

The Other Cheek of Islam

خد الاسلام الاخر

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Dedication:

I dedicate this book to late PM Rafic Hariri (1 November 1944 – 14 February 2005) - may his soul rest in peace - whose foundation, [The Rafic Hariri Foundation](#), covered my educational fees (as well as my sister's) at the prestigious American University of Beirut where I studied chemistry and the Humanities from 1992-1995. He was assassinated in 2005 in Beirut by Hezbollah operatives under pressure from the criminal Assad regime of Syria to which he was opposed. The crater resulting from the powerful 1 ton bomb that was driven into his motorcade near Hotel St. George downtown Beirut by a suicide bomber was 10 meter wide.

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Introduction

The idea of "The Other Cheek of Islam" was conceived in my mind around December 2004 in Beirut, Lebanon. I had recently returned to Lebanon from the USA where I had discovered Rumi a couple of years back and was completely mesmerised and amazed by his poetry. I was job hunting, so I had plenty of free time on my hands, and what better cause to devote one's free time to, than to translate the poetry of Rumi into Arabic and spread his inclusivist, reconciling view of all religions. It hurt me to realize that very few people had heard of him in Lebanon so I felt a sense of urgency in spreading his vision in Lebanon, in particular, where scars of religious conflict could still be felt and are still felt to the present day, and at the regional level where things were not looking so good in Iraq, and East-West relations.

So this is how I started translating some of the most beautiful poems of Rumi into Arabic using Coleman Barks's "The Essential Rumi" and I created the [First Jalaluddin Rumi Online Arabic Translation of Some of His Most Beautiful Poems](#) page.

My view of Islam changed completely (from a total polemical hostile attitude that peaked in the wake of 9/11 culminating in my publishing the page [Problematic Verses in the Koran](#)) to one of understanding and even appreciation. If what Rumi was preaching was Islam, then I found in it my Christianity. Knowing that his 6 Mathnawi volumes of poetry are considered the *Persian Translation of the Quran*, I realized that whatever is viewed as negative in Islam is simply a misinterpretation...

In this day and age, when Islamo-phobia is rampant in many parts of the world (the phenomenal Pat Robertson for example), where racism and materialism are plaguing humanity, what better anti-dote, what better light to spread than the vision of Rumi which is so reminiscent of Jesus's teaching give everything to the poor and follow me?

Below are some of the views/poems/parables and stories of Rumi that I find deeply Christian. The aim of this book is to bring the two religions and their followers closer together, to show that they are "One Praise" as Rumi puts it.

Let it be known to the reader that I am a UK chartered scientist, I have an M.Sc. in chemistry which I earned in the USA but I am also a believer, that is I subscribe to the God hypothesis and Intelligent Design. I also believe in evolution but in intra-species evolution. I don't believe that a worm can evolve into a higher organism or as evolutionists believe a bacterium all the way to human being... I did go through a period of atheism in my life in which I was a Nietzsche enthusiast, but I had an existential crisis in the USA that lead me back to faith after a miserable attempted suicide. One of the factors that lead me back to faith is the character of many of the scientists that I worked with and known throughout my career. Many of them are pseudo-scientists, mental-masturbators or simply jerk-offs. And even the most renowned of them many times have despicable traits. To support my hypothesis I cite the example in history about Robert Hook and Newton, may they both rest in peace, who were contemporaries and they bickered about their theories like spoiled children. So the choice really is, do you believe these flawed atheistic scientists or do you believe the greatest teacher of all time who to me is Jesus Christ who prayed to God calling Him Father and who smiled on the cross of his execution and forgave His enemies...

Let it also be known that my last name is Greek which might explain my philosophical tendencies and I used to work for a while as a photographer in Los Angeles, in which

many times I experienced what Nikos Kazantzakis calls in his book Zorba The Greek, The Sacred Awe... In other words I also have artistic tendencies.

I grew up in Lebanon during the 80's and 90's, from the beginning of the civil war in 1975 until its end in 1990, and I know the bitter consequences of ignorance. I have suffered deeply from them both as a citizen of a country that has many ignorant beliefs and practices but also as a member of a family that was tormented many times by domestic disputes.

I am a voracious reader, and some of my favourite books are, in no particular order:

Les Miserables by Victor Hugo, The Essential Rumi by Coleman Barks, The Mustard Seed by Osho (aka Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh), The Hero with A Thousand faces by Joseph Campbell, Moby Dick by Herman Melville, Zorba The Greek, the Last Temptation of Christ by Nikos Kazantzakis, Time of Violence by Anton Donchev, Love is A Dog from Hell by Bukowski, Twenty Love Poems and A Song of Despair by Pablo Neruda and last but not least Gibran Khalil Gibran's Jesus The Son of Man.

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April 5, 2006 – June 7, 2018

PS: Rumi has helped me heal from the depression and anxiety that has plagued me for more than 20 years that I attribute to the traumas that I experienced growing up as a child in war torn Lebanon. In the span of the time that it has taken me to finish this book 14 years later, my view of the world has matured in many areas and I would like to express those views to the general public with the hope that they will help them cast their chains as I believe I have. The majority of the book was completed in High Wycombe, UK a beautiful diverse town West of London surrounded by beautiful hills one of which has a breath-taking cemetery where I have taken numerous walks reading the tombstone inscriptions and enjoying nature. There is also a small river called the Wye that goes through it and there are ducks and seagulls that fly around it giving the town from time to time the feeling of a sea resort town. There are also these most amazing birds of prey called Red Kites that fly high in the sky and scream like in the old Western movies, sounds that resemble eagles' cries of freedom in the great canyons of the USA.

On Forgiveness

I read in Rumi a story about Ali, one of Mohammed's favourite men and staunch followers, about forgiving whoever does you wrong until the Day of Judgement, no matter how many times they do you wrong. In this I see a manifestation of the Christian teaching of "turning the other cheek" and forgiving your brother seventy times seven as the Bible teaches.

There is another story of Ali getting into a tough sword fight with another Arab. After a very difficult duel, Ali overcame his opponent who having lost his sword lay helpless on the ground. When Ali approached him, he spit into Ali's face... Ali first got angry, but then controlled himself and even gave his arm to his opponent to help him up. His enemy asked him "why did you spare me?" Ali said one must never act out of anger, it is a weakness. Since that day, Ali's enemy became one of his most true followers...

I once told one of my friends Ibrahim in Orange County California that it takes much greater strength of mind and nobility of character to forgive your enemy than to exact revenge on him. Hate comes naturally, but it takes a lot of effort to become a forgiving person, to let go of your Ego.

One of the Muslim guys that I used to debate with in Irvine, California, Abdurrahman used to tell me "turn the other cheek"? Forgive your enemy? What kind of non sense teaching is that...? Later I realized that the depth of the teaching lies in the fact that most anger is about attachment to property or to people... and once you let go of attachment then you become truly free and you can forgive those that have wronged you...

Pope Francis once said that forgiveness is the asepsis of the soul... He who does not forgive does not have peace in his or her soul. Those who do not forgive are physically, emotionally and spiritually ill. Their hearts are septic that is unclean. Jesus once said that it does not matter what comes into the mouth what you eat, but what comes out of your mouth what you speak because that is a reflection of the state of your heart...

In this section of the book I would like to express the hope that Arabs and Israelis can turn the page and forgive each other any past grievances and make peace to live side by side as neighbours and dare I say relatives, for Muslims and Jews are half brothers in their common lineage going back to Abraham. I grew up in Lebanon where the southern border of the country is closed off to Israel and continues to be, and this is a sad fact in my opinion. Anger and hate though are the most tenacious and evil spirits that can plague a soul and impede its quest of the Truth.

On the 22nd of July, 2018, once one of my housemates tried to pick a fight with me and I ignored him and went to my room. I was washing some dishes in the kitchen and he said I splashed him with water. The guy followed me to my room and kicked at the door as I was trying to close it and he called me a terrorist. He happens to be a black man from Nigeria that has not integrated well in UK society despite the many years he has lived in the UK. I was trembling all over, a bit because I was angry and wanted to kick his ass but I was a bit afraid too. I knew better not to get into a fist fight with him because it is my motto in life never to

act out on my anger. Later that day I went for a walk to the Wycombe Cemetery my favourite place for contemplation and walking and I read a book that I bought from a guy I met that day at the local Costa coffee shop about his lifelong struggle with Schizophrenia. The book calmed me down and the spectacular view also from the high vantage point of the cemetery. I was contemplating the question though, may be all our physical ailments are the result of so called Evil Spirits residing in us, more scientifically speaking, evil thoughts and desires and fantasies that create negative chemistry in our brains and CNS.

The same day at the Costa Coffee I had a discussion with a local guy named Luke who was praising Donald Trump and Brexit. I told him they were both a distraction for the masses that cover up the real issues. He said Brexit was a democratic decision, I countered that it was populism stoked by fake news and that the reason that Brexit was a flop so far is that the knife has hit the bone and the government is realizing what a mistake Brexit was economically speaking. I told him the UK has deeper issues like drugs and alcohol abuse and loss of competitiveness in the global markets due to a decrease in the percentage of the local population getting into science and engineering careers that is why some of the locals are angry and they blame the "Other". I couldn't tell him bluntly that the UK has a problem with large groups of society that are fat, lazy and uneducated and unmotivated parasites that live off social benefits. I played some beautiful guitar while I was talking to Luke and it calmed him down and showed him that there are smart immigrants like me coming to the UK and choosing to make their home there and that are contributing to society.

On Women

1. Rumi's views on Women. Read his "*She Is the Creator*" poem below.

She Is the Creator

There is a tradition that Muhammad said, "A wise man will listen and be led by

a woman, while an ignorant man will not." Someone too fiercely drawn by animal

urges lacks kindness and the gentle affections that keep men human.

Anger and sharp desiring are animal qualities. A loving tenderness toward

women shows someone no longer pulled along by wanting. The core of the feminine

comes directly as a ray of the sun. Not the earthly figure you hear about in

love songs; there're more to her mystery than that. You might say she's not from

the manifest world at all, but the *creator* of it.

There is a Hadith that women are morally, physically and religiously defective (see below). Isn't it high time that progressive Muslim scholars re-evaluated the Hadith in light of universally accepted Human Rights?

"Women are naturally, morally and religiously defective". (Bukhary - from <http://www.submission.org/women/equal.html>)

*"Men have authority over women because God has made the one superior to the other, and because they spend their wealth to maintain them. Good women are obedient. They guard their unseen parts because God has guarded them. As for those from whom you fear disobedience, admonish them, forsake them in beds apart, and beat them. Then if they obey you, take no further action against them. Surely God is high, supreme."
Women 4:33*

I think this Koran verse is also proof that some verses have to be taken in context as we live in an era when some of the most powerful leaders in the world are women such as Chancellor Angela Merkel, and women have proven themselves in science as well where we have the example of Nobel Prize Laureate Madame Marie Sklodowkije Curie and many other intelligent women including the recently awarded Nobel Prize laureate in Physics of 2018 Professor Donna Strickland.

Islam same as Christianity teaches that women should be humble and submissive to their husbands, should not dress extravagantly and even walk quietly because a woman's true beauty is her tenderness, spirituality and humility. Her essence is the opposite of aggression and violence. A man penetrates during the sexual act, a woman embraces... A man thinks about God, a woman's intuition knows God because just like Him she also is a creator of Life and she focuses on more practical and beloved matters such as her kids, her man and her household. Men are rational women emotional and intuitive.

There are many bad stereotypes about women in the world today but there are also many bad role models. The media does not help by brainwashing young women about how they should look or dress or impress men. The fashion industry, the makeup industry, the house decoration industry are all brainwashing women and turning them into consumers. Science and technology have give women the opportunity to be equal to men in economic contribution, and with an over-populated world, I think they now have a chance to prove themselves in more areas than just child bearing. I respect a woman professor of Chemistry in UCLA that I know who happens to be Korean who once told me: "any ordinary woman can have a child but not any woman can become a professor of chemistry..." I respect her...

I am a father of two beautiful girls and when my father, may he rest in peace, suggested that I get them Lebanese passports when they were small children, I did not take his advice because women are not taken very seriously in the Middle East. I hope this changes some day.

I once had a vision after smoking a marijuana joint that the proton is male as it attracts the electron to itself while the electron is female as it has the property of pulling away. A woman's body is designed beautifully by the creator, it is soft, and curvy... a woman has soft breasts that produce milk which nourishes a baby...

In the Bible creation story, Genesis 2:18, the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

On September 22, 2018, my younger sister Rosemary had her big day, her wedding which was in Beirut. During the show that was part of the event, there was a belly dancer that danced beautifully. I told my elder sister's fiancée, Chris, look at that beauty, look at her body... "Women are proof that God loves men. "

Yesterday I watched an eye opening video testimonial of Aynaz aka Anni Cyrus: when she was 14 years old, she was tested to have an IQ of 138 and accepted at a prestigious learning institution in Iran. Instead of enrolling her there, her father married her off to some guy that proceeded to rape her for a year and a half. She eventually got smuggled by one of her relatives to the USA. She is an activist in the USA.

Finally, there is something that Muslims need to evolve to understand: if their prophet married a 7 year old and consummated the marriage with her when she was nine, does not mean we have to emulate that at an age when girls have and need to have the opportunity to mature emotionally and intellectually? At the time of writing this book, my daughters whom I love so much, are turning 8 and 9 and a half. I cannot imagine marrying the elder one off. She is a child. And having read the book Lolita recently by that sick pervert Vladimir Nabokov, one can clearly conclude the devastating consequences of having sexual relations with an immature girl. It was very interesting for me to see in one of the videos of the reformist Islamic Imam Mohammed Tawhidi the claim being made that Aicha was 20 when the prophet Mohammed married her, and the hadeeths decreased her age to nine so that people are convinced that she was a virgin contrary to his other wives who had previous marriages. And if the prophet was illiterate, does that mean his followers must also be illiterate?

On Real Men

Below is a beautiful Rumi poem on what it really means to be a man:

The Husk and Core of Masculinity

Masculinity has a core of clarity, which does not act
from anger or greed or

Sensuality and a husk which does. The virile centre
that listens within takes

Pleasure in obeying that truth. Nobility of spirit,
the true spontaneous energy

of your life, comes as you abandon sensual motives and move
only when you feel the spiritual majesty

that commands and is the delight of the self. Remember
Ayaz crushing that king's pearl!

Below is another poem about what it means to be a real human being...

SLEEP

Those who do not feel this love pulling them like a river,
those who do not drink dawn like a cup of spring water
or take in sunset like supper,
those who do not want to change,

let them sleep.

This love is beyond the study of theology,
that old trickery and hypocrisy.

If you want to improve your mind that way,
sleep on.

I have given up on my brain.
I have torn the cloth to shreds and thrown it away.

If you are not completely naked,
wrap your beautiful robe of words around you,
and sleep.

from *The Big Red Book* by Coleman Barks

It is sad that Hollywood portrays the ideal man as a ruthless rich banker that owns a huge mansion and an expensive car. Or he is superman or spider man out to kill the bad guys. Or he is the hedonistic rock star that fucks all the women that he likes and has many groupies. Or he is the rich doctor or lawyer that never loses a case. It is never the poor, humble spiritual man that has renounced the world... that would not be good for business.

Or there is the pathetic role model of the filthy rich African rapper that attracts so many naive young men of African origin with his angry lyrics, stupid shiny bling and crass lyrics about free access to carnal and chemical pleasure and fancy cars...

On the 25th of August 2018 one of my housemates a good guy, a British young man of African origin had his 30th Birthday party. I overheard a bunch of his friends discussing seriously how white people are only a 10% minority in the world and how coloured people were going to outbreed them. What a sad way of thinking, I thought to myself that is common unfortunately also among Muslim people that subscribe to the militant interpretation of Islam. Last night in that respect I was thinking that God must look at all his children that think that way about their brothers and sisters, and feel pain... I thought to myself does God cry or feel sadness because of this? Just like a real loving parent would feel sad at the sight of his/her children fighting? I wanted to tell these youths that God created all His children with love and He wants them to love one another despite their differences....

