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Insights from Bible Stories

The Supreme Master Ching Hai



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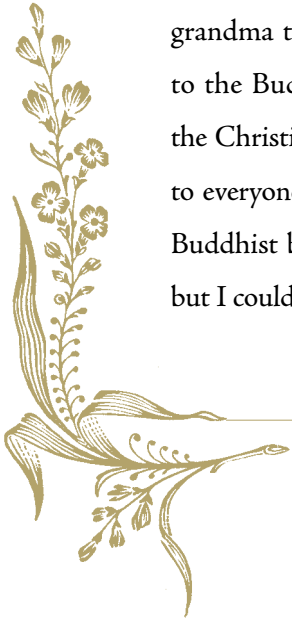
Of God and Humans

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The Supreme Master Ching Hai

When I began to wonder about God and the universe, I was very, very young. And I did not know to whom I should ask these very big questions, such as what does God look like? How can I see Him? Can I touch Him? Can I hug Him? (Because I was very small, and I liked to hug.) Many years passed after my first questions to myself, and I did not find the true answer. So I followed my grandma to the Buddhist temple and prayed to the Buddha, and I followed my father to the Christian church to pray to God. I prayed to everyone that I knew of. I tried to read the Buddhist bibles and the Christian scriptures, but I could not understand much.



I even slept with the Bible. Every night I would hug the Bible and sleep. And I always prayed to God, saying, “Please, can You show me Yourself? Can You show me Yourself, the highest God, the God above all human barriers, the God above all religious differences, the God above all hatred and racism? Please can You show me? I would like to know You more than anything else.”

Somehow I could feel that God was there, but I could not see, and I would have liked to see. So I tried many ways in order to be able to contact Hirm, but I failed. Until one day Hes kind of led me into this spiritual way that Hes told me would be quick so that I could know God. And ever since then, I have become more acquainted with our Father every day.

And Hes has ordered me to also go out into the world, wherever I am requested, in order to give the message that Hes loves you very much. And if you want to see Hirm, I have to show you the way. It has been a very challenging job, and it’s not a profession that I would consider fit for a small woman like me. But God has said, “I’ll give you all the power necessary; you just continue to serve Me, and everything else I will provide.” This way has worked for me and has worked for many thousands, even hundreds of thousands of other people who have been seeking God. So I am sure it works for everyone.

~The Supreme Master Ching Hai ~15th May, 1999, Armenia



Springtime in Hungary, 2005



REVELATIONS FROM BIBLE STORIES

The Bible, one of the greatest works of the world, encompasses the story of creation, the history of the nation of Israel, the record of God's relationship with the Israelites (also referred to as Hebrews or Jews), the laws and guidelines for worship given by God (Jehovah) to his children, and in the New Testament, the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth.

Biblical writings take many forms, including legends, proverbs, poems, genealogies and biographies. However, the contents of the Bible consistently center around one theme; namely, the unavoidable lessons humans must learn in life regarding their relationship with God.

In Genesis, the first book of the Bible, we find one of the most compelling narratives ever told in this world: the story of the creation of the first two humans, Adam and Eve. Later, at the instigation of Satan, represented by the serpent, Adam and Eve willfully violate God's rule, eat the forbidden fruit and are thus banished from Paradise.

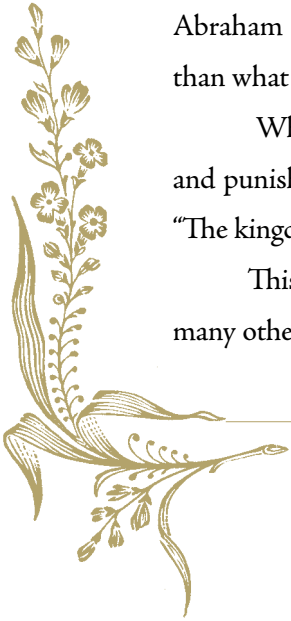
According to Supreme Master Ching Hai, this tragic story of Paradise lost symbolizes humankind's turning away from God: "God' is the creative energy behind everything in the universe. It is given different names in different religions; for example, God, Allah, the Supreme Master, Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi and the Buddha Power." (see Supreme Master Ching Hai's Lecture 7, The Ten Commandments, in this volume.)

Following “Paradise Lost” are many other well-known Bible stories, such as those of Noah (Lecture 2), Lot (Lecture 4) and Moses (Lecture 6). These tales depict God’s children misused their free will and continuing to deviate from the cosmic design of universal love, peace and harmony, with the inevitable result being destruction. Whether in the form of a gigantic flood that engulfs the Earth, a fire that destroys an entire city or endless wars among nations, these disasters might be thought to represent God’s punishment, but in reality they are the direct outcomes of human’s own behavior.

How can human beings avoid such natural and self-made calamities? The answer to this question comes from the shining examples of Biblical figures such as Abraham, Lot, Moses and Samuel’s mother Hannah. These individuals all humbly submitted themselves to God’s will to the extent of giving up their worldly possessions or even their most beloved sons (in the cases of Abraham and Hannah). As a result, they received blessings that were many times more valuable than what they sacrificed.

While the Old Testament figures revered God as an external agent who doled out rewards and punishment to his children, Jesus changed this paradigm when He came, telling His followers, “The kingdom of God is within you” (Lecture 11, The Sermon on the Mount, in this volume).

This statement reflects the link between Jesus’ teachings and those of Sakyamuni Buddha and many other great Saints of the East, Who taught the same truths. Now Supreme Master Ching Hai



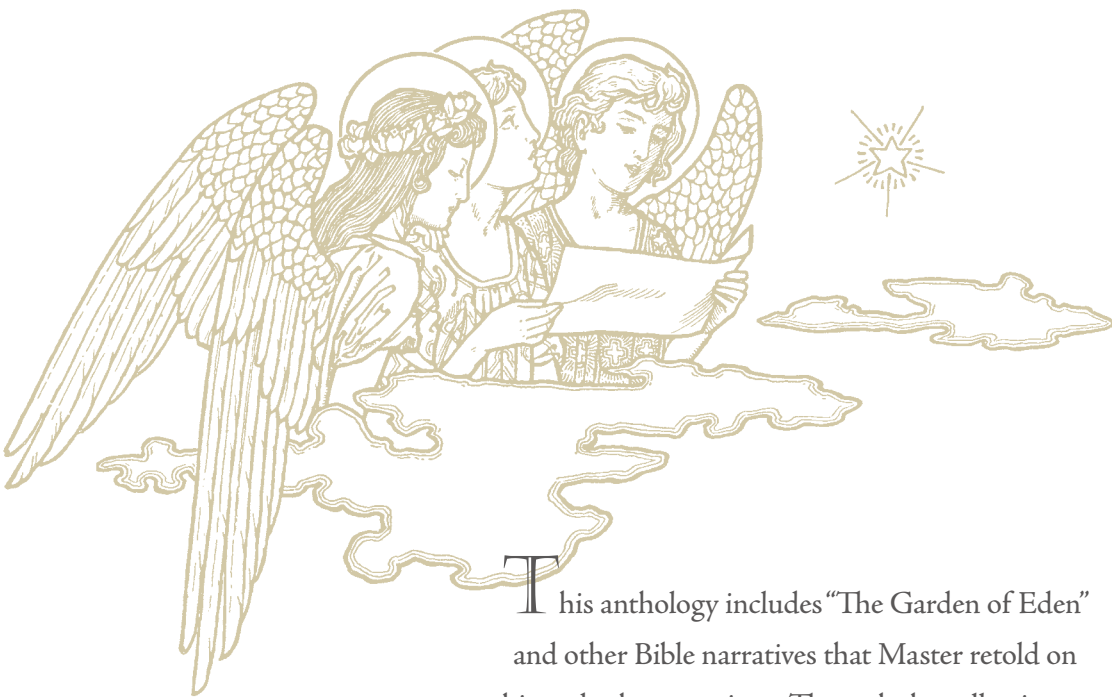
brings us an identical message: that God is none other than our own Supreme Wisdom and True Nature (Lecture 7, The Ten Commandments, in this volume). And if we place our trust in God or our own inner Supreme Master, focus on our wisdom center and follow God's will, not only will we be blessed but the whole world and generations of our descendents will benefit as well.

Far from being a stern father figure who punishes people with earthly suffering or reincarnation, God is in essence Universal Love and Compassion. And even when people assert their free will and separate themselves from Love, Love never gives up. Through the ages, God has sent great Masters to help bring His children back to their Heavenly Home. These Saints are God incarnate and their power is divine. Only through Them can we break the karmic cycle, go beyond the Three Realms and arrive safely at our soul's permanent Home.

Jesus also promised that God would again send us a "Comforter," but how can we recognize a person who is God incarnate as Jesus was? The Supreme Master Ching Hai answers this question as follows: "If there is anyone who teaches the same ideas or gives us the same comfort as Jesus did, we should know that He/She is a Comforter that God has sent to us" (Lecture 9, The Perfect Example of a Great Saint, in this volume). And Her life, words, deeds and the power and love She manifests all testify to the fact that She is indeed from God. If we sincerely wish to be liberated, we need only knock on the door and we will surely recognize Her. Through this Great Master, we earthlings will finally be able to regain our lost Paradise.

Editors~ Golden Year 3





This anthology includes “The Garden of Eden” and other Bible narratives that Master retold on this and other occasions. Through the collection we hope to share with readers Supreme Master Ching Hai’s profound wisdom and wish that it serves as a reminder of God’s eternal love for humanity.



