



The Book of Truth

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To Start Your Journey

Herein is contained a user manual for the human experience. Wherein we explore the most basic motivators that drive us, in an attempt to gain an understanding of ourselves that allows us to live a happy, purposeful, and meaningful life.

The challenge to you is the most fundamental of our existence: To gain wisdom and an understanding of yourself beyond the superficial. Then transform yourself into the epitome of what you can become.

This challenge is daunting. We will be compelled at many points along this path to think that we have “achieved” our goal. But the path is much like climbing a mountain of shale. As soon as you stop climbing, you begin sliding back.

But do not become distressed. For each step achieved has the opportunity to improve our lives immensely.

So trudge on. Rest when needed and don't despair. A better life than you know is waiting for you and could be only a step away.

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The Hidden Questions

There are quite a few questions we ask in this life, a few being:

What does it all mean?

What happens after death? Is this life all there is?

How can I be happier in my life?

...or for a great many of us there is a persistent sense of something being wrong, something we are missing, deep in our gut that drives us to do more, achieve more, be more.

Let's take a look at each of these...

“What is the Meaning of Life?”

Here is where most people will launch into some articulation of what a belief system taught them early in life. Some sort of “Be the best person you can be.” Or “Learn to love more.” Or maybe even “Learn to let go.”

No matter what people say, they will know deep inside that that the real answer is that they don't know. To a man, from fifteen to a hundred and fifteen, no one knows for sure. Each of them spends their time running about with one goal or another in mind. All find out that what they have chased over the years has come up wanting. Leaving them with the same question: “Is this all there is?”

The simple answer is “No. There is more.” Many people can find various comforting thoughts near the end of their life. They look back at their lives and feel consoled that they have “Had a good life.” or “Have loved and been loved in return.” Both in romance and family. While these are good things, it does not change the fact that they have spent their lives trying to figure it out. Trying to navigate through life with no real idea of if they are doing things right.

The fact of the matter is that each of us is trying to figure out how to live a happy, purposeful and fulfilling life. But this life does not come with a users manual. There is nothing that gives us a hint at how to achieve what all of us crave. Worse, some people have figured out part of the equation and pronounce their accomplishment as if it is all you need.

We are thrown into this world knowing nothing. We are then taught by people who have no idea about what they are doing. Then we are let loose to find out own way. All the while, we have others yelling from the rooftops that they have the answer, but we find out the hard way that their way leaves us wanting more.

What is the solution then? How do we live a life that is full of meaning and purpose and which gives us the best chance of having more happy times than bad ones?

The answer is easier than you might think. As humans there are some basic needs that we all have, and which affect almost every aspect of our lives. When we address those needs, everything else can then turn out better.

Those basic needs are:

- 1) We need to struggle against something.
- 2) We need to make sense of/Understand the things we perceive, and we need to have a sense of control over the things in our lives.
- 3) We need a social structure that we belong to.
- 4) We need to have a goal to work towards.
- 5) We need to have a sense of reciprocity in our actions.
- 6) We Need to Maintain a Set of Actions That Affords Growth in Each of the Three Major Areas of our Human Existence. Mental, Physical and Spiritual.
- 7) We need to strive for balance in action, thought and emotion.
- 8) We need to have a job that benefits us and the society we live in.

When we learn to address these needs in everything we do, then we find that by simply addressing these basic human needs, our lives transform into a life that is full of happiness, purpose and meaning.

It sounds easy, but these are only the most basic needs we all have as humans. There is a lot more to life than just this, but these are the things we should keep in mind always and learn to apply them wisely, without hurting others in the process.

What Happens After Death?/Is This All There Is?

Simple answer? No one knows.

Many will tell you they know. Many will offer up, or insist, that you should believe one thing or another. Usually with the unstated stipulation that you have no power and everything will be fine if you just (blindly) follow what they offer.

Some people will believe that this life is all there is. While others will believe that there is some part of them which carries on after their body dies.

I have listened to a multitude of differing ideas and beliefs, and more arguments for either one than I care to admit.

The one thing I have come to realize is that no one knows, no matter how profusely they tell you otherwise.

I don't think it matters though. I need to believe that my soul carries on after I die, so I do. With all the other dichotomies of belief and thought that make up my psyche, willfully holding this "leap of faith" to satiate a need inside me is not going to bring down this house of cards I have built. The only thing that may cause a problem is when I start looking for someone to "save" me. When I transition from a perspective of continual growth (which has no limit), to a perspective of looking for something more powerful than I am to "save" me, then I inevitably go against the basic needs I have as a human. And that is a path that leads to a life that is not full of happiness, purpose and meaning.

Is slavery not slavery because the slave is taken good care of? In the light of our most basic needs listed earlier, then I would say yes it is still slavery. Because it goes against the most basic needs inside myself that I need to address.

If you want to know my beliefs, read the story portion at the end of this book. If you find it helps you, feel free to adopt it.

Basically, believe what you need to believe, and understand why you need to believe it. Then go about your life with that belief as long as you are not hurting yourself or others. And always keep in mind that you can change your belief at any time as you learn and understand more. No belief should be set in stone, denying the light of better understanding.

How Can I Be Happier In Life?

With the myriad of self help programs and gurus in the world, you would think that there would be more happiness. The fact of the matter is that there are a bunch of people that have figured out part of what goes into you making your life happy, meaningful and purposeful. But no one has the full answer.

Part of that is because everyone's life is different. We have different temperaments, experiences, upbringings, values and expectations upon us to list a few things. The answer though, is to see the threads that are common to all humans and which affect every aspect of all of our lives, no matter how different those aspects may be.

Those basic needs are:

- 9) We need to struggle against something.
- 10) We need to make sense of/Understand the things we perceive, and we need to have a sense of control over the things in our lives.
- 11) We need a social structure that we belong to.
- 12) We need to have a goal to work towards.
- 13) We need to have a sense of reciprocity in our actions.

- 14) We Need to Maintain a Set of Actions That Affords Growth in Each of the Three Major Areas of our Human Existence. Mental, Physical and Spiritual.
- 15) We need to strive for balance in action, thought and emotion.
- 16) We need to have a job that benefits us and the society we live in.

Learn to address these in everything we do, and you will be able to make a life that is happier and full of purpose and meaning.

We Must Awaken from Our Slumber

Conscious Thought

What is it that we possess that differentiates man as the pinnacle of evolution that we all like to think we are? Is it simply the possession of an opposable thumb? Our standing upright? Our ability to use tools? Or is it the possession of some imperceptible quality that only uses this body as a tool to interact with this world but carries on after this body dies? An energy, a soul, that adheres to the first law of thermodynamics as an energy that cannot be destroyed.

Let's think about it for a bit...

Take a look at our actions, at what we do. Not in the sense of what we decide to spend our time on, but in the multitude of subconscious and unconscious actions our body and minds take. Lift your arm out in front of you. Now, did you do that? Was it your conscious mind that raised your arm? Most would answer yes, but that is not the case. If it was then you could state exactly which muscles you decided to activate and at what percentage of muscles fibers, to start, maintain and stop the movement of the arm. If it was your conscious self, then you could state the exact saline levels you decided were needed in each cell along the nerve pathways needed to convey the signal to each muscle fiber you used to raise your arm. You would also be able to state the exact voltage levels of those signals and the time between the initiation of the thought and the activation of the separate muscle fibers.

No. It is not your conscious mind that moved your arm, it is your conscious mind that initiated the movement. Like a general on a battle field your conscious mind "gave the order" to raise your arm. Then the lieutenants went about carrying out that order. Who or what are the lieutenants? Those are the subconscious and unconscious processes in your mind. Those lieutenants then inform the enlisted on what to do. The enlisted are the cells that do the actual work.

Why is it done this way? To conserve resources. Our bodies evolved in an environment in which the uncertainty of when and from where our next meal would come was prevalent. So, those organisms that did not optimize resource conservation did not survive. What was our method of resource conservation? It was through the use of unconscious and subconscious processes in the mind, because our greatest asset is also a resource hog. An estimated twenty to twenty five percent of the

resources our bodies use during the day is by the brain. So utilizing as little as we can get away with is a huge way to conserve resources. These subconscious and unconscious processes analyse fewer variables than does our conscious thought, so, fewer resources.

But, the down side is that we may miss the sensory inputs that could potentially save our lives. Take the example of walking to the well to get water. We do it day after day. Time and time again. Our bodies are always looking to conserve resources, so, as soon as our senses start receiving common inputs for actions we are doing, our bodies initiate the chemical responses that we feel as “boredom.” This feeling is a catalyst for our mind to not spend so many resources on an action. To conserve that which is vital to our survival. Our conscious mind then “wanders” or waits. (like driving home and realizing you don’t remember most of your journey.) In our example of getting water from the well, the act of walking to the well has become subconscious due to the repetitive sensory inputs. Our conscious mind goes into standby mode or moves on to another topic and we fail to see the lion hiding in the bushes as we walk by. The lion jumps out at us. The sensory input is no longer repetitive and our conscious mind kicks into full gear. Raising our adrenaline levels to be able to respond to a threat. Widening our eyes to be able to perceive the threat. Increasing the utilization of more of our physical mind, and time seems to slow down as we scan our senses for the threat. Our subconscious processes receive the signal of increased adrenaline and take defensive measures. We stop walking. We jump back. Our muscles tighten up, ready for fight or flight. As soon as the threat is identified, our subconscious processes get to work, fight or flight depending on the individual and the situation. As this is happening, our conscious mind is busy processing the inputs from our senses and from the subconscious and unconscious processes to find a way to improve our situation and survive the threat of the lion jumping out at us.

It is all a well oiled machine. Our conscious mind is the general. Our subconscious and unconscious processes are the lieutenants and our cells and organs are the infantry men. Nothing else is really needed.

But, what about our soul? What about the belief that there is something ineffable about being human that carries on after the body dies? That is not so easily explained. That requires the compilation of desperate “facts” we have observed about the world. The kind of facts that don’t lend themselves readily to scientific scrutiny. Like the hair raising on the back of your neck when you sense and unseen danger. The times when you feel so connected to someone that you can sense what they are thinking. The times you see something out of the corner of your eye. The near death experiences. The spiritual experiences reported by so many. Remote viewing. Mind reading. Ghosts. Magic.

There are far too many things that have been experienced and we cannot fully explain to just dismiss them out of hand. But, there isn’t a logical sequence of known events to be able to explain them scientifically. Unless we close our minds to certain possibilities. And a closed mind is like walking to get water from the well with a subconscious process. We may miss the lion waiting in the bushes.

We are beings of habit

Take a look at the things you do in your life. The things most of us gravitate toward as we get older. Almost without fail, our lives become consumed by habit. We develop a certain set of actions that we “like” to do. And we do them repetitively. Playing computer games. Reading. Working in our gardens or yards. Driving RC cars. Golfing. Boating. Working. Projects that we take on. People we interact with. The things we do tend to become repetitive. This is not just coincidence, it is by design. It is a natural progression of the influence of our subconscious and unconscious processes influencing us through “feelings” to desire the “comfortable”, known, safe and resource conserving actions in our life. These feelings lull us into not engaging our conscious mind, to not give it much thought.

This lack of conscious thought in our actions throughout the day may be good at conserving resources, but it does have a down side. A lion waiting in the bushes. We can all relate to doing something without really thinking, only to find that the action puts us in conflict with those around us. Speeding a bit as we drive because we are wrapped up in our thoughts of being late for work, or what we are going to the store for, or what we have planned later in the day. Wrapped up in ourselves, we are not aware of the way our actions are affecting those around us as we dart in and out of traffic to accomplish our goals in a time frame that seems shorter. Or the myriad of other times in our lives when we are concerned only with what we desire and don’t give much thought to those around us, or how our actions will affect them. If we are honest with ourselves, we can come up with a huge list of examples over our lifetime.

Then, one day, we realize that we need a bit more “excitement” in our lives. Because one of our basic needs as humans is to strive against something. A quality a repetitive, calm, peaceful life does not provide. How did we get here? What was it that caused this malady, this deviation from normalcy, this deviation from homeostasis?

It was a lack of conscious thought and an unbalanced reliance on subconscious and unconscious action. That is why the idioms of “being mindful in our lives” or “mindfulness” are concepts that catch our attention. Because they relate to our unconscious realization of being out of balance in thought and action. Or, because they are saying that are so vague and seemingly just outside our present comprehension that we attribute a quality of “profoundness” to them.

To any extent, we allow our balance between unconscious thought, subconscious thought and conscious thought to falter, and we experience a deviation from homeostasis (a feeling, need or yearning) and are driven to make a change. Though, without conscious thought, there is a good chance that change will not be in our best interest and will only temporarily satiate what caused the need in the first place. We have all seen people that make “bad” decisions in their lives. We sit back and wonder how some people can be so “stupid”. Yet, we fail to see that every one of us does the exact same thing to different extents and in different parts of our lives. We are all beings that have developed “tools” to deal with life according to what we have been taught, what we experience, our social influences and what we have gleaned from our own examinations. These “tools” are the way we think we should act. They are what we value. They are the way we feel and the way we deal with those feelings. They have become so ingrained in us, so much a subconscious or unconscious process, that when we see others not adhering to them we think “That person doesn’t have much common sense.” When what we should see is “That person has not had the experiences or teachings to be able to develop the tools I have been

able to develop.” We are beings of habit, the extent of which few rarely see and fewer remember once they see it.

Free Will

What does all of this say about free will? Reading all of this about subconscious and unconscious processes in our mind being all that we tend to use throughout the majority of our day probably has you thinking pretty negatively about the existence of free will. A notion that usually is so revolting to us to be disbelieved out of hand.

But if we take a look at the idea of free will, we find that there are almost as many definitions of free will as there are people who think they have it.

There is the idea that we can do anything we want. There is the idea that we can choose anything we want. There is the idea that we can choose something other than what we would normally do. And there are a myriad of deviations from these, but pertaining to the same “basic” idea. The idea that we are not bound and can choose any path that is possible.

Yet, is that the case? We are so deeply and vehemently opposed to the idea of not having free will, yet, when we get past our instinctual rejection of the idea and start to examine it, we find that we are at the whim of so many influences in thought and action as to make the possibility of free will a fallacy.

Those influences, I think, are the key what free will is. In the context of what we have previously discussed and the subtle, unconscious influences that affect everything we do, my definition of free will is formed. I define free will as being able to see the things that influence our thoughts, feelings and actions and being able to choose something different than the direction those influences are guiding us. The definition of free will is “The power of acting without the constraint of necessity or fate; the ability to act at one’s own discretion.”

The key here is “being able to see the things that influence us.” Without that we are acting in a manner no better than the instinctual reactions usually attributed to animals. And, if we are truthful, humans spend a great deal of time acting in a manner that is no better than the instinctual animal. Every time we fail to give conscious thought, every time we fail to figure out all of the things that are influencing our actions, and just “go with our gut”, we are acting instinctively. Without the use of our greatest strength which has allowed us to evolve to the point we have.

This behavior worked well for us over history. But our civilizations have grown to a point where it is no longer an asset, it is a hindrance. Take a look around you. How much turmoil can you find in your society that is caused by “the seven deadly sins” laid out by so many religions in various ways. All of them describe not only people thinking of only themselves, but people acting off of subconscious and unconscious processes. People failing to use their conscious mind to figure out all of the things that are motivating their actions. People running off of instinct.

Now, I agree. That is an exaggeration. People do think. We think all the time. The point I am making is that the thought put into something is not only the minimal we deem needed to come up with a course of action that we are satisfied with most of the time. But also that the ideas we come up with lack much insight into the full range of things motivating us in a direction. That is why stereotypes are so effective. “Types” of people act in “certain” ways according to their “common motivations”. They do that repeatedly because they don’t understand or know the things motivating them. So they just keep doing the same things again and again. Hence, stereotypes are good indicators for a person’s actions in a lot of cases.

So, How do We Awaken from Our Slumber?

How to break free from this cycle of subconscious and unconscious influences is the question. How do we escape the cycle of instinctual, animalistic thought and action to claim the power that has facilitated our large societal growth? How do we harness the power that has improved our lives so much?

Time and practice.