Today, earlier, I was at Bicester Village, Oxfordshire, shopping for a dress shirt for my sister's wedding coming up in September. It is a stressful pastime this shopping business. I was revolted by the sight of ordinary Chinese men gobbling up dress shirts by the heapful at Charles' Tyrwhitt store like they did not have shirts in China. While walking around that place, the thought occurred to me when I looked at some beautiful flowers: our fanciest designer clothes, sold at the likes of Ermenegildo Zegna, PRADA, BOSS, DKNY, Saint Laurent, Dolce and Gabanna and Tommy Hilfinger as my British friend Luke calls that brand, are not as delicately and perfectly designed as that flower... and how enlightened people like Jesus once taught: do not worry about what you shall wear.... A beautiful smile coming from a content love filled pure heart is the greatest most precious garment of all....

Keeping the Night Vigil

Spiritual practice takes self-sacrifice but the rewards are immense... Sometimes too much sleep can be bad for you; you wake up feeling groggy the next day... Why not stay up one night reading spiritual texts or praying? The poem below talks about this....

Conversation at Night

Do not go to sleep one night.
What you most want will come to you then.
Warmed by a sun inside, you will see wonders.

Tonight do not put your head down.
Be tough, and strength will come.

That which adoration adores appears at night.
Those asleep may miss it.
One night Moses stayed awake and asked,
and saw a light in a tree.

Then he walked at night for ten years,
until finally he saw the whole tree illuminated.

Muhammad rode his horse through the night sky.
The day is for work.. The night for love.
Do no let someone bewitch you.
Some people sleep at night, but not lovers.
They sit in the dark and talk to God,
who told David, Those who sleep all night every night
and claim to be connected to us, they lie.

Lovers cannot sleep
when they feel the privacy of the beloved around them.

Someone who is thirsty may sleep for a little while,
but he will dream of water, a full jar beside a creek,
or the spirit water you get from another person.

All night, listen to the conversation, Stay up.
This moment is all there is.
Death will take it away soon enough.

You will be gone,
and this earth will be left without a sweetheart,
nothing but weeds growing inside thorns.

I am through.
Read the rest of this poem in the dark tonight.
Do I have a head, and feet?

Shams, so beloved by Tabrizians, I close my lips.
I wait for you to come and open them.

Rumi

In fact there is some published medical research that suggests that sleep deprivation has an anti-depressant effect on MDD* patients.

*MDD = Major Depressive Disorder, an affliction that in some cases is very hard to cure because it involves the mind and the heart... Note that Thomas Mann in his book Magic Mountain talks about how God feels the world through human beings' capacity to feel, so how terrible that illness must be, the one that deprives its victim from feeling love that greatest and noblest of all feelings.... depression is nothing more than the illness that results from the loss of the capacity of its bearer to think creatively and hence positively... it is a Monster....

On Music

Rumi's introduction of Music in worship was a challenge to traditional Islam which bans the use of music in worship. Rumi to legalistic Islam was like Jesus to legalistic Judaism...

There is a verse in the Koran which criticizes and denigrates poets. That is where the antagonism toward art and music comes from in Islam I think. However, one must take this verse into context, where the poets of Jahiliya* back in the day of the Prophet Mohammed did not take his prophethood seriously and that is probably where these verses come from...

"Poets are followed by erring men. Behold how aimlessly they rove in every valley, preaching what they never practice". The Poets #223

Of course modern Muslims enjoy and create beautiful genres of music such as the Ra'i of Algeria (Rashid Taha for example), the music of the Amazigh of Libya (ex Tinariwen one of my favourite bands), and Umm Kulthoom of Egypt. Needless to mention the beautiful ecstatic Qawwali music of Pakistan. The Islamic Azaan itself is musical. Last but not least, some of the greatest oriental music known in the world was created in Lebanon by musicians such as Marcel Khalife, Elias Rahbani, Ziad Rahbani and Fairuz. Ziad Rahbani's father, Elias Rahbani has some oriental disco music from the seventies that is a real time machine...

I would like to note though that sometimes when I listen to bad music on the radio, superficial music, with stupid lyrics, I do feel that such music should be banned...

Music, creative music, is one of the highest forms of humans' ability to express their feelings... and when one creates a song with a new tune, a pleasure which I have had the luck to experience, it is one of the greatest forms of Joy.... When I moved back to the UK in February of 2018, because of the pain of being away from my girls, and the memory of the happy times we shared together, I composed a couple of songs for my girls which I recorded on my mobile phone. One of them has the chord sequence C – Am – Dm – G.

Gibran Khalil Gibran has a beautiful passage on silencing music. He says in his book *The Prophet*, that Muslim extremists can silence performers and loosen the strings of the lyre, but who can command the Bulbul not to sing? Music is part of nature brother, it is an expression of joy....

* Jahiliya = literally, the period of ignorance, is the epoch in Arab history which preceded the general acceptance of Islam as a religion and is viewed as a spiritually fallen period of idol worship, usury, debauchery and despicable customs like the burying alive of female babies the latter being one of the customs that Mohammed the prophet of Islam banned in the Koran.

On Outcasts

Rumi's poem "[Come, Come Whoever You Are](#)" is a mirror of Jesus's befriending of society's outcasts whom we despise and look down upon... what compassion, what love is this but Divine.... This poem is a balm for the hopeless and desperate and those that society has condemned... Jesus said to the adulteress's accusers "Whoever amongst you is without sin let him cast the first stone."

As quoted in Multimind (1986) by Robert Ornstein

Come, come, whoever you are.

Wanderer, worshipper, lover of leaving — it doesn't matter,

Ours is not a caravan of despair.

Come, even if you have broken your vow a hundred times,

Come, come again, come.

Muslims in some backward countries are too quick to label sinners and stone the adulteress... They should take heed of these words.... They should remember Jesus defending the Adulteress in the Bible by asking: "Whosoever amongst you is without sin, let them cast the first stone at her."

The parable is clear, that everyone has a chance to become enlightened. In fact, Jesus taught that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to make it into the Kingdom of Heaven. In my opinion, it is not the money which is the issue but Love of Money which is the root of all kinds of evil.

It is sad that in modern mainstream culture, wealth is portrayed as a higher goal at all cost, this is such a primitive way of thinking. Jesus taught what use is it if you gain the whole world, and lose your soul. This means that the soul, an enlightened soul, is way more precious than all the wealth in the world.

Charles Bukowski says in one of his poems, that weirdos, whores, freaks, even the insane and the cripples loved him... I think that is because he did not judge them but saw in them something unique, something original, perhaps an ugliness that reveals beauty and in this sense is beautiful in itself...

One Song, One Praise

Rumi's poem "[One Praise](#)" unifies all religions and all humanity. A reminder of the Christian teaching "No Greek or Jew...". Rumi is famous for saying that even the atheist, the kafir, praises God in his own way because the kafir in his materialism believes in the Laws of Nature that God has created hence he indirectly believes in God...

One Praise

Every war and every conflict between human beings
has happened because of some disagreement about names.

It is such an unnecessary foolishness,
because just beyond the arguing
there is a long table of companionship
set and waiting for us to sit down.

What is praised is one, so the praise is one too,
many jugs being poured into a huge basin.
All religions, all this singing, one song.

The differences are just illusion and vanity.
Sunlight looks a little different on this wall
than it does on that wall
and a lot different on this other one,
but it is still one light.

We have borrowed these clothes,
these time-and-space personalities,
from a light, and when we praise,
we are pouring them back in.

Translated by Coleman Barks

In another verse, Rumi says, I went into the Jewish synagogue, the Muslim mosque
and the Christian church and found one altar.

The world badly needs this unifying vision and teaching, especially fundamentalist
Islam. This is how fundamentalist Islam can be fought at the ideological level: by
ignoring its divisive teachings, or putting them in a historical context, and focusing
on its unifying teachings.

Only Breath

Rumi's poem "[Only Breath](#)" depicts how he goes beyond religion and nationalism which is plaguing the world today even Europe...

*Not Christian or Jew or Muslim, not Hindu
Buddhist, sufi, or zen. Not any religion*

*or cultural system. I am not from the East
or the West, not out of the ocean or up*

*from the ground, not natural or ethereal, not
composed of elements at all. I do not exist,*

*am not an entity in this world or the next,
did not descend from Adam or Eve or any*

*origin story. My place is placeless, a trace
of the traceless. Neither body or soul.*

*I belong to the beloved, have seen the two
worlds as one and that one call to and know,*

*first, last, outer, inner, only that
breath breathing human being.*

When people ask me where I am from, I say I am half Bulgarian, half Lebanese of Greek descent, I lived 8 years in the USA so I speak with an American accent, I speak 5-6 languages, I understand many cultures from around the world, I play many guitar songs in different languages, I know that people live superficially when they identify themselves with a culture or nation or religion or sexuality or profession without them seeking deeper the source of that culture, profession, religion etc and its hidden meanings which all point to the Creator...

Raise Flag, Close Mind

Rumi's poem "No Flag" which can be read on my [Rumi page](#), is resounding of the biblical story of The Good Samaritan.

It reminded me of a bumper sticker I once saw in Los Angeles in the aftermath of 9/11 with the same text as the title of this chapter...

No Flag

*I used to want buyers for my words.
Now I wish someone would buy me away from my words.*

*I've made a lot of charmingly profound images,
scenes with Abraham and his father Azar,
who was famous for icons.*

*I'm so tired of what I've been doing.
Then one image without form came,
and I quit.*

*Look for someone else to tend the shop.
I'm out of the image-making business.*

*Finally I know the freedom
of madness.*

*A random image arrives. I scream,
"Get out!" It disintegrates.*

*Only love.
Only the holder the flag fits into,
no flag.*

During my summer vacation between August 2-8, 2018 which I spent in Bulgaria, my mother was prodding me to take photos at my upcoming sister's wedding... I told her I don't have a professional camera any more (mine was destroyed in an accident in which my car the old Corsa that I got from Switzerland for 500 Euros caught fire and completely burned down with my camera inside). "What's the matter you are one of the best photographers I know, don't you like to take photos anymore?" she asked me. I told her that I had gone beyond photos just like Rumi said once he had gone beyond words and asked his listeners to take away these poems from him... It's true, I used to worship women in the period in my mid twenties late thirties when my hormones had hijacked my mind and taking photos of them was the greatest pastime of my life back then (see my photography work on www.kremesti.com/krasiva)... now I put them in perspective and still admire them immensely but I admire their Creator even more....

People often ask me where I am from. Sometimes I say I am half Lebanese half Bulgarian, to the Spanish I say "Soy de Buena pasta: poquitto Mafioso, poquitto terrorista". But I am neither. My last name is Greek and I like to think that I am

philosophical like the ancient Greeks. But I am also part American in my freedom of thinking and freedom from social repression that I grew up with in Lebanon.

President Trump recently spoke at the UN General Assembly in September 2018 and he said:

"We reject globalism and we embrace patriotism". Fantastic I said to myself, reject one illusion to embrace another. Globalism is failing it is true, as supported by the recent mutual imposition of import tariffs between China and the USA and the phenomenon of rise of Right Wing politics in Europe as a reaction to immigration from the Middle East and Africa as well as the numerous protests by Anti-Globalization activists at global summits such as the G7. However, patriotism is just another idol that is being erected to replace one that is not serving the needs of feeble witted politicians any more.

We need to raise awareness that the same way every single snowflake is unique in the sense that it has a different geometry, we as human beings are each unique and different in many ways. And it is precisely this that makes mankind so beautiful, it is precisely this diversity that makes mankind so interesting. Just like in a human body, a foot is different from the eye, each plays an important role in the functioning of the human body as a whole.

Me and a physicist friend of mine recently had a discussion about the sprawling phenomenon of DNA testing and database supported lineage sites in the USA to establish genealogy and ethnicity. I told him, we all go back to Adam and Eve. Can you trace the DNA origin of the Soul I told Markos, my friend. Haven't the sons of great kings been known to grow up into spoiled brats? And haven't common vagabonds been known to get their shit together and become successful business men? Didn't Charles Bukowski write the most beautiful poetry after tens of years of working menial jobs such as postman and meat processor?

The bottom line is that God has created us in his own image, with freedom of choice and the divine ability to be like Him in our creativity, humility and self-sacrifice. Any limitations on man achieving his highest potential are self-imposed. The deep question is how to awaken man, to prod him to achieve his highest potential and to see the beauty that is around him. This is the role of the true poet and the saint and the teacher. I recollect the Italian movie *Il Postino* about a simple postman who used to deliver the mail to Pablo Neruda in Italy. The poetry eventually rubbed off on him, and his soul metamorphosed into something beautiful just like a caterpillar metamorphoses into a butterfly inside its cocoon.

It is true that certain societies sometimes impose limitations on freedom of thought and expression... that is when it becomes the duty of mankind to work as a family to correct this injustice. It is my strongest belief that when the leaders of a country behave like dictators and heads of mafia organizations, it is the duty of the larger family that they belong to, that is the greater family of mankind, to pressure them to reform.

On Ambition and Material Possessions

Rumi tells in one of his poems that if someone steals your horse, let them have it. Horses are for getting ahead of others... This reminded me of Jesus's teaching to serve others by washing his disciples' feet and his teaching that if someone took your robe then let them have your tunic as well. There is also the teaching that whoever is first will be last and he who is last will be first.... In Another poem, Rumi likens Ambition to two cocks fighting over a heap of trash playing the children's game "King of the Hill".

Today our world, our planet is plagued by consumerism driven by the lust for egoistic immediate gratification. Environmental problems and climate change are very real, the oceans are polluted, the air we breathe is polluted.... We buy too many things that we do not need... I think it is high time to revert to a more minimalist and primitivist way of living...

People fall prey to the advertisement of many products that they don't really need. The media portray luxury in such a way that the unenlightened start to crave it and fantasize about it as the key to happiness. What is the point of the mega houses that few people live in in the USA for example? What is the point of large cars that waste power in hauling all that extra metal? Why are new cars released every year when an average quality car can run for 20-30 years?

Eckhard Tolle says something very wise in his book *The Power of Now*: he says that to end outside pollution we need to clean up the inner pollution first...

The Buddha was born a prince and he forsake his kingdom to meditate and seek the richness of the soul.

There is a beautiful Rumi poem on Imru'l Kais, King of the Arabs who abandoned the world to become a mystic...

Imra'u 'L-Qays

Excerpt from Coleman Barks's *Rumi - The Book of Love*

Imra'u 'l-Qays*, king of the Arabs,
was very handsome and a poet full of songs.

Women loved him desperately. Everyone loved him,
but there came one night an experience
that changed him completely.

he left his kingdom and his family.
he put on dervish robes and wandered
from one weather, one landscape, to another.

Love dissolved his king-self and led him to Tabuk,
where he worked for a time making bricks.

Someone told the king of Tabuk about Imra'u 'l-Qays,
and that king came to visit him at night.

"King of the Arabs, handsome Joseph of this age,
ruler of two empires, one composed of territories,
and the other of the beauty of women,

if you would consent to stay with me,
I would be honored. You abandon kingdoms,
because you want more than kingdoms."

The king of Tabuk** went on line this, praising
Imra'u 'l-Qays and talking theology and philosophy.

Imra'u 'l-Qays kept silent.
Then suddenly he leaned and whispered something
in the second king's ear, and that second
king became a wild wanderer too.

They walked out of town hand in hand,
no royal belts, no thrones.

This is what love does and continues to do.
It tastes like honey to adults and milk to children.

Love is the last thirty-pound bale.
When you load it on, the boat tips over.

So they wandered around China like birds
pecking at bits of grain. They rarely spoke
because of the dangerous seriousness
of the secret they knew.

That love-secret spoken pleasantly - or irritation -
serves a hundred thousand heads in one swing.

A love-lion grazes in the soul's pasture,
while the scimitar of this secret approaches.
It's a killing better than any living.

All that world-power wants, really,
is this weakness.

So these kings talk in low tones,
and carefully. Only God knows what they say.

They use unsayable words. Bird language.
But some people have imitated them, learned
a few bird calls, and gotten prestigious.