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The Tower of Babel

There's a moral to the story and we can learn from it. What is it? The more comfortable human beings become, the less they think of God. Back when their parents were still alive, everything was very simple. Everyone lived in the ark and remembered God all the time. Not too long afterwards, God gave them comfortable lives. There were no floods, no punishments and no reminders so they began to feel they were great. p41



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The Noah's Ark

We can see from this story that at that time, no one believed in God except Noah's family, who followed God's instructions. That was why God destroyed the entire world. If more families in many places had believed in God, He might not have done that. p29



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The Angels Rescue Lot

Lot's wife, even when God had already sent people to warn them to leave quickly, was still attached to their possessions. As a result, the possessions were gone and her life was also gone. When we have life, the human body, we can get back some possessions after a while. But when the body is gone, it's not useful anymore. p49



God Tests Abraham

It was very good to have such faith in God. Since all things are created by God, if God wants any of them back, we should return them to Hirm, for they belonged to Hirm originally. Abraham and his wife were very old and had no hope of bearing any children, but they eventually had one. What a marvelous thing that was! p63

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The Ten Commandments

The Lord explained to Moses how to apply these commandments in various worldly situations and wanted Moses to explain them to the people. When the situation was different, the commandments were to be applied accordingly. The commandments were meant to protect people, not the other way around. p103

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The Perfect Example of a Great Saint

Many thousands of years later, we're still shocked if we remember this story. Because of the ephemeral nature of our existence on earth, even the Son of God had to die! Everyone must go eventually. If even a man as great as Jesus can't preserve this ephemeral body and also can't be protected from the violence and ignorance of the people of this world, how can we feel safe? p167

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The Exodus

Although there were so many Israelites, God took care of the whole country for forty years. They were even in the desert, and yet Hes bestowed everything on them, let alone living in a city. Why won't Hes take care of us? It's just that our situation isn't urgent and we can take care of ourselves. So God doesn't have a hand in it. But Hes has been silently taking care of us. p81



Samuel

Do you know what the most touching part of this story is? It's the part about the woman who was yearning very much for a child. Because of having no children she felt very lonely and sorrowful and was teased by others. Then she ran to God and cried. Even after having longed so much, she offered her little child to God after his birth! p149



The Sermon on the Mount

When we read the Bible or the Brahmajala Sutra, we know that we shouldn't treat those who slander us and act badly toward us in the same way that they treat us. We should treat them with double love and kindness. If you only let him slap you on your right cheek without reacting, he may think that you're afraid of him or you don't know how to react. But when you also turn your left cheek to him, he may wake up and wonder, "Well! Why did this person react this way? It's not that he couldn't react, but that he didn't care about being slapped and has forgiven me." p191



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The Boy Jesus in the Temple

He had this realization when He was only twelve. He knew who He was. He knew the power of the Creator, but He didn't understand ephemeral human relations and emotions. He didn't recognize ephemeral human feelings. Well! Jesus Christ realized this when He was twelve, and He admitted that His true relationship is with God. However, He was still filial to His parents and continued to be an obedient child. p181

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Two Stories about the Seeds of Spiritual Practice & Beyond Moral Standards

This story reminds us of something. There's no one in this world who hasn't sinned. Besides, whether one has sinned or not depends on the situation, one's background and one's level of enlightenment. The so-called morality and ethics of this world are different than what real Saints perceive. Those who have attained the highest level of enlightenment see no such things... p211

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The Return of the Prodigal Son

...because we're veiled by our so-called preconceived ideas, or our pure heart is affected by social influences. Then our guilty feelings emerge again, and we think that our sins are too heavy to deserve God's grace and love. The truth is we're always worthy. How could God mind how much you've ruined Hiers wealth? Hes is the Creator. Hes can always create a wonderful, vast world or universe. Hes wouldn't mind. As we destroy, Hes creates again; no problem. p227

In speaking of God or the Supreme Spirit, Master instructs us to use original non-sexist terms to avoid the argument about whether God is a She or a He. She + He = Hes (as in Bless)
Her + Him = Hirm (as in Firm)
Hers + His = Hiers (as in Dear)
Example: When God wishes, Hes makes things happen according to Hiers will to suit Hirmself.

As a creator of artistic designs as well as a spiritual teacher, Supreme Master Ching Hai loves all expressions of inner beauty. It is for this reason that She refers to Vietnam as "Au Lac" and Taiwan as "Formosa." Au Lac is the ancient name of Vietnam and means "happiness." And the name Formosa, meaning "beautiful," reflects more completely the beauty of the island and its people. Master feels that using these names brings spiritual elevation and luck to the land and its inhabitants.



1

The Garden of Eden

Spoken by Supreme Master Ching Hai, Hsiu Center, Formosa

May 27, 1990 (Originally in Chinese)



Adam and Eve

A long time ago, when God created the universe, Hes created our world. Hes created day and night, the stars and moon, as well as the sky, the oceans and the land. Hes created birds that flew in the sky, fish that swam in the oceans and animals that roamed the land, and God was pleased at the sight of Hiers creation.

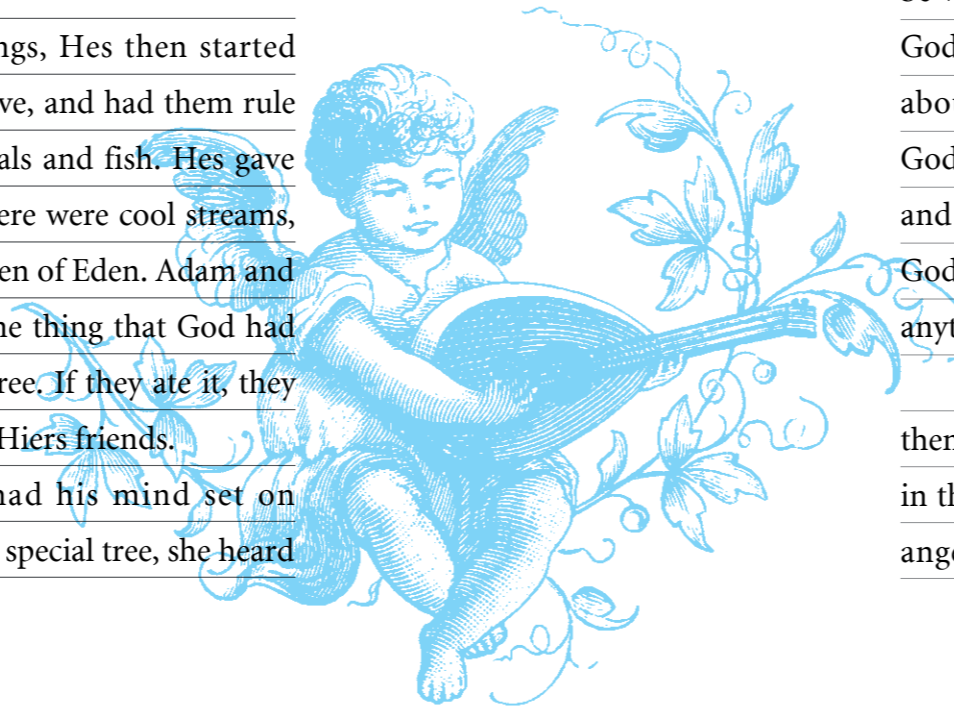
As the universe was meant for human beings, Hes then started creating man and woman. God made Adam and Eve, and had them rule the world, which included the plants, birds, animals and fish. Hes gave them a beautiful place in which to dwell, where there were cool streams, shady trees and a variety of fruit. That was the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were delighted with all they had, except for one thing that God had forbidden – the eating of the fruit from a special tree. If they ate it, they would die. Adam and Eve obeyed God and lived as Hiers friends.

However, there was someone else who had his mind set on ruining God's world. One day as Eve passed by this special tree, she heard

a sweet serpent voice calling her. (The Westerners give the snake a bad name, saying that it always looks for a chance to seduce human beings. They've embodied Satan in a snake.) Anyway, the tree was named "The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil."

The voice told her, "Look at the wonderful fruit! Your mouth must be watering. Taste it, and you'll become very intelligent, as intelligent as God has ever been." Upon hearing the serpent's gentle voice, Eve forgot about God's warning because she wanted to become as intelligent as God and do whatever she wanted. She then reached for the fruit, ate it, and saved some for Adam. That was where things began to go wrong. God knew what Adam and Eve had done because no one could ever hide anything from Hirm.

From then on, they were no longer God's friends and Hes asked them to leave the Garden of Eden. They had once lived such happy lives in the garden, where they had walked and talked with the Lord. But now angels stood on guard at the gate of the garden with swords in their





hands, never to allow Adam and Eve to return.

They had to work very hard till they were exhausted. Now they experienced pain. What was worse, God gave them the most horrible message that they would age little by little and eventually die.

After they left Eden, Eve gave birth to Cain and Abel. Cain grew up to be a farmer, cultivating the land and growing grain on it. Abel was a shepherd, taking care of his father's sheep. At harvest time, Cain offered part of his crop to God in gratitude, while Abel offered a flock of sheep.

We know both are very good gifts, but we can't give them in exchange for God's love because He knows what we really are. Abel was a righteous man so God was very much pleased with his gift, but Cain was jealous and angry. He hated his younger brother Abel, and God didn't like his gift as much.

One day in the field, Cain rose up against Abel and slew him, believing that no one had witnessed it. But God had, and He punished Cain by driving him and his family away forever. A world once so attractive was thus brought to ruin. (Genesis 1:1-4:12)

God's Wishes Are Not Extraordinary

Do you understand the story? It's not that eating one piece of fruit brought about all this misfortune, but that we know what's right and wrong and have the right to make choices. We shouldn't do what we know we shouldn't. If we do know but still do it deliberately, we'll make a mess of our life, turning it into something complicated and painful.

The fruit was just a symbol of what we shouldn't do. Following God's instructions means acting in a reasonable way and not harming other people for your entire life. Even if you haven't taken up spiritual practice, you may well do yourself and the world a big favor by staying on a vegan diet and keeping the guidelines. It's the same with my students. We choose to do what we should and avoid what we shouldn't.

God had taken very good care of them, giving them every kind of food and pleasure. There was nothing else they needed, which implied God's love knew no boundaries. Where else could anyone have lived such a carefree, pleasurable life without having to work? All they had to do was have fun. Did God ever ask anything extraordinary of

At the beginning of all lives, we have choice. We have a voice inside telling us this is better, this is good, this is not. But sometimes we like to play, we like to do the things that are not according to the parents' teachings, like children, and hurt ourselves. That's the problem.

--Supreme Master Ching Hai





them? Never. All He said was, “You may eat anything, but that tree is mine. Leave it for me. You shall not eat from it.”

But they didn’t even spare that one. It’s not that they were starving. Was there anything they needed that they didn’t have? God had only one requirement for them, but they weren’t able to keep it. He created so many things for their pleasure, but they still made mistakes.

Today we’re in a worse situation, tantalized and forced to drift in the ocean of suffering. Our world is full of distresses like birth, aging, illness and death. But at that time they knew no illness, aging or death. They didn’t even have to fight for their bread. All they were asked was just one tiny favor, which they actually fell short of fulfilling.