It is that simple. Though, it is not easy. We have to develop the habit of honest self reflection on the things that motivate what we think, what we feel and what we do. We have to develop the habit of consideration before we take an action. We have to develop a habit of learning everything we can so we can increase the options we have when deciding what actions to take. And we have to develop the habit of listening to others in an attempt to gain new perspectives, new ways of thinking about the things and situations we experience in life.

These are not things that can be achieved in days, weeks, or even years. These are things that cannot be achieved at all. Though, they can be developed. These skills will never be foolproof. They will never work perfectly. There are too many variables, too many differences in each situation. Too many ways to look at a situation and too many differences in people to be able to find a “perfect” solution to what we should do, think or say.

But we are not trying to outline a path to being perfect are we? We are trying to outline a path to achieving a happy, fulfilling, purposeful and meaningful life. We are trying to express what actions we need to take to sidestep some of the most common pitfalls. We are trying to teach you how to awaken from your slumber and live a life that is better than anything you have imagined before.

Practice. Learn. Think. Question everything. We may not achieve perfection, but our lives will become so good that you will think you have.

A Persistent Sense of Something Being Wrong, Something We are Missing, Deep in Our Gut That Drives Us To Do More, Achieve More, be More.

There is an unease in your gut because you are not living life correctly.

It is that simple.

What exactly is causing it? Only you can answer that. But to do so, you need to foster a practice of honestly taking a look inside you to find out what is motivating you. If you lie to yourself, then you have no chance of correcting it, because you will never know what it is.

This is not always an easy task, but it is a skill. Any skill can be learned. And the more you do it, the easier it becomes.

How do you admit those things inside you that you fear, or shy away from? You do it. You put your feelings aside long enough to get it done. What choice do you have? Unfortunately, the only options are to face the things inside of you and change your actions and thoughts to address the issue, or live your life not only suffering from that which intimidates you but also with the fear of facing it.

This is not easy. It is often only accomplished after the prerequisite period of denial and kicking and screaming. But the more we do it, the easier it becomes. And we invariably find that the rewards are always worth the process.

Ecology of Practices

Understanding does not just materialize out of thin air. Take a look at your life and the things you understand. How did you come to understand them? Honest evaluation will show that no matter what it is that you are thinking of, you came to that understanding a learning process. Be it school, personal experience, or from your social group. In any case, you learned it by doing something and analyzing the results.

It is the same with anything we want to understand. That understanding only comes about by doing something. Some things are easy, like when your parents told you not to put your hand on a hot

stove. Some, take much more time and effort. Like those who put years into school to understand particle physics.

Here, we are concerned with what practices should we adopt and cultivate in our lives that will lead to a better understanding of ourselves. Which will allow us to create an unshakable foundation of self which will carry us through rough times.

To this end, we have identified a few areas in which we need to focus our efforts:

1. Fostering Social Needs.
2. Fostering Physical Needs.
3. Fostering Mental Needs.
4. Fostering Spiritual Needs.
5. Morality.

As in all things, we need to approach each of the areas listed above with balance. Not midpoint, balance. A balance unique to each individual and each situation.

For instance, if I were a scientist, my balance would lean more toward Mental growth. If I were a preschool teacher, my balance would lean more toward Social growth. And if I were an artist, my balance would lean more toward Emotional growth. (Each instance may not be entirely accurate, but you get the idea.)

If I strive for equal amounts of everything in my life then I miss the point. I will then be ignoring factors such as What I am good at. What I want to work on next in my life. What is actually needed in my life. We can't effectively work on everything at once, so we do our best to address all these areas, but focus more effort on one or two.

Fostering Social Needs

We are social creatures. That is part of the human condition. We can embrace it by finding some friends that we can relate to, or by being part of a social organization. The ways we meet our social needs can vary, but the fact that we need a social group is indisputable. We can let our need to strive against something impede upon this aspect of our lives, but doing so is only to our detriment.

To this end, there are a few things that we need to focus on:

1. In Person Social Contact.
2. Reciprocity.
3. Balancing our innate selfishness with the societal need for unselfishness.

First, let's look at In person social contact

There is a difference between in person social contact, and not in person social contact.

When we meet someone in person, there are a myriad of social cues that we can't get any other way. Body language, voice inflection, facial expressions, familiarity with physical features, to name a few. All of these combine to help create a social bond fills a need inside us as humans.

This is why we gather at least once a week with other Convocationists. There is no substitute for regular, in person contact with a social group with which you have something in common. On line or any other means of contact does not fill this human need in the long run.

Isolation is a punishment in prison. Isolation is a huge concern for astronauts. Isolation is a concern in big cities and rural communities and isolation rears its ugly head when we get older. In every aspect of life it is apparent that, as a human, we need human contact. And that contact needs to be in person.

Next, let's look at Reciprocity

We need to strive for reciprocity for us AND the people we interact with.

Watch children playing. If a larger child always wins over a smaller child, the smaller child will end up stopping playing with the larger child. But if the larger child lets the smaller child win sometimes, then everyone will be happy. We need to do our best, but in everyday affairs, people need to win sometimes. In organized competitions, the best needs to win. Balance in everyday affairs, Excel when appropriate.

So what does reciprocity look like in life? How do we find a balance?

Give more than you take, but don't always give much more than you get. If your coworkers buy snacks and allow anyone to partake, then make sure and add a little more than what you take. If you are playing a game with a friend, then don't always leave them with no hope of winning. If someone stops to help you on the side of the road with a flat tire, make sure and compensate them for their time and effort, even if all you can do is express gratitude for their effort.

Let people know how much you value what they give, and give back, at the very least, as much as you get.

Moderation. Always giving much more than you get leads to being discontent. Sometimes is fine, but don't make it a habit. Likewise, don't allow others to always give to you much more than you give to them. Whether giving or receiving, there needs to be a sense of reciprocity, of being close to balanced.

Next, let's look at Balancing our innate selfishness with the societal need for unselfishness:

What is selfishness? ...it is looking out for ourselves. More importantly, it only becomes a problem when we do this more than we put our society above ourselves.

At this point a person's hackles raise and their minds are flooded with thoughts defending the need to look out for ourselves. People are trained by almost every aspect of our society to look out for ourselves. "Because no one else is going to." And to a large extent, this is true in our society presently. That is what we need to change.

Look around you. I challenge you to find one thing in your life that is not a product of being part of a large society. Look at the chair you sit in. The clothes you wear. The medium you are reading this on. The electricity that lights your days and nights. The roads you drive on. The buildings you frequent. The car you drive. And on, and on and on.

Being part of a society gives you so much. What is it that you give back? Countless people over the ages have worked to make the society you live in better for you. What responsibility do you have because you want to reap the rewards? What social responsibilities do you have? What personal responsibilities do you have? Have you ever given this any thought?

Selfishness is what helped life evolve. But everything about our existence since that point has shown us that working together has more benefits than not. Cells are a society of parts working together. Organs are a society of cells working together. Animals, and humans, are a society of organs working together. Tribes are a society of people working together. Towns are a larger society of people working together. Cities are even larger societies of people working together. Nations are even larger societies of people working together. In all instances we are shown that when we work together, our existence is better off. Our lives are better. Bacteria have very few options. Single celled organism have greater options. Multi-celled organisms have even greater options. Town, cities, states and countries give us ever increasing options and opportunities as more and more people work together. Again, I ask you to look around and find one thing that is not available to you because of being part of a large society.

But a large society is nothing more than a bunch of individual people working together. Each with their own concerns and needs and desires. The key to societies success is learning to work together. When we are alone, we do what we want, when we want. There are no other concerns besides ourselves. When we are part of a society, we need to take into account the concerns and desires of others. Then we need employ that all important reciprocity we spoke about earlier. We need to not only think of ourselves, our desires and needs, we need to take into consideration the desires and needs of others. We need to value the desires and needs of others at least as much as we value our own.

For society to work well, we need to not be so self-centered in thought and action.

This is not a rallying cry for you to abandon all self concern and think only of what you can give to your society. That is a recipe for disaster. Some people will take that opportunity to take everything they can with no regard for the repercussions. With no regard for how it affects others or the

society they live in. We need to start changing our behaviors to be less selfish, but we need to find a balance that will not allow others to take without reciprocity. We need to make slow and deliberate changes in our actions to help recenter us, and the society we live in, away from selfish thought and action, and more towards unselfish thought and action. There is a balance. If we work at it, we can find it.

Fostering Physical Needs

The human body is a tool. A very complex tool, like your car. And like your car, the human body likes to move. We jump in our car every day without thought. Barring any major break downs, a car will just run. Day in and day out, with minor maintenance, our car stays reliable. But, if you let a car sit for long periods of time, it will become unreliable. If you try and jump in a car that has been sitting for years and drive off, you are quickly going to break down, if it starts at all. It is the same with the human body.

When we are children we are always moving around, and our bodies are growing and regenerating faster than at any time in our lives. And our bodies work at its best efficiency. It is a brand new tool. Compared to the rest of our lives, our bodies need the least amount of maintenance during this period. We can put our bodies through an awful lot of abuse and it still works well.

Then we transition into mid life. Our body does not work as well, it is not as resilient. If we continue to do the things we did as a child, our tool will break down. We also become much more sedentary as compared to our childhood. We stop moving as much. We find a job, and our movement is curtailed. Extremely so if we have some kind of desk job. Our body, our tool, sits for longer and longer periods of time.

As we transition into later years, this behavior is pronounced. The habitual lack of movement results in a drastic loss of muscle mass, which exacerbates the problem of our bodies not working as well as in our youth. Our tool is breaking down.

There is also the problem that the more you use a tool, the more wear and tear it accumulates. Making it not work as well as when it was new.

So, the more we use our body, the more it breaks down, but if we don't use it, it breaks down. The key is to, as in everything, find a balance. The older we get, the more important it is to adopt an exercise routine. Yes, there are aches and pains associated with our bodies being older, but keeping up the exercise in spite of that makes our lives better by helping to maintain our body. Exercise helps us keep our muscle mass and flexibility as we age. It helps our body, our tool, work better.

There is also the consideration that our body and our outlook are linked. The healthier we are, the better our outlook on our lives. Conversely, the more our bodies have problems, the more difficult it is to maintain a positive outlook on life.

So we have a choice. As we get older we can adopt an exercise routine that helps us maintain our muscle mass and vitality. Or we can become increasingly sedentary and end up with more aches, pains and illnesses than we would have if we had maintained our bodies with exercise.

Staying active is definitely more difficult and more painful as we get older, but in doing so we end up with less pain and illnesses than if we didn't stay active. Always pay attention to your body. Pay attention to how it feels and how it heals. It is like paying attention to how your car sounds and runs. When problems arise, we can often catch it early just by paying attention. Like when your brakes begin to squeal before the pads are totally worn down. If you ignore the squealing, the pads wear down

totally and begin grinding down the rotors. Then you have a bigger problem than just routine maintenance.

Fostering Mental Needs

When we start talking about taking care of our mental needs, we open a wide and diverse subject that has more things to talk about than there are humans with those needs. The subject is combinatorially explosive. With just a few major topics to cover, there are a multitude of ways they play out in our psyche. Psychiatrists and Psychologists spend lifetimes exploring these different combinations and still don't cover the full breadth of what is possible. So trying to do so here, without the benefit of that continued, specialized training would be folly.

So here we are going to focus on just a few basics, the few things that drastically affect every aspect of our lives. These basics are going to address the fact that our minds are like a muscle. The more you use it, the stronger it becomes. And the fact that developing your mind is like climbing a mountain of shale. If you stop climbing, you start sliding back. There is no point at which the mind just stays as good as it is, just like the muscles in your body.

Just like your muscles, it takes focused, dedicated work to improve your mind. It is a jarring, uncomfortable process, but the results are well worth the effort. The question is, "How do we train our minds?" Or, more precisely, "What actions do we need to take to improve our minds?"

1. Reading.
2. Exploring different concepts from different points of view.
3. Training focus through different forms of meditation.
4. Talking with others about what we think, and trying to understand a point of view that differs from ours. Not just to debunk, or dismiss it, but to try and fully understand it and how it is valid.
5. Learn new things.

The mind is our most powerful tool. But, as we get older, we get into habits that progressively close our mind until we end up almost not using it at all. Like and unused muscle which atrophies and dies.

We need to practice these things often if we want to keep our mind healthy. Daily if possible, weekly at least. The more you train your mind, the easier it becomes. At first, practicing these things will be a real chore. As these practices become habits, they become easier. Both in making the time to do them and in the ease with which we do them.

You will find that the benefits of sustaining these actions affect every aspect of our lives. Making our lives better, more fulfilled and meaningful.

Fostering Spiritual Needs

There is a basic human need to make sense of and have a sense of control over the things that we experience in life. And I think that is a perfect light to use when exploring what the hell we mean by

our spiritual needs.

I think our spiritual needs are the ideas and beliefs that bridge the gap between when we know, or can prove through observation and logic, and what we don't know.

Think about what comes to mind when we think about spiritual needs. We probably conjure up fleeting images of church, god, monks meditating, our soul (or what happens to us after our bodies die.), chi, magic, witches, or perhaps just a concept of "feeling peace."

Almost without fail, when we think about spiritual needs, it is concepts that bridge the gap between what is known and what is not known. That sheds some light on what practices we may need to develop to make sure we are addressing this need.

For most people, when they are compelled to address this need, they fall back on the idea of church, or religion. People flock to these practices and receive a number of benefits. They get part of their social needs met. Part of their Mental needs met in learning about the religion. And part of their spiritual needs met in the introduction and adoption of a set of beliefs that bridge that gap between what is known and what is not. Religions have done the human race a great service. Though, man has corrupted this message as happens with everything we touch.

Some people flock to self-help forums for their spiritual needs. Delving into books and seminars. Finding benefit in the personal growth which touches many different aspects of our basic human needs. Though, without a deep insight into what our basic human needs are, the results from these self-help programs, as with religion, are varied.

Then we have the less widespread attempts to satiate our spiritual needs in people joining cults, clubs, practicing religious holidays and reciting different pieces of knowledge that they hear from various "enlightened" sources. (Usually without giving it much thought.)

All of these are attempts satiate the basic human needs to make sense of and have a sense of control over the things we experience in life. All of these actions fill the gap between what is known and what is not known to varying degrees.

In this light, we now have a basic path to satiating these needs. We need to take a look at, give thought to, those things we encounter in our lives that cause us discomfort in our lack of knowledge and understanding about them. We need to find an answer to those questions that we are satisfied with, at least most of the time.

What happens when we die? Is there a god? What is this yearning I feel that draws me to consider a religion? What is it that I believe, and why do I believe it?

These questions, these yearnings, arise out of our basic human need to make sense of and have a sense of control over the things we experience. As we explore what is causing these desires to manifest in us, it helps to understand why, to understand what causes these desires to manifest. Because if we don't understand what the problem is, then anything we do to fix it won't work. Because it won't be addressing the cause.

Give thought to the things beyond our current understanding. Develop a concept that you are happy with. Religion, self help, science, cults, witchcraft, clubs, and even just accumulating different tidbits of "wisdom" from those we perceive as enlightened can all have pieces of truth in them. Accumulate the pieces that fit well with you and assemble a belief that sufficiently bridges that gap between what is known and what is not known. Then keep it flexible enough to incorporate a better concept when it presents itself. We are all trying to bridge that gap in knowledge. We are all trying to satiate the basic human needs to make sense of and have a sense of control over the things we experience. Religion, works for some, self help for others. But when we know what is causing the desires and yearnings within us, then we have a chance to develop something that actually works.

Morality

What is morality? How does it manifest? Do we need to have our morality dictated by a higher being, or can we dictate our own? What is it that we consider moral and why? Is there a common thread to what we consider moral? How does our existence as humans affect our decisions on what is moral? How does our society affect what we consider moral? How does our situation affect our morality? All valid questions, and all goes to show the depth and breadth of the idea of morality.

We all have a basic sense of what is moral and not. And most of us have encountered situations in dealing with others where we feel that they have not acted according to what we find moral. And every human, if they are honest, has done something in their past that has caused turmoil with other people. Situations where our actions conflicted with the morality of others.

