



Of Seeds and Flowers



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Rise Up, It's Easter!

Wise, spiritually astute people have always known that the journey to happiness, to wholeness, to freedom is a journey of the human spirit.

- "The most important thing to DO, is to BE. "Lao Tzu 5th century B.C.
- "Know Thyself." "The unexamined life is not worth living." SOCRATES
- "You are what you repeatedly DO, excellence then is not a single act but a habit" Aristotle
- "Our only occupation should be the cure of ourselves. "Epicurus
- "Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains only a grain of wheat, but if it dies, it produces much fruit. " "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free. " Jesus

All great people, all wise people, holy people have always know that to live a full, good life demands inner transformation. Inner transformation means dying to all of the pride, selfishness, fear, ego, the "false self; and rising to a newness of life in humility, freedom and love. There is no resurrection without death. There is no freedom without dying to the "false self.

'When I was a young man I prayed, 'God, give me the grace to change the world and I will be happy.' When I was a middle aged man I prayed, 'God give me the grace to change my wife and children and then I will be happy.' Now, as an old man, I pray, 'God give me the grace to change myself and if I had done this in the beginning I wouldn't have wasted my life.'"

When we are born we are not emotionally, psychologically, spiritually clear and clean like most people think. We inherit, from our first moments, all of the un-healed generational defects of our ancestors; then our parents add their lack of wholeness to our personality and then the school, church, society, etc. and our own sinfulness is tacked on to the growing pile of gunk. Put more simply, there is within us a **fundamental DIS-EASE** that keeps us from full peace. We are not **easeful human beings** who occasionally experience total peace but **driven persons** that occasionally experience total peace.

How do you respond to your unrest? What **you do** to handle your *dis-ease* IS YOUR SPIRITUAL LIFE. Spirituality is not something on the fringes of your life, an option for those with a particular religious bent. None of us has a choice. EVERYONE has to have a spirituality and everyone does have one, either a life-giving one or a destructive one. No one has the luxury of choosing here because all of us do something to care for the worry, the insecurity, the fear, the stress, the guilt, the addictive behavior, our need to control, to perform, to achieve that regularly push us around. The question on the table is, what do you do to care for your *dis-ease*?

Some people exercise, some eat, some shop, some pray, some read, some get therapy, some drink or use drugs, some read a holy book, some go to church, some sleep, some get PhD's, some make money, get angry, control others, etc., etc

What you do to handle your "inner stuff IS your spiritual life. How are you doing? Are the solutions you employ to handle your "dis-ease" leading to true, positive, life giving personal transformation? "By their fruit you will know them." If the fruit of your efforts is producing Genuine love, peace, joy and freedom, rejoice and keep going. If not, time for plan B. Rise up! It's Easter! I couldn't resist closing with these favorite words from St. Paul, "All I want is to know Jesus Christ and the power of His resurrection flowing through me." Power, real power flowing through me. I know it touches MY *dis-ease*. Can YOU feel it? Happy Easter!

A DROP OF RAIN...A BIT OF SUN

For 17 years, Dr. Thomas McGovern has studied one of the pivotal events in history: the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. He has poured over scripture, reviewed medical research, and interviewed experts around the globe about the physical suffering of Christ in his final hours. McGovern believes that while modern-day Christians are aware that Jesus suffered, they don't fully comprehend the agony and brutality of his death on a cross - a punishment so barbaric that it was banned in the fourth century by the Roman Emperor Constantine.

"Being a Catholic, I like to say that our crucifixes are much too pretty," says McGovern, a Fort Wayne, Ind., dermatologist. The punishment was devised by Phoenicians more than 1,000 years before Christ but perfected by the ancient Romans who governed Israel during Jesus' time, says McGovern, who received his medical training at Yale University, the Mayo Clinic in Minneapolis, and the U.S. Army.

