He is outwardly manifested in the conduct of all other men; that all others may recognize GOD as He is manifested in this particular individual; and that thus GOD alone may be ever manifested in all outward appearance."^{liii}

Each person must begin the process of looking beyond the physical appearances that lie before them; the blinders that we have placed upon ourselves must be removed. GOD has manifested himself in all physical and spiritual aspects of our lives, from the grain of sand on the beach to every man, woman and child who are living today and have lived before, from the first original thought of man to our highest spiritual understanding of GOD.

In 1945 a group of manuscripts were found in a region of Upper Egypt which has come to be known as "THE NAG HAMMADI LIBRARY". This collection is attributed to a religious sect who was called the "GNOSTICS", (contemporaries to the early Christian movement) and it was composed of various scriptures espousing their belief system. The time frame for writing these scriptures varies from well before until well after the life of Jesus. The following is from one of the many books in "THE NAG HAMMADI LIBRARY".

“THE SENTENCES OF SEXTUS (XII, 1)”...

Here are some of the sentences:

(310) [Everything] God possesses the wise man has also.^{liv}

All things are within the reach of everyone, being wise does not mean that one must become a hermit and become devoid of the current material world. In fact, Buddha’s great enlightenment was that one must find a “balance” within themselves. We must eat, sleep and work to exist. However, we can do all of these things and still acknowledge who we are in relation to God.

(376a) [A man who] is worthy of God,’ [he] is God among ’[men], and [he] is the Son of God.^{lv}

When an individual truly acknowledges his relationship with God they cannot help but to act in a loving and compassionate manner making them worthy. They then project Gods image to others around them.

In the “Divine Pymander of Hermes”, Hermes speaks of the conversation that he was having with the Pymander. The Pymander is the Universal Mind or Mind of GOD and was making itself known to Hermes, since Hermes was on the path to enlightenment. While talking to Hermes about the creation of all things, Pymander makes the following statement;

“But the Father of all things, the Mind being Life and Light, brought forth Man like unto himself, whom he loved as his proper Birth; for he was all beautiful, having the image of his Father.”^{lvi}

The soul of man was created with all the goodness and beauty of God it is only through the thoughts and actions of the physical body that we tarnish this image.

Bringing GOD'S Image Within

Edgar Cayce gave many life readings during his lifetime, several of them were for people who had incarnations during the time of Jesus and had contact with him. One of these readings concerned a woman who had inquired into his teachings:

“But when the eyes of the Master, as he passed by on the road or way to the city on that day of days, were seen by Sylvia, then Sylvia understood; then she realized that man, as man, may be far from God, but man as a god and acting godly may be close to the divine.”^{lvii}

Today, no matter where you look, it is easy to see people performing their daily duties based upon their own selfish intentions. This is man being man. Mankind must begin and end their day in the duty of GOD showing his fellow man the love and forgiveness which GOD granted him and he must grant that same love and forgiveness to his fellow man.

In the Lord's prayer there is a line which states, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us..." we cannot expect forgiveness unless we have first forgiven others.

Within the Jewish religion there is a group of mystics called Kabbalist. These individuals use the KABBALAH and the TORAH to guide them on their search culminating in a connection with GOD.

"Since he believes that man is literally created in the image of God, the mystic works to polish himself until he becomes so brilliantly clear that he reflects nothing but God."^{viii}

We must as individuals and society strive to emulate GOD in our everyday actions. Let us hone our personal image to the point that we shine the way GOD intended us to.

Paramahansa Yogananda states,

"He made you in His image; you are potentially equal to God since you are a part of Him. Each one of us has the ability to become godly, if he would cast off the eclipse of ignorance"^{lix}

The ignorance he is referring to is that we are taught through many of the religions that GOD is a separate entity from us. GOD sits on high in heaven where we have no access to him. What happens to each of us is the **"Will of GOD"**, and man is generally at his mercy. We must cast off these ideas and begin to realize that GOD is within each one of us and we have a direct connection to Him.

The goal of the Kabbalist is **devekuth** or cleaving to God.

““Union with the absolute” in this case is a matter of “like attracting like.””^{lx}

As you meet people for the first time, one generally starts to size the other up to establish their likes and dislikes. If the individual is compatible with our views, then we choose to accept them into our lives some to a small extent, others to a larger one. When a couple starts to come together each of them begin to learn what makes the other tick. If they choose to work at making the relationship grow into something more fruitful, each of them will take on aspects of the other. Gradually they become as one, **like attracting like**, rather than as individuals. Here’s the good news, you and GOD are already one with each other, and you just don’t realize it, yet. The more you take on His aspects the greater awareness you have of His being a part of you. As you project more goodness and love within your life GOD will make Himself known more.

One must truly emulate everything about GOD to grow closer to Him. The **BHAGAVAD-GITA** is a spiritual book of India subscribed to by the Hindus and many other religious sects.

The quotes I use throughout this book will be from the version called **“BHAGAVAD-GITA AS IT IS”**.

This book was extremely helpful to me, in deciphering the context of the words spoken by Lord SRI KRSNA who was the Supreme Personality of GODHEAD speaking to one of his disciples Arjuna as an emanation of GOD.

“All these devotees are undoubtedly magnanimous souls, but he who is situated in knowledge of ME I consider to be just like My own self. Being engaged in My transcendental service, he is sure to attain Me, the highest and most perfect goal.”^{xi}

A devotee is one who submits his life goal for the purpose of doing Gods will upon the earth, but there is more to it than just this. One must take on the presence of God and truly act as God would act. Through this action an individual will merge their soul with that of the creator, which is what God wishes for us.

CHAPTER 4

KARMA

“...For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again.”^{lxii}

When GOD created the universe, he established laws which govern both the physical and spiritual plane that surrounds us.

On the physical plane, we have laws which explain to us how matter is supposed to react under certain circumstances and what constitutes the makeup of that matter. There are laws of Physics, Mathematics and many more each of these defining the material world we are enveloped in.

But what about the spiritual world that encompasses us?

Anthropologists have speculated that since the dawn of man, religious ceremonies have been an intricate part of human development. Since there are many definitions for the word religion I will only be referring to the aspect of man believing in a supernatural power or God who has control over their destiny or fate.

Acts and rituals were created that would appease the God(s) so that the individual or tribe would positively benefit from their actions. Early on man developed, even though it may be rudimentary, an understanding and belief that their actions could affect their future.

No one can say for sure when man made the jump, in his mind, from thinking that the God(s) ruled them to a possibility that they may have a hand in creating their own future. Morality started to take hold in man when he began to realize that he was going to pay for his actions at some point in his future, most likely the afterlife.

E. A. Wallis Budge is one of the foremost Egyptologists of the 19th and 20th century, in one of his books he states,

“In the texts of the Vth Dynasty we find that Osiris was believed **“to weigh words,” i.e., **to inquire into the various words and deeds of the lives of men when their souls left their bodies, in order that he might reward them according to their merits.**”**^{xiii}

The Vth Dynasty is considered to cover the period from 2480 B.C. to 2340 B.C.