Why is this? How can a seemingly simple concept such as what is moral be different in so many people?

That is because what is moral is not standard or static in any person or group. There are many factors that go into deciding what is moral and what is not. And those factors change over time and situation.

What we find moral is affected by our species, our situation, our social group, our level of selfishness or selflessness, our environment and our experiences. If we think about it, what is considered moral is different if we are alone versus when we are in a group.

Morality is an agreed upon set of actions that help society to not rip itself apart. Whether that society is two people or two trillion, it does not matter. If you are the only being in existence, then there is no morality. You just do what you want because there is no one else to consider.

And that last thought gives us a clue as to how we should go about deciding what we consider moral and not moral. Truly, it gives us insight into what morality is.

With the definition of morality being “An agreed upon set of actions that help society to not rip itself apart” we gain the understanding that morality is a compromise. A compromise between the members of the society on what actions are acceptable and what are not. Compromise can be defined as “An agreement to which neither party involved is happy with, but can live with.”

Some things we consider moral are common to almost all people simply because we are human. Take cannibalism for example. The aversion to cannibalism probably due to an evolutionary fact that eating members of your species repeatedly increases the transmission of different types of diseases. Not to mention encroaching on our basic human need for security. But the act of cannibalism is so commonly revolted in humans that we consider it to be known by all.

Other items of morality are not so common. Tossing trash onto the ground for example. Most of us have seen examples of people picking up trash they walk by and through it into a trash receptacle. And most of us see trash that has been thrown on the ground by someone. Even though it is illegal, at least in most places?

Differences in morality are differences in what we find acceptable and are factors of our species, our situation, our social group, our level of selfishness or selflessness, our environment and our experiences.

I think the main thing to consider when contemplating morality is to ask the question “What type of person do I want to be?” Do you want to be the kind of person that causes turmoil in your society, or do you want to be the kind of person that helps your society get along? Ultimately, the largest question is “How selfish or unselfish do I want to be?” As in everything, balance is key. It is not healthy to be totally selfish just as it is not healthy to be totally unselfish. A balance needs to be maintained for each individual. And balance is not a middle point. In understanding this balance, we

find it easier to cope with the perceived transgressions of others.

So how does all of this pertain to an Ecology of Practices?

Everything we have mentioned so far increases our understanding. It helps us realize that human and societal psychology is far too varied to be able to lay out a list of things to do to cover every situation. It is just too complex. We can however, put forth a list of things to do to help each individual grow. So, as we encounter the myriad of situations in our life, we will have a strong base from which we can make intelligent, socially conscious decisions.

To that end, here are some of the things we should work on depending on what role you want to fulfil in your life:

Actions to put into practice

Actions for every person to practice:

Question everything. Especially when told to just accept or believe.
Continual growth in mind, body and spirit.
Learn all that you can.

Actions for followers to practice:

All previous actions.
Daily reading.
Daily meditation.
Daily exercise.
Study the development of belief systems and how they evolved.
Continually develop a rigorous and honest evaluation skill of yourself and what motivates each thought, emotion and action.

Actions for Priests to practice:

All previous actions.
Development of skills for helping people.
Development of in depth knowledge of Convocationism.

There are many different things to consider in life if you want a chance at having a happy, fulfilling and purposeful life. This list of basic actions, if practiced, will help keep you on a path that accomplishes all of those.

Finding Solidarity in the Search for Purpose

Some people need religion, some need logic. The one thing everyone needs is a sense of purpose in their lives.

Our gatherings are a celebration of difference. Never let our gatherings become nothing but the like minded. We need to challenge our beliefs and ideas or they become toxic.

How do we learn?

What is our path?

People need different things at different points on their path. Some need more sacred, some need more analytical. Most need a balance of both.

Growth comes from opening our minds to different ideas and beliefs. It is a way to bring about growth and change without all the pain and destruction that comes from trying to hold on to static beliefs.

Static thoughts and beliefs, unchallenged by opposing intellectual and spiritual ideas and beliefs becomes stagnant and toxic.

The more we understand and accept difference, the more we are alive.

How To Make a Life Full of Meaning and Purpose

Having a life that is full of meaning and purpose isn't something that "just happens". It comes about by our actions in fulfilling some of our basic needs, not from forces external.

But what needs do we focus on? Herein lies the problem. Unless we identify what our most basic needs are, we won't be able to address them. So let's take a look at some of the most basic needs we have:

1. We Need To Struggle Against Something

If we take a look at our lives, we find that it is permeated with the struggle against various things. Our parents, the law, societal norms, our present position in our social circles to name just a few.

There are many, many more examples, but if we take an honest look at it, we find that even when our life is going well, we take deep pleasure in working to overcome something. We see this in work, in the struggle to overcome a challenge. In sports, in the struggle for our team to overcome the other. We see this in shopping, in the search for the lowest price for the product we want.

In the realization of this manifestation in ourselves, we may be tempted to revel in unbridled acts of rebellion. But if we do, we find that the misguided acts of rebellion lead not to meaning and purpose, but only to alienating us from some of our other basic needs. Thereby destroying any purpose and meaning we are trying to create in our lives.

It is only through wisely guiding this basic need into useful and constructive endeavors when we have a chance to generate purposeful and meaningful lives.

Some may find an outlet in our jobs, by overcoming projects presented to us. Some may find an outlet in playing sports, or in creating art, or in helping others.

As long as we find a useful and constructive outlet for our need to strive against something, it will not build inside us until it lashes out at the most inappropriate times and ways.

I see this as the natural progression from some very basic and, slightly, later evolved circumstances.

First, biological evolution. The need to accumulate resources to survive. It is the biological motivator that can lead to greed when out of balance. From single celled organisms forming the first Markov Blankets, to the formation of the first multi-celled organisms, to the evolution of human kind, to the formation of tribes, cities and eventually nations. Everything we experience in life has shown us that our survival depends on, and our life gets better with learning to work together rather than being concerned with ourselves above all else. That is to say, with the evolution of our thinking away from biological selfishness into societal unselfishness.

This change cannot progress quickly. To try and switch too fast from our present society which teaches and rewards selfish thinking and actions, to a society that teaches and rewards societal unselfishness, is the best way to make sure it will fail. Personal selfishness is ingrained into our society and people. Without slowly changing the mindset of each and every person in the society, the selfish will overrun, take advantage of, and destroy the society we are trying to build.

Second, the extension of this need to accumulate resources into our evolved societies. The name of the game when we started evolving was simply to gain enough resources to survive.

As our societies got more and more advanced, it allowed the specialization of individuals to which allowed for every increasingly more complex items and tools in our lives. Cars, phones, satellite communication... all of this is only achievable through large enough societies allowing people to specialize in what they know.

This specialization of individuals comes with a down side. I don't know how to hunt for food, build my house, build my car, build my phone and the network it runs on, build a power plant to power my home or build a sewage system to enable the "modern" amenities I enjoy.

For these reasons, society has become just as important as finding resources to survive. Therefore, our relation to society is reflected in our biology just as strongly as our need for food. When our need for food is not met, our physical and mental health is effected. When our relation to our society is out of "optimal grip", our physical and mental health is effected. Getting food and keeping our relation to our society are of equal importance. Fortunately, larger societies make getting food a lot easier than if we were on our own.

Third, the need to conserve resources. As we evolved, our existence was a balance between expending resources to find more resources, and conserving enough resources to survive long enough to gain more resources. As an example, we hunted for food, but we needed food to have the energy to hunt for food. When our resources got low, we hunted for more food.

As we evolved, it was uncertain where our next meal was coming from. The larger our societies got, we had to worry less and less about it. We just went to the grocery store, as long as our usefulness to the society was great enough to enable us to earn enough money to buy the food.

So, our whole existence has shown us two things, whether we realize it or not:

One. We need to struggle to survive. We evolved in an adversarial environment. It only makes sense that this struggle would be part of our makeup. The key is to wisely guide this basic need into useful and constructive endeavors so we have a chance to generate purposeful and meaningful lives.

Two. We need to work together. This is a difficult one to incorporate into our thoughts and actions, simply because it seemingly goes against the first thing we were taught. Struggle to survive. But our struggle needs to evolve with our societal growth. As we once learned the personal responsibilities of keeping ourselves alive and healthy, we need to now learn the societal responsibilities to keep our societies alive and healthy.

2. We Need to Make Sense of/Understand the Things We Perceive

And 3. We Need to To Have a sense of Control Over the Things in Our Lives

We mow our lawns. We fold our clothes and put them away. We tidy up the house. We organize our things. We make plans. We draw conclusions about why people did something. We form ideas about what causes things that we encounter. We seek to fill our gaps in knowledge with stories or suppositions that we are satisfied with at least most of the time, if not given too much thought.

The simple fact is that we need to have a sense of control over and understanding of the things in our lives. It is one of the reasons we like the scientific method so much. It explains things in a way that we can understand and leads us to a points where we can form ideas on how to control what we think we understand.

If we search our lives, we can find innumerable examples of these two needs. But the question is “How do I channel these needs in constructive ways?”

Albert Camus said “...they deify what crushes them and find reason to hope in what impoverishes them “

In our gaps of knowledge and control, our need manifests as our best educated guess. Sometimes good. Sometimes not so much. And the wider the gap in our understanding and control to what we experience, the more exaggerated and incomprehensible our explanations tend to be. The question that needs answered then becomes “How do I channel these needs in constructive ways and avoid the pitfalls of adhering to outlandish ideas or concepts?”

Fortunately, there is one very simple way that will give benefits far beyond just these two needs.

LEARN

Learn everything you can. Find one thing in your life that you are interested in and learn all you can about it. When you get to the point where you think you have learned all there is to know about it, then you know that you have just begun your journey. Because only a fool thinks he knows everything.

Learn everything you can. Read everything you can. Talk to your friends about the things you have learned. Enjoy it. Revel in it. The more you learn, the better your life can be.

4. We Need a Social Structure That We Belong To

Like it or not, we are social creatures. Whether we embrace it and join every club we stumble across, or we strive against it and take pride in standing as the social outcast. We need a social structure that we belong to, no matter what role we play. Constructive or destructive.

The key to fulfilling this need of ours constructively is find a social group that we can get along with. A chess club, a band, the local car club, a book club... knitting, bike riding, movies, comics, role

playing games, card games. There are endless opportunities to meet, face to face, with others that share the same interests. The key is to meet in person. To see another person's face and interact in a manner that allows for reading of facial cues, body language. Online or over the phone just won't cut it for long. And the whole purpose is to help generate purpose and meaning in our lives. Only prolonged, in person friendships accomplish this. Everything else falls short to varying degrees.

One of the best ways to fill this need is to find a Convocationism group in your area. Meet with them. Go to their weekly services. Discuss the meditations laid out in the Convocational Bible. There you will meet people with the same goal in mind as you.

5. We Need to Have a Goal to Work Towards

If we take a look at our lives, we find that we are happiest when we are working towards a goal that we feel will be useful. Not in achieving a goal, but in working towards a goal. Think about it. The first thing we do when we achieve something is choose another goal to work on. Achieving a goal gives us joy, but it is in the working towards a goal that gives us happiness. Joy is fleeting, happiness lasts.

Even if fulfilling this need of ours seems daunting, it turns out to be pretty simple. Pick something that interests you and work toward it. Painting. Politics. Helping others. Starting a business. Planting a garden. Reading a book. Writing a book. Organizing a local social event. Going to see a movie that will come out soon.

The point is that it can be anything you want to do, or have to do, but make it a goal. Make it something that you have planned and are going to attend to. Put some time into planning it. Put some effort into it. A goal is something you are going to accomplish. As adults, most of the time it is going to be something you have to do, but sometimes it is going to be something you want to do. It doesn't matter which. It only matters that you make it a goal and put some effort into making sure it turns out the best it can.

6. We Need to Have a Sense of Reciprocity in Our Interactions

How many of us know that one guy who only takes? The person you are always doing things for but they never do, or almost never do anything in return?

We need a sense of give and take in our dealings with other people. More so, we need to feel that we get in return enough to justify the effort we put into something. Work. Friendships. Our vehicles. Anything we devote our time to needs to give us a sense of "It is worth it."

Nothing in life is going to be a 50/50 split. But continually putting effort into things that don't give us a sense of reciprocity is one of the quickest ways to foster resentment and discontent in our lives.

Give where you can, but learn when to cut things off.

7. We Need to Maintain a Set of Actions That Affords Growth in Each of the Three Major Areas of our Human Existence. Mental, Physical and Spiritual.

At different times in our life we focus on, or see the importance in, the different aspects of our existence. At times we focus on our health, physical or mental. At times we focus on the more existential, or spiritual. Though most of the time, for most of the people, they focus on none.

If we do not have a set of practices that is focused on each part of what we need, then it will not be fulfilled. And a need unfulfilled is ample breeding ground for discontent. The internal discontent that drives us, usually subconsciously, to do or say things that cause turmoil in our lives.

But, if we develop a set of actions that addresses each of these areas, and stick to those actions, then we have a chance of living a life that is much better than if we don't.

Mental - Read. Play games where you can use your mind. Contemplate on and discuss the Convocational meditations with your friends. Make constructive goals in your life. Think. There should be very few times in an adults life when they are not thinking about something.

Physical - The human body likes to move. Unfortunately, as we get older we become more sedentary. We get tired. We have aches and pains. We don't feel like it. There are a million reasons we can come up with to not move. But the fact of the matter is that the more we don't move, the worse it feels. The human body is meant to move. It improves so many aspects of our functionality and also improves our mental health. So go for a walk. Do some push-ups. Do leg lifts in your chair. Anything you can, just move. Your body, your mind and your outlook on life will thank you for it.

8. We Need to Strive for Balance in Action, Thought and Emotion

In life, there are many things which push us from balance. The other cars on the road that cut us off. The flat tire. The kids being difficult. The in-laws causing a ruckus. The neighbors playing their music too loud. The person at work that eats your lunch. Or the day that was supposed to be bright and shining that turns out to be cold and rainy.

Everything that happens in our lives pushes us to differing degrees of extremes. Some small deviations from balance, others much more. But as we notice our thoughts, actions or emotions going to extremes, we need to reel them back in.

And Balance does not mean a median point. Each person has a natural tendency, so the balance can be in a different spot depending on the person. Some of us are more in touch with our emotions. Our balance point will be different than others. But our goal should be not to let it get to an extreme. Some of us are more intellectual than others. Our balance point may not match others, but our goal should be to not let ourselves be overcome by a sense of superiority towards others. Some of us are more physical than others. Our balance point may not match others, but our goal should be to not let our physical prowess cause us to look down on others who haven't worked for that end.

This is not to say that we cannot have times of great joy. My balance point for eating a peanut butter sandwich is not going to be the same as when my team wins the championships. Enjoy the good times. Endure the bad times. Just don't let yourself get unjustifiably too far from balance.

The key for everyone, even though our balance points will differ, is to watch out for extremes in

our thoughts, actions and emotions. When we see ourselves going to unjustified extremes, we need to reel ourselves back in.

9. We Need to Have a Job That Benefits Us and the Society we Live in

We are social creatures, and we need to do something “worth while” with our time. We need to feel useful. One of the best ways to accomplish this is to have a job that benefits us and the society we live in.

Whether that is working for someone else, or owning our own business. Whether we shine shoes or build space vehicles, sell ice cream or cure cancer. If we want to build a life that has purpose and meaning, then we need to have a job that benefits us and the society we live in.

Balancing Our Innate Selfishness with the Societal Need for Unselfishness

The human nature is a dichotomy. On the one hand, we are born into a world that is inherently adversarial. Eat or be eaten. Kill or be killed. The strong survive, the weak die. It is apparent throughout our world and our society has evolved to represent that which we see in nature.

The way our society is designed teaches us to look out for ourselves. Work for money, which is an abstraction of power. Pay homage to those who are unselfish, but revere those who accumulate beyond reason the abstraction, regardless of the detriment to others. The winners. The people setting the world on fire. They achieve. They dominate. They win in their constructed situations designed to set themselves up to gain more and more power. More people want to be like Warren Buffet than want to be like Gandhi.