What came from God’s mouth, they disobeyed, not to mention what it would have been like had it been from my mouth. What would it have amounted to? They knew very well that God had created everything for their enjoyment. They knew He was their master and that He offered them whatever they wanted except the fruit of one special tree, yet they decided that they must eat it, of all things.

As a matter of fact, there was nothing special about the tree. It was just like any other tree. But God wanted to see if they could keep themselves from eating the fruit for His sake, and they failed even such a simple request. They

turned a deaf ear to God, yet they listened to the serpent! It was a serpent, of all things! Were the words of a serpent more important than those of God?

Now you see, if anyone should fall into the circle of transmigration, there’s absolutely no one else to blame. If this story is true, we can’t put the blame on God anymore. He was so nice and hospitable to human beings. He asked for nothing, only the keeping of a tree for Himself. But they had to get the fruit of this very last tree. They had faith in everything but God. They even believed in a serpent and ate what they shouldn’t have. Not until they had swallowed it did they realize what suffering they had created for themselves, and what was good or bad. By then, God also knew that they hadn’t had enough faith, and that they didn’t deserve to be His friends.

There are many things in this world, each with a different price. For example, if we buy a diamond, we have to pay a huge amount of money, but we don’t have to pay that much for gold. We pay even less for a piece of silver. A piece of iron costs us a few hundred NT dollars, but gold of the same size may cost ten times more. Similarly, if they wanted to be God’s friends and enjoy whatever there was in Eden, they had to follow the rules. If they couldn’t even spare a tree, how could they live there?

People have to respect each other if they’re to stay together. I may have a request for you and you may have one for me too, and we just have to



cooperate. That's the moral of this story, not that God really wanted something from Adam and Eve.

God thought that if Hes gave them everything but no rules, it would be monotonous and boring. Therefore, Hes granted them everything but this tree, just for variety. But alas, they didn't understand this, and wound up listening to a serpent rather than to God, their benefactor. That's disgusting! So they went 'kaput' after they followed the serpent.

If you think more highly of a serpent than of God you surely don't deserve to be a friend of Hiers, do you? You've betrayed Hiers trust and spoiled the cooperation between you and Hirm. You want your own way. You don't respect Hiers opinion even though it hasn't harmed you at all. With so many things in your hands, what else could you possibly want? So that's the ego, the eagerness to be as great as God.

Beware of the Ego

If you aren't as great as God, so what? It's good enough to live in Eden. Every day, you have enough to eat and wear. You have whatever you want, but you still want to become God. What for? We human beings always have this

troublesome ego. We want to be the king, the highest and the best. That's why we've been cheated into this world of hustle and bustle.

We earn a lot of money to be richer than other people; we use a lot of make-up to look prettier than others; we buy expensive clothes to look better, too. Everyone races against each other. The better we are, the harder we race because there always seems to be someone ahead of us no matter how good we are.

This biblical story is not just about a piece of fruit; it has a moral. The ancient teachers, for fear of trouble, didn't dare put things in a straightforward way, so they used various parables to get their ideas across to the people. If you read the book *The Story Bible*, that's all you need. This book has selected quite a few good stories. Good, but simple. Even children can understand them.

Even by reading this story, you can feel how horrible and inconvenient it was for ancient people to pursue spiritual practice. Most of the time, they were envied and in danger of being captured or killed. The spiritual practitioners must have been better, wiser, smarter and more talented than ordinary people in every way, so they were very much envied and in danger. Just reading the Bible, you will know how hard it was to practice in the past.

The first story in the Bible has given us many good points to ponder and study. It's not just a matter of fruit; it's a matter of discipline, mutual respect,



cooperation and ego. Adam and Eve didn't want to follow the instructions. They just wanted to be greater than others, even God. But they were pretty stupid in their attempt. If they really wanted to surpass God, there must have been some other way. They could have asked Hirm, "Why are You so great? Can You tell us how You did it?"

Being so great meant God must have had Hiers own virtues and ways of practicing. Hes couldn't have become what Hes is in one day. So they should have told Hirm their wish. Stealing behind people's back is by no means a good quality. God had treated them so well, but they ended up doing nasty things behind Hiers back. That's human beings!

The Greater the Goal, the Higher the Price

I've told you, everything has a price. As you follow me in your spiritual practice, you have to obey strict rules. But you get something in return. You know this very well. Otherwise, why are you still here? Buying gold is different than buying iron. If you want to get something, work for it.

Take me for example. I underwent an operation some time ago, but that wasn't the end of it. I had to work my muscles and nerves for three to four hours a



day to help them recover because of the anesthetic, and the surgeon had sutured them. If I hadn't exercised them they would have become stiff and gone on strike.

I was told that I'd have almost, if not complete recovery, after working the muscles three or four hours a day for six months. Similarly, if it's a higher goal that we're after, how can we not work hard every day? This is a rule that we just can't ignore. You may know it very well, but you haven't worked very hard. Still, you've gotten something in return, but not as much as a hard worker.

It's more difficult to obtain worldly things. For example, you have to pay hundreds of thousands of NT dollars for an operation, and you feel very terrible afterwards. For the first few hours, you're unconscious. After you regain consciousness, you discover a lot of tubes all over your body. It's a painful mess. On top of that, you may not yet have recovered completely and the suffering continues because you have to exercise for several hours a day. Nothing in this world is simple or free of charge.

It seems that God's offer was easier. Hes created the whole Garden of Eden solely for the two of them, except

God creates both light and darkness, good and evil, so that we'll be able to understand, to know, to exercise our wisdom to choose the right way. Some of us tend sometimes to give in to weakness and forget that the price of strength, the price of honoring our own ideal is greater than material gain, much, much greater. We have to strive for that. We have to honor ourselves by choosing the right way.

--Supreme Master Ching Hai





for one single tree. However, they took even that. This means that humans are never satisfied, no matter how much they've been given. So if anyone should treat you badly or walk out on you, don't always think that you must have done something wrong. Probably it's just another human being with an insatiable heart, demanding one thing after another.

Have you ever noticed that our mind is really nasty? It keeps bothering us all day long. Once we've settled for one thing, it says, "No, I want that one too." Thus we're always busy with a lot of things. That's why we have to examine it and keep a spiritual diary. We have to watch closely to see whether it really needs something. If it doesn't, don't comply with it. The more you give, the more it demands and the busier we get, although we may never figure out what makes us so busy.

For example, you may have accumulated a lot of stuff in your house, which you don't use even once a year. Sometimes it was used only once after you bought it, and then it was forgotten forever. There are many things like that.

Don't Mistake Lack of Discipline for Freedom

If we make our lives simpler, they won't be complicated anymore. We have to watch our minds carefully to see what they demand, how they get what

they demand, how they bother us, and how they get hold of us. Once we've made a clear analysis, we will have better insight.

We have to be strict with ourselves, observing ourselves as if we were out of our bodies, and ask, "What do you want this for? What else do you want after you get this? How much time, money and effort do you have to expend for it? What can you do with this?"

We should probe deeply into these questions, or else we might become slaves to our own minds while still believing that we're free enough to do whatever we want. No, that would be undisciplined, not free. Freedom means doing something when you need to, and not doing it when it's wrong. On the other hand, doing what our mind tells us to do is just pampering ourselves. We can never improve in this way.

It will only do us good if we're strict with ourselves, not with other people. Nothing is free of charge in this world. We have to work very hard to get what we want. We have to be strict with ourselves, very strict, to acquire the characteristics and level that we pursue.

If we just want to pamper ourselves, that's too easy. We might just as well follow what our mind dictates and believe that it's freedom. No one will interfere, no one will care; we ourselves won't care either. But that's wrong. That's slavery, not freedom.



The whole world is upside down. It always finds my rules and teachings difficult to accept, even though I tell the truth. People think I'm too harsh on them and they can't stand it. They want to do whatever they want because that's easier. But where does this easy way lead us?

We're accustomed to walking the easy way, regardless of whether it's right or wrong because it's an easy, comfortable way. We keep walking on and on and never want to turn back. To keep on going is more convenient than to turn our car around, even though we're actually getting farther and farther away from our destination.

It's all right to keep going, but we have to first make sure that it's the right way. Just because it's a big freeway doesn't mean we always have to take it. If our home is in the other direction, we have to make the necessary turns or even turn our car around, no matter how hard it is. We can't speed on and on just because it's a big freeway, nor should we give up because it's a narrow path. If we give up, we'll never get back to where we want to go.

Freedom is not going straight ahead all the time – stupidity is. The difference lies in the lack of self-control. Irresponsible people may look just like those who have freedom because they do whatever they want and they believe they're free. No, that's being negligent of one's duty, and they're being too easy with themselves.

So now you see. This Garden of Eden story isn't just about a piece of fruit. It's a parable which tells us that it's not easy for us to obey others. When people tell us not to do something, we have to do just that. Our mind always messes things up this way, doing what it's warned not to do. That's why Adam and Eve listened to a serpent just because of one piece of fruit.

They knew how nice God had been to them, giving them the whole world for their use, but they weren't grateful. They believed in the hypocritical serpent and ate what God had told them not to. We shouldn't steal anything from our benefactor no matter how attractive it seems. If we really want it, we have to tell him.

They were given the whole world, but they weren't satisfied. They were told not to eat the fruit, but they ate it anyhow. The moral is: it's not easy to keep ourselves in line because we always listen to the bad guys.

Introspect at All Times

There are two people inside us: one's the good guy and the other is the bad guy. The serpent is the bad guy in us. We know we shouldn't do something



but we still allow it to happen carelessly, or even intentionally, because we don't have enough wisdom or good judgment.

Therefore, we have to examine ourselves every day in order to know what our mind demands. Is it really necessary, or is it just a molehill, something to consume our time, which could otherwise be spent in thinking about what we really need?

Sometimes when we go grocery shopping, we get carried away by the advertisements outside the shops and forget about the important things we have to buy even before we reach the store we've set out for. We hang around and buy this and that. Later we may run out of money, the store may be closed, or we may forget all about it. Anyway, we end up coming home with lots of useless things, and nothing we intended to buy.

Now that you've read this story, you can figure out why some people treat us badly even though we've been very nice to them. Even God can't satisfy human hearts so how can we? That's what human beings are like. So we have to keep ourselves from becoming like that. We have to remember this story and remind ourselves not to become that kind of person.

But it's very difficult because we make mistakes very easily and we like listening to the "serpents." There's no one worse than those with a sweet tongue.

That's why we Aulacese people are afraid of sweet people. Be careful when someone speaks sweet words to you.