Man understood that even though he had given the ultimate power of decision concerning his fate to a God(s) he knew that there would be positive or negative repercussions for his actions.

Spiritual Laws the Most Important

Hermes states,

"Because it is impossible, O Son, to be conversant about things Mortal and Divine....And of whichsoever the choice is made, the other being diminished or overcome, magnifieth the act and operation of the other."^{lxiv}

In "The Gospel of Thomas" Jesus said,

"Two will rest on a bed: then one will die, and the other will live."^{lxv}

Jesus and Hermes were talking about the spiritual and material aspects of man. When man entertains two thoughts in his mind one will take form and begin to live and the other will die and pass away. Specifically, they were talking about man's connection to the world or his connection to GOD. Should man contemplate upon the material world, then this will be fed material things, it will grow becoming the only thing and push away his connection with GOD however if man focuses on the spiritual aspects of GOD the material world will become less important.

One very interesting thing though is that if man chooses to focus his life in the material world this is all that he will achieve but if man focuses on GOD first he will not only achieve union with GOD, but he will also be provided for in the physical world.

"No man can serve two masters"^{lxvi}

must be understood as one master being the physical and material world and the other master being the entity of GOD both cannot be served equally. GOD must take precedence over everything else if we are to advance as an individual or as a race.

CAUSE AND EFFECT

In the previous chapter I talked a little about the principle of “cause and effect”, I will now expand upon that discussion.

The Hermetic axiom which best describes this is as follows,

“Every Cause has its Effect; every Effect has its Cause; everything happens according to Law;...”^{lxvii}.

This principle, Hermes speaks about, effects how our life unfolds before us. Each of us makes hundreds of decisions every day that influence our future and are driven by our past.

We say the words “cause and effect” but do we really understand what they mean. I will attempt to explain it using some examples.

PURELY MATERIAL PLANE

You want to go from the bottom floor, of a building, to the top floor and you choose to use the elevator. Once you have stepped into the elevator, you push the button related to the floor you are going to, the elevator lifts you up and then you exit on the chosen floor.

The effect of you arriving at your destination was caused by the elevator lifting you up. The effect of the elevator lifting you up was caused by you pushing the button for the floor you wanted to get to. This is the simple explanation but if you look closely you will find other “causes and effects” behind these actions.

The cause of you pushing the button affects the opening of a switch allowing electricity to connect with a motor. The cause of the electricity going to the motor effects the way the motor behaves. The motor then causes movement of a cable, which in effect lifts the elevator. The cause of the elevator lifting effects the movement of you in the building. The cause of your movement effects your destination.

Even behind this explanation you can find causes and effects. Causes in the purely material world can be explained by predefined patterns of behaviour.

MATERIAL AND NATURAL PLANE

When a person stands at the edge of the ocean it can have an awe-inspiring effect upon them, what is the cause of that ocean. The effect of the water in the ocean can come from several different causes. The water could have come from rain or snow, possibly fed from a river. These are direct causes that can be determined so now we will look a little deeper into this.

Where did the water come from to feed that river? It might be fed from a lake or from a mountain stream, so what then is the cause for it being in the mountain stream? Depending on what climate you live in it could have come from either snow or rain possibly both. We can define the fact that it is water but not necessarily what form it took to get there. Then the question is what caused the water to be there in the first place? Now we are getting into the realm of nature which man knows very little about.

The reason for choosing water is to start introducing variables into the law of cause and effect. There is always a direct cause, but we do not necessarily know what it is.

THE SOUL

The next realm of cause and effect lies on the spiritual plane, but before we can fully understand this plane some groundwork must be laid.

What exactly is the soul? This is probably the most difficult question that can be answered. Every religion is based upon their own individual interpretation of what the soul is and how it interacts with GOD.

The western religions believe that the soul is created at or near the time of conception they associate a souls' creation with the physical creation. When a body passes on the soul then lives on eternally.

The eastern religions believe that the soul is eternal both in the past and the future, all being created at one time. Always have been and always will be.

How the soul came to be is a subject far too deep to discuss in this small book.

The greatest concept to understand here is that they all agree what actions we perform while we are in the physical body effect our relationship with GOD.

The soul is distinctly separate from the physical form and, yet it is directly affected by how we act and think.

Each soul is the “I AM” of GOD and must be nourished by being GOD like.

SPIRITUAL PLANE

Our thoughts cause both physical and mental effects to happen.

In the physical realm, effects can many times be measured by the human body. Sickesses can be a result directly attributed to what thoughts we harbor in our conscious and subconscious. The effects in the spiritual realm are not so easy to define.

Man has defined himself as a physical being and uses this definition to only believe what he can “see, touch, hear, smell and taste”. We have a saying that “seeing is believing” and limit ourselves by this rule, however we forget this rule when science produces information about a subject. We now believe that scientific opinion as fact, surprisingly though much information put forth by the science community is strictly hypothesis based on a scientist’s belief.

The point is that we will **believe** in the physical aspects about subjects because we root our knowledge in the physical world. Whether we like to admit it or not we have stepped into the realm of **belief**.

There is another hermetic axiom which states,

“As above, so below; as below, so above.”^{lxviii}

In order to explain the above quote, I need to lay a foundation. Hermetic belief is that man can be divided into basically three states of being; physical, mental, and spiritual. Physical pertains to the body, mental pertains to the mind and spiritual pertains to our soul.

It is believed that each state of being influences the other states of being either directly or indirectly.

When a person wakes up in the morning both the body and mind are sometimes in a state of fog, the body moves slowly and stretches in order to get the blood flowing to the brain.

This cause of the blood circulating has a direct effect on the brain activating our thought process to a higher level. The mind in turn starts us thinking (cause) about what we need to do next with the physical body (effect), “**As above, so below**”. This is a rather simple example using the body and mind state of being, but I hope the correlation between the two is starting to take place.

The next example involves participation in an act which provides service to another.

You have volunteered to work at a fund raiser for a cause which you believe in that will help a group of individuals. The mind creates the thought of volunteering (cause, Above) which you verbally express (effect, Below) to the group. This verbal expression (cause) then puts the physical body into action (effect) to perform the duties. While you are performing these duties (cause, Below) you receive a sense of satisfaction in your mind (effect, Above) which makes you feel good. **But it doesn't stop there.**

Accumulating KARMA

The Hindus use a term called **Karma**, the spiritual laws that govern man's physical and mental existence. This particular law has only one specific purpose “to create effects on man based upon the causes we execute”. These laws are created by man's **Dharma** or actions on both the physical and mental plane.

Karma has many rules that apply to it, I will describe some of these rules with simple explanations;

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”

It will be done to you as you have done to others.

“Like begets like”

What your character is will attract others with the same character.

“What you sow you shall reap”

What you do today will either be rewarded or paid for tomorrow.

Remember the old saying, **“What goes around comes around”**, in simplest terms this is an explanation for Karma. When you perform a thought or action, no matter how small, you are creating what is going to **“come around”** at some point in this life or the next, wherever that is, you will have to deal with the consequences you have created.