We live our lives surrounded by a structure that teaches us to look out for ourselves first, and, if we can, help others after that.

The second part of our dichotomy is that everything we have is a product of our working together. Look around you. Try and find one thing in your life that is not a product of having a large society.

From the first Markov blankets, to single celled organisms affording specialization of structures within themselves, to multi-organ systems, everything in life shows that the more we work together, the stronger we are. And the more likely we are to survive. Life shows us that it is better to have a larger society that we are a part of.

We are in transition. Where we are moving away from our biological self-centeredness and learning to become more societally centered. On the one hand, it is our diversity in individuals that can make us stronger. On the other hand, we need to learn to keep ahold of that while working effectively in a society.

We need to learn to balance our selfishness and our societal responsibility.

We have achieved the technological expertise to alleviate the need for human work in our society. Robotics has advanced to a point where almost any manual labor on the part of humans is not needed to produce everything each person in society needs to abundance. The problem with doing that, logistics aside, is two fold.

First, humans are too selfish. At present, if we eliminated the need for a person to work, most people would simply do nothing. Without the need to make money to buy food, people would opt to do nothing, taking from society without giving anything in return.

Second is a fact that most people don't realize. One of the things humans need to make a life full of purpose and meaning is to have a job that benefits them and the society they live in. How many people do you know take pride in the fact that their job helps society run? That what they do helps the society they are in run smoothly and is therefore of great benefit? How many of us drive by the people working on the road and think: "There is a person working his fingers to the bone, in the blazing heat, so that I can have a road to get where I need to go. That person deserves a lot of respect." If we are honest with ourselves, almost no one among us.

No, we are not ready for the next step in development until we can address those things inside us, and inside our society, which perpetuate and cultivate the narrow minded selfishness we evolved with.

The question though, is "What do we do to help facilitate the changes needed?". Followed quickly by "Is this a direction we want to grow?"

The answer to the latter is a moral question. One each of us needs to answer for ourselves.
The answer to the former is a simple one. Stop being so self-centered without being a pushover.

If we spend all of our time thinking of, and making concessions for, others, then people are just going to take advantage of you at every turn and leave you with nothing. If we forego our personal aspirations, then we give up one of the most historically effective ways to affect societal progress. What we need to do is start making a change to our thinking and our actions. Each of us, in our daily lives, needs to find a balance between what we need and what our society needs. We need to start thinking not only about our needs, but about what we can add to our society on a daily basis. We need to think not only about what do we get out of a situation, but what we can add to a situation.

We need to stop thinking only of ourselves and what we get, but also think about what we can add to others lives. We need to work toward becoming more societally minded.

It might help to ask ourselves each day and in each situation: “What can I do today to improve my life? And what can I do today to help improve my society?”

Society

How to define a good society?

“A society is good that fosters the full development of human potentials, to the fullest degree of humanness.”

I do believe that statement is far too inclusive. Understanding that “the line between good and evil runs down the center of every human heart”, to achieve the full development of human potentials would be to develop in the people of the society the full depth of human evil. Not something that is beneficial the society, the individual or the race as a whole.

Perhaps we should amend that statement as follows:

“A society is good that fosters the full development of human potentials in alignment with a moral structure that benefits the individual and the society, to the fullest degree of humanness.”

The above statement is much more acceptable to me even though it still has a degree of ambiguity. But that ambiguity is of design, not ignorance. As humans grow and evolve, so should their moral set. To facilitate the applicability of the statement over time, a bit of ambiguity is needed.

This ambiguity also serves the necessity for thought. Simply being told what to do is of very little use. (“Give a man a fish and he eats for a day.”) But a person who thinks and reasons about various topics gains much more than just knowledge about what he is thinking over. (“Teach a man to fish and he eats for a lifetime.”)

The revised statement facilitates the need for each individual to not only figure out for themselves what moral actions constitute “good” and “bad”, but also envision what could be “better” or “worse.” Not only for us, but for our society (from which we gain so much), and for future generations.

We must always remember that we gain so much from our society, and that society is only here because previous generations worked hard to make it for us. I challenge you to find one thing in your life that is not facilitated by being in a large society, and compare that to the number of things in your life that only possible because of being part of a large society. In such a light, we should keep asking ourselves “How can I make society better for this and future generations?”

The Purpose of the Meditations

Meditations are personal thought exercises and conversational topics used as essential tools to enable the continual growth of our mind and spirit in a way that breaks us free of our subjectivity and adds meaningful value to our lives.

Meditation is a tool to help us to learn to focus. Focus is a tool to help us get an optimal grip on our past, present and future. Optimal grip is a tool to help us move from one point on our path to a better point.

Meditation is not just the existential examination of something. It includes the conscious analysis of our experiences to achieve a better understanding of ourselves, our values and our thought processes, to understand where we are on our path and help us identify where we want to go from there. The following meditative thoughts are concepts proposed to facilitate the growth of our understanding. To be fully realized we need to not only examine each from our point of view at this particular point on our path, but also try to examine them from a variety of points of view that differ from our own. Then discuss them with others that focus on growth.

These meditations are not just for solitary exploration in a meditative state, but are to be discussed with others and in groups to achieve an exhaustive exploration of their meanings and how they apply to us at this point on our path.

How to Meditate

There are many different forms of meditation. When starting, we should focus on training our mind to focus, a skill that should be continually developed. Focusing on our breathing is a popular exercise to develop and maintain this extremely important skill.

Once we develop this skill, we then use that skill to examine different ideas, concepts and perspectives in the pursuit of expanding our mind and understanding. Explore many different types of meditations, these skills will benefit you more than you can imagine.

Once you are ready, focus your abilities on the meditative concepts found in this book. Explore them in your meditations and discuss them with others. Both solitary exploration and discussion with others is essential.

Core Meditations

Considering the evolution of biological systems.

Biological systems started off as single celled organisms. Over millions of years, they evolved into more and more complex systems working together to maintain an organism as diverse as humans.

Acknowledging that the evolution of individual cells to work cooperatively as a unified whole was to create a system that is better at adapting to adverse conditions to allow a greater chance of survival for each individual cell.

Then, from this example, what should we view as the optimal progression of our societal evolution?

As individuals, should we focus on only what we get for ourselves or should we focus more on societal betterment and reap the rewards of a better societal system that offers us more diversity and therefore more options?

The Line between good and evil

The line between good and evil runs down the center of every human heart, to conquer evil, one must first conquer themselves.

We must recognize what is within us and admit it truthfully, humbly, for it is the same in everyone. The only difference is the amount of stimulus needed to invoke it.

When Considering Paradise

When considering paradise, do we realize that paradise would not be having everything we wanted, but in having the needs that threaten our existence met while still having difficult things to strive for?

Here we need to take an honest look at our lives and what brings us happiness versus joy. We can sit on a beach and experience joy in the sun, but that joy is not lasting. That joy does not persist for long in our lives. Contrary to that, happiness is cultivated through successful management of responsibility. Happiness that persists throughout our lives, and a sense of purpose and meaning, comes from having something to do which benefits us and the society we live in.

Can you identify things in your life that bring you happiness and things in your life that bring you joy?

What Would Make Our Journey Worth While

What would make this journey worth while?

To understand that, do we realize that true happiness comes from accomplishing something that pushes the boundaries of our comfortability? Not in having something, but in the remembrance of overcoming something that was difficult and the confidence that develops?

Do we realize that having anything is only important in that it shows our strength to overcome adversity?

Understanding that sheds light on what will make our journey, our life, worth while. Our life is not worth while because of what we have, but because we constantly keep our focus and actions on something difficult to attain. Not material gains, but emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual growth.

The question then becomes, what do I want to achieve in this life and what do I want to achieve for existence after this life?

When Dealing With Others

When dealing with yourself and others. Love the sinner, but hate the sin.

Who among us has not faltered? Who among us has not fallen short of what we would like to be as we have grown and learned?

Can we see that the trespasses of others, and ourselves, is due to personal turmoil or lack of growth?

When dealing with others, the question then becomes “Should I help this person, or scorn them?”

What Do I Fill My Life With

Can you see how much your recent experiences, situations and items you surround yourself with, affect your perception of happiness and the feeling of fulfillment in your life?

On The Topic Of Our Default Mindset

Do you understand that some of our most important actions during the day are to Learn, Participate and see things from other's Perspective. Are you content to be lost on the sea, at the mercy of the influences of what you encounter during the day? Or will you bask in the glory of striving to better yourself a little bit each day, and reap the rewards of continued growth?

On The Subject Of Relationships

Every relationship we are in, no matter how short, has a reason. The reason we are in that relationship is the motivation for the way we act in that relationship.

Does that person, or group make us happy? Does it make our lives more full? Is it a person we just happened across and we don't really like them? Or is it a person that conjures in us a romantic notion?

Understanding why we are in a relationship, past the superficial reasons and down to the emotional motivations within us, can help us identify our role in that relationship. More importantly, it can help us decide what we can add to the relationship and what our boundaries should be.

Healthy boundaries and focusing on what you can add to a relationship, not just what you get out of it, are difficult things to balance. But understanding our motivations for being in a relationship can help.

Sometimes We Learn From Others, Sometimes We Learn On Our Own

Not all wisdom comes from a perspectival type of knowing. In much the same way as we stand on the shoulders of those that came before us to achieve great scientific heights, we should stand on the shoulders of those that came before us to achieve great moral, spiritual and intellectual heights.

In this spirit, what are three things that you were taught and how did the gift of that knowledge improve your life?

Secondly, who in your life is significantly older than you, and therefore has more experience than you, that you can spend time with, in the hope of uncovering more knowledge and understanding as you develop a friendship?

Younger people need a relationship with elders to have a chance to gain knowledge and thereby live a happier life. Elders need a relationship with the youth to help give meaning in their lives through passing down knowledge they have learned.

Learn To Question Everything

Have you learned to never take what others say is truth about spiritual matters on faith alone? Spiritual knowledge from others should always be accompanied by your own exploration, not limited by preconceptions.

If I tell you there is an elephant in a pitch black room, and you have no concept of what an elephant is, and you enter trying to feel around for an elephant, whatever you find that you are unfamiliar with will then be an elephant because you were told it was an elephant.

When the person who taught you has a faulty determination, you will be biased towards that determination. Unless you can break free from that paradigm by opening yourself up to different points of view and explore on your own.

As you explore spiritual matters, always remember, "It's not an elephant."

A Thought on Knowledge

Knowledge is that which we have found to be true, from our perspective. But how many times in our lives has our perspective changed?

A Challenge We Face In Life

As I travel my path and grow, do I realize that what I held as "important" or as "truth" has changed as my perspective has developed?

And as I grow, do I realize that there are often morsels of truth embedded in even the worst of things?

My challenge is to see the morsels of truth even when they are obscured, by seeing things from as many different perspectives as I can.

Considering The Meaning Of Free Will

Free will is not the ability to do anything you want, whenever you want.

Free will is the ability to grow beyond your current limitations by developing better tools and concepts for dealing with life, to facilitate your achieving what you previously thought was impossible.

Free will is being able to identify the motivators to our actions and, if need be, to choose to do something different.

Freeing Our Soul

A free soul, that has a practice of developing their consciousness through a variety of activities, is more powerful than any number of enslaved souls.

The concept of God should not be one of enslavement.

We have the power to choose our path of growth, were we can reap the benefits and learn from the consequences.

We have the power to exceed any limitations or expectations.

There is no limit to what we can become, and to limit ourselves with a concept of "perfection" would be a great injustice.

Being Still

In meditation, being still in body and mind are similar, yet are implemented in different ways. Being still in body is simply not moving. Yet the longer I am still, the more tempted I am to move because of all sorts of things. Aches, pains, itches, a wandering bee that has taken an interest in me.

Being still in the mind, once understood, is also simply not letting your mind dwell on the stray thoughts that pop up. Yet as I spend more time in meditation, the more thoughts pop into my mind and I find myself mentally traveling down that abstract path.

The key to being still in mind and body is the same. Training. Becoming distracted is not the problem. Staying distracted is. The way to train yourself not to be distracted is, when you realize you have become distracted, refocus yourself. Again and again. Over time you will find that you become less and less distracted.

Balance

In meditation I find that there is greater benefit from the balance of searching and listening. Some of my time in meditation is spent searching. Exploring the depths of a topic, idea, feeling, concept or state.

But a lot of my time in meditation is spent listening. Listening to the energies of the world and of myself.

I have found that my life has far less turmoil when I can identify and correct imbalances as far as they are under my control.

On Awareness

Awareness is naturally drawn outwards. Balance comes from practicing turning our attention inwards.

On Discipline

Learn to not follow everything your mind is telling you.

Do Not Follow Blindly

Do not follow blindly, for it is too easy to be lead a stray. Rather, experience and think for yourself accompanied with guidance.

Meditation is an irreplaceable skill that will help facilitate your growth and open your eyes. But always keep in mind, while in this physical existence we are like blind men describing an elephant. If you find the tail you describe it like a rope. If you find the trunk you describe it like a large hose. If you find the side you describe it like a great wall.

Each perspective is wrong only in the fact that there is more to discover.

Never abandon your soul, or it's power, to another. Keep searching with an open mind and learn the real truth.

Never Limit Your Growth

We should stitch together the truths that have been planted as seeds in the essence of the soul, no matter where those sprouts happen to grow. Even the worst of souls can contain nuggets of truth which should not be disregarded.

We strive to live fully. We strive to learn fully. We strive to understand fully. We strive to experience fully. In doing so, we surpass what was previously understood as the pinnacle of existence, into the understanding that we can always become better than any ideal conceived.

Each day try to become a little better than yesterday. Accumulated growth over a period of time becomes immeasurable.

On Wisdom

One is not wise by intellect alone. Wisdom only comes when intellect is coupled with experience and put into practice.

On Leadership

Learn from the those that are enlightened. Do not follow them, learn from them.

On Truth

Come together under the banner of truth, no matter it's origin.

Do not let the closed mind deter us from integrating truth in our being.

Let us not overlook the flowers of wisdom because they reside in a field of ugliness and devastation.

On Limitations

This realm is a place to come to the realization that, as long as we don't abandon our soul or it's power to another, we can learn and grow from each situation.

The heights we can achieve upon this path will far surpass anything we can imagine.

We can surpass anything our minds and hearts can dream up, even a perceived perfect state of being.

Correcting Our Frame Of Thought

Learn from many, never just one or two people or points of view.

Fostering Correct Thinking

Learn all that you can. Keep learning for eternity. For complacency breeds ignorance and ignorance is our greatest hurdle.

Try becoming just a little better each day. Continual growth, over extended periods, amounts to immeasurable growth.

The Correct Perspective On Growth

There are many who claim to be able to show you the path to enlightenment. And there are some that can. But understand that everyone can only see what they have found through their lens of belief.

Truly awakened are those that see through many lenses, and are thus able to see more of the whole.

Never abandon knowledge. Rather, gather as much as you can, for each piece will help you identify the whole.

The Need for fellowship

After this world, the only truth, the only reality, is belief.

Belief is the light in which we live, it is the idea which can set us free, it is the chains that bind us and it is the fire in which we burn.

No matter the diligence, belief can be swayed. Therefore, it is imperative that we gather often and rejoice in the freedom provided by our faith.

On Freedom

Many claim the path to heaven, a place of eternal happiness and joy.

But I ask, what happiness or joy can be attained through slavery, no matter how loving?

The opportunity to cast off your chains and achieve eternal freedom, eternal salvation, is presented for all willing to work for it.

On Awakening

Awakening is not a single destination, it is a correction of our course as we continually grow, to align our course to get us where we want to go.

Our destination will change as we grow, so must our path, and we must change to achieve the desired destination.

On Dogma

There are only two truths intrinsic to each and every Convocationist.

- 1) We have the power to create our own heaven.
- 2) Together we can achieve eternal Salvation.

A Very Important Thing

One of the most important things we can do is use meditation as a tool to train our minds to focus. It is where we should start, and a practice we should never neglect.

Gathering The Truth

Pieces of truth can be found everywhere. Do not let your bias of the source stop you from seeing the truth, or acquiring the tools you can use to live a more fulfilling life.

