

**[Sunday] 1 December 1991:** The word “eternal” did not mean everlasting to the Jews, it meant a long time.

“This doctrine of migration<sup>1</sup> is nowhere to be found systematically developed [in Jewish writing].

Whenever it occurs, it is tacitly assumed as well known” —Rabbi Moses Gaster.

New Testament references to reincarnation: Luke 9: 7–9; Matthew 11: 7, 10–11, 14–15; Mat. 16: 13–14<sup>2</sup>.

Origen: “The education of souls is continued in successive worlds.” See also, *Seth Speaks* and Mormon theology.

“Among the many possible meanings the word “God” carries, none is more important than ‘that to which a man gives himself without reservation.’” H. Smith.

Religion is not only concerned with morality, but what sets it into motion, or how we can be more like Christ. The four gospels tell what Christ did, the rest of the New Testament is how we can do the same.

“It is not difficult to see why even at the cost of infinite logical awkwardness that the Church insisted on Christ’s humanity as well as his divinity. A bridge must touch both banks, and Christ was the bridge between God and man. To have said that Christ was man but not God would have been to deny that his life was fully *normative* and concede that other ways might be good. To have said that he was God but not man would have been to deny that his example was fully relevant; it might have been a realistic standard for God, but not for me.” —H. Smith

The Pope is there in the same way we have a Supreme Court. To give God’s interpretation of the Law. The Pope is God’s representative here on earth<sup>3</sup>. And “whatever he binds on Earth, will be bound in heaven. Whatever he loosens on Earth will be loosed in Heaven”.

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<sup>1</sup> This is a note on reincarnation. I think it is interesting that this idea shows up in many religions. There are other mentions of reincarnation in the Christian scriptures as well (*Matthew 16: 31-21; Mark 8: 27-30; Luke 9: 18-21*).

<sup>2</sup>

Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead; And of some, that Elias had appeared; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again. And Herod said, John have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see him. (*Luke 9: 7–9*)

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. (*Matthew 16: 13–14*).

<sup>3</sup> This is one of those passages that surprise me, as I very much do not believe this now. In many ways, this passage can be a good example of a thought process that I am trying to cultivate: if I used to believe something and I don’t anymore, it is worthwhile to try and figure out why I no longer believe it. Clearly, one of the reasons I don’t believe this has to do with not believing in God. But, there are other reasons. First, I am also not persuaded that Jesus meant to say that Peter was the cornerstone of the church, or that the Pope has any special authority. Second, the history of the Catholic church is one great record of living in a way that is against what I would consider spiritual.

While there are many perspectives on this passage, here is why I disagree with this view of Peter and the Pope. In the synoptic gospels, there is a story known as Peter’s confession. In this story, Jesus and his disciples are in Caesarea Phillippi and he asks his disciples who do other people say that he is. They answer that some say he is John the Baptist, some say he is Elijah, or one of the other prophets. Jesus then asked his disciples who they thought he was. In response, Peter said that Jesus was the Christ (*Matthew 16: 31-21; Mark 8: 27-30; Luke 9: 18-21*). What happened next is critically important to the history of Christianity. Both Mark and Luke say that Jesus immediately told the disciples not to tell anyone. Matthew, however, adds four sentences before this admonition:

And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not reveled this to you, but my father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church (εκκλησιαν) and the powers of death and hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

There are several issues with this passage that bother me. First, it only appears in one of the three gospels. Such an important passage would likely appear in other gospels, especially Mark’s. This is especially important because Mark

The only area in which the Pope is infallible is those times when he speaks on matters of faith or morals<sup>4</sup>.

**[Monday] 2 December 1991:** Family. How it operates is as mysterious as to be known. How it should, and how it does, are as far apart as our sins from God. What is family? How should, not does it work? It is important for every couple to find their own way to run a family—or rather their lives. Still the question of children, chores, where to live, *che per cena*<sup>5</sup>—or even should our be allowed to pursue himself? How much are we willing to support another who ignores us, for how long? Truly we are bound by the rules of the one who pays the bills.

“Choosing to come out is an act of courage, but to not do so does not imply a lack thereof” . . . “one does not know how much change or anxiety one can handle, or how they will respond to both<sup>6</sup>.” Emotionally loaded issues can come in any form and should be proceeded upon carefully. “When one person changes, people will try to get that person to change back so as not to upset the status quo.”<sup>7</sup> Change takes time, don’t ask the other person to change instantly, but allow them to work through their feelings on an issue<sup>8</sup>.