Sugar and candy don't do us any good. Sugar spoils all the vitamins we consume – so I was told. So now you see why those who have high sugar intake, or have a lot of sugar in their coffee, look very nervous – because they don't have enough vitamins. Besides, too much sugar causes tooth decay. Sweet things don't help us. We'll put on weight, and get high blood pressure or heart disease if we have too many cookies, and they're fatal diseases.

So sweet things are no good at all, and neither are sweet words. But the whole world is fond of sweetness. That's the trouble. Had the serpent's words not been so sweet, stupid Eve would probably not have taken the fruit. But as they were sweet, she bought them, ate the fruit and then dragged her husband down as well.

Because of this story, people believe women are like serpents, in that they all seduce men. I dare not say it's wrong, but who was the original seducer?

*To God, to the Buddha,
we should have the
spirit of total concentration.
Do not be influenced by this
world or any temptation,
or let our mind be diverted
from our goal. Only in this
way can we receive God's
grace.*

--Supreme Master Ching Hai





The Latter Part of Eden

When Adam and Eve fell to Earth, they were captivated by worldly pleasures and virtually forgot about repentance. From that time onward, they became mesmerized. Intoxication alone is still acceptable, but why were they so ferocious? It's because of what I just told you. When they wanted to eat a piece of fruit in Heaven, the fruit would drop into their hands. Such things never happen in this world. You shake a tree with all your might or even use a hook, and the fruit still won't come off.

So, they began to rack their brains, trying to conceive of a way to get a lot of fruit in the most civilized and speedy manner. They got some inspiration from the power of the rains and storms. They saw the trees wavering in the wind, so they imitated them and blew at the trees, but the trees didn't move an inch.

Then they began to practice Chi-kung and energy exchanging. At first they could only bully the small trees. As their Chi grew stronger, they affected the bigger trees. Consequently, their faces started to look flushed, and their voices also became very loud and coarse.

Previously, they didn't have to speak in Heaven. Everyone could communicate by telepathy and understand each other's thoughts. Here they had to learn from the animals because they wanted to defend themselves. It was

still all right when they first came here, but later the animals smelled them and threatened to eat them.

Terrified by the roaring animals, they didn't know what to do. So, because the animals roared, Adam, Eve and their children also began to roar. Observing that they were fiercer, even the tigers ran away – it worked! Their method worked. So they continued and became even fiercer, just like tigers and lions.

If we sometimes see people who are very fierce, you know that was how they first learned it. Originally, they practiced it to protect themselves, but gradually it became a deep-rooted habit. That's how we became like we are today – fierce and raucous Buddhas.

If people still remembered what they were like in the very beginning, they would speak in a softer manner. When they don't remember, they roar. So now we know it's only our habits that make us speak softly or loudly.

Then came the whistling sound of the wind, very much like the rumbling sound of tigers and lions. However, Adam still couldn't talk to his wife because they didn't have to speak in Heaven. As soon as other people thought, they understood. Not a word was required.

When they fell to Earth, however, their power was gone. It was different when they were deprived of the blessing power. Once they left this power, they



got lost in the secular world. Therefore, they needed to speak. Then they felt the shame that estranged them from each other. They dared not hold each other's hands or do anything. It was not the same anymore.

So, they began to charm each other. In doing so, they had to learn from the animals because they could no longer communicate inside, and they didn't know how to speak either. They observed the animals and imitated their voices. That was how they learned their A-B-C's.

Having no one else to learn from, they could only imitate the chaotic behavior of the animals. When they were up there, they learned from God, from the immortals, the Buddhas and Saints, which was much more elegant than in the human world.

When they first came here, there were no other humans because they were our ancestors. They didn't have an enlightened Master to teach them here, so they had to teach themselves. However, their wisdom had been severed and forgotten! As soon as they left the spiritual center, they got lost and couldn't return. They became intoxicated by passions and sensual pleasures!

The secular world is full of worries, which made them forget their wisdom so they had to take care of themselves. Having no teachers, they learned from the wind, the rain, the fearful thunder, the sun and the extreme phenomena of hot and cold. They learned everything from nature.

They also learned from the animals how to protect themselves. Sometimes they weren't really angry, but when the tigers came roaring, they also roared. They imitated them so well that they started to look like them. They weren't really fierce at heart, but sometimes Adam would forget and roared even at his wife. His wife also roared back at him so the two acted in the same way. Human language was initiated from that, which was a compilation of animal sounds.

We shouldn't blame ourselves really; we should blame God for giving us such a severe punishment. Anyhow, God is impatient in the first place. He has the greatest patience, but He is also the most impatient. He is the most merciful, but also the most apathetic. He has two faces. He is the most Yin and the most Yang, the most gentle and the most forceful. This is what makes Him so interesting.

It's similar in our world. If there's only sunshine every day, we can't bear it and the crops won't grow. We need rain. However, if it rains constantly, it's very inconvenient for us who live in tents. So, both are essential.

However, although we're aware of the law of Yin-Yang equilibrium, it's still unbearable when the effects come to us. We know there are rainy days and sunny days; there's winter

*As practitioners,
sometimes we are
tested and we will be tested
very severely, mentally,
internally, so that we
become more and more
humble, more and more
egoless, so that we can endure
hardships better, so that the
God power can integrate
within us better without any
interference, without any
obstructions.*

--Supreme Master Ching Hai





and summer. Nevertheless, we often complain about the hot, sticky, humid weather of summer.

When it rains, though we know it's essential for agriculture, we still can't stand it, especially when we're having a one-day or seven-day retreat or gathering. Everyone gets completely wet, and the steel cups get filled with rainwater and can't be used to drink Oolong tea. (Laughter)

The same also applies when we encounter trials in our spiritual cultivation. The Master has told us a hundred and eight times that there ought to be trials, and that we should keep a balanced mind, see good and bad things as the same and take praise and reprimand equally.

However, when we're being scolded, we still pull a long face, feel hurt and show all our protesting gestures, one here and one there, with many little signs. We show all our hands and feet in protest – against whom we don't know, even when there's no one watching us.

History of the Earth

Actually, in the earliest days there weren't any extreme climatic conditions on our Earth. There were no hot summers and cold winters. There might

have been some rain, but not so distressing as today. Our climate used to be more pleasant. There were sunny days and rainy days, but it rained only when necessary. It was not that cold and humid, and it would dry when the sun came out. Summertime was not that hot.

Our climate now is a result of a war that we waged against Heaven. We didn't listen to God, and wanted to challenge the angels just after we had learned a few things. Therefore, they destroyed our weapon system with another powerful weapon, and locked us up in here. That's why we can't get out of the Three Realms.

The angels set up a protective layer surrounding our Earth, just like the magical spell that confined the Monkey King. We're imprisoned by this invisible control. At every moment, the beings in Heaven are observing us, and they won't allow any of us to advocate revolutionary ideas as we did before!

That's why the machines we have now are lousy ones; we can't invent really good things. But we've started doing it again. In the last century, we've built atomic bombs based on our past-life memory. But instead of feeling remorseful, we're creating trouble again.

Therefore, the angels are monitoring us continuously, and they keep warning us with a chain of calamities. Besides, our resistance also generates a destructive power that will destroy us. When we're angry, don't we feel



heartache, physically irritated? When we're in trouble and cry, don't we feel very exhausted just like when we're exhausted from working? (Audience: Yes.) This is how we're hurting ourselves.

At that time, the angels prepared to destroy us. Their attack was so forceful that the Earth was moved slightly off its orbit, which resulted in the extreme hot and cold climate of today. After that, the angels locked us up here. In addition, we ourselves generate this kind of ambiance, so we live and die by ourselves.

Although God has confined us here with His magical spell, He still keeps an eye on us, fearing that we might sneak into Heaven. Some people tried to liberate themselves through meditation, but they ended up being possessed. Who are the devils? They're the guardian angels.

Observing us trying to escape, they think we are trying to revolt and fight again, so they push us down. When we come back, we're like idiots, separated from our souls, extremely confused, and unable to recognize anyone. People call this "being possessed."

They forbid us to go up. So, if we get out ourselves, they regard us as revolutionaries, and take prompt action to keep us from ruining the universe. We're under constant observation, and we can't go up alone without the guidance of an enlightened Master.

However, there are some very sincere people so the Buddhas often come to teach and encourage us: "We know where you're hiding. Quickly come out and surrender; you don't have much time. You'll be forgiven. This is the final warning!"

Some enlightened beings go out and put up posters, and distribute leaflets and sample booklets just to edify us. There are people who really repent and want to be liberated from life and death. They really want to get out of this barrier. If we're truly sincere, we can enroll, observe a vegan diet for three months, and then a Master will come and accept us. This is initiation. Other people still can't get out!

Here we're just like prisoners. Some prisoners behave better, and they're not that evil by nature. Their offense is light, and they truly repent and behave well; so they can be released when a lawyer comes to help them. This is what happens to initiated people.

If we truly want to get out of jail, the Buddhas will open the gate and take us out. Other people aren't allowed; they must first repent, and stop producing atomic bombs. Only a small group of people who really repent and want to get liberation can break through this intangible barrier.

We're not supposed to get out. If we stealthily escape, there will be graver consequences when we're caught. We'll be condemned to a small cage where we



can neither stand nor sit, and be forbidden to talk to anyone.

Similarly, those who attempt to seek liberation by themselves will face an even more tragic end. They'll become stranger than before. Originally, they could still understand something. But after they meditate by themselves, they do all sorts of hand and foot mudras and talk nonsense. Their minds become confused and run amuck.

Like prisoners, if we escape and get caught by the police, we'll be treated more harshly than ordinary inmates. We'll be chained, locked up in a small place where there's no light – it's very dark. Severe criminals are jailed there, and they aren't allowed to talk with anyone. The situation is worse than before we escaped.

The initiated people are those who are sincere about getting out. If you're not really sincere, and you've cheated the Buddhas, later you'll be thrown in and locked up again. The enlightened beings have nothing to lose; it's we who have to bear the consequences.

The two and a half hours of meditation each day is meant to remind us and let God know that we're very sincere, that we're determined to get out. God tests us to see if we always remember or not. We've only said once: "I want to get out!" One statement is nothing. Besides, there's no proof. It's not enough! So we must repeat it every day.

Because we were so bad before, God wants to make sure that we're truly sincere this time. For two and a half hours each day, we have to recite: "I want to get out. I want to get out. I really want to get out. I'm determined to get out!"