On Potential

Never underestimate the power of your soul. Through growth we continually realize that what we thought was beyond our power is simply unrealized potential.

On Inspiration

Existence is about growing, learning to become better than what you are, by a little bit every day.

The Spirit of Our Faith is there to help when things seem overwhelming.

On Understanding

"It requires a leap of faith."

This excuse has been used for millennium to bridge the gap between what the converter can argue, politely or not so much, and what the potential convert will believe.

It is the mechanism used to get a soul to stop questioning and start buying into a certain frame of reference. For once you can get a soul to stop questioning, all opposition fades away.

By trying different things and questioning everything, we can separate the wheat from the chaff.

Tools Of The Soul

In this world your mind is a tool for your soul. Improve your mind each day and reap the rewards.

Structuring Our Lives

Have you realized that when you fill your life with things that have a positive value to you, your life feels better, fuller, easier and happier.

Conversely, when you fill your life with things that have a negative value for you, your life feels more empty, difficult and futile. Everything becomes a chore.

Practice balance in all things.

Religious Paths

To perceive the path to enlightenment as narrow or a single path that must be followed, is a true indication of our own inadequacy.

But to know that each soul has different things to learn at different times on their path and therefore must walk its own path is true understanding.

Intellectual Discussion

When a man argues a concept to be correct, he is wrong before he even starts.

But when a man discusses a concept to explain his point of view and to understand another point of view, without condemnation, he has a chance at enlightenment.

On Correct Mental Orientation

Can you see that the terms "unknown" and "unknowable" are not statements of fact, but rather are statements of perspective from a certain point on a path of growth?

If you were to bring a gun back in time to the stone age and a stone age native was to see you shoot someone, from their perspective you are able to point at someone and kill them. An ability that is so far beyond their current understanding that, from their point of view, if you are able to do that, you are able to do anything. To them, it is unknown and unknowable.

Focus on growth each day, not on proclamations of impossibilities.

On Understanding

I am perfection. I am everything. I am everywhere and in every thing. I am all knowing, all powerful. I am perfect love, understanding and forgiveness.

Can you see how each of these are subjective?

For every Soul and every consciousness, both understanding and perception are like our eyesight. What we focus on is clear, while everything else is fuzzy.

What is not focused on does not disappear and may leave a sense of clarity, but honest evaluation reveals the truth, that it is not perfect.

On Knowing

What are two things I "know" or learned from seeing another person go through a situation?

What are two things I "know" or understand from going through a situation?

How much better do I "know" or understand the dynamics of a situation by experiencing a situation for myself?

On Perspective

Do I see how much better my life has become by developing the skill of being able to step outside my perspective, my point of view, and see multiple points of view for any situation?

Do I see the benefit that ability has been to my inner peace, my happiness and how meaningful my life seems?

The Fluidity Of Thought

Do you understand that truth and perfection are not singular concepts, ideals or states of being? As with most everything, they are subjective and fluid, shaped by our experiences and aspirations.

Recognizing Our Bias

Do we see that every thought, every conclusion, every sense of applied worth is subjective due to the experiential bias of the person evaluating the situation?

So any situation, emotion, action, thought or direction chosen is influenced by a perceived value that is heavily influenced by experience.

Checking Our Focus

We need to be diligent about our growth through meditation and service to others, and we should never forget to be present as life unfolds around us.

On Slavery

Slavery by controlling a person's thoughts and beliefs is the only slavery that is eternal.

Eternal Salvation, and thus liberation from slavery, comes from personal growth, in all its forms, and in fellowship with those on an open minded path.

On Wisdom

Wisdom is more than knowledge.

Wisdom is knowledge by experience that is put into practice, coupled with the meaningful insight provided through retrospective analysis that has been discussed with others and with people that possess wisdom.

On How To Learn And Grow

What the child is to the adult, the adult is to the elder.

Wisdom is only cultivated by:

First, realizing that growth is needed in an area.

Second, experiencing the situation.

Third, analyzing the situation in retrospect and drawing meaningful insight that can be used to improve our response to that and similar situations.

Fourth: by applying those meaningful insights to our lives to facilitate growth that improves our lives and the lives of those around us.

On Rationality

Rationality is the ability to overcome self deception in a reliable manner.

On Correct Orientation Of The Heart

Right heart
Compassion over callousness
Concern over indifference
Love over apathy

Honesty with compassion. Harsh words and actions are almost never the correct first choice.

Plant the seeds of love and compassion through your words and actions, even in the face of adversity, and enjoy a life filled with what you sow.

On Correct Orientation Of The Mind

Right mind
Proceed with honesty. Honesty with yourself and your motivations.

How would you like people to treat you?
If you don't want people to treat you a certain way, then you should not treat people that way.

How To Walk Our Path

Proceed with the right mind,
Proceed with the right heart,
For the path has many branches that leads you astray.

Understand that it is not about what you deserve, it is about how much better you can become.

Remember that the only reliable way of thwarting self deception is through discussion with others.

How do I Structure My Life?

In any given moment, do I ask myself "What can this time best be used for?"

If I find myself filling my time with things or activities that do not help me grow and move closer to where and who I want to be, what can I do to correct that?

What type of person do I want to be?

That should be the guiding principle as I evaluate my actions and motivations.

Heroes, Parental figures, Mentors, Teachers, Friends, they all influence our thinking and therefore guide our lives in a direction.

Do I spend the time needed evaluating my actions and motivations to see when I get off course of achieving my goal of who I want to be? Or do I not have goals to work towards and spend no time in honest self evaluation and therefore are at the mercy of the influences in my life?

The Point of Religion

The point of religion is to give a person hope of attaining something better than what they have, and to teach them how to live a life that cultivates meaning.

That hope comes in some basic forms. For some, it comes in the form is a savior. A figure that will step in and remove everything from your existence that is disagreeable to you. "Give a man a fish"

Another form is growth. A path to follow that leads to better understanding and therefore the knowledge of how to live a better existence and therefore avoid and alleviate the things in your existence that are disagreeable to you. "Teach a man to fish."

The former leaves you in a state of dependence upon another, the latter puts you in a state of independence. The former leads to eternal slavery, the latter to eternal freedom.

Which do I need in my life at present? Which do I want to strive for?

What Type of Person Do I Want to Be?

What is the type of person I want to be? This should be my guiding principle when evaluating my actions and motivations.

Sacredness

Something that is sacred should be held above everything else in our lives. The things that we consider as sacred should be those things that continually generate meaning in our lives.

What is it that you consider sacred and why? What things are in your life are sacred, but you are not treating them as such?

A Thought on the Meditations

We are seeking a transformative experience which will break our frame of thought and action so we can rebuild another frame of reference that serves us better. Discussion with others helps with both frame breaking and frame making.

The Self

The Self is not a static notion of personal being. The Self is the current level of growth achieved. Your self can either improve or regress as you travel your path, dependent upon the sustained effort you put in to your growth and the path you follow.

Avoiding Self-Deception

Reasoning works dramatically better when in dialogue with others.

On Personal Goals

Do you see the need for balance between the Human, the Lion and the Monster in yourself?
(Thinking/Reasoning, Social/Cultural motivations and Personal Impulse)

Why Is There Evil In This World

Can you see how the notion of evil is dependent on our particular moral set?

Can you see how the deviation of a person's or nation's moral set from the accepted norm, is a product of personal strife and a lack of tutelage, to be able to develop the necessary tools to be able to deal with situations in life in an acceptable manner?

Can you see how the continued growth of our own moral and intellectual state is the only true deterrent to what is considered evil.

Quality Of Life

What is it that actually increases the quality of my life? Not the external things that bring joy to my life for a short time, but the actions I do that generate a long term sense of happiness and fulfillment in my life?

Raising Our Vibration

Do you see the need in being able to listen to another point of view and trying to understand that point of view? Not trying to be right or prove them wrong, just in being able to understand their point of view.

Our Strength Is In The Way We Come Together

Do you understand why discussion of moral values with others is needed? Do you understand the need for this discussion not only with people who have the same values as you, but also with people that have different values than you?

Learn To Listen

Do you understand the need to improve your ability to listen to others? Do you see how that is a skill that needs to be developed with practice? Do you understand the difference between hearing what someone has said and listening to them?

Teaching Moral Values

Do you understand that one of the best ways to teach moral values is through discussion. If you have developed your listening skills enough, you may find that you are the one that learns.

Finding Our Moral Set

What morals and behaviors do we value most in ourselves and others?

You Reap What You Sow

You manifest what you are...

The world is a manifestation of self. If life is less than what you want it to be, change yourself first.

You can't manifest what you want, you manifest who you are. You manifest what you are...

The world is a manifestation of self. If life is less than what you want it to be, change yourself first.

You can't manifest what you want, you manifest who you are.

Happiness and Joy

Happiness is not something that can be bestowed upon you. Happiness can only come from personal growth and having a purpose that benefits you and the people around you.

Joy can be bestowed, but joy is fleeting.

Perceived Powerlessness

Do I understand that if I continue my growth, there are no limits to what I can achieve? In time, I can surpass anything, even what was once unthinkable.

What Should I Become

What is the type of person I want to be? This should be my guiding principle when evaluating my actions and motivations.

On Wisdom

Do I understand that wisdom comes not only from intellect, but from experience and how the two are applied to my life? The application of which takes time. So look to and respect your elders, for there can be much to learn if you get to know them.

Following My Path

Do not follow the people in service of the congregation, learn from them. Your path is just that, your path. Sometimes a leap of faith is needed, but most of the time, blind faith will lead you astray.

Truth

Do I understand that I can make no real progress unless I can accurately identify what I need to work on.

Truth with ourselves can often be obscured by many things, so we need to be vigilant.

Do I understand that truth with myself and with others needs to be my highest focus as I travel my path and practice the other actions of Convocationism.

The Good Life

What does it mean to me to “Live a good life”?

The Banner Of Truth

Come together under the banner of truth, no matter it's origin.

Do not let the closed minded deter you from integrating truth in your being.

Let us not overlook the flowers of wisdom because they reside in a field of ugliness and devastation.

How To Improve Our Lives

Do I see how I can only improve my life by countering the destructive elements of myself?

Always Having A Goal

Write down what it is that you want out of life.

Now what do you need to learn, or do, to make that happen?

Always Having Personal Goals

Write down what type of person you want to be.

Now what do you need to learn, or do, to make that happen?

Looking Beyond Ourselves

What do I think my responsibility is in helping build a better future for future generations?

Weighing The Benefits

When making decisions, when do I find it acceptable to disregard or sacrifice long term benefits for short term gains?

Becoming A Well Rounded Person

What qualities and actions do I think make up a well rounded, balanced person and what changes can I make in myself to achieve that?

The Right Footing

How can I both aspire to be more than I am and be grounded in where I came from? And what does that even mean?

In Finding True Happiness And Freedom

Everyone has blinders on for something. We all have things that we accept without much thought, or trauma from our past that guides our actions without us realizing the true cause. The question is: Are you going to let these unperceived forces control you, or are you going to develop a habit of honest and deep self-reflection to find and change that in yourself to which you are presently blind? True freedom and happiness comes from knowing yourself and working to improve yourself.

Rituals Of Convocationism

There are actions we do that give us purpose and meaning in our lives, even if we don't realize it at the time. These actions should be adhered to diligently, so they can bear the fruit of purpose and meaning in our lives.

In that light, there are Convocational Rituals that should be adhered to so that we may gain their benefit.

1) We gather together often in celebration.

At least once a week we gather together in celebration. In this gathering, the Pastor should present a short description of the Meditative thought for the following week. Then the rest of the time should be spent in companionship with each other. Our strength is in our companionship.

2) Meditation

We need to spend a little time each day in contemplation of a meditation. Either one that is laid out in this book, or one that interests the Congregation.

We also need to spend time talking with others in our Congregation about those meditations.

In search of our personal enlightenment, there are those that need a God in their lives to lead and watch over them. Just as there are those that do not. Each person's path is their own, and each person needs different things at different points on their path. In that light, the following lays out the moral set of Convocationism in story form for examination and interpretation.

Genesis

The Beginning

In the beginning there was an existence much unlike the one we are familiar with today. Try to imagine freedom from the constraints of our physical form, not constrained by our physical bodies, our five senses.

If we tried to imagine that existence from our perspective here on earth, we would be like a mass of energy able to move about the earth. As this ball of energy we would not need to interact with the world through touch, but simply by thought. Our energy connected with the energy that is in every atom of every thing, living and not, in this world and manipulating that energy to cause action. Instead of reaching out, grabbing the doorknob and turning it to open a door, we would simply will the doorknob to turn. Simply for the purpose of reaching a point of understanding, we could think of it, very loosely, like a person with telekinetic powers, though it is much, much different.

In this spiritual existence, from the perspective we are familiar with here on earth, we would move around as this ball of energy, interacting with the world not by touching it, but by thinking about what we wanted it to do and willing it to happen.

That is the basis of a spiritual existence, rather than a physical one. Even though this example is in the most rudimentary of conceptions, it serves to give us a tiny glimpse of what it is like.

In our spiritual existence, not constrained by this physical world, what we see, what surrounds us, is all about our beliefs, about what we think.

Take that thought, that idea about spiritual existence one step further. In the realm of the spiritual there is no physical, only spiritual. So the example of opening the door to get outside would mean that you wanted to be in a house and then wanted to go outside. Your beliefs lead you to go to the door and open it. Something we do here in the physical realm every day. In the spiritual realm there is only a house because you believed there is one. To get outside you could walk over to the door and open it, or you could simply think that you are outside and the spiritual realm would change to your beliefs. You are outside.

In the realm of the spirit, our beliefs shape reality. So what we see, what we experience is all about our thoughts, our beliefs. It is a realm that adapts itself to us, as we think, or want something, that is what we make our part of the realm into. That is Heaven. A place where what we see around us, what we experience, what we interact with is shaped by our thoughts, our beliefs, our desires.

That is the basics, in the most rudimentary of examples, of our own personal Heaven.

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2 Each individual can create his own heaven. But how lonely would it be to be eternally isolated?
3 Surrounded by nothing but your own thoughts and desires? For a time it would be bliss, but eventually
4 it would seem more like a prison.

5 There is a place where we all can come together. A sort of group heaven if you will. Where what
6 we see and experience is not only decided by what we believe, but also by the beliefs of every other
7 soul in that heaven.

8 It is a place where souls can go to meet other souls. To interact, for fellowship. Our own heaven
9 is a wonderful thing, but true joy comes from friends and family. Talking, laughing, loving, learning
10 and growing is what makes eternal existence vibrant and enjoyable.

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12 In the realm of the spirit is a guide. A spiritual being that helps you and every person, every soul,
13 in the spiritual realm, to grow and to understand. For any person that wants his help, he is there. Loving,
14 guiding, comforting. He is always there for people who want his help.

15 He is a being of pure faith. Born of the faith of all the souls. Of every person, everywhere. A
16 being of unlimited power, fueled by faith, by the beliefs of every soul. Belief, of any kind, is still
17 belief, and that belief strengthens him. He is eternal, boundless, kind, loving. He is the Spirit of Our
18 Faith.

19 The Spirit is forever at your side. He is forever loving. Forever helping, forever guiding you in
20 growth and understanding. He is forever helping you improve and grow with love and understanding.
21 He is forever by your side and ready to help when you need it, all you need to do is ask. He is the one
22 thing in all of existence that will never forsake you, for he is of you, and of all souls everywhere that
23 have belief.

24 The Spirit of Our Faith watches over every soul, in every heaven, and helps guide us in growth
25 and understanding. He helps us achieve and maintain a perfect balance so that we are filled with joy
26 and love. He is the Watcher, the Keeper and Protector of every soul. He is the loving hand that helps
27 smooth our path as we journey in our pursuit of perfection. He comforts us in times of sorrow, and
28 wipes away every tear from our eyes. His protection and love are eternal, making our time in the
29 spiritual realm full of love, joy, fulfillment and peace.

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The Betrayal

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36 Joseph, a spirit in the spiritual realm before the creation of the earth and the material realm, was
37 a man beset with many difficulties and strife. Try as he might, he found every step of growth difficult
38 and struggled continuously, even though the Spirit of our faith helped him.