There is another term that goes along with karma and it is called the **“Akashic Record”**. Think of this as a book of your life everything you think and do (causes) is written in this book. Now this record has tracked all your actions from one life to the next, at the least one moment to the next, then these effects become causes in your everyday life through the action of Karma.

There is no escaping the Law of Karma every human being is bound to it.

Leucippus, another early Greek philosopher wrote,

“Nothing happens at random, but all things for a reason and of necessity.”^{lxix}

The reason and necessity he speaks of is governed by everyone by how they wish to live their life. If a person does not show compassion to their fellow man than at some point during their soul’s existence, they will be placed in a situation where they will need compassion from other individuals and will not receive it or they may receive it and finally realize that they too must show compassion.

There is no telling when or where this act of KARMA will be played out, so you can’t schedule your life by how you want it to be played out.

Immanuel Kant was an original thinker in the field of philosophy during the 1700’s. Kant spent his life applying logic to the existence of knowledge and morality, in one of his writings he states,

"It was seen that man was bound to laws by duty, but it was not observed that the laws to which he is subject are only those of his own giving."

The duty which man was bound to was one of love to his country, his wife and his family all the while being subject to how he executed these duties. Man’s execution of his daily life defines how his life is going to unfold before him, this unfolding is the KARMA he creates.

Ralph Waldo Emerson was a great studier of the ancient Hindu texts, one of interest to him that thoroughly enlighten him was the Bhagavad gita. KARMA was not a word which he directly used, he chose to use the term "FATE" instead always trying to write employing his western terminology. One essay he wrote was specifically concerning fate and the conduct of life, in it he announces,

"It was a poetic attempt to lift this mountain of Fate, to reconcile this despotism of race with liberty, which led the Hindoos to say, "Fate is nothing but the deeds committed in a prior state of existence."^{lxx}

Webster's 1913 definition of Fate is,

"A fixed decree by which the order of things is prescribed; the immutable law of the universe; inevitable necessity; the force by which all existence is determined and conditioned."

Webster's 1913 dictionary defines KARMA as,

"One's acts considered as fixing one's lot in the future existence. The doctrine of fate as the inflexible result of cause and effect; the theory of inevitable consequence."

I have deliberately provided the above definitions so that the reader may be able to understand that the words for KARMA and FATE are interchangeable.

We are so indoctrinated with our western philosophy that we pass off eastern terminology without understanding what the term means.

There is a mistake often made by the westerner that fate implies predestination, **THIS IS NOT SO!**

Fate or KARMA whichever term you choose to use does have some influence upon your future, but it does not determine it.

“For will is that developing factor with which an entity chooses or builds that freedom, or that of being free...”^{lxxi}

There is no escaping what KARMA you may create but that KARMA may be manipulated by your current and future actions.

Do not become resigned to the fact that you are going to pay for something in the future, you can start right here and right now determining what your future is going to be like.

Live each moment with the understanding that you and only you have control of how your present and future are going to develop before you.

Make this knowledge work for you do not be just another pawn in the surrounding world!

Your Fellow Brethren

There is another aspect of creating KARMA which is quite often forgotten by those who understand its laws of creation and that is Karma created or relieved by performing acts upon your fellow man.

To achieve **Nirvana**, the highest aspect of being for the Buddhist, one aspect of the Buddha's “**Eightfold Path**” is “**Right Conduct**”.

Man's direct interaction with his fellow human beings is reflected in how he puts forth his **"Right Conduct"**.

Individuals **"Compassion"** for another is right up there on top as **"Right Conduct"**, for how can man truly show his love if he continuously turns a blind eye to another's unfortunate circumstances.

When Jesus was asked by the Pharisees which was the most important commandment to follow he replied

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."^{lxxii}

There are at least two parts of the above quote which I would like to remark on, one of these I could write a whole book on alone, but for now I will try to keep it simple.

The first falls into the Buddha's definition of **"Right Conduct"** and that is to **"love thy neighbour as thyself"** for this is the greatest single action that we as human beings can perform on this physical plain.

The large majority of people out there truly believe that they practice this on a daily basis, but the truth is our actions are speaking louder than our words.

We have created so many levels of being truthful to one another that we no longer understand just what being truthful means. There are grey areas, white lies, acceptable lies and downright just not caring about what we say to another, and this is just one facet on how we interact with each other.

The second point I wanted to address on the above quote was the statement about **“the law”**.

I am sure that the first thing that comes to most, if not all of you readers out there is the vision of the “Ten Commandments” when we talk about law in the bible.

Man, in his infinite wisdom, given to him by his free will, will try to create fine lines for every one of his actions to justify those actions to himself. We are always on the lookout for **“wobble room”**.

Most the laws in the Commandments were given by the religious leaders to man in such a fashion as to spell out individually what not to do against your fellow man in the hopes of closing the loopholes we are constantly creating.

CARE AND FEEDING OF THE SOUL

Whether one believes in reincarnation or not, it has been held by philosopher, theologian and people who believe that somehow or somewhere they will atone for their actions which they have created while in their physical body.

“But there is a further point, gentlemen,’ said Socrates, ‘which deserves your attention. If the soul is immortal, it demands our care not only for the part of time which we call life, but for all time;...”^{lxxiii}

CHAPTER 5

REINCARNATION

*Body of B. Franklin, Printer,
Like the Cover of an Old Book,
It's Contents Torn Out
And Stripped of its Lettering and Gilding,
Lies Here Food for Worms.
But the Work Shall not be Lost
For it Will as He Believed
Appear Once More
In a New and Elegant Edition
Revised and Corrected
By the Author^{lxxiv}*

Does an individual have only one chance at living our life in such a perfect way so that they may abide in the loving arms of God for the rest of eternity?

Can GOD be so cruel as to say, “Tough luck you had your chance you blew it now you will subsist in the fiery depths of hell for all eternity!”

This seems to me like a pretty tough statement from someone who loves us too much.

Do you as a parent tell your child when they make a mistake, “Forget it you messed up I will give you no second chances to correct your mistakes!”

I hardly think so, at least I hope not! Being the loving parent that you are, you work with your child showing and explaining to them how they can modify their actions so that the next time this opportunity presents itself they will have listened to you and heeded your advice. We labor with them repeatedly always wishing and wanting them to learn from their mistakes to become a better individual.

How can a person grow into the best that they can be without these chances? We have allowed ourselves the prospect to work with the ones we love and give them an unlimited number of attempts to grow. Are we better than or above GOD since he does not provide these opportunities to his beloved children?

Remember that I talked about my perception of GOD as a loving, caring Father; surely, he grants us the same privileges we grant our own children. Whether you recognize it or not GOD is continuously granting us the ability to work on our missteps no matter what they are.

Western religions enforce upon us their teachings that we are doomed by our improper actions during our lifetime and the only correct way to make amends for our actions is to obediently love and accept GOD, through their interpretations, before we die. In some respects, these religious institutions have it partially correct in that we must accept and love GOD.