It's the same when we want to marry someone. It's not enough just to say once: "I want to marry you!" We have to show it by our actions, present gifts, and chant every day: "I really want to marry you. I definitely want to marry you."

Furthermore, we have to prepare for the wedding ceremony to show our sincerity. We must work towards that, step by step. Similarly, we have to meditate for two and a half hours each day and keep chanting until we're "married" to God.



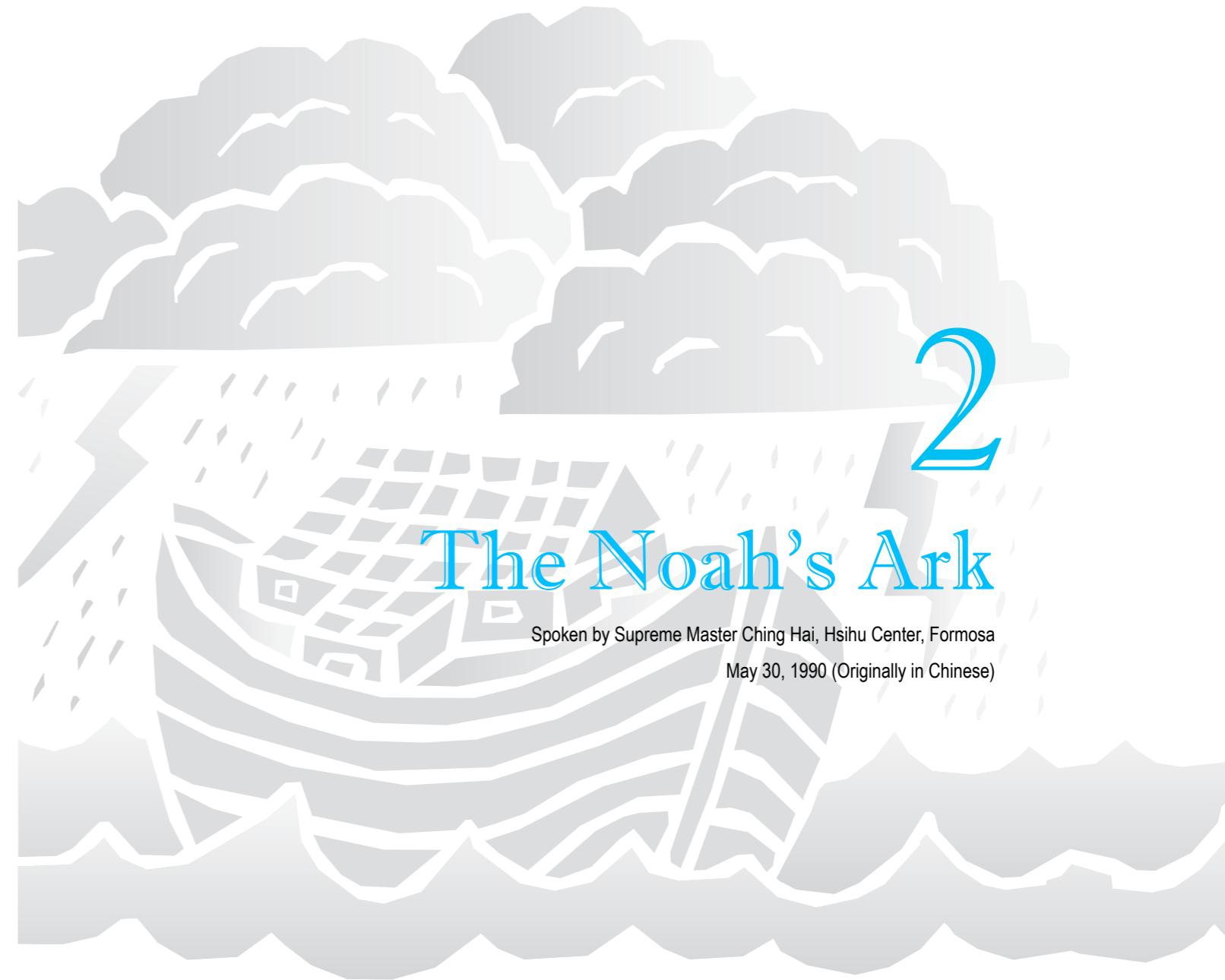


Q: Why is there so much suffering in this world? Is there innocence involved in suffering?

M: No one is innocent. Except you are born again, you are not innocent. Born again means repenting our past misdeeds and promising God to lead a better life, a virtuous life. Then God's grace will descend on us, will help us, clean us, purify us, and make us become a child. Then you can say: "I am born again, I am innocent." After the initiation you can say you are innocent.

If you follow the virtuous path, then you will always be innocent – but not before that. We are burdened with the so-called original sin, or the past karma. We cannot say we are innocent. We, everyone of us, are responsible for the condition of our world today. Whether knowingly or unknowingly, we have done some damage to the world. We must repent. We must change our way of life. We must live in wisdom, in virtue.

--Supreme Master Ching Hai



The Noah's Ark

Spoken by Supreme Master Ching Hai, Hsihu Center, Formosa

May 30, 1990 (Originally in Chinese)



God Regrets Creating Human Beings

After Fool ('Eve' sounds similar to the word 'fool' in Chinese) and Bold ('Adam' sounds similar to the word 'bold' in Chinese) went down the hill, they gave birth to many children who later scattered and lived in different places and countries. Gradually, the world became chaotic and people became worse and worse. They didn't follow God's instructions and didn't respect Hirm, nor did they care about how Hes wanted them to live. That is, they didn't care about virtue and the commandments of God. No one listened to God.

Then God began to regret having created human beings. There was only one thing that Hes could do, and that was to re-create human beings. Since Hes felt very annoyed, Hes decided to destroy the entire world. However, this decision brought Hirm a lot of anguish. Hes wanted not only to destroy human beings, but also to destroy the entire world. Therefore, Hes decided to flood the world, to submerge everything.

However, there was a person who was very good, who had lived

according to God's instructions, rules and precepts, and who also loved God very much. This friend of God was called Noah. God told Noah about the flood and explained Hiers plan to him.

God said to Noah, "I want to save you and your family. You should build an ark big enough for all your family members. With the remaining space, you may bring some animals – two of each type, a male and female so that they can multiply." You see, God was very thoughtful! If Hes had let Noah plan it, Noah might have brought three females and two males of each type, and then they would have quarreled and not even been able to lay an egg. (Laughter) God also said, "There should be enough space to store food for you to survive a long time."

Noah followed God's instructions and began to build the ark as Hes had asked. This work required a very long period of time. Many people came to see him and always asked, "What are you doing? Why are you building such an ark?" Noah told them God's plan, but no one believed him. They all thought that Noah was crazy. They thought that he must have had a mental problem to do such a thing. Can you imagine that?



Noah lived on a high mountain, which was far, far away from oceans or rivers, several thousands of kilometers away, yet he was building an ark! They all said, “How stupid he is!” and laughed at him. But Noah still believed in God and his faith didn’t waver.

The Flood Submerges Everything

The ark was finally built, and then it started to rain. So Noah, his family, the birds and other animals in pairs all ran into the ark. God then told them to lock the door, so they did. They saw that the rain was pouring down and it kept pouring down each day. Soon all the rivers and seas overflowed, and the water level kept rising. Gradually, the ark was lifted up, and Noah and his family floated on the water. However, the rain didn’t stop and one day everything was submerged, and even the highest mountain disappeared. Nothing could be seen, nothing was alive, and nothing could be saved. Noah, his family and the animals were in the ark with only water around them, nothing else.

Can you imagine that the world could become like that in one day? Suppose we are drinking tea here, but suddenly water is everywhere. It’s hopeless even if we go to the top of the roof, and even the highest mountain disappears. At that time, the world became a very lonely, quiet and pitiful place.

Eventually, the rain stopped and the water level gradually fell. One day, the water receded sufficiently so that the ark came to rest on a mountain top. After some time, Noah wanted to know whether the land had become dry or not. He had to make sure before he went out. So he opened a window and sent an animal out. But the animal didn’t come back. It might have drowned because it had rained for a long time and the forests had become rotten and muddy. Then he released a pigeon. But for the pigeon, the land wasn’t dry enough so it flew back. Pigeons are trained to fly back. Noah opened the door and let it come in.

After another period of time, he sent the pigeon out again. This time when the pigeon returned, it was carrying a green leaf in its mouth. Noah knew that the trees were beginning to grow and the land really had



become dry enough for them to go out. He opened the door, allowing everyone to go out. All his family and the animals were very happy, so they went out cheering and dancing. They had stayed in the ark for a long time, so they must have felt bored.

God told Noah, "Now you can leave the ark and go out to start new lives." They thanked God for protecting them. They then collected many stones and built a very big and tall altar. They cooked food and made offerings to God. At that time, a rainbow appeared in the sky, with which God showed His compassion and kindly promised Noah, "From now on, I won't destroy the world again." God made this promise so that people could start new lives. (Genesis 6:5-9:17)



Even Diamonds Are Created from Coal

Do you know why God did that? It's true that when God created human beings, He gave us His spirit, to let us have His wisdom and love. However, when humans wanted to use them, these qualities were filtered by their minds. If our minds don't work well, we'll reduce the love or use it to do evil deeds. So the mind is a very important instrument. If our minds don't work well, we become different. So God didn't destroy human beings but only their damaged instruments. When He did that, He knew that He had done it correctly and it was nothing fantastic. However, to create such a beautiful world, it takes a long time. It takes millions and billions of eons to create such an Earth.

You all know that in the beginning our Earth was chaotic. There was no life, no human beings, no animals or anything. It was like a fire ball. No one could live on it and nothing alive could survive. After a long, long time, millions and billions of eons, the surface of the Earth cooled down; but its center is still hot even now. Occasionally the center explodes and then we say that a volcano has erupted. The heat from the lava can melt stones and minerals, which gradually cool down and become different materials. That which cools down more quickly becomes harder materials, while that which cools down more slowly becomes stones, and so on. Although they're different kinds of materials, they're all similar in quality. So you see, wood can turn into coal after being compressed for a long time.



What can coal turn into if compressed for a long time? (Audience answers: Diamonds.) Yes, diamonds. That useless black material can become diamonds, precious stones. It consists of the same elements, but the different pressure turns it into different things.