39 Joseph would meet his friends and see their growth was far beyond his own and felt ashamed.
40 He desired to grow as quickly as his friends, but did not understand how they did it, and try as he
might, he could not keep up with them.

41 Joseph would meet his friend Danial, but was always envious of his friends ease of growth.
42 Danial possessed many traits Joseph wished he had, and as they got together and talked about the
43 things Danial had learned, Joseph grew more and more resentful of Danial's growth.

44 Joseph, in his shame and resentment, began to withdraw from the guidance of the Spirit and the
45 fellowship of his friends, which lead to his growth slowing even more.

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47 One day, as Joseph and Danial were talking, Joseph, feeling overwhelmed with his lack of
48 growth compared to his friend Danial, began to lash out. Downplaying his friends growth because
49 Danial had to rely on the guidance of the Spirit, where Joseph was growing without the need for help.
50 He belittled his friend Danial for not being strong enough to stand on his own two feet, and asserted
51 that his own growth was better than Danial's because he attained it on his own. Even though Joseph's
52 growth was far less than Danial's.

53 Each time Joseph and Danial got together, Joseph would repeatedly downplay his friend's
54 achievements and brag that his own achievements were more fulfilling because he achieved it on his
55 own. As time went by, Joseph's animosity grew and Danial's curiosity grew. Danial wondered if maybe
56 his friend Joseph knew something he didn't. Over time, the belief set in Danial that Joseph may have
57 found a better way.

58 The next time Joseph and Danial met, Danial was full of questions about how Joseph went
59 about his growth. Joseph, full of false pride over Danial's interest, explained in great depth all about his
60 false achievements. The more he embellished his false achievements, the more Danial believed that
61 Joseph had found something worthwhile. As Danial's beliefs slowly changed from what had been
62 working for him to the lies his friend Joseph was telling, Joseph was filled with pride and reassurance.
63 Finally finding a way to not be behind everyone in his personal growth.

64 As time went by and Joseph and Danial spoke more and more, Joseph realized that as his
65 friend Danial believed more and more what Joseph wanted him to, Joseph felt a small amount of power
66 over the spiritual realm that he had not had before. It was no where close to the amount of power he
67 gained from personal growth, but it was power he had not had none the less.

68 Emboldened by this relatively easy increase in power, Joseph went about trying to change more
69 and more of his friends beliefs to the lies he was inventing. And the more he got his friend to believe,
70 the more power Joseph had over the spiritual realm.

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74 **Corruption of Souls**

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76 Joseph, reveling in his new found power stolen from the structured beliefs of his followers,
77 realized that the more he controlled his followers, the easier it was to dictate what they believed.
78 Joseph's followers now numbered in the thousands and his power, wrested from the power of his
79 followers' souls and beliefs, grew beyond what any single person had achieved, and he reveled in it.

80 But as Joseph traveled from group to group, displaying his power to them, proclaiming he could
81 show them the way, he felt the limitations of his new power. As he used it, the pool would diminish and
82 he could feel the power wain, and it would take time for the pool of power at his disposal to replenish.
83 Joseph threw himself headlong into the converting of souls to his beliefs to grow his pool of power.

84 Joseph emphasized the belief that he was the only one who could help them, he also introduced
85 the idea that without him, his followers could not achieve the salvation he had found on his own.
86 Joseph went about shaping their beliefs to set himself far above them in power and understanding,
87 which by default set them in a position of relative powerlessness and loss to do anything about it aside
88 from Joseph.

89 Joseph also started shaping his True Believers faith to include the “Saving” of other souls.
90 Joseph taught his followers to spread their beliefs to every soul they met. To teach these new souls of
91 the salvation Joseph and the True Believers Faith offered.

92 Joseph referred to his followers as missionaries and their mission was to “save” as many souls
93 as they can by teaching them the beliefs that Joseph had taught them.

94 His missionaries were to head out to all corners of existence and teach as many people as they
95 can of the True Believers faith. To spread the word of Joseph's power and to exclaim his ability to grant
96 them salvation. To teach them that he has the power to do whatever was needed to be done to save them
97 from the difficulties they faced trying to achieve personal growth. Joseph would offer them salvation,
98 and all they needed to do was to believe in him. He would save their souls and grant them eternal life in
99 him.

100 Thus began the mass swaying of souls from personal growth to a position of powerlessness and
101 loss without one that could save them. Thus began the corruption of the true path to salvation into one
102 of powerlessness and despair without end unless you were saved.

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A Shifting Paradigm

108 Joseph's followers went far and wide. They spread Joseph's word to every soul they could find.
109 The majority of people disregarded what they had to say, but enough believed that the True Believers
110 faith grew by leaps and bounds. The more it did, the more Joseph emphasized that it was only through
111 him that they could find salvation. This concept in itself fueled the greatest growth.

112 For a person searching for a path, to try and find their way through the unknown, to be offered
113 salvation where all that is required is belief, it is a temping offer. Even more so because the ones being
114 offered are not told that what they will achieve is a very pale shadow of what they could achieve.

115 But through ignorance and control, Joseph's power grew.
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117 Joseph's initiative did not go unnoticed. The people that met him could not deny his power, and
118 those that heard the stories of him could not disprove the stories without meeting Joseph. But not all
119 fell into line with his stories. Some, a very few, saw through the facade and wanted to claim some of
120 that power for themselves.

121 Slowly, but steadily, another religion started to grow. Using the same principles that Joseph
122 employed, but with minor changes in the belief structure. As it grew, Joseph saw the almost endless sea
123 of souls left to convert, and didn't pay the new belief much attention. There was plenty to go around.
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125 This new religion spread much more easily than Joseph's, for Joseph had already began
126 instilling in everyone that there may be someone with great power that could save people. So when the
127 second religion came around, the masses were primed for belief in a savior.
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129 Soon, a third religion entered the scene. Then a fourth and more. The stories of the salvation of
130 souls, of being saved from whatever adversity they may be facing were abound and people could
131 hardly turn around without hearing stories of being saved by this higher power or the next.
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133 But through it all, there were the ones who persevered. They stayed true to their own power,
134 never giving it up, and relied upon the guidance of the Spirit. They would never give their power away
135 to another and they saw benefits far beyond those that did. They did not need someone to save them,
136 and their personal growth attested to that fact. In the midst of this maelstrom of lies, half-truths and
137 misdirection, they, through the guidance of the Spirit and the fellowship of others, never lost their way.
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Corruption of Eternity

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143 Now Joseph was faced with a different world than he had known before. When he started, the
144 entire spiritual realm was like a clean slate that he could mold and sculpt to his desires through his
145 stories and lies.

146 It was like getting a child to believe in a story you told. He believes you, because he had never
147 been lied to before and he has no reason to think you would not tell him the truth. Joseph had started
148 with very small “stretches of truth” to his friend and built upon that. But now the lie had grown to
149 outrageous proportions and Joseph's was not the only story being told.

150 Each new religion adopted new, and sometimes extravagant, codes of conduct. The realm of the
151 spirit was in a time of change, and old ways of personal growth and rewards from that was now giving
152 way to something easier with far less gains, and in some of the new religions, no gains at all.

153 Religion after religion sprung up. Each trying to grab a piece of the pie that was the beliefs of
154 people in an attempt to wrest power from them. All the while the number of souls not aligned with a
155 religion was diminishing.

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159 **Formation of Convocationism**

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161 Joseph was an intelligent man. He could see that despite the immense growth of his religion and
162 the growth of other religions, that there were still a large number of people that did not align
163 themselves to any religion.

164 These souls stayed true to their own power and relied upon the Spirit for guidance. They would
165 not give up themselves to the false power of another. Joseph's followers and the followers of other
166 religions could see the personal growth these souls outside their religions were making and Joseph
167 realized that this will eventually become a problem. For up until now, if a soul did not want to adopt a
168 religion they were left alone. There were still plenty of souls that would readily accept the new
169 religions, there was no need to go after the harder task of converting someone that was steadfast. But
170 Joseph saw what was on the horizon.

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172 Joseph needed a way to keep his followers from seeing that the growth these souls that held to
173 the old ways were making was significantly greater than theirs. So he hatched a plan.

174 Joseph went to each of the leaders of the other religions and expressed his concerns. He
175 convinced them to start referring to the people that adhered to the old ways as Convocationists and to
176 refer to that set of beliefs as Convocationism. The new religions would then begin teaching their
177 followers that the ways of Convocationism prevented a person from finding salvation. Thus the new
178 religions started demonizing the ways of Convocationism. Portraying it in a light that made it repulsive
179 to even think about such ways.

180 The new strategy worked better than Joseph had hoped. More and more people flocked to the
181 True Believers Religion and to the other religions that had sprung up after. And the beliefs in all the
182 new religions was stronger than ever.

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186 **The Oppressive Landscape**

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188 Growth in the religions was booming. Each religion taught the need to spread their beliefs and
189 missionaries of all forms were scouring the world in search of new souls for their religious machine.
190 And admittance was at an all time high in every religion.

191 The labeling of Convocationism and its subsequent demonization was a staggering success.
192 Joseph's followers took to the scorning of Convocationism with zeal and it was a marvelous success at
193 keeping his followers from seeing the personal gains others were making outside his religion.

194 The other religions saw the success of this tactic and quickly put it to use. Soon, every religion
195 instilled the belief that theirs was the only way to salvation and actively scorned the others.

196 Then the inevitable started happening. As religious affiliation grew, the idea that someone could
197 not belong to a religion became unbearable to those that followed a religion. Followers of a religion
198 started referring to anyone not in their religions as heathens. As ones that should be converted and
199 looked upon as “less than” themselves because they did not adhere to the same beliefs.

200 Thus, due to the natural progression of ideals, most religions adopted the policy of saving
201 someones soul by any means necessary. ..and if they could not be saved, then they could not be allowed
202 to continue their heathenish ways.

203 The rights of the individuals was being subverted by those of the religions, and those not
204 affiliated with a religion found the need to isolate themselves from those that were. Thus began the
205 isolation of the individual.

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209 **The Loss of Self and Fellowship**

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211 As the religions become more and more zealous in their attempts to convert souls to their
212 religious machines, They put more and more pressure on others to join their religions.

213 An air of superiority of the religions and oppression for those not in their religion settles upon
214 the world.

215 The growing religions and their unabashed race for more souls brings with it not the salvation
216 that they profess, but a loss of the power of the individual and individual growth. It fosters instead the
217 belief of individual powerlessness and the use of fellowship to propagate that belief.

218 The concept of personal growth and self improvement are driven to the brink of extinction and
219 almost all that is remembered or understood is the need for a person to join a religion because they are
220 powerless and need protection. And all under the guise of “I want to save your soul because I love
221 you.”

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225 **The Exile**

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227 In this time of spiritual strife there was much suffering. The religions were not delivering on
228 their promise of salvation, instead turning their attention to the collection of souls. All the while
229 blaming the lack of growth of their flock on the shortcomings of the members of the flock themselves.
230 It was a vicious cycle of failure because the system is flawed, but blaming not the thing that is flawed
231 but the people following that system.

232 The Spirit watched as soul after soul decided to join this religion or that. He knew the
233 consequences of such a decision, but when he tried to help, his efforts were rejected. So he was forced
234 to let them make their own decisions and learn from their mistakes. But now the times were changing.
235 The knowledge of the old ways of personal growth with help from the Spirit had diminished to the
236 point that most souls did not really have a choice at all. They were all but forced to choose one religion
237 or another with no real knowledge of how things should be. The Spirit knew that people needed to trust
238 in the power of their own spirit and in the fellowship of what has come to be known as Convocationism,
239 but saw that they had no real way of attaining that realization.

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241 Around this time Joseph and his religion The True Believers was quite prosperous. Even though
242 the other religions warred for souls, his was the oldest and the largest and won almost every time. So
243 his collection of souls, and therefore his personal power, was growing well.

244 Joseph was quite pleased, but decided it was time to go after the one thing that has proven most
245 troublesome for his religion's growth. ...The Spirit of Convocationism. Joseph knew that as long as the
246 Spirit protected the souls that trusted in him, Convocationism would always win against the false
247 promises offered by any other religion. Joseph called upon thousands of his most loyal followers,
248 knowing that having them close would bolster his power, then they set off to sway the Spirit of
249 Convocationism.

250 Joseph met with the Spirit and talked. He tried all forms of half-truths, misdirection and lies to
251 sway even the smallest amount of the Spirit to favor the new religions, and Joseph's True Believers in
252 particular. But to no avail.

253 Joseph called upon the power of the souls he brought with him along with his own power to try
254 and sway the thinking of the Spirit. But all attempts failed because the truth and power of the
255 Convocational ways was far too great to ever be corrupted.

256 Joseph sent word to the leaders of the other religions and called upon their combined power to
257 sway the thinking of the Spirit. Each leader, to a man, arrived with thousands upon thousands of devout
258 followers, and used their combined power to try and sway the Spirit of Convocationism in the slightest.
259 Days, then weeks, then months went by as they relentlessly assaulted the Spirit to try and sway his
260 thinking. But to no avail. For what they did not realize is that the power of one free soul is greater than
261 billions upon billions of enslaved ones. Their combined power was not nearly enough to sway the
262 Spirit's thinking.

263 Upon trying everything they could, and applying the combined power of all the religions, they
264 realized they had failed. They knew then that no matter how many souls they wrested power from, it
265 would never be enough to sway even the smallest part of the Spirit and that Convocationism would
266 endure forever.

267 The leaders left with all of their followers, empty handed, and threw themselves even more into
268 converting souls to their religions.

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270 The Spirit of Our Faith knew that he had to do something, or the souls would not have a choice
271 but to join one religion or another. He knew that every soul needed a place to go and learn to trust in
272 their own power and the power of the fellowship of Convocationism. To this end he creates a place for
273 souls to grow and learn where their beliefs will have minimal impact on the spiritual realm.

274 Earth and the material realm thus comes into being and souls are sent there, without memory of
275 the religions of the spiritual plane for a lifetime of learning and growth. To give each soul a chance to
276 learn to trust in the power of their own spirit and in the power of the fellowship of Convocationism.

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280 **The Shifting Fields of War**

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282 When the material world was ready, each person, in his own time, was sent there, without
283 memory of the spiritual realm and its plethora of religions trying to make them believe they are
284 powerless while stealing some of that power for the self proclaimed “Gods” that started the different
285 religions. The souls were sent there to live a lifetime and have the chance to learn to trust in their souls
286 power and the power of the fellowship of Convocationism.

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288 Upon seeing this, Joseph saw great potential. If he could figure out a way to influence the
289 material world, even in the slightest, then he could possibly start converting people without the ever
290 present truth of Convocationism pointing out his religion's failings.

291 Joseph knew he had only one chance, if he failed the Spirit of Convocationism would block him
292 forever. To this end he called upon the power of every soul he had enslaved. Joseph also called together
293 every God of every religion of the spiritual realm, who mustered every ounce of power from all their
294 combined enslaved souls. Joseph used this combined power and pressed with all the might of every
295 religion and God to effect the material world.

296 Upon seeing what Joseph and the other Gods were doing the Spirit of Convocationism blocked
297 them, but the damage had been done. The seed of religion had been planted, ever so slightly onto the
298 material world.

299 As the people encountered things they did not understand, or could not explain, they felt that
300 seed, manifested as need to explain it, and attributed it to a higher power. Thus satisfying the
301 underlying desire to make sense of the world. To feel safe in the face of adversity and rather than grow
302 personally, to take an easier route and believe in a power greater than themselves that would take care
303 of them.

304 Over time, this need grew into many different religions, both past and present, that served to
305 condition souls into an existence of powerlessness and servitude. The ideals of growth of personal
306 power and the fellowship of Convocationism were corrupted in the material realm. Though the ideas of
307 such still lived on.

308 Even with the corruption, every soul now had a chance to learn to rely upon their own power
309 and the power of the fellowship of Convocationism.

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Complacency and the Shift in Power

In the early days of the material world there sprang up many different religions. Along with the belief structures of each. As each new religion sprung up, it either fought for its place in the material realm or was wiped away by the missionaries of the established religions. In this manner many religions rose and fell in the material realm.