“When we define a new position in a relationship, we need to focus on what we want to say about the self and from the self. We need to be less focused on the other person’s reaction<sup>9</sup>.” And we need to take total responsibility for our decisions.

“You can just about measure the level of anxiety in a work system or family by the amount of gossip<sup>10</sup>.”

“True selfhood and assertiveness are self-focused and not other focused<sup>11</sup>.”

As Krishnamurti says, no theory about personalities are as important as the ones we believe about ourselves. For only we truly know ourselves<sup>12</sup>.

“April 3, 1850 to Harrison Blake: I lived in Judea eighteen hundred years ago, but I never knew that there was one such as the Christ among my contemporaries” – H. D. Thoreau

“And he send down rains from above in proper quantity and he brings back to life the dead earth, similarly you shall be reborn” –Chapter 25—Sura Zakhraf—Meccan Verses 5-10-6

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was allegedly a follower of Peter. It’s odd that Mark wouldn’t mention this detail. Second, the Greek word means assembly or congregation and not an institutionalized power structure; so it seems to mean something like “faith in me will be what binds people together”. In line with the Protestant reformers, “the rock” in the passage is not Simon but Simon’s confession (e.g., Tyndale [Daniell, 1994, p. 119]). As Tyndale says,

Peter in the greek signifieth a stone in English. This confession is the rock. Now is simon bar-jona, or simon jonas’ son, called Peter, because of his confession. Whosoever then thiswise confesseth of Christ, is the same called Peter. Now is this confession come to all that are true Christian. Then is every Christian man and woman Peter.

Third, Jesus later gives to all the disciples the power of bounding and loosing (*Matthew* 18: 18). Finally, I think is important to note where this passage repeats itself. It appears again when the disciples are themselves arguing about who will be greater. Jesus said that they are all equal.

<sup>4</sup> Clearly I disagree with this as well.

<sup>5</sup> This is as good a time to mention that after I moved to Chilhowie, I decided to start learning Italian. I think I did this more as something to do that would exercise my mind, more than any particular love of the language. I went to the library and got some Berlitz tapes and would practice them in the evenings. Later, I found a guy who became my Italian tutor. I think this translates as something like, “what for dinner.” I think I was trying to get at that people have to discuss what foods to eat and what time they will eat. In many ways, I think agreement on these topics is more important than agreement on some higher topics.

<sup>6</sup> I don’t know the origin of this quote.

<sup>7</sup> I don’t know the origin of this quote, but this seems to be the case. When one person changes, it can cause a disruption in many people’s lives.

<sup>8</sup> I do not know why I have so many entries on homosexuality.

<sup>9</sup> This is from Harriet Goldhor Lerner’s *The Dance of Intimacy* (p. 139).

<sup>10</sup> I don’t know the origin of this quote.

<sup>11</sup> I don’t know the origin of this quote, but it and the prior one may also be from Lerner.

<sup>12</sup> I think that this is an open question. There are many ways in which we fail to know ourselves. We very often misremember our past, we are wrong about what will give us pleasure in the future, wrong about why we have behaved as we have, and so forth.

When we are living we often lose sight we shall die. Every day the mountain of old age and death approaches, and we squander our youth, forgetting that they are irrecoverable. Every sunshine that shines upon my youth should be enjoyed, everyday lived. I should forget those petty things I cling to and enjoy a simple life, or if not that, at least not become attached to the more expensive life<sup>13</sup>.

**[Tuesday] 3 December 1991:** What works for me may not work for another. My ways are good for me, they work for me, respect that another's work for them.

Why in the hell am I studying psychology? It seems I know how to lower the anxiety/stress level but choose not to do it. I am ladling the spirituality into myself—not the other way. If I knew how to ease tension you would think I would, or do I thrive on causing tension<sup>14</sup>?

I was just thinking about “the way” and my trying to become a man of God. Am I far from it! My attempts have been a farce! Here I am attached to my hair and earrings—all along knowing that the man of God does not care about outward trappings. Yet, I caused major commotion over them. And a man of God is not even moved by life or death! I have much to learn, or rather lose. Religion is about what a man believes, no books are needed. Knowing the sayings of earlier men should lead me to myself, after that is only trying to impress others with my knowledge. Once Nirvana is achieved, all books dissipate. I have not achieved Nirvana, nor become a Buddha.