They are also correct in that we are doomed (this is their term) by our unethical actions against our brother, however the loving GOD that we know allows us to work through these dealings over many lifetimes. In the last chapter I dealt with the subject of KARMA (the effect) which we create by our everyday actions (causes) and how it relates to our soul. Because our lives are so short, in relation to time, that it is almost impossible for an individual to rectify any of their shortfalls that they have established during their physical time on this earth.

Reincarnation allows the individual to “Work Out” their Karmic debt, whether it is positive or negative, whether it is in relation to society or themselves.

This “debt” may not present itself to the individual in the exact same form or circumstance that we initially created by our actions or thoughts because too many events would have to happen in the correct order so that an individual could correct or modify their past choices and be able to gain knowledge through a repetitious form of learning. It is also an unfortunate fact that most of us still don’t learn from our past mistakes and rectify them at the first, the second and even the third chance we get.

Reincarnation Defined

The formalized religions of today, based upon Christianity, do not believe in the term reincarnation but they do believe that their soul will live on in some form or another in heaven; the early Christian church Fathers, like Origen, did in fact believe in reincarnation but their ideas and beliefs were slowly expunged from church doctrine.

Should one choose to look at the definition of reincarnation in the dictionary they will find that the word means “embodiment in a new form”, which is not necessarily a new human body. Here again as in the word “fate” we have meanings that relate to the same concepts.

Isn’t it possible that the departure of the soul from the physical body into a heavenly body could in fact be a form of reincarnation?

The Christian religion speaks of the second coming when the dead will be raised, and all will be judged and the righteous will walk with God, but will this be in the same body they had or a new body, and not necessarily a physical body but a spiritual body and does it really make a difference which form it will take?

The belief in reincarnation is held by almost all religions in some form or another.

Most Eastern religions believe that reincarnation is the actual return to this earth plane, some do however believe that one's soul may take forms other than that of a human being but for the sake of these writings I will only deal with the return of a soul in the human physical form.

There are many other terms which relate to reincarnation such as generation, transmigration, rebirth and incarnation each one having to do with either being reborn or the aspect of being in a new body.

Reincarnation Beliefs in Past Civilizations

In the Mahabharata (pronounced approximately as Ma-haa-BHAAR-a-ta), one of the most ancient and the largest religious epics from India, there is a particular section called the Bhagavad Gita which speaks about the process of reincarnation and clearly states it as a natural process of life that has to be followed by any mortal.

Lord Krishna says: "Just as the self advances through childhood, youth and old age in its physical body, so it advances to another body after death. The wise person is not confused by this change called death."^{lxxv}

"...Just as the body casts off worn out clothes and puts on new ones, so the infinite, immortal self casts off worn out bodies and enters into new ones."^{lxxvi}

The great Buddha of India believed that the human form would continuously be reborn until they had reached the "right understanding" of their existence.

Ancient Egypt held in their belief that the soul would reside with the gods in the afterlife and this is one of the reasons why they buried their dead with so many of their belongings; these personal items allowed the individual to be comfortable during their afterlife.

Philosophers of ancient Greece such as Socrates, Plato and Pythagoras along with many others believed in the reincarnation of the soul into another human body.

Socrates discloses, **"I am confident that there truly is such a thing as living again, that the living spring from the dead, and that the souls of the dead are in existence."**^{lxxvii}

Plato proposes, "**The Soul is older than body. Souls are continuously born over again into this life.**"^{lxxviii}

Jesus and Reincarnation

There is no place in the bible where Jesus speaks directly using the term reincarnation or transmigration of the soul, to the best of my knowledge, but he did address it indirectly when he was asked by his apostles with respect to a blind man which Jesus was about to cure.

"As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, `Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?' Jesus answered, `It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.'"^{lxxix}

Here the Apostles use the word sin to denote the bad or negative Karma which may have been incurred by this individual or even possibly by his parents. The verse clearly spells out the fact that this "sin or sins" they are questioning, had occurred **prior** to the physical birth of this man!

If this sin had come about by the man's parents it could possibly be explained away by him being born blind as a punishment for their sinful actions, although I do not personally hold to the belief that one person will be held accountable for another's action and that the others action would be forced upon another individual. I can fathom no explanation around this type of questioning, by the Apostles, or the answer, provided by Jesus, unless both parties had some preconceived conceptions of KARMA.

How can a man pay for a sin which he may have committed prior to his birth without having lived BEFORE?

Some will argue that all of us are born under the act of "Original Sin", which the Christian church would have you believe was Adam and Eves surrender to the serpent, and that this man was paying the price of that sin but again it would be hard for me to believe that any individual human being would have to pay for another's actions.

There are some who believe that the apostles did not really mean to state the question as the sin happening before the man was born but that his blindness was a result of something he did during his current life. This is not a possibility either because the actual question is answered by Jesus himself in saying "**neither this man sinned; nor his parents;**" without Jesus trying to correct or manipulate the question.

In fact, the statements of the man being born blind are confirmed by the parents later in John Chapter 9 verse 20.

So where did these preconceived ideas come from?

There are many scholars who believe that Jesus was raised under the teachings of a Jewish sect called the “Essenes.” Though very little is known about this group of individuals it is known that they did believe in the immortality of the soul and that their teachings eluded to the possibility of transmigration. It is also widely believed that some of the apostles also belonged to this sect or were at least familiar with their teachings.

During Jesus’ learning years, of which we know little about, it is known that he spent time in Egypt when Mary and Joseph fled there, how many years they stayed no one knows for sure.

Edgar Cayce in many of his readings talks about Jesus and the training he received while he was in Egypt, in his travels to Persia and to the Far East in India.

This book is too small to delve into all the aspects regarding Jesus’ life so I am only touching on a very small area during his existence on this earth.

EARLY CHRISTIAN THOUGHTS AND REINCARNATION

I mentioned earlier briefly that Origen held a belief in reincarnation but not in using this word exactly, I will now expand a little further upon this subject.

There is little doubt among those who have studied early Christian theology that Origen was a brilliantly inspired soul that helped to develop the basic concepts of Christian thought which were later converted into church dogma. Unfortunately, not all his ideas were accepted, shall we say warmly by those of the church wishing to push their own agenda.

I will reiterate what I have proposed earlier in this book that opinions are just that “**opinions**” and are not absolute fact, the whole concept of philosophy itself is nothing but opinions and in this book, I wish to present the possibilities that some of these opinions can be a part of your belief if you choose to be open to them.

Origen, in one of his books, speaks about the possibility that based on common reason a soul may be introduced, notice he does not say re-introduced which is generally the term associated with reincarnation, according to its former actions.

“Or is it not more in conformity with reason, that every soul, for certain mysterious reasons (I speak now according to the opinion of Pythagoras, and Plato, and Empedocles, whom Celsus frequently names), is introduced into a body, and introduced according to its deserts and former actions?”^{lxxx}

Then just what did Origen think “deserts and former actions” could be if the soul did not exist before in a physical form?