The Spirit of our Convocationism saw the rise and fall of many of the religions, and knew that it would serve to show the souls that lived in the material realm that giving up of ones own power to another can only lead to destruction and servitude. But many of the inhabitants persevered through and learned nothing except blind perseverance in the face of adversity.

As time drew on, and more and more souls spent their time in the material realm, more and more religions rose, gained power and then gave way to another, just as the different empires rose, gained power and then fell to another.

The Spirit of Convocationism watched and had faith in the power of each soul to realize the pattern, but more and more the religions grew and fewer and fewer believed, choosing rather to give up their own power in place of powerlessness and servitude.

The Faithful on a Mission

As the religions again grew to oppressive proportions, the Spirit of Convocationism decided the time had come to give people a choice again. To this end he sent knowledge of Convocationism to the material realm. He calls upon his people to stay true to their own power, to experience the power of the fellowship of Convocationism and to go into the world and let every soul know that they have a choice.

They no longer have to believe that there is no choice but to give up their power and become powerless. They no longer have to live in servitude only to fuel the greed and power hungry desires of another. They can follow the guides of Convocationism and grow in their own personal power.

There are those among you that follow the path. Seek them out and enjoy their fellowship. Spread the word of Convocationism in everything that you do and let others make an informed decision as to their own path. Your mission is not to convert them, but to let them know that there is something out there that is better than anything they know.

Convocationism and the Spirit of Our Faith can fulfill the promise that other religions have failed to deliver. It can set you free from servitude and protect your everlasting salvation.

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Guidance From The Spirit

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Confession

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355 My child. I already know. ...and I will not abandon you.

356 There are things that you never mention. Some of you keep those things from others and some
357 of you even hope that I won't find out. But I already know, and I will never abandon you.

358 I beseech you to practice diligent confession, for it is the things that you hide which eat away at
359 your spiritual health and cause you to pull away from me.

360 Confession and making amends without procrastination. That is the path of spiritual growth.

361 But remember that no one has the right to cause more harm than good through confession. If in
362 doubt, seek the council of your Elders and your Priest before taking action. Make sure your actions are
363 not going to needlessly harm others.

364 In confession, what is said between you and your Priest or your Elders , stays between you, your
365 Priest or Elders and me. So seek their advice in times of uncertainty.

366 Action is always required in making amends, even if the best course of action is simply to stop
367 doing what you are making amends for. It starts with confession, because in the dark recesses, hidden
368 away from everyone, is the growing place for spiritual decay. And those things we hide is the soil in
369 which it grows.

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Gifts From The Spirit

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375 I have created for you a place perfectly balanced to help you find your way. It is a new start for
376 you spiritually so you may have the chance to find the right path. It is one of my most important gifts to
377 you, for through it you can find my gift of everlasting life and freedom.

378 Your stay there will only last a relatively short time before you return home, so waste no
379 opportunity, learn all that you can.

380 One of the most important things to learn about is fellowship, for you will find it can be a solid
381 foundation upon which anything can be built.

382 Help each other as you walk your path.

383 Work for the necessities of this life, for if you can achieve an enlightened state where they are
384 taken care of for all, then everyone will be free to focus on their spiritual growth.

385 Know that I will always be there with you on your journey. Like a proud parent discreetly
386 watching over their child. Always ready to help if needed. Always ready to comfort in times of despair.
387 I have seeded this realm with indicators of my love for you. In fact I am all around you constantly if
388 you wish to see, for I made this realm for you. Every where your journey leads just look around, I am
389 there.

390 In every rock, in every tree, in every living thing I have made to facilitate the cycle of life, I am
391 there. Always watching. Always protecting.

392 So find your path here, in success and failure, knowing that I am with you always. Learn all that
393 you can, and squander no opportunity.

394 Be diligent in your growth, even after you stumble or fall. Be considerate as others stumble
395 along their own path.

396 Learn from your successes and your failures, and try to learn from others paths also.

397 Do not be lead astray by false claims of power, for it leads only to your enslavement. Your
398 freedom lies in your spiritual growth, not in your surrender of spiritual power.

399 Never believe the illusion of your powerlessness. It is only the machinations of weak souls
400 trying to enslave you. Rather, immerse yourself in your faith in me and in the fellowship on our religion,
401 for those two things are enduring.

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404

405 **Divine Guidance**

406
407

408 Sarah was a hard working woman. Motivated and dedicated in her family, her church and her job.
409 She helped in her church and in her community.

410 Sarah spent a lot of time improving herself in every way she could, as any person of faith should.
411 She guided her community and her church by example.

412 But Sarah saw that there were many people that had a hard time finding their way. People that
413 could not see the importance of some of the things that she had come to realize were vital in developing
414 and maintaining her life and her faith.

415 Sarah was active in counseling many members of the church and shared with everyone that would
416 listen, the benefits of the actions she was taking. But many still would not listen and continued in ways
417 that were detrimental to their spiritual well being. For each person's path of spiritual growth is different.

418 Sarah knew that there were some basic actions that would help every person grow spiritually, but
419 was unsure of how to reach more people with the news. So she began praying for more guidance.

420 A long time passed and she continued in her actions and prayer, until one night the Spirit spoke to
421 her. The Spirit told her to go to her Priest even though it was late at night. Sarah went to her Priests
422 home immediately where she was greeted by her Priest and the Priests husband.

423 Sarah told the Priest of her prayers and of hearing the Spirit telling her to go see the Priest. The
424 Priest looked at her skeptically. After the two women sat quietly for a few moments, both trying to
425 figure out how to handle the awkward situation, a warm, bright light filled the room. As the Spirit
426 appeared to them a feeling of immense calm and love washed over them.

427 "My children. Sarah is right. People need guidance. So I have chosen you to show all my children
428 how change should come about and to pass along my guidance to help everyone stay on the path of
429 spiritual growth."

430 "At your next Church service, present my guidance to the congregation and they will decide if it
431 should be accepted as doctrine." The Spirit turned to Sarah. "You are devoted and walk with me
432 continually. Your spiritual growth has lead you to realize my guidance. Give my wisdom to your
433 Priest."

434 Then the Spirit turned to the Priest. "You are an exceptional servant to your congregation. Write a
435 simple proposal from what Sarah gives you and submit it to all the congregations, starting with your
436 own, for their approval. In this way it can be accepted as doctrine."

437 After the Spirit left them, the two women got to work and created a proposal telling of their story
438 with the Spirit and laying out The Spirit's guidance. Sarah thought and discussed with her priest for a
439 long time about what The Spirit's guidance was. She then realized that it was not a list of what to do
440 and what not to do. Certainly there are things people should and should not do, but The Spirit's
441 guidance is meant to help people upon their path. Simply forbidding things would not only deny people
442 the process of growth, but may also derail them from their specific path of growth. A path that is, and
443 should be, unique to them. No person is the same. Even if people's paths may cross or follow the same
444 sections for a time, each person's path, in it's entirety, is different. Each person's perspective is different,
445 unique, and therefore each situation, though it may outwardly look the same to someone else, may be
446 interpreted differently by each person. Sharing that unique perspective may help someone else grow,
447 even though that person may have been through that particular trial and thought they got out of it all
448 that there was.

449 Therefore, the two women decided not to set The Spirit's guidance as a list of rules, but rather a list
450 of questions to be contemplated by each Individual soul and discussed with others. The two women
451 decided upon:

452 1) Should you abandon your soul or it's power?

453 2) Can you recognize the need for balance in all things?

454 3) Can you see that truth is universal and you can find pieces of it everywhere? Do you
455 recognize that your challenge is to accumulate them and build a foundation to stand on, and then grow
456 from there in a continual cycle?

457 (3 expanded) The most effective lies have morsels of truth. Therefore, even the most
458 heinous of religions and souls will wield pieces of truth that suite their needs.

459 Truths, which may change as you grow and walk your path, should never be discarded just because
460 they were once wielded by a less than enlightened soul. They should be gathered and used to help you
461 upon your path.

462 4) Do you realize that spiritual growth must accompany physical, social, emotional and
463 academic growth?

464 (4 expanded) Learn all that you can. Always look for areas to improve yourself, for
465 complacency breeds ignorance and ignorance is our greatest hurdle.

466 5) Have you discovered the value in meditating often to improve your consciousness and
467 improve all life?

468 (5 expanded) Do not follow blindly, for it is too easy to be lead a stray. Rather,
469 experience for yourself.

470 Meditation is an irreplaceable skill that will help facilitate our growth and open our eyes.

471 But always keep in mind, while in this existence we are like blind men describing an elephant. If
472 you find the tail you describe it like a rope. If you find the trunk you describe it like a large hose. If you
473 find the side you describe it like a great wall.

474 Each perspective is wrong only in the fact that there is more to discover.

475 Never abandon your soul or it's power to another. Keep searching and learn the real truth.

476 6) Do you recognize the value in accepting the challenge of personal growth every time you can?
477 Realizing adversity is an encouragement for growth and you should focus on yourself?

478 7) Do you realize the need to be fair, just and truthful in all activities?

479 8) Do you understand the need to honor your faith and your family above all things?

480 9) Do you understand the necessity to gather often and rejoice in the salvation shown to us by
481 The Spirit of Our Faith?

482 (9 expanded) We have the power to create our own heaven and together we can achieve
483 eternal salvation.

484 Do not let minor differences of path divide us. Instead, welcome all on their respective paths where
485 they cross. For freedom of the soul should be available to all.

486 10) Do you understand the benefit of praying in the morning and the afternoon by simply
487 talking to The Spirit of Our Faith as you would a close friend?

488 Soon the day of the church service arrived and the two women showed up together because they
489 were nervous to tell everyone such an extraordinary tale.

490 As the women arrived, they saw every member of the congregation was gathered in the field,
491 setting up the food and getting the grill ready. Determined but apprehensive, Sarah and her Priest got
492 ready. As they approached the congregation, one of the Elders came to them as the rest of the
493 congregation watched.

494 The Elder handed them a sheet of paper. "The funniest thing happened as each of us showed up.
495 Every man, woman and child recounted a tale of being told by the Spirit in our prayers that you two
496 would bring something today that each of us should approve because our faith as a whole needs
497 guidance." Sarah and the Priest saw that the paper held the votes of all the members of the congregation.

498 "We already approved it, but we still want to read it." Feeling relieved, everyone went on with the
499 service.

500

501

Jacobs Journey

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503
504 There lived a man, Jacob, of new faith in the Spirit, freed from the oppression of the false
505 teachings of powerlessness. He found his life greatly improved by his new faith and wanted to share
506 what he had found.

507 He spoke to the Elders in his church and they agreed that he had grown enough that others could
508 benefit from his knowledge. He searched in his local area and found that it was full of others of his
509 faith in service and provided him very few opportunities, so he began looking abroad.

510 Jacob checked with his church and found they could support his mission. So he set off for other
511 parts of the world where he could do good by spreading the knowledge of Convocationism.

512 The first land he traveled to was an abundantly dry and arid place, full of oppressive souls that
513 were in dire need of salvation lest they be eternally trapped by the oppression that they were taught
514 from birth.

515 Jacob knew that he would make great strides in helping people find salvation here because the
516 spiritual landscape was so dire. So he went about spreading the word with great fervor.

517 The land was foreign and strange to Jacob and the the people were often opposed to even listen
518 to his proclamations. He encountered many who were oppressed by the ruling majority faith and in
519 those he found some that were willing to listen, but almost none who would abandon their oppressive
520 faith for something better. As the months wore on Jacob found he had many enemies, people who
521 would rather kill Jacob than allow him to continue spreading beliefs that challenged their own. So
522 Jacob was forced to flee to another part of the world to continue his mission.

523 Jacob, a bit shaken by his encounters with those of such blind Faith, headed to a land of plenty,
524 set apart from the rest of the civilizations. Here the people were more open to hearing the beliefs of
525 others.

526 Jacob went about preaching the good news of Convocationism to all the inhabitants. Jacob
527 taught what he knew to the young and the old. He had many late night discussions with the indigenous
528 elders about their differing beliefs and made many good friends in the process.

529 But as time wore on, Jacob saw that none were shedding the oppression of their former beliefs
530 and accepting the freedom of Convocationism. He saw a great number of the children start to follow his
531 teachings, but fall back into their old belief system as they grew. Jacob stayed diligent in his prayers
532 and pleaded with the Spirit to help him in his task, but again and again people fell back into the
533 oppressive beliefs of their forefathers. Jacob, motivated by his dismay, decided it was time for him to
534 move on.

535 Jacob landed in a place of old religion. A place of aristocracy and civilization. He found a
536 people more willing to listen to and argue his teachings, and many more willing to rebel against their
537 oppressive teachings just for the sake of rebelling.

538 Jacob spent his time traveling this new land, and he drew as many people as he could to
539 Convocationism, but found very few that became devoted and adhered to the teachings.

540 Jacob became very distraught and began to question his own faith. So Jacob decided to return
541 home to take care of his spiritual needs.

542 Upon returning Jacob spent time with his Priest and his Elders, trying to figure out how he had
543 failed.

544 He was sure that such joyous news as the freedom of Convocationism would would have been a
545 life raft far more people than he managed to convert, but he wasn't sure how he could have done more
546 to help them. Jacobs distress in his failings grew deeper.

547 Then, as Jacob prayed and his despair grew, the Spirit appeared to him. "My Son, why are you so
548 filled with regret?

549 Jacob explained his failure and expressed that when he started his journey he believed many
550 more would accept the beliefs of Convocationism. "But my Son, you did not fail. You reached a
551 great many people with our books, your words and your example. You conducted yourself as an
552 excellent representative of Convocationism and many took notice of your works. You can only bring
553 the waters of eternal salvation to those who need it, you cannot make them drink, no matter how
554 parched you see they are.

555 Jacob thought about that for a few moments and felt a bit better. But the Spirit saw he needed a
556 little nudging to see what else was bothering him. "My Son, there is more that weighs on you isn't there?

557 Jacob examined his feelings for a moment and realized there was. He explained to the Spirit that
558 he thought he could help increase the number of followers in Convocationism. Knowing that the more
559 souls following our beliefs, the stronger our faith is.

560 The Spirit smiled at Jacob. "My son, you know that even one soul freed from the oppression of
561 the false belief of powerlessness is more than strong enough to defeat any number of souls enslaved by
562 those beliefs. So what is the true reason for your despair?"

563 Jacob examined his intentions more closely and realized that he felt the need to to convert more
564 souls to Convocationism not only to strengthen our beliefs, but also to strengthen the Spirit, who is born
565 of those beliefs. The Spirit later his hand upon Jacobs head and all doubt and concern drained from
566 Jacob.

567 "My Son, I am touched by your concern, but I can never fail to protect my children no matter
568 how great you may perceive the odds. For I am far more that born of our faith., I am born of faith."

569 "If you are holding a stone and then drop it, do you not believe it will fall? Or if you light a fire
570 it will burn, give off heat and light? Or if you cut your hand it will bleed?"

571 "I am much more than your God of Convocational belief. I am the God of belief. I started what
572 is called Convocationism to help my children grow and I will always protect them, but I do not need
573 them to follow my teachings to have the power I have."

574 "Each of my children must walk their own path to find the truths I try to teach them, because
575 each learns in his own way. Some learn quickly and some have great difficulty, but each step, as
576 stumbling as it may be, is what they need to learn. They may not learn it the first time they stumble, but
577 they will eventually catch on and therefore become a better person. I understand that it is frustrating,
578 and sometimes painful, to watch and allow each person to stumble and fall on the path over things that
579 we have already learned, but that is the path to enlightenment they have chosen. And again, we can only

580 bring water to the parched, we cannot make them drink.”

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Dedication Of Service

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586 Joshua was a man of dedicated service to his church. He spent years as a Deacon and an Elder
587 and never shrank when called upon. He was often told by the members of his church that he would
588 make a good Pastor.

589 The day came when the desire to dedicate himself fully to the service of his faith arose in him,
590 so Joshua approached the other elders and his Priest and asked for their blessings. They agreed and the
591 Pastor and Joshua wrote up the proposal to submit to the congregation.