Similarly, with us human beings, we're all equal originally. But what we become depends on how much effort we put into it. It's true that we're all equal and we all have the Buddha Nature within, but it depends on whether we train ourselves to become Buddhas or not. We can't just half-heartedly hope to change ourselves, or we'll only be like coal and emit black light. Nevertheless, diamonds also come from coal. All precious stones are created from coal or from ordinary wood.

It takes a long, long time to create a world like this. We say that it's not perfect and sometimes we dislike it. But in fact it has taken a lot of hard work to create it. Even an insect, a mosquito or a fly is of a great design. The Creator had a great plan and made a special design for each kind of living creature, not only human beings. It took a lot of time to create even a small animal. So God was also in anguish when Hes destroyed the world.

But one has to give up an instrument after using it for a while. Just like when we drive a car for a long time, and it becomes old and damaged. What can we do about it? We have to discard it and leave it in a junk yard. Later it'll be crushed into a piece of metal, which will then be used to make other things

or parts for another car. Similarly, after this world was destroyed, it could have been re-created by other instruments.

Only the Instruments Are Destroyed

The human brain becomes bad when used for too long a time because it collects bad influences. When it's filled with bad information, a person will become bad. After a while, it becomes too bad to be used anymore. Then it has to be erased and re-created all over again. However, our souls exist forever.

God has given everyone a living-loving spirit. Hes can take it back and integrate it within another instrument, and then Hes won't lose anything. It's the instrument that has been damaged or destroyed, not the person, not the soul, not God or the Buddha Nature. This is what happens when we die. If we can separate our Buddha Nature from the instrument, we'll be free to find another instrument to attach to; but if we can't, we'll be attached to our old instrument and be unable to disassociate from it.

After initiation, God's Power helps us to repair our instrument. In case it can't be repaired, after we die, Hes will help to permanently separate it from



us, and then we'll be free to find another useful instrument that's better, more perfect, more useful and more easily maintained and repaired. That's all. It's not that we lose anything. We'll still be the same, but our instrument will be new.

It's just like buying a new car when our old one doesn't run. But we have to have the money. Initiation gives us the "money" – makes us wealthy and gives us merit to buy a new instrument later, since we can't repair our old car and can't sell it for the time being, even though we ought to drive it away to discard it. That's why we still drive it for the time being. That's why it's said that fixed karma can't be changed. We have to wait until we buy a new one. That's all.

The World Can Be Saved If More People Practice Spiritually

This world is really not a big deal and nothing happens, actually. It's just that if it's repairable and if we can repair our own instruments, there's no need to destroy the whole world. We can gradually repair our instruments one by one. For example, if you've fixed your car, you can help to tow another car or fix it, or you can give people a ride so that they don't have to drive their damaged cars and have an accident. So you save your own car, and then take others with your good instrument – tow their cars to the airport or to the garage to get repaired.



Therefore, if many people practice spiritually, this world won't be destroyed but can be repaired gradually. It'll be enough to repair a portion of the human population. Then these people can carry others. If everyone carries some and takes care of his share, then it will be balanced and everything will be all right.

We can see from this story that at that time, no one believed in God except Noah's family, who followed God's instructions. That was why God destroyed the entire world. If more families in many places had believed in God, He might not have done that. Since there was only one family, it was very simple for Him to handle.

Our world will not be destroyed because there are some people practicing spiritually. However, I think that it's very difficult. After practicing for a while, they become sluggish and forget their purpose in coming here. They quarrel over trivial things, struggle with nonsensical feelings, and forget the matter of life and death. We should first strengthen our faith regarding life and death; and then whatever we do, we won't forget God.

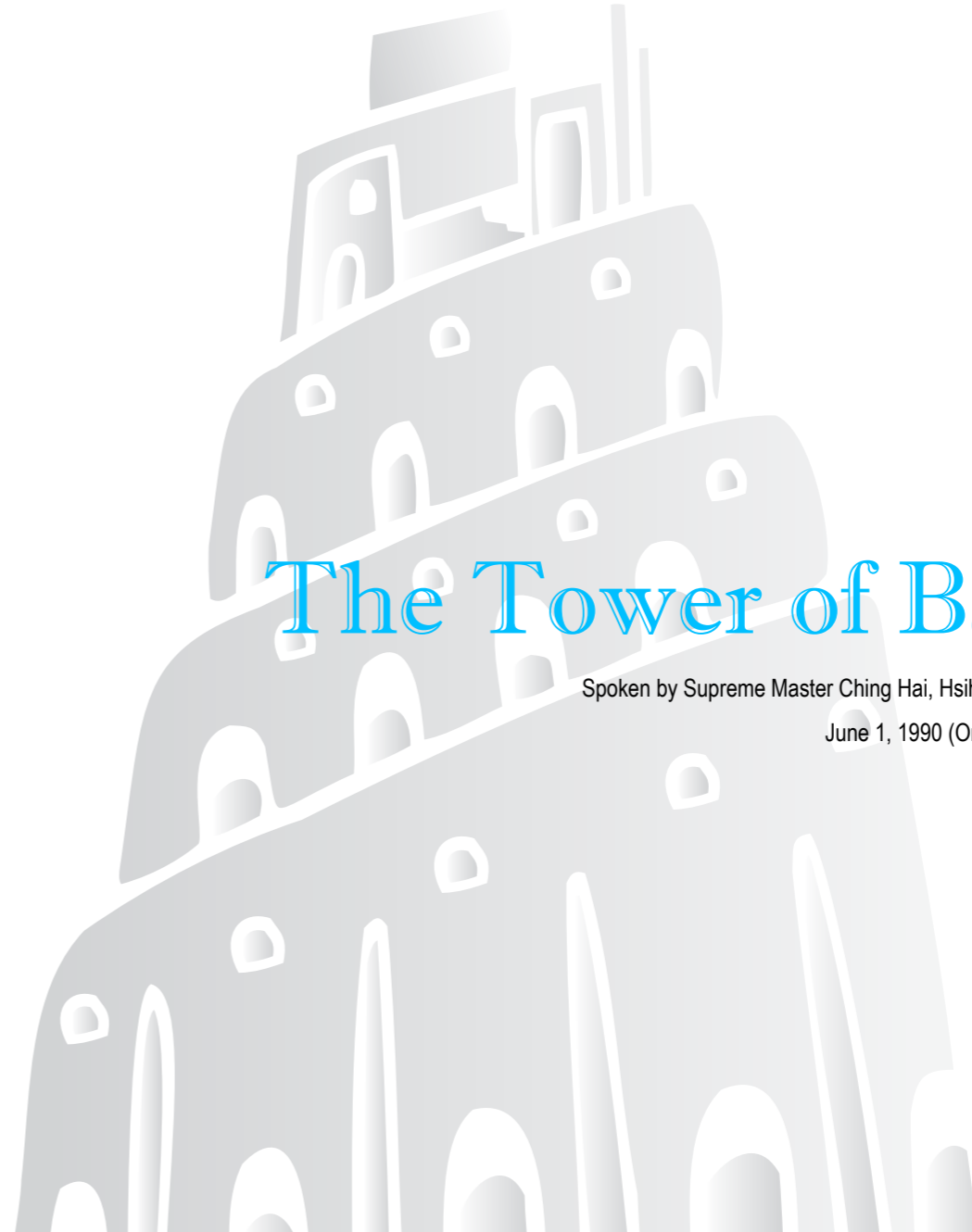
Many glorious dynasties or rich and powerful countries suddenly came to an end. It was because these people did not respect the law of the universe. They did not show any gratitude towards God. A similar event occurred in Noah's time. It is clearly recorded in the Bible that at that time the whole world was corrupt. People cared for nothing but mundane material things, and they had no morals, so God used the flood to cleanse the Earth.

--Supreme Master Ching Hai





It's not that we can't do other things. For example, Noah had a family – he had a wife, children and many animals – but he didn't forget God. This is why he was different than others. Other people also have spouses, children, businesses and animals, but they're completely attached to them. So we spiritual practitioners should know what the most important thing is and what's secondary.



3

The Tower of Babel

Spoken by Supreme Master Ching Hai, Hsihu Center, Formosa

June 1, 1990 (Originally in Chinese)



Now the time of the deluge had passed. Noah lived to be eight hundred years old, and had many sons, probably thousands of them! The book says that Noah and his children cultivated the land and grew grapes on it. His children had many children, who in turn had many more children. There were generations upon generations. Before long, there were too many people, and many families had to move somewhere else. If they didn't, there would not be enough grass for the livestock. Because all of them spoke a very simple language, they understood each other very well so it was easy for them to cooperate on any project or task.

Some of them moved to a place called Babylon, where they invented a way to make bricks. They learned to fire the bricks, making them hard and strong. They also learned how to adhere the bricks together with an ancient material very much like the cement we have today. In this way they were able to build houses.

One day, one of them said, "We should build ourselves a very large city and in that city a sacred tower, as big and tall as never before so we can make a name for ourselves." Nonsense! (Audience laughs) They

wanted to build it to become famous. Then everyone in Babylon agreed, thinking it was a very good idea. From then on, everyone worked very hard to build the Tower of Babel.

The People's Egos Expanded

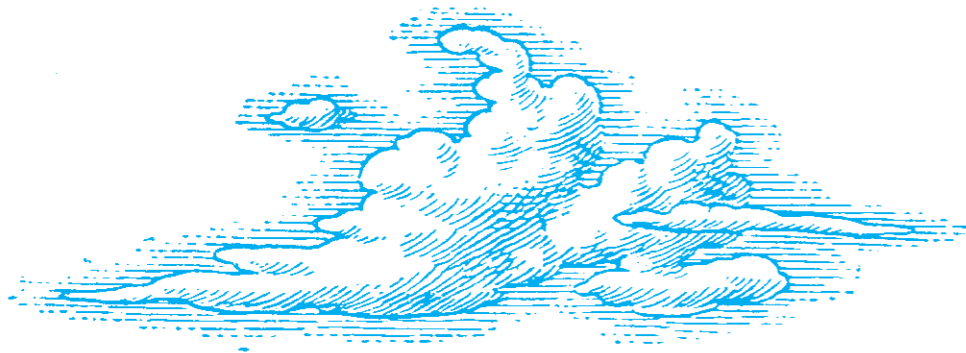
God began to observe their work from Heaven. Seeing the walls getting taller and that human beings were having more opinions and becoming busier in their minds, God knew there would be trouble. Human beings began to think too much, and their egos and mundane notions were expanding.