* Imra'u 'l-Qays: (died ca. A.D. 540) is considered the best pre-Islamic poet who wrote in Arabic. He is credited with being the first in that tradition to catch the reader's attention by referring at the beginning of a poem to a lost love.

** Tabuk: City in Saudi Arabia

PS: The last verse reminds me of so many called pseudo-writers of modern times that recycle or more accurately regurgitate the philosophy and wisdom of ancient

sages into books that are widely read and circulated by the unenlightened masses. These books are a waste of the paper that they are printed on. Gibran Khalil Gibran calls them word-jugglers in his book *Jesus the Son of Man*. They only respect other word-jugglers and they despise those enlightened ones that speak the truth.

Finally I close with a quote from Gibran Khalil Gibran's same book, ie *Jesus The Son of Man*, in which Benjamin the Scribe is speaking about Jesus:

"He looked upon Rome and upon us who are the slaves of Rome, as a father looks upon his children playing with toys and fighting among themselves for the larger toy. And He laughed from His height".

And here is the whole beautiful passage whence this quote is taken from, it deserves to be quoted in this book:

BENJAMIN THE SCRIBE

Let the Dead Bury Their Dead

It has been said that Jesus was the enemy of Rome and Judea.

But I say that Jesus was the enemy of no man and no race.

I have heard Him say, "The birds of the air and the mountain tops are not mindful of the serpents in their dark holes."

"Let the dead bury their dead. Be you yourself among the living, and soar high."

I was not one of His disciples. I was but one of the many who went after Him to gaze upon His face.

He looked upon Rome and upon us who are the slaves of Rome, as a father looks upon his children playing with toys and fighting among themselves for the larger toy. And He laughed from His height.

He was greater than State and race; He was greater than revolution.

He was single and alone, and He was an awakening.

He wept all our unshed tears and smiled all our revolts.

We knew it was in His power to be born with all who are not yet born, and to bid them see, not with their eyes but with His vision.

Jesus was the beginning of a new kingdom upon the earth, and that kingdom shall remain.

He was the son and the grandson of all the kings who buildt the kingdom of the spirit.

And only the kings of spirit have ruled our world.

Finally I would like to bring the attention of the reader to the fact that modern psychology has proven that many CEO's in the West have psychopathic tendencies (12)

Chopping off the hand of the Thief and Killing the Infidels (Unbelievers, Kuffar)

Rumi interprets the Quran's teaching of chopping the hands and the feet of heathen or thieves as symbolic of killing the desires of the "Nefs" which is our egoistic self... This I read in *Rumi Discourses - From the Tongue of Hasan Dede*

"As for the man or woman who is guilty of theft, cut off their hands to punish them for their crimes. That is the punishment enjoined by God. God is mighty and wise. But whoever repents after committing evil, and mends his ways, shall be pardoned by God, God is forgiving and merciful." The Table 5:~39

Also could it be that the so called Violent Verses in the Koran that urge the killing of Infidels (Jews and Christians) are not universal but refer to certain Christian and Jewish tribes that were wicked and lived at the time of the Prophet Mohammad? This is certainly one theory that is propounded by Louis Massignon that famous orientalist that wrote a lot about Mansur Al Hallaj. He stressed the fact that many verses in the Koran are contextual and should be interpreted in line with their historical context.

"Unbelievers are those that say: 'God is the Messiah, the son of Mary.' For the Messiah himself said: 'Children of Israel, serve God, my Lord and your Lord.' He that worships other deities besides God, God will deny him Paradise, and the Fire shall be his home. None shall help the evil-doers. Unbelievers are those that say: 'God is one of three.' There is but one God. If they do not desist from so saying, those of them that disbelieve shall be sternly punished." The Table #71-

Let us remind ourselves that the Bible also teaches that if your eye or hand causes you to sin gouge it out/cut it off... But no one goes as far as implementing this. It is symbolic.

Under the Taliban rule in Afghanistan, there were numerous documented cases of stoning of women that were accused of adultery. Let us not forget the example of Jesus who said in defence of an adulteress that was brought to him whom the crowds wanted to stone: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." John 8:7.

Here are some more extremist verses from the Quran that need to be taken in context:

"He that chooses a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him and in the world to come he will surely be among the losers" The Imrans #85

"Believers, take neither the Jews nor the Christians for your friends¹. They are friends with one another. Whoever of you seeks their friendship shall become one of their number. God does not guide the wrongdoers." The Table (5) #51.

"They denied the truth and uttered a monstrous falsehood against Mary. They declared: 'WE have put to death the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, the apostle of God.' They did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but they thought they did." Women #157-

Finally I would like to bring the reader's attention to a beautiful passage from Gibran Khalil Gibran's book, *Jesus the Son of Man*. The section attributed to the disciple Luke which is on hypocrites:

“Jesus despised and scorned the hypocrites, and His wrath was like a tempest that scourged them. His voice was thunder in their ears and He cowed them.

In their fear of Him they sought His death; and like moles in the dark earth they worked to undermine His footsteps. But He fell not into their snares.

He laughed at them, for well He knew that the spirit shall not be mocked, nor shall it be taken in the pitfall.

He held a mirror in His hand and therein He saw the sluggard and the limping and those who stagger and fall by the roadside on the way to the summit.

And He pitied them all. He would even have raised them to His stature and He would have carried their burden. Nay, He would have bid their weakness lean on His strength.

He did not utterly condemn the liar or the thief or the murderer, but He did utterly condemn the hypocrite whose face is masked and whose hand is gloved.

Often I have pondered on the heart that shelters all who come from the wasteland to its sanctuary, yet against the hypocrite is closed and sealed.

On a day as we rested with Him in the Garden of Pomegranates, I said to Him, “Master, you forgive and console the sinner and all the weak and the infirm save only the hypocrite alone.”

And He said, “You have chosen your words well when you called the sinners weak and infirm. I do forgive them their weakness of body and their infirmity of spirit. For their failings have been laid upon them by their forefathers, or by the greed of their neighbours.

“But I tolerate not the hypocrite, because he himself lays a yoke upon the guileless and the yielding.

“Weaklings, whom you call sinners, are like the featherless young that fall from the nest. The hypocrite is the vulture waiting upon a rock for the death of the prey.

“Weaklings are men lost in a desert. But the hypocrite is not lost. He knows the way yet he laughs between the sand and the wind.

“For this cause I do not receive him.”

Thus our Master spoke, and I did not understand. But I understand now.

Then the hypocrites of the land laid hands upon Him and they judged Him; and in so doing they deemed themselves justified. For they cited the law of Moses in the Sanhedrim in witness and evidence against Him.

And they who break the law at the rise of every dawn and break it again at sunset, brought about His death.”

Could it be, dear reader, that the infidels and unbelievers, the kuffar, that the Koran condemns are nothing but the same hypocrites that Jesus condemns in the Bible? I think the answer is yes, and in this way, Islam and Christianity are one and the same teaching... and I think we both agree that there are many hypocrites in today's churches and mosques that preach God and know not how to love their neighbour....

Three Travellers

Rumi's vision of Islam is inclusivist unlike main-stream and militant Islam. He views different religions as different expressions of the same universal truth - Different in words but the same in meaning. His *Three Travellers Tell Their Dreams* poem captures that spirit. Read it on my [Rumi](#) English page

Three Travellers Tell Their Dreams

Three devout men of different religions fall in together
by chance traveling. They stop

at a caravanserai* where the host brings as a gift a sweet
dessert, some taste of God's

nearness. This is how people out in the country serve
strangers. The Jew and

the Christian are full, but the Muslim has been fasting all
day. The two say, "Lets

save it for tomorrow." The one, "No. Let's save self-denial
for tomorrow!" "You want it

all for yourself!" "Divide it into three parts, and each can
do as he wants." "Ah,

but Mohammad said not to share." "That was about dividing
yourself between sensuality

and soul. You must belong to the one or the other." But finally
for some reason, he gives in,

"I'll do it your way." They refrain from tasting. They sleep,
and then wake and dress themselves

to begin morning devotions. Christian, Jew, Muslim, shaman,
Zoroastrian, stone, ground,

mountain, river, each has a secret way of being with the
mystery, unique and not to be

judged. This subject never ends! Three friends in a grand
morning mood. "Let us tell

what dreams we had last night; whoever has had the deepest
dreams, gets the halvah**."

Agreed. The Jewish man begins the wanderings of his soul.
"Moses met me on the road;

I followed him to Sinai: an opening door, light within
light. Mount Sinai and Moses and

I merged in an exploding splendour, the unity of the prophets!"
This is a true dream. Many

Jews have such. Then the Christian sighs, "Christ took me
in his arms to the fourth

heaven, a pure vast region... I cannot say..." His also
deep. The Muslim, "Muhammad came

and told me where you two had gone. 'You wretch!' he said,
'You've been left behind! You

may as well get up and eat something.'" "Nooooo!" laugh the
Christian and the Jew. "How

could I disobey such glory? Would you not do as Moses and
Jesus suggest?" "You're right,"

they say. "Yours is the truest dream, because it had immediate
effect in your waking life."

What matters is how *quickly* you do what your soul directs.

* caravanserai: an inn surrounding a court in eastern countries where caravans rest at
night

** halvah: a flaky confection of crushed sesame seeds in a base of syrup (as of honey)

Peace, Shalom, Salam

The highest form of greeting in Judaism and Islam is Shalom or Assalamu Aleikum which means Peace Be Upon You in Arabic. This is because the Middle East is lacking in peace so it's a highly valued commodity. If peace were achieved in the Middle East, say in 100 years, will the way people greet each other evolve there to say Blissfulness Be Upon You? For surely blissfulness is a state that is higher than peace don't you agree with me?

This is one of the comments that Sadhguru made when he went to visit Israel. He has a point. However I think the greeting does not mean political peace, it means the peace of the soul, the peace that surpasses all understanding that the Bible talks about....

It is noteworthy to mention that Hindu culture talks about Bliss as still a higher state, and higher still than bliss is nothingness... Ofcourse the Christian counterpart is Joy in the Holy Spirit and in Sufi Islam it is called Fana'a.

This was posted on FB by Rami Ellias Kremesti - August 16, 2015

It is sad that peace has eluded Middle Eastern countries in recent history. The old conspiracy theories that blame the West are no longer valid and nobody buys them anymore. It is time for a new vision. It is time to establish meritocracies' not ruling aristocracies as is the case in that part of the world. It is time to separate religion from state. It is time to relinquish the literal translation of the Koran and Hadeeth which teaches that camel urine is therapeutic. And what is sad is that in the latter case some highly esteemed scholars of Islam such as Dr. Zakir Naik argue that it has been proven scientifically that camel urine can cure cancer. It is sad that organizations such as Hezbollah are sworn to the destruction of Israel when they do nothing about treating the sewage that flows to the Mediterranean Sea in the part of Beirut where their supporters are concentrated, namely Southern Beirut. It is sad to brainwash young Muslims into believing that if they blow themselves up in a mall in Manchester killing all the young infidels that go there they will dine with the Prophet Mohammed and have 72 virgins that same night... It is sad to see zealous Muslims believing the Bukhari Hadeeth that women are morally, physically and emotionally defective. It is sad to switch on the TV in a Muslim country such as Algeria to watch their talk shows and see bearded sheikhs answering calls from sincere Muslims about how to conduct their business. What is more sad is that when democracy was brought to Egypt after the ouster of president Mubarak, the extremist Muslim Brotherhood came to power and their sheikhs started to spew hate on social media and a corrupt military figure such as Al Sissi had to take back control before the country plunged into chaos (something very similar happened in Algeria). It is sad to see members of the terrorist organization Hezbollah being democratically elected to parliament in Lebanon. It is sad to see a great civilization such as the Persian one degenerate into the country that is Iran today. It is sad to see that part of India which broke away into what is nowadays Pakistan degenerate into the mess that is the country today. Indians and Pakistanis are the same people embracing different religions; you draw your own conclusions dear reader... It is sad to see Palestinians embrace extremist ideology that does not even acknowledge the right of Jewish Israelis to exist. It is sad to see a war criminal such as Assad remain in power after his regime killed about half a million Syrian people and displaced millions creating the biggest refugee crisis in the modern era.

Finally I would like to close with a few words about the Nobel Peace Prize of 2018: I cant think of anyone who is worthy of this prize this year....

On Karma and Suffering

Karma is not existence's reward or punishment system as people seem to think, well in a way it is but let me explain how....

According to the Hindu tradition, Karma literally means action. We are referring to past action. From the moment you were born till this moment, the kind of family, the kind of home, the kind of friends, the things that you did and did not do, all these things are influencing you. Every thought, emotion and action comes only from past impressions that you have had within you. They decide who you are right now. The very way you think, feel and understand life is just the way you have assimilated inputs. We call this karma. Neuropsychopharmacology is even discovering that negative states of mind can lead to toxic states of brain chemistry... Could this be the scientific interpretation of Heaven and Hell or Reward and Punishment that is pre-programmed in our brains?

This reminds me of the saying Khalli Balak Min Nafsak in Egypt used to warn someone. It literally translates to empty yourself of yourself... Similar to the Jesus teaching that we must become like children if we are to be saved.... This is the breaking of the cycle of Karma... this is Enlightenment.... This is what it means to conquer the ego through Humility as the Orthodox Fathers teach....

If this is so, then this finding is a breakthrough in modern medicine and brings science and religion closer together.....

My recent research into mind altering (psychotropic) chemicals as part of my M.Res. in the UK led me to the work of Professor David Nutt from King's College London and the Beckley Foundation of Lady Amanda Feilding who discovered among other things that the centers of the brain responsible for the Ego are more active in depressed patients than in others. So could it be that hell and karma are programmed in to our brains? That is once you become arrogant and self-centered then your brain centers responsible for Ego become more active and you become more depressed and miserable and unhappy? In other words, suffering is pre-programmed in our brains as a self-checking mechanism if we get too vain and egoistic and lose the spiritual path to truth. Jesus taught that we must seek the truth and that the truth will set us free. Free from suffering obviously...

Rumi says in one of his poems that suffering is the place from which the light enters into a suffering person's body... A scientific explanation of this would be that an arrogant egoistic brain automatically creates its own depression, its own hell, which makes it helplessly repentant and brings it back on the road of seeking... prayer and fasting.... I am tempted to theorize that heaven and hell are programmed in our brains. Heaven is bliss, Ananda as the Hindus call it. There is even a bliss molecule called Anandamide did u know that? Anandamide is an endogenous cannabinoid which means that it is a molecule that our brain synthesizes itself and acts on the cannabinoid receptors that are responsible for mood, the CB2 receptors. Anandamide was isolated and identified by Bulgarian born Jewish chemist Raphael Mechoulam who emigrated to Israel in 1949 to escape the anti-semitic atmosphere in Pro-German Bulgaria. His father who was the head of a local hospital in Sofia was sent to a concentration camp unfortunately, but he survived.

There is some research that I have read in the scientific literature that fasting actually might help the brain to release endorphins...

There are also many studies that correlate stress with many lifestyle diseases such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart disease and diabetes. Could it be that the stress that we experience in modern life is because we are distancing ourselves more and more from the things in life that are simple and authentic and spiritual? Such as nature and growing our own food and working with our hands and prayer... There is a saying in Homer's *Odyssey* that stuck in mind. Homer says that two things calm a man's soul: one is a live fire and the other is animals. How many people living in the cities have experienced the healing power of an open camp fire or the simple pleasure of watching a farm animal eat? How many city people especially the younger generation go to a church or a mosque, synagogue or Hindu temple to count their blessings and thank the Creator, or to ask his help for problems that they are facing...

Here is one of the most beautiful metaphoric Rumi poems about suffering which explains how suffering is a blessing in disguise...

The Rider and the Man Who Swallowed a Snake

Once, a holy man, riding his donkey, saw a snake crawling into a sleeping man's mouth! He hurried, but he couldn't stop it in time. He hit the man several blows with his club.

The man woke terrified, and ran beneath an apple tree with many rotten apples on the ground.

"Eat!
You miserable wretch! Eat!"

"Why are you doing this to me?"

"Eat more you fool."