Did Origen have another concept of how the soul existed prior to entering a human body that would determine its former actions?

At the very least I believe that he did have a concept of the term KARMA!

I will remind the reader here that Origen was considered one of the early Fathers of the church even though during his lifetime he was greatly admired, later he would be condemned by the very church he had given his life to, for many of his views.

REINCARNATION AND THE PHILOSOPHERS

Emmanuel Kant, in his General History of nature states, **“In view of the endless duration of the immortal soul throughout the infinity of time, which even the grave itself does not interrupt . . . shall the soul remain forever attached to this one point of world-space, our earth? Will it never participate in a closer contemplation of the remaining wonders of creation?”**^{lxxxix}

Kant brings forth some very interesting questions on why a soul should have even been created in the first place if it is only to experience life and its surrounding circumstances for only one time. Should a life know only suffering and pain while it is on this earth then what has it truly gained spiritually?

Organized religions will suggest to you that only by experiencing trials and tribulations can an individual be brought to understand and accept the true nature of God. One must continuously pray to God for redemption and forgiveness of their sins which they are being punished for in their everyday living and only through grace will they reap the rewards after they have passed on.

To me I see this form of thought as a very fatalistic view for living out our existence upon this earth! One will only receive their reward **after** they are dead!

Life is too short to carry this point of view from cradle to grave!

Why should not the opportunities afforded to one soul during their stay upon this planet be provided to another?

Who or what determines which circumstances in life are given to you and why you should be subjected to poverty and misery while the person across town lives a life of opulence and luxury?

Is every person born subject to the “luck of the Draw” or the “roll of the dice” as to how their life will unfold before them?

Is God truly the only entity that determines this? I certainly hope not since to me he has taken away one of the primary principles of the soul, that most religions agree upon, and that is **freewill** it also touches on the very nasty subject of predestination! These subjects I will touch upon in a later chapter.

Picking Up Where You Left Off Before.

Have you wondered why you are good or excel at what you do? Where do you get that innate drive for knowledge in your profession or a subject that you pursue? Haven't there been times in your life where you can just start learning something and it comes to you naturally while the person next to you struggles with it?

What makes a brilliant mathematician? Take Albert Einstein for example, how was he capable of understanding mathematics to such a degree that at the age of eleven he was studying physics at the university level.

What made Mozart a child prodigy? How could he at the age of four learn a piece of music?

What gave a person like Thomas Edison the edge which allowed him to create so many magnificent inventions?

Then there was Leonardo Da Vinci, a true genius, born in a time of upheaval but had the foresight to dream about things which have only come to fruition during this last century.

My list can go on and on with no end in sight about individuals who have touched our existence with no reasonable explanation on how they achieved their purpose.

Can it possibly be that they have lived before in some other human form and worked on these areas of expertise or did they just get lucky with the right set of genes?

Let us not leave out the great spiritual leaders throughout history; Hermes, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus, Gandhi and so many others, what gave them the insight to give of themselves to the study and devotion of spirit? Where they just in the right place at the right time?

CHAPTER 6

I AM

“One must not hold to doctrines held yesterday simply because one held them yesterday”

---Ralph Waldo Emerson^{lxxxii}

Who I Am.

I Am an individual.

I Am accountable for my own actions, thoughts, and feelings.

I Am responsible for how I live my life.

I Am a part of mankind.

I Am obligated to help my brothers and sisters.

I Am a child of God, my Father.

I Am as my Father.

I Am the I Am.

Do you know who you are? This is a question that has troubled man since he first walked this earth. Most people today define themselves by their surroundings, by where they work and where they live.

Individuals learn from infancy forward that to survive in this world they must conform to society, hence they take on their culture's perception of who and what they are and push their true selves aside.

At an early age, human beings discover that “**Survival of the Fittest**”, a phrase first accredited to Empedocles who lived in the fifth century BC^{lxxxiii}, is the only way to live. Mankind has taken this to mean, “**conquer or be conquered**”, but where does that process really leave oneself?

Edgar Cayce had a different view of survival. In one of his readings he states,

“Survival of the fittest applies in the animal kingdom, not for man. Let all who read history. Which has survived - brute strength or the development towards God? Which survives – the man who studies God and seeks to emulate His forces and powers, or the man who emulates the forces of earth or flesh? This answers itself...”^{lxxxiv}

Living by society’s code structures one for his or her entire life. You might say, “I am my own person and make my own decisions. Nobody can make me do what I don’t want to!” How correct you are but think about this; where are you getting your information to build the foundation your decisions are based upon? Is everything you know just a reflection of what the world has taught you or have you painstakingly sat down and contemplated your beliefs?

Society, through a variety of methods, teaches individuals that they must aspire to be independent and completely self-sufficient. After all, who is going to look out for your best interest better than you do?

It is true that we must have our own house in order before we can offer our services to others but at what expense to others have we accomplished this?

Mankind has lost the scope of what we are a part of and in doing so has suffered as a whole. Remember the saying,

“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”?

Believe it or not we are doing exactly that in our everyday lives. Our subconscious has been so molded by the environment that we project to others who we really think we are. The values and morals we have are set so low we invite others to treat us to that standard. Mankind, in general, has feelings of very little self-worth. Is it any wonder we have come to the point we are with everything that happens to us each day?

The world is screaming at us constantly about who we are. Television continuously barrages us with negativity and movies are no better.

The pulpits of western religions pummel their congregants into submission, stripping away all self-hope by repeatedly telling them they are sinners and have no prospect for salvation. The workplace for many individuals treat employees as slaves making them submissive and thereby stripping away their dignity. Our governments deal with us like numbers instead of people, removing our individualism. Businesses are constantly taking advantage of people, companies swindle money out of investors.

Individuality has been taken to such an extreme that no one can trust or believe in another person's motives or actions without thinking they will eventually harm their own existence.

For all of us to survive, let alone grow into the best that we can be, each of us must look deep inside for the GOD Spirit that is within. This is no easy task given what we have been bombarded with since birth. One must break the mold of thought, which surrounds them.

“THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX ”!

Human nature is one of the most difficult things to overcome. We are reinforced from birth about who we are and where we must fit within society. When a child is born, he has no understanding of what is possible or impossible for him, his thoughts and visions are unlimited, not impeded, by knowledge. He can be anything he wants to be from a cowboy to an astronaut. Only as he begins to grow up does society tell him what he can and cannot be. Unintentionally and sometimes intentionally we are constantly placing limitations on how a child should think. We slowly strip away his belief system of “anything is possible” and replace it with a skeptical outlook of all in life. Overcoming these perceptions is a lifelong journey, but it can be done through understanding the "I AM" of your soul.

THE SOUL

Edgar Cayce in one of his readings stated,

“A soul is a portion of the divine energy, and is as everlasting as that energy itself. Thus, if there is a continued period of activity that is for self-exaltation, then the entity may be said to be separating itself, or losing its relationship. Those however that worship and glorify the first cause are mindful of the first command to man in the expression; ‘Thou shalt have no other gods before me’ - before the I AM of the soul”^{lxxxv}.