While hanging on the cross, the victims' arms and legs were wracked with pain as their body weight pulled them down. Their chests would sag, making breathing a painful task. Acid built up in their blood, making the muscles rigid, starting with the feet and slowly moving up the body. Their mouths were dry from the loss of fluids, their tongues cleaving to the roof of the mouth.

Unlike most crucifixions, which were long, painful, and bloodless, Jesus died swiftly, in just three hours because of massive blood loss from the severe scourging he received beforehand, McGovern says. In addition, the Roman soldiers sought to hasten his death because the Jewish Sabbath, or day of rest, was only hours away. The soldiers did not use a footrest on the cross or a sedulum, a small seat on which victims could rest, which typically served to prolong the agony.

Victims were forced to carry a 6 foot wooden beam, similar to a railroad tie, atop their shoulders a distance of 1,000 yards to the execution site, McGovern says. Because Jesus was so weak, the soldiers shortened his walk to about 600 yards. Despite common portrayals of Jesus carrying an entire cross on his back, that was not the case, McGovern says. A full cross would have weighed 400 pounds. The 100 pound crossbeam, pressing painfully against Jesus' mutilated shoulders, was itself too much to bear for the weakened victim.

The base of the cross was permanently fixed in the ground and routinely used for executions. When Jesus reached the site, the guards hammered nails 7 to 9 inches in length through his wrists and into the crossbeam. The spikes were driven between two wrist bones, missing major blood vessels but piercing a large nerve called the median nerve. "The nerve damage results in causalgia, the excruciating pain such as a soldier would feel when a limb is blown off,"

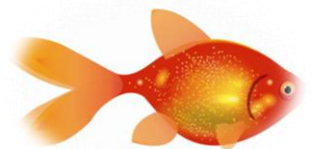
McGovern says. Jesus feet were nailed to the cross in such a way that his knees were flexed at a sharp angle, making it more difficult to support his weight. As Jesus hung on the cross, thirsty from loss of fluids, weak from bleeding, his muscles rigid, back mutilated, nerves pierced in his wrists and feet, his biggest problem was breathing. McGovern says, "The main source of the patho-physiological suffering is not being able to breathe normally." "Your lungs are filled with air, but it's bad air, full of carbon dioxide. In order to exhale, he had to push up his whole body, reopening the wounds on his back as he scraped against the bar." The repetition of words like "crucifixion" can make the reality dull, unreal. STOP. THINK. FOR YOU.

THE LITTLE FISH

"Excuse me," said the ocean fish. "You are older than I, so can you tell me where to find this thing called the ocean?" "The ocean," said the older fish, "is the thing you are swimming in right now."

"Oh this? But this is water. What I am looking for is the ocean," said the disappointed fish as he swam away to search elsewhere.

Prayer, real prayer of the heart helps us to realize the Reality in which we are swimming. Stop searching "little fish. There isn't anything to look FOR. All you have to do is LOOK. -IN YOUR HEART.



VISION AND REALITY

THE B. S. FACTOR

About 15 years ago I read the New York Times best seller "The B. S. Factor" - The Theory and Technique of "Faking It in America", by Arthur Herzog. - it hit the jugular!

Mr. Herzog begins chapter one with these trenchant AND MOST PROPHETIC words, "America will be the first civilization to eliminate lies. Soon, in America, the lie will be superfluous, unnecessary, and will be buried. He continues, "The lie is not vanishing because it is being killed off like some hapless species of wildlife or because it has atrophied from a lack of use or become a victim of higher morality. The lie has been replaced by something that will accomplish the lie's objectives and be, at the same time, safe. The "safe lie". The breakthrough has come and as a result our society will soon be free of lies.