At that time, human beings began to believe they were deities and were capable of anything. So before they finished the tower, God came up with an idea. He thought that if human beings spoke different languages, they wouldn't understand each other and so wouldn't work so aggressively.



Then God began to confound their languages and sent people to different corners of the world – to the north, south, east and west. Some settled on the coast and some on the islands. Some moved to places very far away. Some went to Egypt, some to Africa and others to Arabia.

Noah's descendants multiplied and became more and more numerous. Each lineage generated many more men and women. Each of the families grew larger and larger. Finally, they became nations. In each nation, people spoke a different language. From then on, they were unable to work together or communicate with each other. (Genesis 11:1-11:9)



As Babel Implies, We Always Speak Too Much

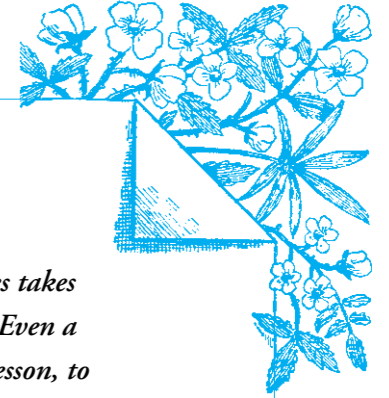
So now, whenever people think of the Tower of Babel they're reminded of why people "babble" so much, meaning they "blah, blah, blah" a lot. The word babel means speaking like children, babbling, so the tower was named the Tower of Babel. Like what the word babble implies, we always speak too much.

This is a story about God and Noah's descendants. There's a moral to the story and we can learn from it. What is it? The more comfortable human beings become, the less they think of God. Back when their parents were still alive, everything was very simple. Everyone lived in the ark and remembered God all the time. Not too long afterwards, God gave them comfortable lives. There were no floods, no punishments and no reminders, so they began to feel they were great.

Sometimes when we live a more comfortable life, we become more fanciful, just like Eve the Fool and Adam the Bold. When they were still in Heaven, they were carried away by their illusions, thinking that they didn't have enough and that they should be like God. But what's the point of being like God? It was just an apple that they didn't have, and they were tricked into doing a foolish thing. They already had the whole world and the whole of Heaven to themselves. They were happy every day and had whatever they wanted, but they still wanted to be like God. How foolish they were! No wonder God punished

them by sending them down to Earth. Only in this way could they learn their lessons. Then they would know “The life before was good; it’s painful now,” and they would begin to cherish it.

They already had everything except one apple, but they still coveted it to be like God. What egos they had! Hopeless! So we have to reflect on ourselves once in a while. When we live a good life, we shouldn’t fantasize too much, or else we’ll regret it later when it’s too late to come back. Usually in a comfortable life, people are likely to forget and do unpleasant things or things they shouldn’t do. So, even in a relaxed and happy situation, we shouldn’t forget, indulge or pamper ourselves and end up getting weak and unable to survive in more difficult situations. Instead, we should maintain our courage and a balanced heart.



God always loves us humans and Hes takes care of us in many different ways. Even a disaster is a form of grace, a very severe lesson, to remind us of the transitory nature of this world. Should we learn the lesson, God will take care of us and give us material things and wealth to make our lives comfortable. However, in comfort, we should not forget what God has taught us, because if we do forget the lesson, more than likely we will have to learn it again. When we are in God’s grace and we are given everything, we should cherish and respect the law of God and the universe even more, then our lives will be richer and more comfortable.

--Supreme Master Ching Hai



4

The Angels Rescue Lot

Spoken by Supreme Master Ching Hai, Hsiu Center, Formosa

June 3, 1990 (Originally in Chinese)



“I Shall Make You the Leader of a Great Country”

Once there was a person named Abraham. He and his wife Sarah lived in the city of Ur. One day, God said to Abraham, “I want you to leave the city of Ur quickly and go to a very faraway place called Canaan. If you follow my instructions, I shall make you the leader of a great country.” Sarah had no children. However, they very much believed in God and so did what He instructed.

They had a nephew called Lot, whom they brought with them, along with some servants, animals and possessions when they left the city of Ur. Leaving their relatives, friends and all the familiar places to go to a foreign country was very unpleasant for them so they had a hard time and hesitated about leaving. During their migration, they used camels and walked very slowly. The country was very far away. Nonetheless, they finally arrived and set up their tents.

From that day onward, they lived very happily together. However, their herds and flocks – cows and sheep – continued to grow in number. So, eventually, their location didn’t have enough water, and couldn’t provide grass for them to eat, and gradually they began to quarrel, saying: “This land is mine;” “That tree is yours;” “This lake is mine and that is yours;” “My sheep can drink but yours cannot.” The people who were quarreling were the servants who looked after Abraham’s and Lot’s animals. Since they were quarreling so much, Abraham and Lot decided to separate.

Abraham let his nephew Lot choose first where he wanted to go. He didn’t want to use his position as an uncle to overpower Lot and so he let him choose first. Lot decided to go down the mountain to the plain because there was a basin in the plain. There was water there as it was close to the Jordan River and it was close to a city called Sodom. Besides, it was very green looking and seemed to have plenty of grass. Since Lot thought that there was plenty of grass and water for his animals, he then walked away with his flock.



God Was Very Fair

This decision meant that Abraham would have to stay on a very dry, bare mountain, where the grass did not seem to be plentiful and the water also seemed scarce. The basin that Lot was going to look very abundant and all green. However, Lot's decision was wrong. Although the basin area seemed to look good, he discovered something unpleasant when he went there; namely, that the people living in Sodom were proud, cruel, greedy and lazy, and had a very ferocious character.

Very often many horrible things happened in Sodom. However, no one felt ashamed, no one would take care of such matters, and there was no one to protect the weak and punish the wicked. However, God was very fair. He wouldn't close His eyes to such unfair happenings; He wouldn't close His eyes to allow those ferocious people, those who intentionally did wicked things, to continue to act freely. So, He decided to let the city of Sodom be punished since the people there didn't feel ashamed of themselves and had done many evil things.

One day, the weather was very hot, and as Abraham was resting, he saw three strangers walking toward his tent. Abraham stood up to greet them. He invited them into his tent to rest and gave them something to eat. Since the visit was unexpected, Sarah and their servant hurried to prepare some food. They baked some fresh bread and cooked some fresh food for their guests, and also gave them milk and cheese. After eating, the three strange men started to explain why they had come.

At that time, both Abraham and his wife Sarah were already old. However, God gave them very good news, saying, "You have longed for a son. He will be born not too long from now." After hearing this, they were very surprised and happy. Although they were already old, since they believed in God and felt that God would not cheat them, they knew that it was going to happen so they were very happy.

However, those three men also told Abraham and Sarah something that made them worried: God had decided to punish Sodom and destroy it. Since their nephew Lot was living in Sodom they were worried. In



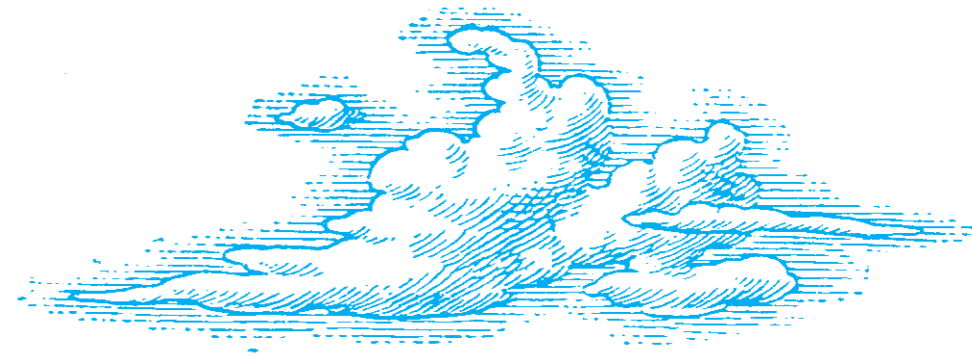
Sodom, the only virtuous people were their nephew's family and some servants; all the others were not good; and God did not forget them.

God sent Hiers messenger to Lot's home to warn him of the coming disaster and tell him to flee. However, Lot's family didn't want to leave Sodom as they were living very comfortably there. They had everything – material riches and no lack of grass and water. They had become rich there and life was very comfortable.

So, they didn't want to give up everything and leave. And at the last minute, God's messenger had to induce them to go outside the city to a safe place. When they were just outside, a great fire started in the city, and they almost didn't make it. Before they were far away from the city, an earthquake and a fire had already begun in the city. Falling from the sky, blowing up from the ground, the wind and fire seemed to come from nowhere and destroyed the entire city! The air was full of dust.

When the situation was already very serious, Lot's wife was still not willing to leave quickly. She continued to hesitate and was slow to move.

She stopped to look back and so she was killed. Her husband and two little children were not hurt, but the wife and all the others in her group were killed because they didn't listen to God and didn't run quickly. They didn't think it could be very serious and thought that it might be all right. They were still attached to their possessions, their homes, and consequently, they were all killed. Only Lot and his two daughters ran away safely. God rescued them. (Genesis 17:1-19:26)





A Practitioner Is Looked After by the Inner Master

God is the inner Master – called God or Buddha. When God wants to appear to us as a human being, He transforms Himself into the inner Master. Otherwise, as God is omnipresent and great, how could we catch Him and talk to Him. It was the inner Master's instructions and they said it was God's instructions.

There were not too many tests in this story, but there were some. It was actually not a kind of test; God just spoke the truth. Because their mundane minds didn't want to listen, they thought, "It won't! Nothing will happen!" Their minds were slow to accept and then a lot of disasters occurred. Such things come about because we don't listen to the instructions of the inner Master.

Sometimes, we depend on our limited brain and ideas instead and then there are many disasters. It's all created by us. Therefore, Lao Tze said that our troubles are created by ourselves. If a practitioner is being looked after by God, by the inner Master, he or she usually doesn't have any serious problems. Even sometimes when they do happen, the inner Master will take care of them. It's when we don't listen to Him that we cause trouble for ourselves. Just like in the story – Lot's wife, even when God had already sent people to warn them to leave quickly, was still attached to their possessions. As a result, the possessions were gone and her life was also gone. When we have life, the human body, we can get back some possessions after a while. But when the body is gone, it's

not useful anymore. So, sometimes most of us don't know what's of secondary importance and what's most important.