Each soul is a divine parcel of GOD. Within each of us is the pure essence of GOD. We have at our disposal, if we so chose, his pure love, kindness, compassion, etc., everything that makes up the good of GOD. The **“I AM”** of the soul Cayce referred to is the GOD essence within each of us. GOD is pure and so are each one of us. It is only by our individual actions and thoughts that we deny the purity of our being. When we put our own selfish actions before our divinity we are placing those false gods before GOD. A false god does not have to be a religious figure that we pray to. Everything from love of a possession to indulging in one of our many traits (ego, pride, power, greed, etc.) can be considered as a false god, in fact anything we place before the love of GOD is considered a false god.

Ernest Holmes, the father of “The Science of Mind “ states,

“...when a man says “I AM”, it is God proclaiming His own Being.”^{lxxxvi}

He is talking about that essence within us which is GOD letting everyone around know that he is present and speaking through this body. Unfortunately, we don't understand or keep this in mind when we make statements about what or who we are. All too often we preface things we say with “I am this or I am that” not realizing that we are reflecting what we think GOD is.

Jesus was quoted in John 10:34 that

“...Ye are gods”.

Here he was stating that since we have the divine energy of GOD within us we are as GOD. GOD provides each soul with the ability to be as He is. GOD wants us to aspire to that purity.

GOD further desires that we know who and what he is. How can we do this if we do not attain to be as he is?

In “The Divine Pymander of Hermes”, Hermes writes,

“If therefore thou wilt not equal thyself to God, thou canst not understand God. For like is intelligible by the like.”^{lxxxvii}

You may be thinking right now **“...equal myself to GOD? No way! That's blasphemous”** or **“That's impossible!”**

Stop for a moment and ponder why this thought is occurring.

The masses have been so indoctrinated into structured religions that they do not think for themselves when it comes to their personal relationship with GOD. Our religious leaders would have you believe that you are “evil” or a “sinner” not worthy of GOD, let alone possess anything of him, yet from where do they get this information? If you read what the great spiritual teachers throughout time have taught, you come to understand that GOD is nothing but good and wants nothing but goodness for us. It is only from a few men’s interpretation of what has been said that they have developed the ruling tyrant side of GOD and the lowly side of man.

When actors choose to take on a role they must immerse themselves into that character if they truly wish to give a convincing performance. They become that entity to play it; this cannot be accomplished suitably unless they fully integrate that being into their own.

Understanding that GOD uses this same principal, one must take on his attributes and absorb him fully to appreciate and emulate all the wonderful gifts that he has for us.

BECOMING

Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher in the sixth century BC, wrote a piece called, "Peri Physeos", in verse, of which only large fragments have survived. In this work he lays down the Philosophy of Universal Flux,

“‘Becoming’ is itself the first principle of reality, the essence of things. Everything that exists, including man himself, exists because it is in a continuous process of passage from one state to another. If this passage should cease, reality would be annulled. Everything is in a state of universal or continual flux.”

It is up to everyone to become the best person they can be with no limitations. Is it so wrong to want to become as good as GOD is? Of course not. There was a point in time when all the great philosophers and thinkers of history chose to step beyond the precepts taught them about GOD and start to question their own individual connection with Him. They wanted to become more than what they were.

In 1945, a group of manuscripts were found in a region of Upper Egypt which have come to be known as “THE NAG HAMMADI LIBRARY”. This collection is attributed to a religious sect which were called the “GNOSTICS”, (contemporaries to the early Christian movement) and it was composed of various scriptures espousing their belief system. The time frame for writing these scriptures varies from well before until well after the life of Jesus. One of the manuscripts, from “THE NAG HAMMADI LIBRARY”, is titled “The GOSPEL of THOMAS”.

“(2) Jesus said, “Let him who seeks continue seeking until he finds. When he finds he will become troubled. When he becomes troubled, he will be astonished, and he will rule over the all.””^{lxxxviii}

The knowledge of understanding who you are can be a troubling experience. Once you begin to strip away the facade you have created for yourself and look in the mirror at what you have become you may not like that picture. This groundwork must be laid though to become one with GOD. The more truth you learn the greater aphrodisiac effect it has on your life urging you on to learn more and more. Each new level of truth will make you question other things, which in turn will give you greater control over your life. There is absolutely nothing wrong with questioning; this is a healthy part of living. Man cannot grow unless he has doubts about what he has come to believe; we must not become sedentary in our thoughts and beliefs.

Paramahansa Yogananda states,

“It is only when your soul will call to God and your heart will melt with love for Him that you will know Him.”^{lxxxix}

We as a society move to quickly to “stop and smell the roses”. Everyone must take the time to look at everything around them whether it is good or bad. Can you truly remember the last time you stopped and looked at all the wondrous things around you? Do you see GOD in every blade of grass and every tree? Can you feel him touch your cheek as the wind passes by? Does he stand out to you in the faces that walk by each day? Once you start recognizing these things you begin consciously calling to GOD and finding Him everywhere.

Throughout the ages, GOD has provided humanity with many individuals who have attained the GOD purity within them. Each of them states, in so many words, that we are children of GOD. Holding this statement to be true it is only natural that our Father wishes us to attain to be as he is. GOD nurtures us with love and understanding, providing all that we need and lack for nothing.

Deepak Chopra has a wonderful section in his book, “How To Know GOD” about becoming the “I AM”. He explains what it is like to possess the knowledge of being the "I AM", this being the conclusion of understanding who we are. In it he states

“The God of stage seven is holistic – he encompasses everything. To know him, you would have to possess a mind to match.” ^{xc}

How can one possess a mind to match God?

This question goes back to what your opinion of GOD is.

YOUR CHOICE

There are many contradictions within today’s organized religions; one of them is the doctrine of “**Free Will**”. We are taught that we have complete control over how or what we do, on the other hand we are also taught that we are at the mercy of GOD’S will. How can it be both ways, it is either one way or the other GOD controls us or we control ourselves!

GOD created man to be an independent thinker; he wanted man to realize who and what he was. What good would man be to GOD if we did not have this independence? We would serve absolutely no purpose to him if all we did was what he wanted us to do. GOD allows us to choose how we wish to behave and what we wish to believe in, nothing is forced upon us.

Lord Krsna states,

“I envy no one, nor am I partial to anyone. I am equal to all. But whoever renders services unto Me in devotion is a friend, is in Me, and I am also a friend to him”^{xci}.

One thing I hear is **“Why did GOD let this happen?”** or **“If GOD is so loving then how could he let this happen?”** If you remember back to the first chapter I had a diagram of lots of little dots called **“the all”** representing everything that exists. When all things were created, GOD gave **“free will”** to everything. Free will does not strictly refer to the human power of thinking and acting as one wishes to, it also represents that GOD does not interfere with the workings of anything. God does not cause the earthquakes, tornadoes, or the floods that destroy lands and kill people. This is the free will act of nature upon the earth. God does not cause the suffering, which afflicts man; it is the free will act of men who inflict their actions upon others or upon themselves.