"I've never seen you before!
Who are you? Do you have some inner quarrel with my soul?"

The wise man kept forcing him to eat, and then he ran him.
For hours he whipped the poor man and made him run.
Finally at nightfall, full of rotten apples,
fatigued, bleeding, he fell
and vomited everything,
The good and the bad, the apples and the snake.
When he saw that ugly snake
come out of himself, he fell on his knees
before his assailant.

"Are you Gabriel? Are you God?
I bless the moment you first noticed me. I was dead
and didn't know it. You gave me new life.
Everything I've said to you was stupid!
I didn't know."

"If I had explained what I was doing,
you might have panicked and died of fear.
Muhammad said,
'If I described the enemy that lives
inside men, even the most courageous would be paralyzed. No one
would go out, or do any work. No one would pray or fast,
and all power to change would fade
from human beings,'
so I kept quiet
while I was beating you, that like David
I might shape iron, so that, impossibly,
I might put feathers back into a bird's wing.

God's silence is necessary, because of humankind's
faintheartedness. If I had told you about the snake,
you wouldn't have been able to eat, and if
you hadn't eaten, you wouldn't have vomited.

I saw your condition and drove my donkey hard
into the middle of it, saying always, under my breath,
'Lord, make it easy on him' I wasn't permitted
to tell you, and I wasn't permitted to stop
beating you!"

The healed man, still kneeling,
"I have no way to thank you for the quickness
of your wisdom and the strength of your guidance.
God will thank you."

Mathnawi II: 1878-1915, 1923-1926, 1930

There is also a beautiful Sufi saying about suffering that I would like to share. A holy
man was asked what is Sufism and his answer was:

Sufism is joy at sudden disappointment

How deep is that?

Every cloud has a silver lining right?

According to Rumi, the greatest suffering is the suffering of the heart of the Lover
separated from his beloved. I found this beautiful Rumi poem on line:

Description of Love by Rumi

A true lover is proved by the pain of his heart
No sickness is there like the sickness of the heart
The lover's ailment is different from all other ailments
Love is the astrolabe of God's mysteries

A lover may hanker after this love or that
But in the end he or she is drawn to the King of Love
However much we describe and explain love
When we fall in love we are ashamed of our words
Explanation using words makes most things clear
But love unexplained is much clearer
When the pen hastened to write
Upon reaching the subject of love it split in two
When the discourse touched upon the topic of love
The pen broke and the paper was torn
On explaining it, reason is stuck real fast, like an ass in mire
Nothing but love can explain love and lovers!
None other than the sun can feel like the sun
If you would see it displayed, turn not away from it
Shadows indeed may indicate the sun's presence
But only the sun brings life to the world
Shadows induce slumber like evening muhabet under the moon
When the sun rises, the moon disappears
In the natural world there is nothing as wondrous as the sun
But the sun of the soul sets not and has no yesterday or beginning
Though the natural sun is unique and wondrous
We can conceive of similar suns like it
But the sun of the soul, beyond the firmament
There is no likeness to Him in the natural or abstract worlds
Where is there room in conception for His essence,
So that similitude of Him would be conceivable?

And if we really think about it, all the suffering that the world experiences is nothing but the result of a lack of love.... They say that 80 to 90% of all severe mental illness has its roots in childhood trauma... Think about that for a minute...

Finally I close with a call from Jesus in Mathew 11:28:

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Rest from suffering comes only by heading the call of the soul to turn to its Creator. To turn inward...

Stop Calling Rainy Weather Bad

I sent a complaint to the BBC today to stop calling rainy weather bad weather because it is not helping really and this is not accurate it's a subjective opinion... I love rainy weather... especially storms... trees and grass love rainy weather... Flowers too... Fruit trees love rain... the whole plant kingdom loves rain... Rain is good for the lettuce which in the UK is some of the tastiest I have tasted in the world.... When I used to work in Saudi Arabia and Iraq, rain is one of the greatest blessings... August 14, 2015

Rumi talks about contrast and opposites and need in his poetry. For example he says that for a doctor to be able to practice his art he needs disease... A carpenter needs a broken chair. A baby cries when it needs milk. A tailor needs a pair of torn pants or a dress so he can practice his skills... In one of his most quoted sayings, Rumi says that the wound is the place from which light enters. And that the cure is in the pain itself.

Jesus said in the Bible that it is not the healthy that need a doctor but the sick, and he was talking about spiritual health of course.

There is a beautiful poem from Rumi about how suffering can heal you:

The Guest House

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture, still,
treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing
and invite them in.

La Ilaha Illa Allah

To be a true Muslim means to abide by the Muslim principle "La ilahaiLLa Allah" which means "There is No God but Allah". To abide by this principle means to make no idol of anything or anyone in this world including the Self... I don't think Muslims realize how difficult that is... Anger is an idol... Love of money is an idol... love of power is an idol.... love of expensive clothes is an idol... Lust is an idol... love of good food is an idol.... expensive cars are an idol... jealousy is an idol.... hate is an idol.... laziness is an idol.... partying and getting drunk like an animal is an idol... getting fake tits and lips is an idol... gossip is an idol... thinking that you are smart is an idol.... The Egyptian phrase for Be Careful is "Khalli Balak Min Nafsak" which literally translates to "Empty yourself of yourself"...

August 10, 2015

One of the more difficult teachings of Jesus that are difficult to understand is this one:

"Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." Mathew 10:37

This teaching of Jesus is a clear statement that one cannot get attached to his or her loved ones. Loving your children is one of the most beautiful feelings in the world, and I am speaking from experience as I have two beautiful daughters. But many people fall into the selfish trap of loving their family at the expense of their neighbor or the Creator. Jesus gave two commandments: The first one is Love God and the second one is Love your neighbor....

It is with a warm feeling in my heart that I remember while growing up in Lebanon the phenomenon of people saying Inshallah and Al Hamdullilah for everything they are about to undertake and good things that have happened to them. These two Arabic words mean God Willing and Thank God. And before undertaking anything, Muslims say Bismillah which means In God's Name... It is also amazing to realize that the Arabic greeting "Kaifa Al haal" translates to "How is your state" which in other words means, in what state is your soul? When Egyptians try to warn someone they say "Khalli Balak min Nafsak" which means, empty yourself of your self !

One of the greatest scenes in the Bible is Pilot asking Jesus "what is the Truth?". Jesus had declared it earlier in his statement: "I am the way and the Truth and the Life." This is the mistake many people make, by thinking that Truth is an idea or information or science. The Truth is A PERSON, GOD, who was incarnate in His Son Jesus Christ. This realization helped me answer many other deeper questions about life that I explain to my children: What is beauty I asked my girls? I teach them beauty is the quality of that which or whom is created with love. What is right and wrong? Obeying the commandments is right, disobeying them is wrong. What is human love? Human love is when you see the beauty of God's Creation and you get that soft mushy feeling in your chest and everywhere else.

Therefore the statement La Ilaha Illa Allah becomes: There is No God but God who is the ultimate Truth, who created the world and all its creatures with Love. He created us in His

own image, with an intelligent mind and a soul and Freedom of Will that are a piece of Him in us. Hence the ancient Greek teaching, Know Thyself leads to Knowing God.

Inclusiveness and Freedom

"Existence is happening out of its inclusiveness, not out of exclusiveness. Not a single micro-organism can exist exclusively on its own... We cannot exist without the trees or the grass which feeds the animals.... We cannot even exist without bacteria which are the lowliest of life forms... We cannot exist without the sun for sure.

So you being exclusive is a ridiculous idea, yet the whole world or at least the commercial forces and even some religions on the planet are constantly telling you that you are exclusive."

I got this meme from Sadhguru in August 5, 2015.

There is a saying in the Bible that different vessels are used for different purposes, some are used for containing wine and some are used for containing vile substances. God made them all and they all serve a purpose. The body is made from different organs and we have five senses that are all equally important.

The ancient Greeks looked down upon manual labor and the elites engaged in philosophy and poetry. However, an enlightened mind can enjoy any task that it finds to do. The Bible teaches whatever your hands find to do, do it with all your heart...

A multicultural society is more interesting than a mono-cultural one. I know from experience. I grew up in Lebanon during the war where there was pressure on all smart kids to study engineering or medicine. The arts were for less intelligent students. No attention was paid to students' creativity and how to make the world a better place or heal the wounds of civil war. The end goal was prestige and a fat salary. I was revolted by this mentality from a very young age.

When I moved to the USA in 1996, and after 8 years living there, I started to appreciate American freedom in the sense that kids are encouraged to pursue their creative dreams... I grew up in the civil war plagued environment of Lebanon between 1975 and 1990 in which all my colleagues in uni wanted to be doctors or engineers because that is what brought a family prestige and earned good money. I was stifled by that atmosphere and rebelled against it and decided on studying chemistry for the sake of chemistry. Twenty years later, I have learned so many interesting things in this field and have worked in such interesting projects, that I consider myself way ahead of all my colleagues at AUB where we studied together.

Finally, I would like to state that true freedom comes from spiritual enlightenment. Jesus taught us to seek the Truth and then the Truth will set us free. According to St. Siluan of Athos, once you taste the sweetness of that Truth, everything else in life pales in comparison, and the greatest suffering of the heart is separation from that sweetness of union.... Rumi likens this to the reed that is separated from its lover the river... hence all the sweet nostalgic music.... And to get a feel for this kind of music I refer the reader to listen to the duduk music of master musician Levon Minassian.

I quote a beautiful line from Gibran Khalil Gibran's book Jesus the Son of Man:

“Today I am with you. Tomorrow I go westward; but before I go, I say unto you that your neighbour is your unknown self, made visible. Seek him in love that you may know yourself, for only in that knowledge shall you become my brothers.”

Some Random Musings

Either Islam is a useless religion because it has failed to turn Arabs into decent people or Islam is great but the Arabs are hopeless ignoramuses... I posted this meme on FB on July 19, 2015.

I have struggled with the fact that the Arabs were once a mighty empire and I have wondered what are the factors that contributed to the demise of their nation. Arabs themselves of course point the finger to the colonial powers but I think that is a myth. Arabs in the 21st century have the freedom to self-rule but look at the state in which their countries have descended... Case in point: Syria and Lebanon.

One theory propounded by the African American professor of Physics Neil DeGrasse Tyson is that Al-Ghazali banned mathematics and scientific thinking in favor of theology. I do not agree with this theory either. Al-Ghazali did not ban rationalist thinking although he declared divine inspiration as a superior way to real gnosis compared to rational knowledge. Also at the time there was a disagreement between the Islamic view of the world as being created and the Platonic view which views the world as eternal. For this reason, Omar Al Khayyam, even though he was a brilliant mathematician and a poet of his time, was not liked by many of the traditional Islamic thinkers of the same era because of his hedonistic poetry and disbelief in the afterlife.

Ikhwan Al Safa in Iraq were an esoteric group of spiritual seekers that translated many works of Greek philosophy and science into Arabic and they were a brotherhood that was bound by the ties of belief in the principles of Islam. This is proof that Islam is not a hindrance to the development of science and scientific thinking.

Another source of insight into this question comes from the German poet and philosopher Friedrich Schiller. In his book *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, Schiller propounds the fact that man is both body and soul, mind and feeling. The savage is the man who lets his feelings rule over his mind and his principles and the barbarian on the other hand lets his mind rule over his feelings and the urges of his nature. Could this be the answer to the phenomenon that we mentioned earlier, namely the demise of the Arab nation? It is a fact that Arabs are highly emotional people and not renowned for abstract thinking. Islam itself, in its description of paradise (soft couches, gardens of delight, fruit and drink) and the reward for martyrs of Islam (namely 72 virgins) reinforces the theory that the Arab and Muslim mind understands better and identifies with the sensual pleasure principle.

The Nothing vs. the Word

It hit me early this morning... Allah is spelled Al-Lah in Arabic which literally translates to The-No (in other words Nothingness, Darkness). So this reminded me of the Hindu God Shiva, whose name means "That which is not". Christianity talks about God and The Word (a vibration, Energy) or the Light (Jesus). Again Hindu theology talks about Shakti or Primordial Energy. Shakti embodies the active feminine energy of Shiva. Could we be talking about complementary concepts here? The Ying and the Yang? The male and the female... Matter and Dark Energy?

Posted on FB by Rami Elias Kremesti July 13, 2015

Deeper analysis of the nature of God though led me to the first verses of Genesis: In the Beginning, God created the Heaven and the Earth which means that God transcends time, matter and space. And before creation God existed together with the Nothingness... and His Son actually according to the Trinitarian Orthodox theory...

The first verse of the Gospel of John says:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

In other words, the Logos is God.

Later on in verse 14, the Apostle John writes:

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

These verses lead me to a simple explanation of the Trinity, as three aspects of God: the Father being the maker of heaven and earth (the universe) and the son the giver of life who breathes life into inanimate mud from which Adam was made and the Holy Spirit, which is the source of all spirits that animate all living creatures.

The Koran mentions the Holy Spirit in a couple of verses:

"We gave Jesus son of Mary veritable signs and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit"
The Cow #86

"The Holy Spirit brought it down from your Lord in truth to reassure the faithful, *and to give guidance and good news to those that submit*" *The Bee #101*

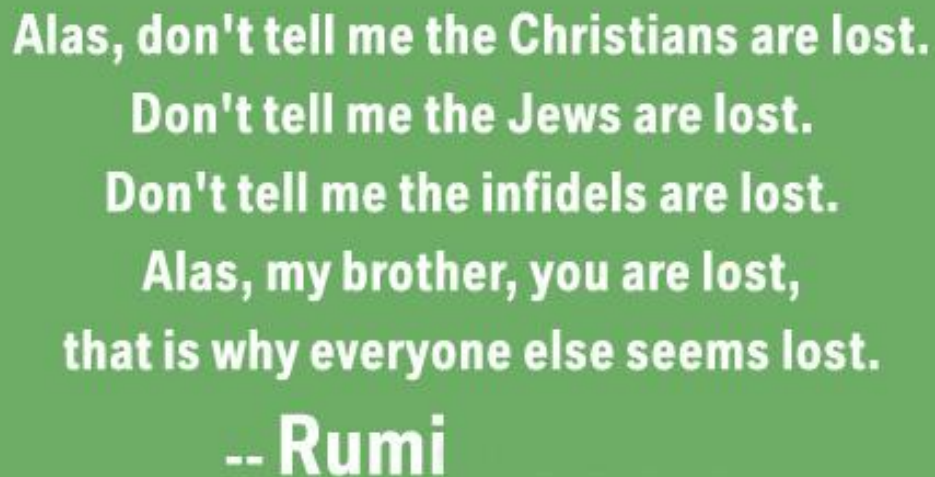
Of course I am able to extrapolate further and talk about thousands of other aspects of God such as The Destroyer whom the Hindus worship in the person of the goddess Kali, The Jealous one, this being one of the 99 names of Allah in Islam and Al-Musawwir which is also one of the 99 names of Allah in Islam and it means the fashioner of forms... This I say with the hope of reconciling all religions and to bring forth the idea propounded by Rumi that most misunderstandings are disagreements over words... and words are inaccurate tools to describe that which is indescribable... For God is outside time and space and matter...

Say No to Hate

Islam is a very simple yet profound philosophy: Nothing matters but Allah the Creator... but once a Muslim espouses this belief, he/she must not harbor hate for the non-believers or enact violent Jihad against them because hate and violent action are an idol in themselves...

Differences in the interpretation of our religious views of the world must be deferred to the almighty creator.

FB September 24 at 10:11am



**Alas, don't tell me the Christians are lost.
Don't tell me the Jews are lost.
Don't tell me the infidels are lost.
Alas, my brother, you are lost,
that is why everyone else seems lost.
-- Rumi**

When a tender feeling develops in your heart towards those unfortunate creatures that are clearly lost in life, that are rudderless, that are suffering, that are delusional, instead of a feeling of arrogance, a feeling or thought of I am better than them, which is the original sin of Satan, that is what it means to love your enemy... and believe me it is possible....