**[Thursday] 5 December 1991:** What we have in this country today is judges second guessing each other and people getting found guilty or innocent on the virtue of slanting of truth and letters of law. If a man is guilty, should he not pay?

“I have made my own rules, and I have not even followed them”—Mussolini

Anytime we blame another (i.e., our parents for our raising), we have not taken responsibility for our lives.

“The degree to which we can be clear with our first family about who we are, what we believe, and where we stand on important issues will strongly influence the level of ‘independence’ or emotional maturity that we bring to other relationships<sup>15</sup>.”

“The goal is to be in a relationship where the separate ‘I-ness’ of both parties can be appreciated and enhanced, and where neither competence nor vulnerability is lost sight of in the self or the other. Intimacy requires a clear self, relentless self-focus, open communication, and a profound respect for differences. It requires the capacity to stay emotionally connected to significant others during anxious times, while taking a clear position for self, based on one's values, beliefs, and principles.” – H.G. Lerner.

“Mao Chiang and Li Chi were considered beautiful by men. But if fish saw them, they would dive to the bottom of the river. If birds saw them, they would fly off. If deer saw them, they would run away. Of these four, who recognizes real beauty?” – Chuang Tsu. I should surely pursue that which I think lovely, no matter what others say.

**[Saturday] 7 December 1991:** The federal government is supposed to be the voice of the states. It should have all the states together meeting and deciding what is best for them all. In turn, the president is supposed to be the representative of America. The one who speaks with our voice. Farce. What good is those “pork barrel” projects? It is one state out vying another. Why? Perhaps the danger is not clear. On the Federal level, the idea

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<sup>13</sup> There is so much here that I wish I had paid more attention to. In many ways, I feel like I didn't take the time to enjoy my youth. Indeed, as I look back, I see that I was so worried about graduating that I didn't take the time to enjoy the people and events around me. I have kept a music playlist for years called “Every life has a story,” and I add to it whenever I feel that is a song that really captures how I feel at a particular time. Several of the songs from this period, especially from graduate school, are about taking time to sit still, to rest, to “pass the evening with a drink and a friend” (“Time Stand Still” by Rush).

<sup>14</sup> Wow, there are many entries on this point (e.g., 8 November 1991). It seems that I deliberately did things to provoke people.

<sup>15</sup> I think this quote is also from Lerner.

is to come up with a plan to help the whole nation. This means some might hurt, but the nation live on. It isn't state versus federal, they work together. The federal is just (theoretically) the voice of the whole nation.

Abortion could be used to get the sex of the child one wants. This is neither bad nor good, but it is a proposition that needs to be explored to see how it should be responded to<sup>16</sup>.

“Great knowledge is all-encompassing; small knowledge is limited. Great words are inspiring; small words are chatter. When we are asleep, we are in touch with our souls [see also Seth Speaks]. When we are awake, our senses open. We get involved with our activities and our minds are distracted. Sometimes we are hesitant, sometimes underhanded, and sometimes secretive. Little fears cause anxiety, great fears cause panic. Our words fly off as arrows, as though we know what was right and wrong. We cling to our point of view, as though everything depended on it. And yet our opinions have no permanence: like autumn and winter, they gradually pass away. We are caught in a current and cannot return. We are tied up in knots like an old clogged drain; we are getting closer to death with no way to regain our youth. Joy and anger, sorrow and happiness, hope and fear, indecision and strength, humility and willfulness, enthusiasm and insolence, like music sounding from an empty reed or mushrooms rising from the warm dark earth, continually appear before us day and night. No one knows whence they come. Don't worry about it! Let them be! How can we understand it all in one day?” — Chuang Tsu<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> I think this is a way more complicated issue that the 18 year old me realized. There is a preference for male children in many cultures around the globe, and in many cases females are more likely to be exposed to die or selectively aborted. This has created a massive shortage of females in some countries (e.g., China and India). This has had the effect, however, of increasing the value of women in those cultures to some extent. Will it continue?

<sup>17</sup> I think this is from the second chapter. This actually reminds me a great deal of Buddhism, especially the idea of *anatta*.