Man is not bound by what GOD is or is not going to force upon him, **“Free Will”** means exactly what it states, no strings attached, no interference with what the individual chooses.

The primary reason for writing the above piece is to let you know that you are not bound to what you are taught about your relationship with GOD. No man has the right to tell you how you must believe and what practices you must perform or whether you are a saint or sinner. Do not just take what your religion has taught you as gospel consider the direct teachings of the great masters, Hermes, Buddha, Jesus and many others to find your true path to GOD.

When Buddha was about to pass from this world he brought together his disciples to talk with them. One of his disciples spoke to him in regard to leaving instructions for Buddha's order after he left them. Buddha replied to him in this way,

“Those who, either now or after I am dead, shall be a lamp unto themselves, relying upon themselves only and not relying upon any external help, but holding fast to the truth as their lamp, and seeking their salvation in the truth alone, shall not look for assistance to any one besides themselves, it is they, Ananda, among my bhikshus, who shall reach the very topmost height! But they must be anxious to learn

...”xcii

At first glance, of the above statement, one may get the feeling that Buddha was telling those listening, don't get your information from another only listen to yourself. You are partially correct in that assumption, what Buddha was trying to explain was, do not rely upon another person's feeling or doctrine in effect making their way yours. Buddha wanted them to define themselves by what **they** believed in their own heart and not what others believed in.

Buddha was not saying that you could not, read or listen to what another person had to say about spiritual enlightenment, if this was his belief then we could not even read what he had to say to his disciples and others. He wanted you to take all that was presented, grind it up in your mind, sift through it and determine whether you truly accept it or not.

There is no "one size fits all" approach to an individual's belief in GOD there are many paths to GOD each ending in the same place, there are over 7 billion people on this earth and there are over 7 billion paths to God.

A concern that I have for mankind is that they do not take the time or effort to understand their own individual view of GOD. People go to church hoping to be told how they should believe in GOD and not how to develop a personal understanding of GOD. There is more to understanding GOD, than spending an hour or so, listening to someone preach to you.

Get excited about finding out who you are and where GOD stands in your life. One must "be anxious" about obtaining GOD within them.

Every individual must create a heartfelt love and belief in GOD tailored for their own belief. There are many paths to GOD each specifically designed by the free will of choice.

I AM THAT I AM

I hope that many of you reading this book are still with me on this subject and are willing to go on to contemplate the next step in realizing who you are.

In the Jewish texts, or the Old Testament of the bible, Moses was given instructions, by GOD, to deliver the Jewish nation out of bondage from the Egyptians. Moses asked GOD,

“in whose name shall I say sent me?”^{xciii}

and GOD said,

“I Am that I Am”^{xciv}.

In previous passages, of the bible, God had already proclaimed his **“I Am”** to the people. **“I Am thy Shield”**^{xcv}. **I Am the almighty GOD**^{xcvi}. The elders of that time understood Moses’ proclamation that he was speaking for GOD.

In the preface, I mentioned that words were spoken in phrases based upon the language of that time, so now I wish to break down this saying into a modern context.

The quote **“I Am that I Am”** put into today’s English would read

“I Am the I Am”,

a small but subtle difference.

Now we know that GOD was referring to himself in this description, so I am going to expand the quote to fit the subject,

“I Am the I Am of GOD”.

The “... **the I Am of GOD**” literally means **GOD’S** proclamation of **Himself**.

Taking all the above into account the quote should be read as

“I Am GOD”.

GOD was telling Moses to say to the Jewish people that he, Moses, was GOD speaking to them.

I am quite sure that some if not many will argue with me on this interpretation, but this is what I received through my communion with GOD.

Anaxagoras, another Greek philosopher who lived during the third century BC, took Xenophanes concept of the Mind being the mover of all things a little further. He believed that not only were all things a part of Nous, or “Mind”, but that “all things will be in everything.”

“6. And since the portions of the great and of the small are equal in amount, for this reason, too, all things will be in everything; nor is it possible for them to be apart, but all things have a portion of everything. Since it is impossible for there to be a least thing, they cannot be separated, nor come to be by themselves; but they must be now, just as they were in the beginning, all together.”^{xcvii}

Emerson states,

“If a man is at heart just, then in so far is he God; the safety of God, the immortality of God, the majesty of God do enter into that man with justice.”^{xcviii}

Jesus proclaims,

“I and my Father are one”^{xcix}. “Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me...”^c

Jesus was proclaiming to those listening that he and GOD were of the same essence. Remember ***“All is in GOD, and GOD is in All”*** stated earlier, Jesus reinforces this statement. Nothing is outside of GOD!

In the first epistle of John, John writes,

“If we love one another, GOD dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he has given us of his spirit.”^{ci}

Before I continue with the rest of this subject take some time and truthfully reflect upon what GOD really does means to you.

Why do you believe in your image of GOD?

Is your belief grounded in a true understanding and communion with GOD by looking at all aspects relating to GOD or is your belief only based upon what has been told to you by others and being the lamb that follows?

In the gospel according to John, Jesus tells his disciples that they can do even greater works than he has done if they believe in who he is and what he is a part of,

“Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do;...”^{cii}.

In the above paragraph you may have noticed that Jesus said “**believeth on me**” and not “**believeth in me**”. Jesus was stating that one must believe that what he was doing on this earth was placed upon him and performed through him by the presence of GOD within him. Jesus wanted the followers to know that the GOD or the Christ consciousness was within him and it was not the man as a physical being who spoke or acted in His name.

Let’s review what has been put forth so far.

GOD is and is in everything.

GOD created you in his image.

GOD wants you to act and be as he is.

GOD gives you his essence freely.

GOD wants you to be one with him.

THE FINAL REALIZATION

Jesus said,

“The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord.”^{ciii}

Jesus was not talking about the disciple and master, as one in a learning group, nor was he talking about a servant and lord, as relating to a household. Jesus was talking about man being as GOD, saying that all human beings are equal with GOD, no matter who they are and no matter what they have done.

Emerson wrote,

“The simplest person, who in his integrity worships God, becomes God; yet forever and ever the influx of this better and universal self is new and unsearchable.”^{civ}

Each one of us walking this earth, from the richest to the poorest, from the strongest to the weakest has the capability of becoming GOD. You are responsible for your own integrity and only you know if you are being true to yourself and only then can you realize you have become as GOD.

Following are quotes from Jesus establishing who he was and what we are.

"I and my Father are one."^{cv}

"... that the Father is in me, and I in Him."^{cvi}

"... I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you."^{cvi}

"All things that the Father hath are mine..."^{cvi}

"And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them."^{cix}

It does not matter whether you believe that what Jesus said was absolute, fundamentally, or allegorically true, he was establishing the divinity within himself and what lies in each one of us.

You are GOD and so am I.

There are many today who have taken the first step in believing this by stating that as individuals they are gods, but I ask them to step beyond their individuality and realize that they belong to the whole of consciousness and are not just a part of it.