On September 25, 2018 I gave a local from High Wycombe who is of Pakistani origin a ride in my car. He probably realized that I was Middle Eastern so he requested a ride to the town's center and I took him. I told him I was from Lebanon and he commented that Israel was a serious problem for Lebanon. I told him "brother, the Israelis are smart people. They want to live in peace. Seven armies attacked them in the 1967 war and they defeated them. They have taken the land God gave them by force the war is over. Let them live in peace." The guy whose name was Shazad said, "You are right. Even Pakistan sent airplanes to bomb them in 1967."

It is my dream that Lebanon signs a peace treaty in my lifetime with Israel so I can visit Jerusalem crossing the southern Lebanese border. I hope I can convince Hezbollah to relinquish their militant policies towards Israel.

God is Not happy with Modern Day Muslims

I wonder if it ever occurs to the Muslims of the Middle East that Allah is not too happy with them? and the reasons behind that.... I mean look at the state of the Middle East and all Arab and Muslim countries for that matter... Isn't it high time for Muslims to modernize? Isn't it high time for tyranny in Middle Eastern countries to end? I posted this meme on FB in September 12, 2017 at 12:30pm.

Growing up in the Middle East I realized that there is a Master-Slave mentality there which means you are either a master or a slave. When I worked in Saudi Arabia I was appalled by the disrespect that locals treated Asian engineers such as Hindus and Philipinos with. I was Lebanese I was treated with respect. The Lebanese are smart Arabs, Hindus and Philipinos are second class citizens. If you were an American or a European, that's a totally different matter as well.

One of the greatest sociological dilemmas that has confounded me is how the Arab/Muslim empire devolved from its heyday up until the Crusades into what it is today, a collection of fragmented countries ruled by dictators. I have enquired after many Arabs and some of them blame the backwardness on Islam but I do not think that is true. Islam should make people spiritual, but in reality that is not the case. Arabs are some of the most materialistic people I have ever met. Spirituality should lead to beautiful poetry and saintly leaders, however the Islamic world is producing some of the worst poetry and the most backward spiritual leaders in the world let alone some of the most vicious and criminal dictators. Some blame colonialism but that is nothing but the reaction of weak minds.

Growing up in Lebanon I was exposed to my share of conspiracy theories, always blaming the troubles of the Arabs on Western evil and racist plots. But in the end, the Arabs were slaughtering each other and Muslim countries have produced some of the most cruel and mindless terrorists of all time.

In science, things don't fare any better. The statistics on Nobel Prizes won by Arabs and Muslims are pathetic compared to their counterparts the Jews whom they so despise and hate.

Last but not least, could it be genetics? I spoke with a Muslim Lebanese professor of Forensics in the UK and she told me that Arabs are genetically retarded because they intermarry within the family... and I actually once met a German physician in Lyon, France and she told me she has many Qatari patients that try to treat their developmentally retarded children, but she fails to help because it's genetic... Could it be that when a society closes itself on itself, then the resulting intermarriage of closely related genes leads to the stupefaction of the general masses? A warning to all Brexiteers...

Needless to mention that the West has strayed from the path of Christian faith and has fallen into the trap of materialism and arrogance which is no lesser sin. Many Western media that I have come across in the USA and the UK for example are purely sensationalist and do not tell a useful story or teach an important lesson. Even the so called natural documentaries brain wash people with their theory of evolution and they forget to mention that perhaps all this including evolution is intelligently designed... The people hunger though for the truth, the people hunger for something real... I sense it... In the early days of Christianity, the Christian religion had power because the faith was transmitted through spiritual power not through rote repetition of mantras that have lost their inner meaning... The same is true for modern day Christianity and Islam. Early Christians were Gnostics, the knew God they did not need to believe in Him as Carl G Jung puts it.

The Ten Commandments

You shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make idols.

You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Honor your father and your mother.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

You shall not covet.

Jesus summed up the Ten Commandments into two: Love God and Love Thy Neighbour. It dawned on me one day, that one must live one's life in love with everything and everybody otherwise he is in sin. What are the Seven Deadly sins? They are simply a lack of love...

Lust is a sin because in lust one desires to gratify their sexual desire without loving the other person...

Gluttony is a sin because one desires to satisfy one's hunger and take pleasure in eating food without measure, hence forgetting about those that hunger...

Greed is a sin because a greedy person sets up an idol in his life in the place of God. He or she want to possess something that they are attached to...

Sloth is a sin because by being lazy you do not make an effort to feed yourself and hence you become a burden to others, there is no love in that...

Wrath is a sin because wrath is nothing but a negative feeling towards someone or something or even God for not being able to possess something that we are attached to... hence Wrath is a consequence of making an idol of someone or something in one's life...

Envy is a sin because an envious person desires something that someone else has, hence they have made an idol out of that thing... and they are not happy for that other person for the blessing that they have...

Pride is a sin because in it one sets him or herself as more important than God, not realizing that all that we have, our bodies, our souls, our mind and our intellect are God given.

Modern media brainwashes the general masses into believing that happiness is to own various things: big fancy cars, clothes, big houses, bling bling jewels... Modern media glorifies revenge and lust and military power and pleasure... and the result is that the poor half of the world are envious of the rich half of the world...

It is sad how degenerate the mass media have become after two thousand years since the revelation of the message that, what's the point of owning the whole world, if you lose your soul? Meaning that inner wealth is true wealth... Some media programs just glorify stupidity and some are just creating crass shocking footage of all kinds.... I was having a sincere chat recently with a friend of mine from the USA, of Greek descent, a theoretical physicist. I was complaining to him how hard it is to meet real authentic, intelligent and creative people these days. Everyone is motivated by money. So many people have jerk off jobs sustained by a jerk off economy. Then it hit me, all the unemployed or pseudo-employed people should go work in farms which are always short-handed. It is hard work but essential for providing a basic necessity: food.

On another commandment: Thou Shalt Not Lie or Bear False Witness as it is written. How many lies do we live in our fake societies? Listen to this story: I was recently (Around September 11, 2018) at an anti-counterfeiting conference in London. So many "smart" people were delivering passionate speeches about how to fight counterfeit medicine which is killing people around the world... Pharma representatives were networking with technology providers to learn how to fight counterfeiters... The stated reason is to save lives, but really, no one cares about the lives that are lost in Africa and the Middle East, not even their own leaders care, because their leaders are probably cashing in on the profits made from counterfeiting. Big pharma hurts because counterfeiting diverts profits from their own coffers. Only one guy from a third world country delivered a speech at this conference, a gentleman from Kurdistan. He made it clear to everyone that fighting counterfeiting is useless in third world countries because everyone is corrupted: the border customs agency officers who are bribed when they let the counterfeits in, the owner of the distribution warehouse who buys counterfeits and has political cover, the minister of health who protects the hospitals where counterfeits kill people, the owners of unlicensed pharmacies who have political connections, etc etc. I have seen fat fucks of the bureaucratic type that work for WHO show horror films about children dying in Africa from counterfeits without the slightest hint of emotional reaction, pretending to be fighting counterfeits... justifying their high paid jobs....

Let us cut the bullshit about climate change too... everyone wants to fight climate change but the fat rich fucks in the world want to live in large houses that consume lots of Kilowatts of energy to keep them cool in the summer or warm in the winter.... or another kind of airheads want to drive useless gas guzzling big SUV's around the city where they are least needed. Or they want to go on distant vacations to exotic places and burn lots of fuel to get there where they generate tons of trash that ends up poisoning the environment where they came to relax and be served by the poor under paid locals that work for large hotels owned by the corrupt greedy politicians that rule over them and keep their ill-gained profits in offshore bank accounts in the West...

Soft Couches and Dark Eyed Virgins

To Muslims, and strictly according to the Koran (Soura 37 #42 see below), Paradise is a place where you sit around on soft couches, drinking beer and hanging out with dark eyed virgins (which is not a bad concept - if you were still a male teenager). When I tell this to some of my Western friends, they laugh... Religion is the Ultimate Hypnotizer...

FB 31-10-2015

"But the true servants of God shall be well provided for, feasting on fruit, and honoured in the gardens of delight. Reclining face to face upon soft couches, they shall be served with a goblet filled at a gushing fountain, white, and delicious to those who drink it. It will neither dull their senses nor befuddle them. They shall sit with bashful, dark-eyed virgins, as chaste as the sheltered eggs of ostriches." The Ranks (37) #42

This is another proof that things must not be taken literally in the Koran... All these aspects of Paradise are clearly metaphorical....

On Denial of the Trinity, the Crucifixion and the Son of God

It appears that the Koran denies the crucifixion of Jesus.

"They denied the truth and uttered a monstrous falsehood against Mary. They declared: 'We have put to death the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, the apostle of God.' They did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but they thought they did." Women #157

On the face of it, this verse appears to be denying the Crucifixion of Jesus. However I think the deeper meaning is that the Jewish leaders that crucified Jesus failed to kill him because he was resurrected on the third day. There is a beautiful quote from Gibran Khalil Gibran's book *Jesus the Son of Man* attributed to Zacchaeus:

"Neither the Romans slew Him, nor the [Jewish] priests. The Whole world stood to honour Him upon that hill [Golgotha]".

Could it be that we, human beings, are too fixated on the phenomenon of death as the end of a living entity when it is only a transformation of its/his/her physical make up?

Could it be that each and every one of us is resurrected after our physical death when our bodies are transformed into earth and grass and roots and fruits and worms and birds and even animals and birds that eat those worms and fruits of the earth?

The Koran is monotheistic and has a problem with the concept that God has a son.

"Creator of the heavens and the earth. How should he have a son when He never had a consort?" Cattle - #100

However if we look at Bayazid Bestami's saying:

"I came out of Bayazidness and I found that Lover, Beloved and Love are one". In the world of unity, everything is one there is no distinction between God and his creation...

Rumi uses the image of the branches of a tree that all connect to the same root, or the waves of the ocean that are all connected to the ocean and part of it and the essence of it.

Why is it hard for Muslims to accept the concept that Jesus is the perfect man, the *Ecce Homo* that each one of us must strive to emulate? The Form of man that was created before the physical creation of man in the Platonic sense of the word? If you think of the Son of Man in this sense, then it is easy to understand that Jesus is not the physical son of God as Muslims struggle to accept.

Finally, I would like to point out that the Koran mentions the Holy Spirit (Al Rooh Al Kudus), so I think the difference between Islam and Christianity on the Trinity is simply semantic.

In the end, all religions differ about are words... and for the Lover of God, the two become one, the opposites unite.

Finally I close with a passage from Gibran Khalil Gibran's beautiful book, *Jesus the Son of Man* in which Zacchaeus is quoted expressing his views on Jesus's voluntary death upon the cross:

ZACCHAEUS

On the Fate of Jesus

You believe in what you hear said. Believe in the unsaid, for the silence of men is nearer the truth than their words.

You ask if Jesus could have escaped His shameful death and saved His followers from persecution.

I answer, He could indeed have escaped had He chosen, but He did not seek safety nor was He mindful of protecting His flock from wolves of the night.

He knew His fate and the morrow of His constant lovers. He foretold and prophesied what should befall every one of us. He sought not His death; but He accepted death as a husband-man shrouding his corn with earth, accepts the winter, and then awaits the spring and harvest; and as a builder lays the largest stone in the foundation.

We were men of Galilee and from the slopes of Lebanon. Our Master could have led us back to our country, to live with His youth in our gardens until old age should come and whisper us back into the years.

Was anything barring His path back to the temples of our villages where others were reading the prophets and then disclosing their hearts?

Could He not have said, "Now I go east with the west wind," and so saying dismiss us with a smile upon His lips?

Aye, He could have said, "Go back to your kin. The world is not ready for me. I shall return a thousand years hence. Teach your children to await my return."

He could have done this had He so chosen.

But He knew that to build the temple invisible He must needs lay Himself the corner-stone, and lay us around as little pebbles cemented close to Himself.

He knew that the sap of His tree must rise from its roots, and He poured His blood upon its roots; and to Him it was not sacrifice but rather gain.

Death is the revealer. The death of Jesus revealed His life.

Had He escaped you and His enemies, you would have been the conquerors of the world.

Therefore He did not escape.

Only He who desires all shall give all.

Aye, Jesus could have escaped His enemies and lived to old age. But He knew the passing of the seasons, and He would sing His song.

What man facing the armed world would not be conquered for the moment that he might overcome the ages?

And now you ask who, in very truth, slew Jesus, the Romans or the priests of Jerusalem?

Neither the Romans slew Him, nor the priests. The whole world stood to honour Him upon that hill.

We Christians believe that Jesus conquered the physicality of death through his resurrection, but for my Muslim brothers who also believe in the concept of life after martyrdom, Jesus was made stronger and greater and He conquered His enemies through his death.

On Love

They say depression is modern day's epidemic. People are popping anti-depressants like candy. Why are people so sad then especially in the West where there is no war or poverty? They have access to information, they are connected on face book and other social media, but there is no sense of neighbourhood and many families are broken. People have become strangers to each other... In England where I am currently living, many people have a problem with psychotropic illegal drugs and alcohol. I read a very interesting scientific paper part of my MRes research that opened my mind: it was about the motivation for people to drink alcohol and take empathogenic drugs, drugs that make them feel closer to other people. They just want to feel more sociable, more connected, less afraid.... They want to love and be loved in other words !!!! Scientists and judgemental people do not understand that. Read the Rumi poem below, and you will realize that love is the answer and the proof and the ultimate goal.

Love Is Its Own Proof

How long will you keep on crying,
“Where’s my remedy?
Where’s my cure?”
Whoever it is that’s making you search for a remedy,
go look for him.

How long will you stay mired in sadness, complaining,
“Sorrow has taken my soul away”?
What is the soul?
Why don’t you try to find it?

Did you smell a loaf of bread?
Go toward that smell.
That smell will tell you everything
you need to know about bread.

If you fall in love,
your love is your proof
and that’s enough.
If you’re not in love,
what good is proof?



In another poem Rumi says that “Love comes with a knife not some shy question.” This means that seekers who seek the ultimate are intense and have to make great sacrifices.

If there are many distractions in your life, too much stuff, you have to cut them out of your life...

Last but not least I want to talk about the subject from which the title of this book is derived, loving one's enemy and turning the other cheek. I think the Rumi poem below captures the spirit of Rumi which is in agreement with that of Jesus...

What Do You Think Will Happen

If you pass your night
and merge it with dawn
for the sake of heart
what do you think will happen

if the entire world
is covered with the blossoms
you have laboured to plant
what do you think will happen

if the elixir of life
that has been hidden in the dark
fills the desert and towns
what do you think will happen

if because of
your generosity and love
a few humans find their lives
what do you think will happen

if you pour an entire jar
filled with joyous wine
on the head of those already drunk
what do you think will happen

go my friend bestow your love
even on your enemies
if you touch their hearts
what do you think will happen

~Rumi

There is a another beautiful Rumi poem that I found that tries to describe Love:

Description of Love

A true lover is proved such by his pain of heart;
No sickness is there like sickness of heart.
The lover's ailment is different from all ailments;
Love is the astrolabe of God's mysteries.
A lover may hanker after this love or that love,
But at the end he is drawn to the KING of love.
However much we describe and explain love,
When we fall in love we are ashamed of our words.
Explanation by the tongue makes most things clear,
But love unexplained is clearer.
When pen hastened to write,
On reaching the subject of love it split in twain.
When the discourse touched on the matter of love,
Pen was broken and paper torn.
In explaining it, Reason is stuck immediately, as an ass in mire;
Naught but Love itself can explain love and lovers!
None but the sun can represent the sun,
If you would see it displayed, turn not away from it.
Shadows, indeed, may indicate the sun's presence,
But only the sun displays the light of life.
Shadows induce slumber, like evening talks,
But when the sun arises the "moon is split asunder."
In the world there is naught so wondrous as the sun,
But the Sun of the soul sets not and has no yesterday.
Though the material sun is unique and single,
We can conceive similar suns like to it.
But the Sun of the soul, beyond this firmament,
No like thereof is seen in concrete or abstract.
Where is there room in conception for His essence,
So that similitudes of HIM should be conceivable?