The new device that is making the lie obsolete can be called the FAKE FACTOR (sounds like it was written yesterday) or, for those who require more trenchant terminology, the B. S. Factor. The B. S. Factor causes a subtle skewing of common sense, a distortion of meaning, without ever becoming a recognized lie. For the FAKE FACTOR to succeed it must be everywhere and so it is in America. The FAKE FACTOR must set the standard for what is, or isn't an acceptable level of truth. The B. S. Factor is responsible for the continuing difference between what people say and reality. - the objective TRUTH. The B. S. Factor has brought about THE LIE WHICH IS NOT A LIE AND THE TRUTH WHICH IS NOT THE TRUTH. It determines how our society talks to itself and establishes meaning."

The B. S. Factor has chapter after chapter of examples of false language, mis-directed terms, executalk, media drivel, political double talk, journalistic lying, educationese, the non apology-apology, that uncovers America's thought pollution and crimes against logic, truth and language. We are in a state of spiritual numbness.

In a deeply therapeutic and politically correct culture, apologies function like secular sacraments. More and more people demand them (Victimhood is a new American vocation), while fewer and fewer people are willing to give them. So instead of "I did it and I'm sorry," we get fake apologies. "I deeply regret.." "If I offended anyone ... " "I mis-spoke", "If you took offense at anything I said' ... " "I know that my actions may have given a false impression, blah, blah, blah ..."

Pope Francis recently said, "Spreading misinformation was probably **the greatest damage that the media can do** and using communication for this rather than to educate public amounted to a SERIOUS sin. P.C. IS SINFUL!!!! How many times have you *not spoken* A CERTAIN TRUTH because it was not politically correct?" "No more will the fool be called noble, nor the trickster be called honorable." Isaiah 32. - No PC in the Old Testament. Declare yourself a "Politically Correct (really control) Free-zone" -only the TRUTH frees.



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"We must not become comfortable with evil that has grown respectable with age." - Thoreau

Lyrics for the Christian by Fr. Gordon Gilsdorf

The last stanza reads: *I searched God's lexicon,*

to fathom "Bethlehem"

And "Calvary."

It simply said: See "Love."

**"I AM A HOLE IN A FLUTE THAT
THE CHRIST'S BREATH MOVES
THROUGH."**

**"Easter: It's not about a bunny but a
Lamb. Christ is risen! Smile!"**

A good man was granted one wish by God. The man said that he would like to GO ABOUT DOING GOOD WITHOUT KNOWING IT. God thought it was such a good idea that He granted the wish to ALL HUMAN BEINGS.

SPEAKING SOFTLY

PLAY BALL

A troubled man paid a visit to his rabbi. A wise and good old rabbi, as all rabbis' try to be. "Rabbi," said he, wringing his hands, "I am a failure. More than half the time I do not succeed in doing what I must do."

"Oh?" said the rabbi. "Pease say something wise, rabbi," said the man.

After much pondering the rabbi spoke as follows: "Ah, my son, I give you this wisdom: go and look on page 930 of the New York Times Almanac for the year 1970, and you will find peace of mind." "Ah", said the man, and he went away and did just that. Now this is what he found: The listing of the lifetime batting averages of all the greatest baseball players. Ty Cobb, the greatest slugger of them all, had a lifetime average of .367. Even the great Babe Ruth didn't do as good as Ty Cobb.

So the man went back to the rabbi in questioning tone: "I learned that Ty Cobb batted 367. Is that it?" "Right," said the rabbi. "Ty Cobb, 367. He got a hit once out of every three times at bat. Even he couldn't bat 500, so what can you expect already?"

"Ah, I get it", said the man, who thought he was a wretched failure because only half of the time he did not succeed at what he must do. Theology is amazing, and holy books abound in the strangest places!! "LIFE MUST BE LIVED FORWARD, BUT IT CAN ONLY BE UNDERSTOOD BACKWARD." Soren Kierkegaard, Dutch Philosopher.

"Grown-ups never understand anything by themselves and it is tiresome for children to always be explaining things to them." The Little Prince

"God lives in us **out of choice**, out of *preference*. **We refuse to believe it.**" Thomas Merton, Trappist Monk.



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