I have heard some individuals say that, "I cannot be GOD since I am an individual." One must understand that GOD is SPIRIT and does not belong to the material or tangible items which we can see, touch or feel, so we must not confuse this issue by thinking he is.

I put forth the following analogy;

Say that you are the parent of three children.

You know that you love each child individually independent of the other children, you give them all the same equal amount of love.

You will not love the other two children more than you do now if there was no third child.

Equally you would not love a single child more if there were no other children.

Love is not a tangible item it is an emotion which can be expressed an infinite number of times by one single individual and yet still be equal in every expression.

Now what you will say is that every individual expression of love is only part of the whole emotion of love.

Then I must ask you some questions;

If it is a part, then how many parts can you have of the LOVE emotion?

Is there emotion left over after each expression?

Is the individual expression of LOVE separated from the whole of LOVE that an individual has?

GOD'S manifestation of us works on the same principle, he has expressed himself an infinite number of times producing each of us as an individual but still remains the WHOLE.

But GOD is so much more than an individual emotion, he is the pure essence of spirit!

GOD does not separate himself with each individual soul that he creates; he creates you with everything he has.

Jesus did not say he was a “PART” of GOD but that he was “ONE” with GOD.

Put aside your scientific perception that all things are made up of individual pieces, this is man’s categorization of things and not GOD’S.

Remember there is nothing outside of GOD!

We must accept this fact to get beyond our earthly bonds. If all of us took on the identity of what GOD is LOVE, COMPASSION, and FORGIVENESS, and put forth these attributes in our everyday life in all that we do there would truly be PEACE on earth.

When you look inside yourself you have to question, “Is this all that life truly is?” We go to work, we come home, we are inundated with problems throughout the day, and our existence has been reduced to a menial status by what we do and what others are doing to us.

Step beyond all of this and realize your full potential of who you are and what you are, show everyone around you what you and they are capable of, live and be GOD in every part of your life.

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven”^{cx}

STAYING CONNECTED

Connecting and being as GOD is no easy feat in today’s world.

We are constantly besieged with negativity and little positive reinforcement. One must affirm the union they have with the creator on a regular basis whether it is through meditation, mantras or affirmations.

How often do you call upon GOD? If you are like most people then only when you need help with something, then when and if you get what you ask for you begin the process of forgetting from where you received help. We have a bad habit of only recognizing that GOD is in our life when we need his help then we forget about GOD and continue with our life.

Paramahansa Yogananda says,

“Always hold onto the consciousness of God’s underlying presence. Be of even mind and say: ’I am fearless; I am made of the substance of God. I am a spark of the Fire of Spirit. I am an atom of the Cosmic Flame. I am a cell of the vast universal body of the Father. I and my Father are One.’”^{cx1}

Shirley Maclaine is a well-known actress and author of our time. She has written several books about her spiritual journey. In her book, “Dancing in the Light”, she writes a section about using affirmations in her everyday life. These are some of what she uses,

“I am God in action...I am God in health...I am God in Happiness...”^{cx2},

this is her way of calling and connecting with the God essence, which lies within, to centre herself on what she needed to be accomplished.

There are so many other individuals to be quoted about this subject that I could go on and on, hopefully I have captured the essence of what I wished to say by what I have chosen.

Do not fear GOD! Once you accept that GOD is all goodness and love you begin to accept that He is in all of us. Conduct your day with Him in mind, emanate GOD through all your actions then you will realize the GOD essence within you.

FINAL DESTINATION

The goal of many religious concepts is to become united or one with GOD either with him or in his presence.

Lord Krsna states,

“O son of Prtha , those who take shelter in Me, though they be of lower birth... can attain the supreme destination”^{cxiii}

Buddha talks about entering the state of “**Nirvana**” where one has achieved peace, truth and oneness with reality.

Jesus expounds the virtues of obtaining the “**Kingdom of GOD**”.

Once a person has re-discovered their “**I AM**” within them, they have attained the goal spoken of by the prophets and philosophers.

Remember that when you need help with a problem don't pray to the GOD outside of you, look within yourself and recognize the power of GOD which you have access to, this is your personal connection with GOD.

CHAPTER 7

BEYOND THE I AM

It has not been the intention of this author that any of the readers agree with the subject matter that I have put forth, what I have tried to bring to the forefront of this material is that there are other possibilities out there and you the reader needs to think for yourselves.

“Believe nothing, no matter where you read it, or who said it, no matter if I have said it, unless it agrees with your own reason and your own common sense.”^{cxiv}

“The key to growth is the introduction of higher dimensions of consciousness into our awareness.”^{cxv}

You as an individual must take the time to research and look deep into your soul regarding what you truly believe about yourself and the world around you.

“No matter how busy you may think you are, you must find time for reading, or surrender yourself to self-chosen ignorance”^{cxvi}

Good, bad or indifferent these beliefs have shaped your life into what it is today.

Our beliefs have created the world in which we live in. There is no quick fix, no magical formula, no one individual person or one specific book that can assure your spiritual growth!

“Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”^{cxvii}

One of the greatest sayings of Jesus was,

"And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”^{cxviii}

Remember a child is the closest being to spirit upon this planet and why? Because their physical mind has not been indoctrinated and perverted by a society pride and prejudices.

We as adults have done a great dishonor to our children by forcing upon them our religious views just because that was the way we were brought up to believe.

We say that we are this religion or that religion, but the majorities have not taken the time to reflect upon what they believe and to justify those beliefs based upon their **own** studies and not those spoken from the pulpit.

Baruch Spinoza was a prominent Dutch philosopher during the middle to late 17th century. Spinoza was repeatedly chastised by the public for publishing his beliefs. One instance was by a former pupil of his, who had found the perfect religion, judged and degraded Spinoza for what Spinoza believed.

Spinoza replied,

“You who assume that you have at least found the best religion, or rather the best teachers, and fixed your credulity upon them, how do you know that they are the best among those who have taught religions, or now teach, or shall hereafter teach them? Have you examined all of those religions, ancient and modern, which are taught here and in India, and all the world over? And even supposing that you have duly examined them, how do you know that you have chosen the best?”^{cxix}

It is true that we have each been given “free will” as to what and how we believe but we have not been given the right to **force** those opinions upon another human being.

“Always recognize that human individuals are ends, and do not use them as means to your end.”^{cxx}

“One's own religion is after all a matter between oneself and one's Maker and no one else's.”^{cxxi}

There is no better time than the present to start the process of evolving from who we are to who we could be. I am not saying that you as an individual are incorrect in how you behave or what you believe in on the contrary I believe that you have, in your heart, the best of intentions, but one must remember that what is good for one is not necessarily good for another.

Begin your journey with the goal in mind but be open and flexible enough to follow the path in whichever direction it may take you for many surprises and delights lay before you.

“All rising to great place is by a winding stair.”^{cxxii}

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ⁱⁱⁱ IBID, Chapter XLVI. —The Word in the world before Christ

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