I cannot close this chapter without reference to the way Jesus loved Mary Magdalene whom they say He cast out seven demons out of. The quote is from Gibran Khalil Gibran's book *Jesus The Son of Man* from the section MARY MAGDALENE: On Meeting Jesus for the First Time.

"Then He looked at me, and the noontide of His eyes was upon me, and He said, "You have many lovers, and yet I alone love you. Other men love themselves in your nearness. I love you in yourself. Other men see a beauty in you that shall fade away sooner than their own years. But I see in you a beauty that shall not fade away, and in the autumn of your days that beauty shall not be afraid to gaze at itself in the mirror, and it shall not be offended. I alone love the unseen in you."

This is the same woman that was brought to Jesus later to pass judgement on her after being accused of the sin of adultery and He pronounced to her accusers: "Whoever amongst you is without sin, let him cast the first stone". Before that Jesus is pictured in the Bible as writing in the sand, and

Gibran Khalil Gibran attributes to Andrew in his book Jesus the Son of Man that what Jesus was writing was:

“He wrote the name of every man, and beside the name He wrote the sin that every man had committed.”

This is powerful stuff dear reader....

Jesus summed up the Law and the Prophets, as He referred to the Torah and the New Testament parts of the Bible, with the two commandments: Love God and Love Your Neighbour. All the problems of the world stem from a lack of Love. Couples marry before they have perfected themselves hence their love is not perfect so they end up in divorce proceedings. Wars break out, massacres are committed because of hate and arrogance which are symptoms of a lack of love. People steal and cheat because they are not perfect in love. Corruption destroys countries because their leaders lack love for their subjects whom they are supposed to serve. Murder and rape are outcomes of a lack of love. Cain murdered his brother Abel because of jealousy which is a form of lack of love and inner perfection. And where does love come from? It comes from God because God is Love. And when Nietzsche declared that God is Dead he actually declared that Humanity is dying....

On Reason vs. Ecstasy

Eckhart Tolle has a very interesting video on how to stop persistent thoughts. People in the West seem to have become the victims of their own success brought on by the age of reason. People start to think too much and they go in loops, they keep treading in the same place as the saying goes in Bulgaria. They don't get anywhere... To counter this, many people resort to meditation... but it doesn't work because meditation is a contemplation, and if you don't believe in a soul and the creator of that soul you will get nowhere...

Modern Darwinists think that they have killed God with their theory of evolution. I think it is just a theory and it shouldn't necessarily preclude a Creator. I still believe in intelligent design and a Creator. You can't convince me that the marijuana plant evolved THC as a chemical defence against animals that want to eat it. You can't convince me that tiny mosquitoes evolved their complex infra red radars through natural selection... You can't convince me that bees and ants with their tiny brains evolved their built in social intelligence. You can't convince me that small mammals have instincts that is how they find their mother's teat... this is built in intelligence brother! And intelligence is a form of memory. And how can a baby remember if it has just been born???

We must remember that when religion had the upper hand in society in the Dark Ages in Europe, it tried to fetter science. Now science is trying to do the same to religion, and we must not go to either extreme. Each of these two cousins, has a role to play in society. And in fact I have hinted earlier that there might be a scientific explanation for heaven and hell in the chemistry of the brain.

The simplest living plants have achieved what modern chemical engineering has not: fix CO2 gas selectively out of thin air, using sunlight, water and chlorophyll to produce biomass. Every time I think about that, I am in awe of the smallest blade of grass and the most majestic oak trees that I see in the UK.

Gibran Khalil Gibran, the famous poet of Lebanese origin, says in his book *The Prophet*: Seek not God through reason, but look about you and you shall see Him playing with your children, you shall see Him smiling in flowers then waving His hands in the trees.

Here is a Rumi poem on giving up reason and becoming a mystic.

Why Are You So Reasonable?

You are our soul.
You have the face of an angel.
You have given up all thoughts.

The one who gets lost in thought
is looking for a cure for his illness,
but thoughts themselves are the cause of his illness.

Reflection causes confusion.
Don't be a man of thought.
Stay pure and clean.
Become a man of joy and ecstasy instead.

Reason is a monster on this road.
O my soul,
get crazy, and go insane.
Why are you so reasonable?

The silkworm has many thoughts
and wants to parade his knowledge.
He does so by creating a cocoon
and kills himself in his confused ideas.

Be careful. Don't talk too much.
Stay silent.
You are not alone,
even so, try to stay silent.

I have met many scientists throughout my career as a chemist, and I can tell you that many of them have petty, miserable souls. Take for example Newton and Hook: they detested each other back in the day and quarrelled like children. A lot of the science that is being produced today is pseudo-science that serves no real purpose. And one obvious fact is that at the end of every research paper, the scientists admit that more research needs to be done because they don't know the whole truth...

Not just scientists, but psychologists as well have failed to deeply understand the human psyche. As part of my current MRes research into psychoactive substances, I came across an interesting quote from a researcher at Imperial College who works on psychoactive substances for treatment of mental illness as well as for research into the mind and consciousness:

"Psychoanalytic theory dominated psychiatry in the 1950s but after influential critiques (Eysenck, 1973), the cognitive revolution (Neisser, 1967) and significant pharmacological developments in

psychiatry (Ban, 2001a,b; Fink, 2010), its influence significantly waned. ... despite over a century since its inception, psychoanalysis has failed to establish itself as a science of the mind. " Carhart Harris et al, Frontiers of Human Neuroscience, Feb. 2014

Therefore scientists are admitting that psychoanalysis has failed. Even the post-psychoanalytic theory of Cognition in my opinion is another crutch of science that tries to explain the rationally unexplainable... Look at one of the fundamental notions of the Cognitive Mind:

"The mind cannot be a blank slate because blank slates don't do anything." *The Blank Slate* by Pinker, Steven (2003). Penguin. [ISBN 0-14-200334-4](#). But what is the whole point of meditation I ask? Isn't it to silence the mind so that consciousness explodes?

Friedrich Schiller in his seminal book *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, defines beauty and aesthetics as the harmony of reason and feeling. The man whose reason controls his passions is a barbarian he asserts. And the man whose feelings take over his rational thinking is a savage. In the balanced, cultured man, both aspects of his soul are in harmony. Ofcourse Rumi calls us to abandon reason all together and become Madmen...

Jews say that the beard is the connection between the mind and the heart I told some friends attending my sister's wedding in September 2018.

Rumi on Hashish and Wine

God has given us a dark wine so potent that,
drinking it, we leave the two worlds.

God has put into the form of hashish a power
to deliver the taster from self-consciousness.

God has made sleep so
that it erases every thought.

God made Majnun love Layla so much that
just her dog would cause confusion in him.

There are thousands of wines
that can take over our minds.

Don't think all ecstasies
are the same!

Jesus was lost in his love for God.
His donkey was drunk with barley.

Drink from the presence of saints,
not from those other jars.

Every object, every being,
is a jar full of delight.

Be a connoisseur,
and taste with caution.

Any wine will get you high.
Judge like a king, and choose the purest,

the ones unadulterated with fear,
or some urgency about "what's needed."

Drink the wine that moves you
as a camel moves when it's been untied,

and is just ambling about.

Mathnawi IV, 2683-96

The Essential Rumi, by Coleman Barks

I strongly believe that psychedelic substances are a two edged sword because people abuse them before they are spiritually mature, and that is why they fall into the trap of addiction and eventually destroy their lives. Under the right conditions and for the prepared person, psychedelics can open the gates of perception and consciousness.

On The Stupidity of Modern Day Tourism

Part of the modern day spiritual epidemic is the phenomenon of massive tourism with the goal of going to distance places and seeing unique architecture, tasting exquisite cuisine and seeing beautiful natural places. There is nothing wrong with that but the problem is that the tourists are not getting savvier or smarter and they are generating millions of tons of GHGs and mountains of trash in the various "paradises on earth"... The tourists are looking for instant personal gratification again, gratification of the senses...

Below is a poem from Rumi that deals a blow to the ethos of travel for the purpose of sensual gratification.

"

The mystery does not get clearer by repeating the question,
nor is it bought with going to amazing places.

Until you have kept your eyes
and your wanting still for fifty years,
you do not begin to cross over from confusion

"

from *The Big Red Book* by Coleman Barks

I have nothing against experiencing different cultures, God knows that this is partly how I became open minded myself. But concomitant with my travels was a voracious reading of many, many books. And not just any books, I sought out the books written by the giants of mankind like Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables*. These days the books people read are rubbish self help books and love your fat body kind of books. The news and entertainment media are superficial and they glorify the superficial. There are a thousand systems out there for losing weight. And there are a thousand programs on different kinds of recipes for food. Modern day media have made porn out of the simplest act of feeding ourselves. Thousands of articles are written on how to please a man or a woman, or the secret of a happy marriage when all you need is love... Information porn is what I call it... and there are some modern day philosophers such as Sadhguru that predict that suicide rates among the youth are going to go up because of it... I will not comment on the porn industry either... it's disgusting...

Here is a poem of Rumi that captures the essence of real tourism:

Seek God in self-abasement and in self-extinction,
for nothing but forms is produced by thinking.
And if you derive no comfort except from form,
then the form that comes to birth within you involuntarily is best.
Suppose it is the form of a city to which you are going:

you are drawn there by a formless feeling of pleasure, O dependant one;
therefore you are really going to that which has no location,
for pleasure is something different from time and space.
Suppose it is the form of a friend to whom you would go:
you are going for the sake of enjoying his company;
therefore in reality you go to the formless world,
though you are unaware of that being the object of your journey.
In truth, then, God is worshipped by all,
since all wayfaring
is for the sake of the pleasure of which He is the source.

Mathnawi Book VI, v. 3749-3755

From *Jewels of Remembrance - Rumi* by Camille and Kabir Helminski

There is another fallacy that modern day tourists don't realize, when they seek out all kinds of food experiences as part of their mass tourism:

To experience the magic of food, one must experience the magic of how food *grows*... that is how vegetables and fruits grow and how cheese is made from milk, the beauty of cows, sheep, lambs and calves... and the horror of slaughtering a lamb or a chicken... Indeed alremember a quote about food as being the only art form in which you use all your five senses to experience... In fact, not just your five senses, but your soul too feels happy when you eat....

God Created Man in His Own Image

I have always wondered what does that verse from the Bible mean... Surely God does not have a body like we do... although I have read some weird things in a book about the Kabala about the Beard of God...

So if God does not have a body, then our likeness to Him must be in intangible attributes such as intelligence, soul, consciousness and intellect... and most importantly Love, for the Bible teaches that God is Love... and one of the 99 names of Allah in Islam is Al-Wadood which means loving.

There is a Rumi poem in which he goes searching for God but he does not find Him in the various temples of the day... Rumi finally finds God in the heart of the Lover...

Below is a poem that captures Rumi's quest for God...

There You Are

You are inside every kindness.
When a sick person feels better, you are that,
and the onset of disease too.

You are sudden, terrible screaming.

Some problems require we go for help.
When we knock on a stranger's door, you sent us.
Nobody answers. It's you.

When work feels necessary,
you are the way workers move in rhythm.

You are what is, the field, the players,
the ball, those watching.

Someone claims to have evidence that you do not exist.
You are the one who brings the evidence in,
and the evidence itself.

You are inside the soul's great fear,
every natural pleasure, every vicious cruelty.

You are in every difference and irritation.
Someone loves something. Someone else hates the same.
There you are.

Whatever eyes see, what anyone wants or not,
political power, injustice, material possessions,
those are your script, the handwriting we study.

Body, soul, shadow.
Whether reckless or careful, you are what we do.

It is absurd to ask your pardon.
You are inside repentance and sin.

The wonder of various jewels: agate, emerald.
How we are during a day, then at night,
you are those moods and qualities.

The pure compassion we feel for each other.

Every encampment has a tent where the leader is
and also the wide truth of your imperial tent overall.

from *The Big Red Book* by Coleman Barks

Once when I was in London, it hit me as an epiphany: God created man with freedom of will and also the responsibility to go with that. Man chooses freely his thoughts and actions. When man procreates for example, he is a partaker in the act of creation...

This is an epiphany that I had on 22.8.2018 after smoking a nibble of MJ.... God the Father is the source of Intellect and Intelligent Design and He is the Creator of Everything out of Nothingness. The Holy Spirit is the source of the living spirit that animates all living plants and creatures and bacteria/fungi/viruses. The Son of Man is the incarnation of God amongst men: Jesus was able to create something out of nothing which is the highest form of creativity, this is the way he healed sick people. Some atheists poke fun of the concept of a God who knows our every single thought and feeling but they don't realize that our intellect, our soul, our minds, our will are just quanta of the Will, Soul, Mind of God hence God is in Us that is why He knows everything about us. And suffering is nothing but the outcome of denying this Great Truth. Creativity comes before love I was made aware in this vision, because God first created Man then came His Love for man... that is why the highest form of human endeavour is Creativity because that is when man is truly in the image of God. Monks and Hesychasts suffer a lot because they want to experience and taste God without being Creative, just through prayer and fasting and thoughtless physical work.

Pleasure is a lower form of ecstasy that one experiences when he/she enjoys food or sex or even nature without realizing that God created all this and that it is a work of Love. Ecstasy is when you eat a nibble of food, you look at a woman, or at nature, and you see a marvellous creation of God. Kazantsakis called this the Sacred Awe.

One of the great questions of Neurochemistry and the Science of the Mind is whether the various neurotransmitters are the cause of the symptoms or the effect of the various mental states of man.

The Real High

These days people resort to alcohol, tobacco and all kinds of legal and illegal chemicals to experience a sense of spirituality that every soul deep down longs for... One motive for ravers to take MDMA is its empathogenic effect, it makes them feel connected, loved and close to people around them... Below is another Rumi poem with pointers on how to achieve the greatest legal high of all... Love.

No Expectations

A spirit lives in this world
and does not wear the shirt of love,
such an existence is a deep disgrace.

Be foolishly in love,
because love is all there is.

There is no way into presence,
except through a love exchange.

If someone asks, But what is love?
Answer, Dissolving the will.

True freedom comes to those who have escaped
the questions of freewill and fate.

Love is an emperor.
The two worlds play across him.
He barely notices their tumbling game.

Love and lover live in eternity.
Other desires are substitutes for that way of being.

How long do you lay embracing a corpse?
Love rather the soul, which cannot be held.

Anything born in spring dies in fall,
but love is not seasonal.

With wine pressed from grapes,
expect a hangover.

But this path has no expectations.
You are uneasy riding in the body?
Dismount. Travel lighter.
Wings will be given.

Be clear like a mirror reflecting nothing.
Be clear of pictures
and worry that comes with images.

Gaze into what is not ashamed
or afraid of any truth.

Contain all human faces in your own
without any judgement of them.

Be pure emptiness.
What is inside that? you ask.
Silence is all I can say.
Lovers have some secrets that they keep.

Rumi

from *The Big Red Book* by Coleman Barks

Saint Siluan of Athos says in his book, that once a monk has a taste of the Holy Spirit then there is nothing else that he wants in the world... and in fact, if the Holy Spirit departs, they are grief stricken and spend their lives in prayer and fasting trying to get that state back. It is said that Saint Seraphim Sarovski the Russian saint that lived some 200 years ago, got a taste of the Holy Spirit, and when that spirit departed, he spent three years out in the wilderness on a rock, prostrating himself and praying non stop, for the Holy Spirit to come back...

The West, and by this I especially mean the USA, tries to sell the world the concept of sexual emancipation in all its connotations as another pleasure seeking principle, as another goal, as a prerequisite for happiness. This is another myth that has devolved and one of its facets is the disgusting porn industry and not just that but, many industries tied to selling products have a sexual under tone such as cars that impress girls etc. It is commendable in fact that abstinence is still esteemed as a kind of virtue in the Middle East especially for women (although I strongly believe men should practice abstinence as well). I think the religious teaching that young men and women should abstain from having sexual relations outside of the marital bond has some deep spiritual meaning behind it. Marriage is a commitment of love and to have sex outside of marriage generally means to have sex for pleasure and that is where it is wrong because it is selfish and ego centric...