592 After the Congregation took sufficient time to consider the proposal, they approved his request
593 and Joshua went to train to become a Pastor.

594 Upon finishing the needed training Joshua took his vows and went back to his Congregation to
595 serve as Pastor.

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Consecration

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601 Jeremy, a man of new faith, spent time with the people of Convocationism. He saw their good
602 deeds and benefited from their wisdom. Then the time came that he decided to join them because it was
603 right and good for him. During his evening prayer, Jeremy proclaimed to the Spirit his intention to join
604 the church.

605 At that time, David, the Pastor of Jeremy's church, was also in prayer. To his astonishment their
606 appeared in front of him a figure of pure light and a feeling of immense love and peace washed over
607 him. The Spirit then spoke to David.

608 “Pastor, you have worked diligently in your service to your congregation and your efforts are
609 bearing fruit. Let all who wish to follow the teachings of our faith show their dedication through the
610 anointing of olive oil, thyme and rose. Let this consecration bind their hearts, minds and souls eternally
611 to our faith and let them rejoice in the love, protection and support granted to them in such a binding.”

612 “In such a way let every person, place, thing and action be anointed when in the service of our
613 faith and let the power and protection of our faith flow to and through them eternally.”

614 David went forth and started making the preparations.

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The Spirit's Revelation To Adam

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Adam was a man new to the faith. Searching for understanding and knowledge, unsure of aligning his path to Convocationism. He was searching for something more than his life presently offered, but was unsure of what he sought. So his path brought him to check out Convocationism to see what it was about and what it may offer him. Meditation was suggested by many of the elders of his Congregation, so Adam decided to give it a try.

Adam attempted to meditate many times, in many different ways, but found it hard to attain any of the peace or connection described by the Elders. Over the course of many weeks Adam tried several times.

His perceived failure began weighing heavily upon him and discouraged his attempts more and more as time went on.

As he sat one night, attempting yet again for the experience the Elders described, Adam was suddenly engulfed in a pure, bright light that did not hurt his eyes as he gazed upon it. He felt a sense of calm and love wash over and through him, and he had a sense of being protected by the light.

Then a voice spoke to him. Not in a manner that his ears could hear, or in a manner that originated in his mind, but speaking directly to his soul, in a connection so warm and comforting and familiar that its magnificence could never be described by simple words.

Adam waited and reveled in the experience until he realized this feeling is different than what had been described to him by the Elders. Unsure of what was happening he began to feel concerned.

The light then spoke to his soul in a feeling so majestic and powerful that it greatly surpassed anything Adam could have possibly imagined. At the same time the voice was so calming and familiar that Adam's fears were alleviated.

“Adam. Ask your questions so that you may understand my answers better.”

Adam thought for a few moments. He realized that he must be speaking to God. Upon realizing that, a flurry of questions flooded his mind to the point that he did not even know where to start. Caught in a cycle of confusion. He simply asked. “Are you The Spirit, the God of Convocationism?”

The light replied. “One of my many names, but the most accurate concept of all.”

Adam sat, not knowing what to ask, and hoping the Spirit would simply continue. But The Spirit did not, so Adam thought some more of what questions he may have.

656

657 After a while, Adam realized he had so many questions he did not even know where to start. So
658 he just started blurting out question after question as they entered his mind. Everything from “Why are
659 we here?” through “What is Convocationism?” to “Are we alone in the universe?” Then Adam fell
660 silent for a moment, then simply said “I have so many questions I don't even know how to start.”

661

662 The Spirit smiled and embraced Adam's soul, instantly calming Adam more and surrounding
663 him in a comfortable blanket of peace.

664

665 “My Son. You are not lost. You are on the right path. You will find what you seek if you
666 continue to work at your growth. Your journey is as important as your destination, so I will not ruin it
667 for you.”

668

669 “I have chosen you Adam. I wish for you to convey a message to my people, both in
670 Convocationism and not.”

671

672 “Your journey is yours alone, I will always be with you and will always protect you, but you
673 must choose your path.”

674

675 “I can offer this to alleviate some of everyone's confusion of where to start.”

676

677 “There are simply five things to know. Though the facets of each, one could spend an eternity
678 exploring and still not fully understand. All combine in a fluid dance of what you have learned to
679 perceive and what you may possibly learn to perceive, and facilitate your endless journey of growth.”

680

681 “There is, at the center, the Soul. The wellspring of all power and all things. Tied almost
682 indistinguishably with belief. Almost totally misunderstood in this age, the infancy of realization of it's
683 true nature.”

684

685 “There is belief. In it's infinite permutations. The starting point of all things, no matter how they
686 have been formed or twisted. From here all things arise and take shape in the multitude of forms agreed
687 upon.”

688

689 “There is the Physical in it's infinite combinations. It encompasses all that has been created as a
690 place for you to learn.”

691

692 “There is the Spiritual in it's infinite, awe inspiring possibilities. It is all that is and is not
693 intertwined with the physical.”

694

695 “And there is Personal Interaction in it's infinite diversity. Often perceived as a tool for gauging
696 our growth, or a source of strength, or direction, but comprising so much more than what has even
697 begun to be understood.”

698
699 “There is no end, just opportunities that open, even if you cannot perceive them at the time.”
700

701 “You can learn from exploring for yourself or from the wisdom of others. You can blaze a new
702 path or follow a path others have lain for you. You can move quickly or slowly, but the opportunity to
703 grow is always present and available for those willing to see. So the only real question that is worth
704 asking, is from me to you.”

705
706 “...So how long after you stumble on your path will it take before you are ready to continue on
707 your journey”
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711 Proverbs

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714 **The Fellowship of Convocationism**

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716 I write this letter to every man, woman and child so that you may see the works of the Spirit of
717 Convocationism and hopefully learn a better way.

718 To most of you I was the man you passed on the street as you headed to your destination, too
719 consumed with your own lives to give me a second glance.

720 To a few I was the man that you extended a helping hand in a fleeting attempt to ease my
721 immediate discomfort.

722 To the latter, I thank you for your kindness. But my malady was not that of momentary
723 discomfort, it was much deeper. And though you helped me through the moment, the cause of my
724 malady persisted, and therefore so did my condition.

725 That is until a man approached me and offered me not a fleeting gesture, but fellowship. He
726 treated me as a friend, not a nuisance. Even though, looking back, I know that I was a disruption to his
727 life for quite a while.

728 He gave me his time, again and again, to help me find a solution to my malady. Most of the time
729 though, he listened. He was simply there with compassion, acceptance and understanding. And I am
730 pleased to be able to tell you that I have been roused from my malady through the works of this man.
731 Though we have since parted ways because our lives are so different, I seek to carry on the fellowship
732 that this man has shown me. So I am starting with this letter to you.

733 To those of you that extended a helping hand as you passed by, again I thank you. But most of
734 the time there is more needed to actually help another person. A friendship, sometimes for an extended
735 period of time, can help heal wounds that a passing helping hand can't even come close to helping with.
736 I've also learned that I don't have to have all the answers. Most of the time people just need a
737 sympathetic ear to help them get past the obstacles they face.

738 I've learned not to tell another person what to do. Each person needs to make their own
739 decisions, but the man who helped me would subtly point out, or ask if I had considered different points
740 of view to help expand my understanding so I can make the best possible decision at the time.

741 The man not only helped me with the malady I faced, he also showed me a new way to live. For
742 when I had been relieved of my malady I thanked him, and he then explained to me that he had
743 received as much as I had. For selfless actions not only improve the life of the person being helped, but
744 also of the person helping. He proclaimed that for this reason he tries, in every situation he is in, to
745 make a positive contribution to it, not just take from it.

746 As we parted ways, I expressed my desire to tell this story in an attempt to show others how to
747 offer the fellowship that was given freely to me and had helped me so much. He was grateful, but
748 warned me against going farther and trying to teach people things that I do not do myself.

749 I have learned to respect what this man says, so I am not only spreading this man's story, I am
750 living my life according to it.

751
752 May the Spirit guide you upon your path.

753
754
755

756 Fellowship with each other

757

758 Dear Pastor,

759 I wanted to thank you and all the parishioners that come to visit me here at the hospital. It means
760 more to me than you all can know.

761 Prior to falling ill I did not realize just how important the fellowship of other people of faith was in
762 my life. Over the past few months I have seen a change in my spirituality and in my personality as a
763 direct result of my inability to socialize with other people of faith.

764 As my illness dragged on, my optimism and dedication to prayer wavered. Life began to weigh
765 more heavily on me and I began feeling alone. Anxiety and desperation began to set in, further
766 hastening my spiritual decline.

767 I still felt my faith was strong, but the edges of my spiritual shield we're more tattered than I
768 realized.

769 Then you and other members of the church began showing up. We would talk and pray. Sometimes
770 about my situation, other times not, but the fellowship was always revitalizing. It helped me realize that
771 standing alone I am no where near as strong as I am when I stand with others of faith.

772 Thank you again to all those that gave their time to help me through this rough situation and I
773 eagerly look forward to the time when I can join you all at the services again.

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Plea of Vigilance to the Congregations

I entreat you my children, follow your Pastors. For they have dedicated themselves to leading you in your spiritual growth. Tithe regularly, the church can be a powerful tool for good but only if it can pay it's way in this world.

But always be vigilant, for those that serve the Congregations are only men. Though they burden the responsibility of leading many, your path of spiritual growth is up to you. Do not let someone who has gone astray lead you in the wrong direction. And if you find yourself on the wrong path, turn around immediately.

Your leaders should not seek excess, they should be a model of minimalism. They should not take money from the church to live when their church responsibilities allow them to hold down a job. They should not seek fame or prestige, they should be a model of humility. They should not focus on what they can get from a situation, they should focus on how they can help. They should not bring pain and strife, they should spread love and peace.

This holds true for every Leader, every Deacon, every Elder, every Pastor and every Bishop. It holds true for everyone that serves the congregations.

Be vigilant my children. Watch for those that promise to serve the congregations but only seek to serve themselves. Cast them out of service, for the will of the congregations has more power than any position of service. Be knowledgeable in your church's activities and be active in your church. People may serve the Congregations, but the church is it's congregation, not it's servants.

Discussion Between Paul and David

David, a man of many years in the church, was sitting in the park watching the younger members of the church playing games when he was approached by Paul, one of the younger members of the church.

Paul asked David what was the Spirit of Our Faith? To which David replied: "It is the spiritual manifestation of our combined faith."

Paul looked concerned for a moment, then asked "...but, compared to other religions we have so few. How can the spirit possibly protect us from so much?"

David smiled and replied simply "The spirits power is our faith, not individually, but collectively, as a whole."

To which Paul exclaimed "But there are so many more believers in other faiths. Surely their faith combined is much greater simply because of their numbers."

811 David replied “A slave works the masters fields grudgingly, because he has to, always watched
812 by his master. A free man works his fields with vigor, because it is his. The free man is always going to
813 get much more work done than the slave.”

814 “It is the same with our faith. A soul that is enslaved and taught to believe it has no power can
815 never be as strong as a free soul. And one free soul can be more powerful than legions upon legions of
816 enslaved souls.”

817 “On top of that, the Spirit of Our Faith is the combined power of all the souls that have faith.
818 Not just stolen power from those taught they have none. We never give our power away, but the power
819 of free souls focused on a common good, and the power of every soul that has faith, that kind of power
820 can never be defeated by any amount of stolen power. Even one free soul is more than enough to defeat
821 anything that tries to enslave it. So you see, it doesn't matter how many followers the other religions
822 have. They will never be able to defeat the Spirit of Our Faith. And the Spirit of Our Faith protects us
823 always.”

824 Paul thanked David and retired to contemplate what David had said.

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Letter From The Prophet Danial

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Deliverance from Despair

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834 My friend, I am sorry that times are rough. I am always with you in spirit, if not always in body.

835 As you navigate these turbulent waters, I pray that you keep in mind that The Spirit is watching over

836 you. He will help you through the toughest times and guide you to peaceful waters again.

837 I pray that you keep in mind that troubling times give us a chance to develop new tools to help

838 us deal with life, therefore making the rest of our lives easier and giving us a chance to become a better

839 person.

840 Though it may not seem so at the moment, you will make it through. You always will. Pull

841 closer to The Spirit and the fellowship in rough times, for it will lighten your load. Just as you have

842 done for others many times before.

843 Stay true to your faith in these turbulent times. For doubt and despair erode our spiritual

844 foundations, and leave us prey to the easy slavery and false powerlessness taught by other religions.

845 So stay close to The Spirit and allow yourself to be enveloped by the fellowship and you will

846 make it though.

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Proclamation of the Love of the Spirit

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854

The Love of The Spirit.

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856 The Spirit's love for you is eternal. He has defended you from countless foes and has created a
857 safe haven for you. He is forever ready to strengthen you in your time of need and always watches over
858 you.

859 He will never forsake you, no matter the odds. He will always stand with you and guide you on
860 your path.

861 Guided by the example of The Spirit, we should treat each other with love. Love is patient and
862 kind. It is not envious, boastful or prideful. It is not self-seeking and does not take advantage of others.
863 It is not easily angered and is quick to forgive. Love is kind, honest and truthful always. Love always
864 protects, love always hopes and love always perseveres.

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I will protect you always

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870 First off, I do my best to be an altruistically spiritual person. I pray three times a day as I should,
871 not including the occasional "Spirit help me!" In times of stress. I give of my time to help those in and
872 out of my church, and I engage in fellowship with my church members a few times a week. I meditate a
873 few times a week and I spend a lot of time explaining to others that they need to trust in The Spirit, for
874 he will take care of us always.

875 I have a good life. I am happy, protected and have many friends in my faith.

876 Then, while meditating I found my consciousness drawn to a place of previously unknown serenity.
877 I felt as if I was floating on a warm and calming sea, enveloped by a sense of comfort and ease.

878 With me was a presence. The spirit. Quietly watching over me. Ahead of me I saw a place of eternal
879 bliss. A place of joy and peace so deep that I never imagined it possible. Behind me I saw a storm
880 threatening the people trying their best to make it through.

881 I threw a quick prayer to the Spirit to watch over them too, then I settled down to enjoy a
882 comfortable ride to the heaven I see ahead of me.

883 As time passed, I saw person after person pass me headed toward the most joyous horizon, but I
884 seemed to be getting no closer. After a time, I became quite concerned.

885 I looked up to the Spirit and asked "Spirit, I do all that you ask. Why are you not bringing me closer
886 to paradise?"

887 I heard the Spirit whisper to me "You have given up."

888 I was taken aback by this exclamation. I adamantly recounted all that I do for the Spirit. I pointed
889 out that not only do I give myself to him freely, but I teach others to do the same. I do more work than a
890 lot of others, what does he mean I've given up?

891 I heard the Spirit reply "I am here to help protect you on your journey, but the journey is yours. All
892 that I ask you to do is to help you grow, to help you learn, to help you move forward on the right path.
893 But the journey is yours. You are getting no closer because you stopped growing, stopped learning. You
894 stopped improving yourself. I will always protect you, but you must continually try to improve yourself
895 to make it to the horizon.

896 So I sat up straight, picked up my oars and started rowing.

897

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900 **We have the power to create our own heaven**

901

902 I say to you that you are the most precious and the most loved of all creatures for in you is a thing
903 of unimaginable power and love. In you is a thing coveted by all. In you lies a soul.

904 The soul is a thing of limitless potential, and will be instrumental in creating your perfect existence
905 after this life.

906 But the soul is malleable by personal belief, and if the soul is not taken care of it is subject to
907 spiritual decay.

908 Therefore I implore you to learn to take care of your soul through Prayer, Self Improvement and
909 abstinence from sin.

910 Prayer helps keep our mind and soul focused on the righteous path.

911 Self Improvement should be our focus continually.

912 Abstinence from sin, perhaps the most difficult of all. Take aim at the seven deadly sins as a good place
913 to start.

914 Do not be lead astray by those that wish to make you believe you are powerless and they have all
915 the power. Rather than improving themselves and thus increasing their own power, they scramble to
916 enslave as many souls as they can to siphon a small amount of that power for themselves.

917 Abandon your souls power to no one! It is yours for a reason, do not give it away by believing you
918 are powerless!

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