Sex is one of the basest instincts that we share with the animals, what's so liberal about having sex for pleasure? The sexual organs are positioned lower in the body and the Hindus with their chakra system will point out that the sexual organs are the centres of the lowest chakras. The highest chakra is in the crown of the head, the centre of the intellect... World wide media have failed the young generation in my opinion by liberalizing sex, this sacred act of union which is not for couples that are not spiritually advanced, that are not truly in love.... Pornography has defiled the act of love making. Pornography has made public that which should be known only in the privacy of the bed of true lovers. Kids are not aware or ashamed of their nakedness because they are pure. Grown ups are. So why then does the Porno industry display that which we are ashamed of displaying in public? That which each of us covers with clothes when we are in public? Jesus asserted that desiring a woman lustfully is as bad as committing the act of adultery.... The reason is because lust is lacking in Love. Just like Anger. Sloth. Gluttony. Etc. All sins are a manifestation of a lack of love...

It's A Miracle!

One of my friend's wives once asked me, if I am meditating, I told her no but I am praying. She asked me: are you experiencing any miracles? This was my answer to her...

The way the fish breathe under the water, isn't that a miracle?

The way trees fix CO₂ out of thin air using sunlight, water and chlorophyll isn't that a miracle?

It certainly has evaded modern scientists working on fixing CO₂ in an efficient way...

The Way babies are made? From two tiny cells that merge into one...

What about a deliciously home cooked meal made with love and how it nourishes our bodies? And how it tastes good?

What about the delicious fruits and vegetables and spices that nature gives us?

What about hot bread, have you ever smelled that and experienced what it does to you?

What about how birds fly in the sky isn't that a miracle?

Tiny Mosquitoes have intelligent radar systems and they can find a warm body in the dark then they insert their needle in and suck blood...

What about bees? Aren't they amazing? They build their own bee hives and gather pollen and make honey...

What about dogs, they give birth to tiny beautiful puppies and those little guys know how to find their mother's teat and how to drink milk from her... and the sounds they make doing that, hearing it for the first time last year I thought to myself this is amazing, it's a miracle !

What about grass that feeds the grazing animals that give us meat and milk?

What about termites that have nitrogen fixing bacteria in their guts which enrich the soil?

What about the human mind that has invented amazing contraptions like the car and cell phone and computer...

What about music that invokes feelings in us, isn't that amazing?

Jesus was asked for a miracle by stubborn rationalists, he gave them none because He was the Miracle and they did not see it...

Anyways, Muslims say Subhaan Allah about anything that is fascinating or beautiful... so that is where I am going with this....

June 1, 2018

High Wycombe, UK

On Death

On the 2nd of June 2018 I met with a group of psychonauts in Hyde Park, London to discuss our experiences on psychedelics. I was the least experienced amongst those attending having tried only marijuana with which I had experienced two mind expanding experiences one bordering on what felt to me like enlightened Buddhahood. There were many curious kids in the group as well as experienced drug users and I kept telling them you have to be careful with these drugs because some of them are toxic and I shared my belief that you need to be spiritually prepared to ingest these psychoactive substances otherwise you will not achieve the desired effect. One of the magic mushroom users in the group shared with me that the shrooms only enhance your imagination... He said though something very interesting that on one of his mushroom highs, he felt so blessed out that he felt that if at that moment he was shredded to pieces by a mob of angry youths he would not be angry with them...

One Polish guy, Lukasz who had experienced ayahuasca was fixated on the theory of Death and that it was the real final ending and the only truth. I explained to him my belief that death is not final that it is only a transformation, even of the body. The body does not die when it is buried in the earth, it is transformed to earth and bugs and grass and grass seeds and perhaps flowers, and if a grazing animal happens to eat that grass then you are reborn as part of a goat or lamb, or if a bird happens to eat some of the seeds of that grass to which you were transformed then you are reborn into a bird. It's possible also that you are transformed into pollen on a flower and that a bee ingests some of that pollen and you are transformed into honey which eventually is ingested by a human being ! So you see there is scientific basis for that feeling of oneness that psychonauts experience when high on LSD or psychedelics or empathogens... We are what we eat and what we eat is growing from the soil or from animals that feed on grass that grows on that soil which is nothing but recycled dead plants, animals and insects...

Rumi has a poem on this, he says that when soil dies it is transformed into a plant, and when a plant dies it is transformed into an insect and when an insect dies it is eaten by an animal and when an animal dies, it is transformed into a human being. He goes further to extrapolate that when a human being dies he or she is transformed to a pure spirit, to an angel... Hence we must not fear death... For by dying we only move higher in the ladder of being...

There is a Muslim saying that one must smell the earth which has a beautiful smell and then one would be less afraid of dying...

It is not a coincidence that the early Christians were not afraid of death as was Hallaj one of the greatest Sufi mystics of all time... They knew that the body was only a temporary shell that the soul eventually sheds...

God's Generosity – Ya Kareem

There is a passage in Isaiah chapter 55 that talks about God's generosity it reads like this:

The LORD says,

Come, everyone who is thirsty –

Here is water!

Come, you that have no money –

Buy corn and eat!

Come! Buy wine and milk –

It will cost you nothing!

Why spend money on what does not satisfy?

Why spend your wages and still be hungry?

Listen to me and do what I say,

And you will enjoy the best food of all.

Listen now, my people, and come

To me;

Come to me, and you will have life!

When I first re-read this passage I thought I was reading a poem from a Rumi book !

One of the good traits that are to be praised about Arabs and Muslims in general are the fact that they are a generous people, and a guest in their house is treated like royalty.

Their main problem these days is that they have stopped being creative... Most of the Arabic music and books and art churned out these days is worth rubbish I am sorry to say....

April 14, 2018 – London, Camden Town

I discovered a bookstore today in London near Camden called Daar Al Hikmah.... I immediately asked about the Rumi books in Arabic, I found Feehi Ma Feehi for 8 GBP.

There is an interesting passage about Jesus, it is on the parable of the fox... Foxes have holes but the son of man has no place to lay his head....

According to this book, the background to this story is that Jesus was trying to find shelter during a storm in a fox hole and God said to him that he is disturbing the litter that was taking shelter there so he had to leave.... What kindness, what humility..... what a lesson.... This story definitely puts Jesus as one of the first environmentalists in history....

Later on, I met an old man after I bought my book who was breathing heavily and looked tired.... I greeted him and offered him to carry his bag. His name is Ricardo. He said he had a manuscript there and had just come back from the publishers. I told him that there are many Orthodox saints and that they are the jewels of the land... I walked him to St Alysius RC church. Told him about St Nicholas and St. Anthony the Great couldn't think of St Dimitrius and St George and Mar Elias... I Remembered Saint Savvas of Palestine... why why??? Don't we have good stories about these saints that are unforgettable????? Shame on us the Orthodox we are literary idiots.....

There was another parable in the book about an unbeliever who asked to be shown God... A man of God told him you have thoughts but you know not from whence they come they are like the wind.... you cannot see it but you feel it.... made me think that Jesus's parable about the Wind is talking about our thoughts....

I had a splitting headache today in the afternoon with something like shivers or mini epileptic episodes... I prayed to God why this suffering Lord, why this pain.... I thought that Migraines must be linked to Serotonin and depression..... Last night I had not taken my anti depressants.

I also finished the DH Laurence short story today about The Virgin and the Gypsy. Why is there nothing important the virgin kept saying in her own house? Everything felt fake..... Lord give me a taste of the real... come live in my heart..... Rumi also talks about this.... He says he overheard some people talking "yes so and so the guy who owns two black cows?" is that the superficial way we know people and refer to people????

The Sayings of Jesus According to Philosophers of Islam

Excerpts from "Ra3iyyati" (My Parish) - Publication #13, Sunday 26 March, 2006 - Published by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jubail and Batroun, Lebanon

There are many sayings attributed to Jesus in the writings of Islamic philosophers such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Hanbal, Ibn Arabi, Jahez and Sahrawardi. Below I have translated some of the most beautiful ones:

Al Ghazali (Died in 1111 A.D.) attributes to Jesus the following sayings:

"Fast from the world and break your fast at your death bed (i.e fast your whole life). Death brings good to the believer after which there is no evil and to the evil, evil after which there is no good".

"Worship is ten parts, nine of them are in silence and the other is in distance from people (i.e solitude). Four cannot be achieved except through toiling: silence which is the beginning of worship, humility, mentioning God's name, and using little of everything.

"My food is hunger, my dress is wool, my prayer in winter time starts with sunrise, my light is the moon, my ride is my legs, my food and fruit is what the earth grows, I go home and own nothing, get up and own nothing, and there is no one richer than me on Earth."

Al-Ghazali tells a story that Jesus once lay his head on a stone to use it as a pillow and Satan came and said: "Didn't you decide to deny this life for the life to come?" Jesus answered "Yes and what it is that happened?"

Satan says "Your using this pillow is a form of enjoyment of this earthly life. Why don't you put your head on the ground?". Jesus throws away the stone and lays his head on the ground.

In regards forgiveness, Al-Ghazali quotes Jesus as saying: "Whoever asks forgiveness for those that wrong him defeats Satan".

Al-Ghazali quotes Jesus as saying: "Whoever works and teaches, he is called great in the Kingdom of Heaven".

Jahez quotes Jesus as saying that "The world is a ranch for Satan and people till its land". and "The dead I can raise, but the stupid I cannot cure."

Al-Abshihi (Died 1478 AD) tells of Jesus in his book "Al-Mustatrif" that a man once asked Jesus, who among people is the greatest? Jesus picks up two fistfulls of dirt and says:

"Which of these two is better? All men are made of dirt, the greatest among them is the most pious."

Ibn Arabi, the great Arab philosopher from Spain attributes to Jesus His saying:

"Know that your earthly life to your after-life is like your East is to your West. The further you go West the further you are from the East and the further you go East the further you are from the West.

Al-Samarqandi (Died 983 A.D.) attributes to Jesus in his book "Tanbihu L' Ghafileen" (Warning to the Idle) His saying:

"Do not store food for you for tomorrow, for tomorrow comes and brings its own gifts. Look at the small ants and who provides for them, and if you say ants have tiny bellies, look at the bird, and if you say the bird has wings, look at the beasts how big and fat [and wingless] they are..."

On The Environment

Abdullah ibn Amr reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, passed by Sa'd while he was performing ablution (Islamic ceremonial washing before prayer). The Prophet said, "What is this extravagance?"

Sa'd said, "Is there extravagance with water in ablution?"

The Prophet said, "Yes, even if you were on the banks of a flowing river."

Source: Sunan Ibn Mājah 425

It is amazing that the Prophet of Islam taught moderation in the consumption of water. And it is a shame that Saudi Arabia and the UAE, are two of the highest consumers of water per capita (8) in the world.

The Bible in a similar tone teaches:

*The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it.
Genesis 2:15*

If we look at the environment as God's creation of Love, then it becomes our holy duty to tend it. It may sound cliché, but our bodies are made of the metabolized food, air and water that we source from the environment. Therefore, if we pollute the environment, we automatically pollute our own bodies....

I am a chartered environmentalist, and if you ask me what is the solution to the world's environmental problems, my answer is two-fold: minimalism and primitivism. A constant growth economy on a planet with limited resources is unsustainable as the great natural scientist David Attenborough says. Therefore consumerism must be reduced, and the economy must become circular, that is earth's resources must be recycled over and over again.

I was in the British Library on 16.9.2018 and on the way there I saw the Friends' House of the Quakers. Their motto is beautiful: Peace, Equality, Simplicity, Truth. Simplicity is gravely missing from modern man's life.

I also discovered Schiller's Book *On The Aesthetic Education of Man*. It's brilliant. It's genius. It's profound. He quotes Kant as saying in his essay *An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?* The answer is two words: *Sapere Aude* meaning Have courage to use your own understanding! This is powerful, in other words, you find the Truth within you, you know yourself ! You don't need others, the state or organized religion, to tell you any more...

This week we saw two super-storms hit both the USA and Asia, Florence hit the Carolinas and Mangkhut hit the Philippines and China. I told my friend Markos from the USA that these massive storms are nothing but the equilibrium of earth's atmosphere pushing the global warming stress back, we learned this in Chemistry it is called Le Chaterlier's principle. I told him that Earth will rid itself of its stressors I am not worried about that, but in the process millions of human beings will die and there is a risk of living species going extinct.

At the British Library I also saw in their manuscripts section an original manuscript of Nizami's poem *Khamsa* (Five aka Panj). It was such a beautiful object that it made me wonder how could the Persian empire degenerate into what is known as Iran today. I found a beautiful poem of Nizami in his Wikipedia article:

*I went to the Tavern last night, but I was not admitted
I was bellowing yet nobody was listening to me
Either none of the wine-sellers were awake
Or I was a nobody, and no one opened the door for a Nobody
When more or less half of the night had passed
A shrewd, perfect man raised his head from a booth and showed his face
I asked him: "open the door", he told me: "go away, do not talk nonsense!
At this hour, nobody opens door for anybody
This is not a mosque where its doors are open any moment
Where you can come late and move quickly to the first row
This is the Tavern of Magians and perfect men dwell here
There are Beauties, candles, wine, sugar, reed flute and songs
Whatever wonders that exist, they are present here
(in this tavern there are) Muslims, Armenians, Zoroastrian, Nestorians, and Jews
If you are seeking company of all that is found here
You must become like dust upon the feet of everyone in order to reach your (spiritual perfection)
goal"
O Nezami! if you knock the ring on this door day and night
You won't find anything except smoke from this burning fire*

The greedy capitalists want to go to Mars because they are running out of resources on our beloved Earth which they are destroying and they feel that the end of their mindless exploitation is near....
Reminder: The real journey is the Inner Journey of Enlightenment.... Posted on FB October 25, 2018.

Fake Science, Fake Technology

Yesterday, I told my research adviser to go to hell. Supposedly "the committee" gave me a six months review of my research work. The literature review I had done so far was not up to par and I was told I had to work much harder. My adviser started asking me to state definitions of what a systematic review is, what my methodology and strategy were. I told her I don't want to regurgitate common knowledge. Poor thing asks me what "regurgitate means" I told her it's when you throw up half digested food. Pseudo scientists sometimes hide behind fancy words because they don't know the truth and/or they want to pretend to be very sophisticated people. They pretend to do something very important when in reality it is only mental masturbation and a useless amount of work in the lab, in other words, a futile jerk off exercise. In the end all research projects end with the conclusion: "more research needs to be done to explore this and to check that", in other words, they need more money to continue to do their jerk off work. For example: Buckminster Fullerene and Graphene were discovered over 15 and 25 years ago and the teams that discovered them were given Nobel prizes in chemistry. Any practical applications for these materials today? Nada. They want to put graphene in rubber to make running shoes that last 50% longer. What a jerkoff. They promised us super lightweight, stronger than steel air planes and a super light and super strong cable that reached to the moon, and we got shoes that last 50% longer. I told my research adviser that I know what is going on and that we should end this circus: she wanted a couple of quick papers published without doing any work and my other boss who was sponsoring my research wanted to sell a couple of over-priced Chinese analytical instruments in the process. At this point she got really mad and launched about me stabbing the importance of the work being done by the EMCDDA and how systematic reviews are the highest form of science that establishes whether a certain medicine works or not.

It is the same with technology: first there was mIRC, then Skype, then Facebook, then Instagram, then SnapChat, then Viber, then Whatsapp... They are all get-rich-quick schemes... The latest model of cell phone has 5 cameras. For real !!! 5 Cameras !!! One or two is not enough... The other hype: Artificial Intelligence which is a pseudonym for computer algorithms gathering data about users to sell them something in the future. This reminds me of Friederich Schiller who said in his book *On The Aesthetic Education of Man*: the higher the human endeavour, the more despicable its demise... We are witnessing the demise of civilization dear reader... There is talk about ethics in science and engineering but the whole charade is nothing but a carefully orchestrated act by greedy business-like people who want to make a profit.

On the other hand, science shies away from the fundamental questions: who are we? What is this consciousness? What is this intelligence? How does memory work? How is information stored in the brain if that is where it is stored. Are we happier as human beings living in congested cities that were built on the charred remains of chopped down trees and soil that has been suffocated by pouring smelly asphalt and hard concrete on it? How many true human beings is society nurturing as opposed to consumerist robots.

Nietzsche declared that God is dead. I declare that humanity is dying.

October 6, 2018

Finally I would like to comment on the fact that as long as Science and Technology, and Medicine for that matter, are for-profit enterprises, then they will never rise above the conflict of interest that is inherent in any endeavor that is commercially driven. One of the ugliest manifestations of this phenomenon is private hospitals turning away seriously ill patients which is known to have happened in Lebanon, TV commercials that advertise pharmaceutical panacea cures for certain diseases which is so annoying in Bulgaria for instance, and search engines such as Google that selectively give top rankings to companies that pay for that placement and tout Artificial-Intelligence as a solution for many problems

when all it is in fact is a spying tool for your shopping habits so that more commercial goods can be sold to you.

If I Were The Philosopher King

If i were Philosopher King, all the bankers, lawyers, jerkoff scientists & engineers, economists, private media tycoons and greedy business men would be at the bottom of the food chain... farmers, artists, philosophers, carpenters, fishermen, teachers, musicians and poets at the top.... Pseudo writers or word jugglers would be exiled to remote islands. i would dissolve the military. The military budget would be allocated to educational, research and artistic projects. There would be healers not doctors treating the few sick people and all hospitals would be called Hotel-Dieu, the places where there is a chance you might meet your Creator. Complete ban on cars. only bicycles and public transport where people meet and chat to each other. all food would be grown in local public organic farms owned and managed by locals where the use of harmful pesticides is banned. energy must be 100% renewable. no for-profit pharma companies. Hypocrisy would be a punishable crime because it leads to the destruction of cities and civilizations and trust amongst people. i would teach people to love one another... violent people including parents would be treated with MDMA. Video games or TV for children not allowed. They would be encouraged to play outside and get dirty and would be read stories at night by the fire in the open. No pets for private entertainment, animals deserve to be free and to enjoy living in the midst of nature outside. If one wants to eat chicken, they have to kill the chicken themselves. Same with beef and lamb meat. One child or no child policy for all poor people and over-populated countries. The dictators that oppress poor countries would be removed by an international tribunal with supreme authority and a diverse judiciary. There would be one international police force to deal with violence and anti-social behaviour. Every youth must serve in that police force and be stationed in several countries during their formative years so that they learn about various cultures as part of their education. Mass tourism would be banned due to its negative environmental impact. Complete ban on single use plastic. Exuberant trash fees have to be paid to encourage recycling and put a lid on rampant consumerism. Localization not globalization is the model for government and the economy. There is no such thing as continuous growth on a planet with finite resources. Arrogant people and bullies are sent to retreats for learning how to be humble and respect others. Freedom of religion and expression is enshrined in the constitution. No such thing as social benefits, if you want to eat, you have to work.

Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung? *

Sapere aude is the Latin phrase meaning "Dare to know"; and also is loosely translated as "Dare to be wise", or even more loosely as "Dare to think for yourself!" Originally used in the First Book of Letters (20 BCE), by the Roman poet Horace, the phrase *Sapere aude* became associated with the Age of Enlightenment, during the 17th and 18th centuries, after Immanuel Kant used it in the essay, "Answering the Question: What Is Enlightenment?" (1784). As a philosopher, Kant claimed the phrase *Sapere aude* as the motto for the entire period of the Enlightenment, and used it to develop his theories of the application of reason in the public sphere of human affairs.

The Koran has a similar message:

Read [O Muhammad!] in the name of your Lord who created. (96.1) He created man from a clot. (96.2) Read, and your Lord is the Most Honorable (96.3) who taught with the pen. (96.4)

According to the Hadith of Bukhari, Mohammad's answer to this divine command was that he does not know how to read...

The Bible teaches us to seek wisdom as something more precious than pearls.

Proverbs 16:16 in the **King James Bible**:

"How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get understanding rather to be chosen than silver!"

India, which is also known by its ancient Sanskrit name *Bharata* (*Bha* means knowledge, *rati* means lover), meaning, *the land of spiritual knowledge* (13), is full of yogis that own nothing except the loin cloth around their waist, however they are masters of their own minds and all of them teach us not to get attached to material things, because these bring misery, and the only joy worth pursuing in life is the job of inner perfection... inner joy. It is fascinating that Indian culture is captivated by the ultimate quest of enlightenment and inner knowledge whereas in the West we think that we have killed God and consequently we turned into soul-less humanists because I remind the reader that the Soul is a piece of God inside of us....

Here is an amazing quote from Rumi on this topic:

"

The mystery does not get clearer by repeating the question,
nor is it bought with going to amazing places.

Until you have kept your eyes
and your wanting still for fifty years,
you do not begin to cross over from confusion

"

Rumi - from *The Big Red Book* by Coleman Barks

* "Answering the Question: What Is Enlightenment?" (Emmanuel Kant 1784).

A Modern History of the Arabs

MBS, King of the Arabs, Servant of the 2 holiest sites of Islam, also a stupid murderer... Bashar Al Assad the great leader of the Syrian Arab nation, a mindless war criminal... Colonel Qaddafi, the legendary head of the Lybian nation and author of the seminal Green Book, ordered mercenaries to massacre his own people and ended up being sodomised and murdered by his own people... 9/11 the unthinkable cruel terrorist attack, planned and orchestrated by Arabs... Hezbollah, the Lebanese Party of God, terrorists, they assassinated the former PM of Lebanon Rafic Hariri and planted a bomb to target Israeli innocent tourists in Bourgas, Bulgaria... Mubarak (literally in Arabic, the name means the Blessed One) former president of Egypt, a deposed dictator... The current president of Egypt, Sissi, a military dictator. Algeria, a military dictatorship... Iraq: a corruption infested mess. Tunisia: 30 British tourists massacred at the beach.

Ladies and gentlemen, I present: The modern history of the Arabs ... it reeks.... I have said this before, either Islam is a useless religion because it has failed to civilize the Arabs or Arabs are hopeless ignoramuses.... or... Muslims have misinterpreted Islam... which is my explanation... La Ilaha Illa Allah means there is No God but God.... there is no "I" in this mantra... but what is the cause of all Arabs problems, better yet what is the cause of all the world's problems? The answer is that people have forgotten about God and placed the "I" or Egoism in its place.... which leads to inequality and eventually to war and suffering.... These ideas came to me on the 27th of October, 2018 on a cold British day after I watched some amazing YouTube videos of the Indian guru Papaji, I highly recommend that you find them on YouTube.

I am not saying this out of hate, but out of compassion because I am one who grew up in the Middle East and had to suffer because of the ignorance that infests that area. *Sapere Aude*.... La Ilaha illa Allah....

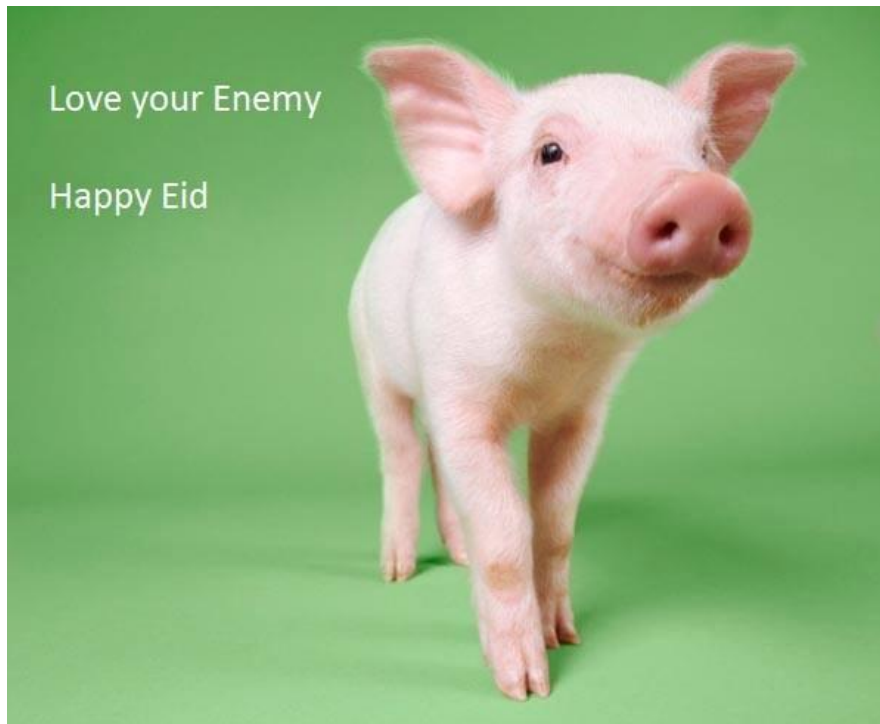
**Either Islam is a useless religion
because it has failed to turn Arabs into
decent people or Islam is great but the
Arabs are hopeless ignoramuses...**

Rami E. Kremesti M.Sc.

<http://amalid.org/>



Constructive Humour



Some of the teasers I posted on my Facebook account during the Muslim holidays in 2015 after I returned home from my project in Iraq.

Dear Muslim economic immigrants and refugees coming to the EU: although u do not eat my kind which I highly appreciate, I have noticed that your people's sticking to a pork free diet has not made you more intelligent or less prone to violence so I suggest trying a vegetarian diet and showing equal kindness to my relatives the cows and lambs...



Gluttony is the real sin, not the kind of animal that you eat...

Thank you dear Muslims for not eating my kind...

These fucking Europeans and Americans are savages....



This caricature is my quip at Muslims that think they are better or cleaner or holier than people from the West...

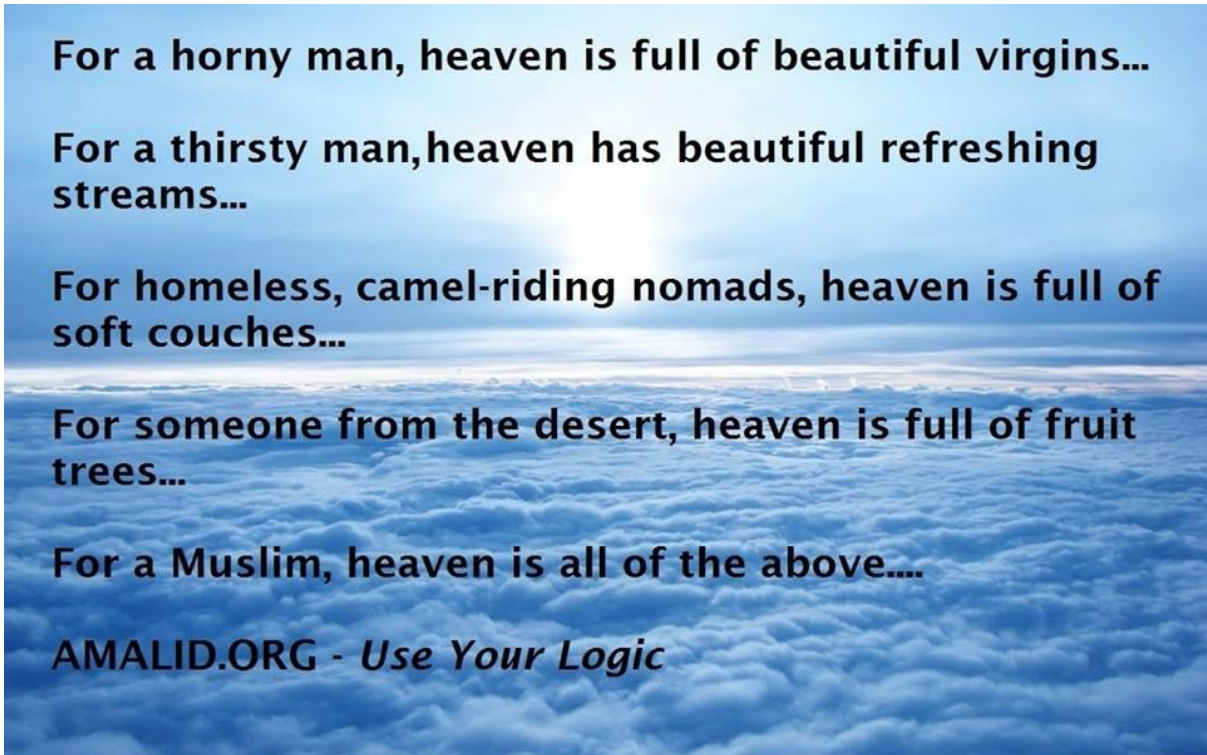
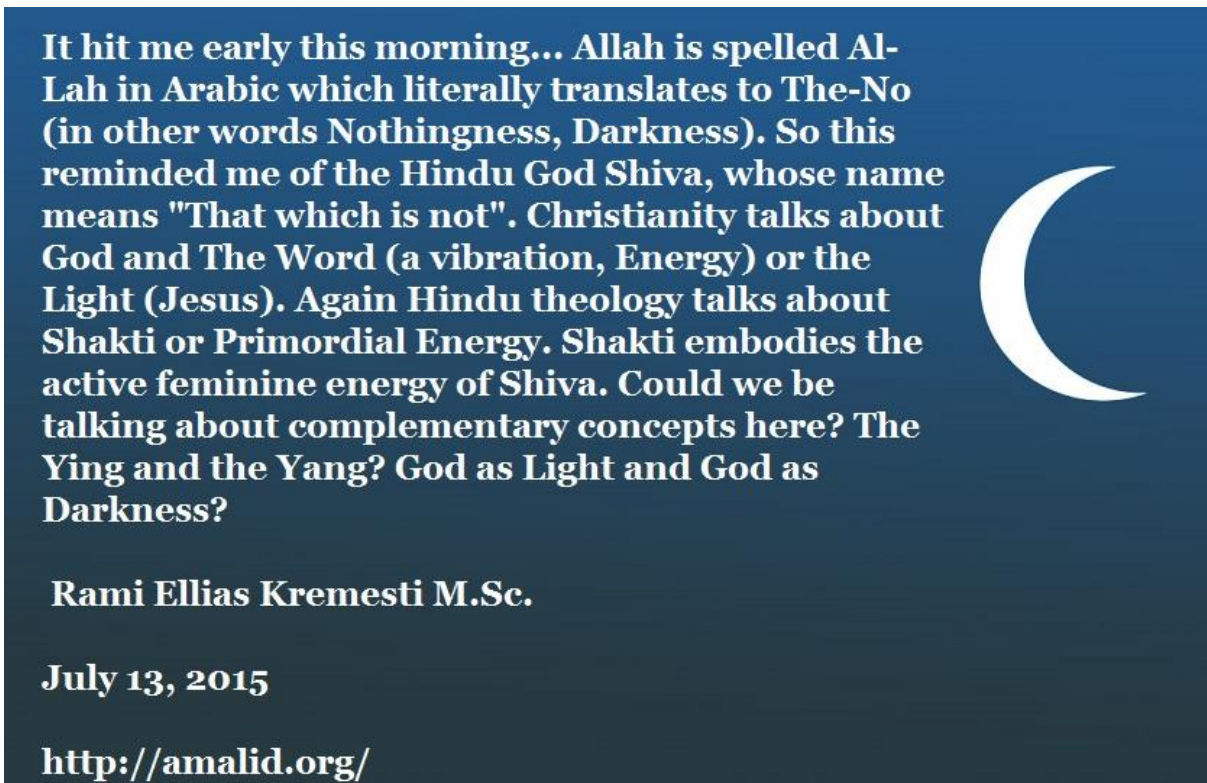


Figure: Trying to use the power of sarcasm to help fundamentalist Muslims reform.





A photo that I took in South Lebanon circa 2001. One of the signs says in Arabic that Jews are slayers of the prophets... But I ask my Muslim brothers who killed Hussein? Who killed half a million people in Syria? Who killed Khashoggi? Who killed Theo Van Gogh? Who killed innocent people on 9/11 and 7/7? And if your own countries are a mess, why would you want to liberate a country such as Israel which is the pinnacle of technological, scientific and cultural advancement in the Middle East?

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