Just like those sent by God to deliver the warning; they seemed to be saying something illogical. To leave their family, relatives, friends and possessions all seemed illogical to them. It was like asking them to do something bad, something wrong and detrimental to them. Being attached to our possessions and homes is very common and seems to be very logical. However, it is those who use an urgent tone of voice to push you out who are really helping your life. What use are those who spend time comforting you, shaking hands with you only to die together? Because Lot's wife was still attached after she left, she squandered her time and looked back. She still wanted to go back. Those servants who sympathized with her died with her. Those who hastily pushed them out and raised their voices were the real saviors.

Our Mundane Minds Are Used to Sweet Talk

Sometimes we find it difficult to distinguish between who's good and who's not good. It's because our mundane minds are used to sweet talk and don't use wisdom to judge. Many kings of old were the same way. Since they listened to the sweet talk of bad ministers, their kingdoms collapsed. The good ministers



were usually straight in their speech and very often were not placed in important positions by the king.

Being a Master is just the same. Since the talk of others is so different, many don't wish to listen to the Master and relatively few people like the Master. In the USA there was a very famous monk named Yogananda. He said his Master was very direct. He said if his Master had not been that direct, his Master would have become the most famous teacher in India and had the greatest number of disciples. Since his Master didn't always talk sweetly, the number of his disciples was fewer.

Yogananda wrote in a book that there was a person who practiced the Quan Yin Method and had contact with the inner Master. One day, when there was war in India, he ran quickly from the street into another person's home so that he could escape the bombing for a while. However, though the house was very big and uncrowded, the family wanted to kick him out and pushed him away. They were very unkind to him and pushed and kicked him out so he had to leave. He was rather surprised and asked himself, "Why was it like that? Why was Master not protecting me? I have run for such a long way to find a family and go into hiding, but I was kicked out." He was complaining all the way on his way out. However, soon after he left, the family's house received a "bang!" and everyone inside was killed by the explosion.

Sometimes we think that certain situations are not good for us or are harsh for us. But after a while, we know. It's similar in this story. Those strange people went in to persuade Lot and his wife to leave their possessions, their homes and friends, and their many flocks of animals. This seemed not to be good to them. However, it was the only way to save them. What was important was their lives and not their possessions.

Sometimes the Inner Master Works in Mysterious Ways

Sometimes, we can't understand how the inner Master works. We think that He should be very gentle to us every day or that everything should be very smooth and good. But it's not always like that. Sometimes the situation isn't smooth, but after a while it becomes better for us. So, we'd better not ask to have smooth sailing all the time; we should only ask the inner Master to do whatever is good for us. Whether it's smooth or not, it doesn't matter. After a while, it will become smooth. In our daily lives, we unavoidably encounter many difficulties and situations that aren't smooth. We can't be happy every day. If we're happy every day, we won't treasure it. It's really like that.

Just like the story of "Stupid" and "Daring" who were living in the Garden of Eden that I told you last week. I called Eve and Adam stupid and



daring. Being too ignorant, they were stupid. God had given Eve everything except an apple, yet she was still calculating and wanted to possess it. She stole the only possession left behind for God. That was no good and so she can be called stupid. Being too happy and too comfortable every day, one won't treasure it and will subsequently do silly things. If there were no lessons from society, no turbulent situations to educate us, we would never learn. In very good circumstances, one just lies there. Then, the spirit can't be strong, the body won't be good, and our disposition will be corrupted. Besides, there can be a very high sense of dependence and no humility. Therefore, no matter what difficulties you encounter, don't just think that they're not good.



Things do not always go smoothly for those of us who are spiritual practitioners. Sometimes we think things are going well but they really are not. It is not necessarily good for our spiritual practice or wisdom. Neither is it always good for us physically. It does not necessarily help with our progress in a certain aspect. At that time, we may spoil ourselves, relax too much, indulge in too much physical fun and merrymaking, squander our precious time, listen to our minds only, and take little care of our spirit. Sometimes you may be brought to the test, either by Master or fellow initiates, or by outside situations. At that time we think things are not going smoothly and there is much to endure for us to live on. But later on, we will make rapid progress. Therefore, sometimes when we think that things are not working out in our spiritual practice, business, or life, it is actually the most favorable and beneficial situation for us, because our spirituality will then develop, sprout, and bloom.

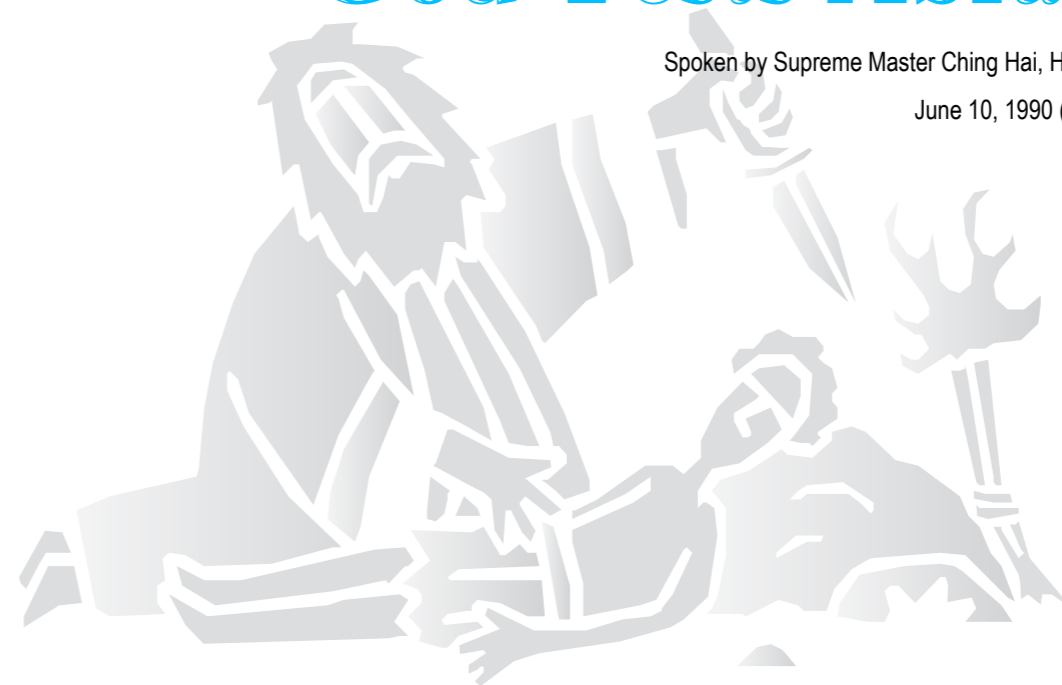
--Supreme Master Ching Hai



God Tests Abraham

Spoken by Supreme Master Ching Hai, Hsihu Center, Formosa

June 10, 1990 (Originally in Chinese)





Once there was a family, and the patriarch of the family was called Abraham. He did very well in his spiritual practice and was God's friend. One day, God told him to leave his home town, promising, "If you follow my instructions – leave your home town, and do what I tell you to do – I'll make you the father of many nations." This meant that God would make him the national founder of many nations.

God also promised to give Abraham a son and many other children to make his family very large. He said, "You'll have numerous children, as many as the stars in the sky." However, at that time, Abraham and his wife were very old. Although they had faith in God, they wondered, "How can that be? We're too old to bear children."

Many years passed, and each night when Abraham looked at the stars in the sky, he remembered God's words and felt very annoyed. He thought that God might have been joking. Finally, Abraham and his wife completely gave up hope.

A Child Given by God

However, Abraham's wife then unexpectedly conceived and gave birth to a boy, and they rejoiced over his birth and named him Isaac. Many years later, Isaac became a big, tall, strong and handsome boy. Then God decided to test Abraham.

One day, God appeared to Abraham and said, "Abraham, I want you to take your only and most beloved son Isaac into the land of Moriah and offer him to me." Here, to "offer" means to kill or sacrifice. Ancient people made sacrifices to gods or ghosts that way. Sometimes they sacrificed little boys or girls and sometimes cows, horses, pigs, and so on.

Abraham couldn't believe this and kept asking himself, "Does God really want me to kill my only son? He once promised me many children. How could He ever want to take away my only son?" He kept struggling within himself. However, he had learned all his life to believe in God. Some people might believe in God only fifty percent, but he believed in



God wholeheartedly. So the next morning, he prepared a lot of wood and matches, and set out for Moriah with his son.

It took three days to get from their home to Moriah. They had to walk a long way to get there. With the passage of time, Abraham felt more and more pained and sad. Although he believed in God, he still struggled within and didn't have the heart to face the moment when they would reach Moriah. Although he was hurting immensely, he didn't tell his son. No one knew about it except him.

Abraham Offers God His Son

When they were close to Moriah, Abraham's son Isaac asked him, "Father, we've prepared wood and matches in order to make an offering to God, but where's the lamb?" In the old times, people killed a lamb and burned it to make an offering to God. That's why Isaac asked Abraham where the lamb was and why they had only wood and matches. At that point, his father sighed and replied, "Don't worry. God will Himself provide a lamb."

After arriving at Moriah, they built an altar and piled the wood in an orderly way. Then Abraham bound his son's arms and legs and placed him on the altar, ready to sacrifice him. He told Isaac, "You're the lamb to sacrifice to God because God wants you." Then he picked up the knife to slay his son. However, at that moment, Abraham heard God call his name and say, "Abraham, don't kill him. Now I know that you truly have firm faith in me. This was only a test. Now I know to what extent you will follow my instructions. You don't need to kill your son. There's a lamb nearby. You may sacrifice that for me." That lamb was produced by God. God truly provided Himself with a lamb by producing one. So it wasn't a real lamb.

Abraham and his son were very glad and showed their gratitude to God. From then on, everything that God promised Abraham came true. Abraham had many descendants, generation after generation. The story ends here. (Genesis 22:1-22:19)



The Lesson of Detachment

Do you think that Abraham was a good father? (Audience: Yes.) It was very good to have such faith in God. Since all things are created by God, if God wants any of them back, we should return them to Hirm for they belonged to Hirm originally. Abraham and his wife were very old and had no hope of bearing any children, but they eventually had one. What a marvelous thing that was! The child was given to them by God. Since he came from God, why couldn't he go back to God? Right? (Audience: Yes.)

Why do most of us live in suffering? Because we hate to part with anything. We can't even part with a pair of ragged shoes, let alone our sons. Therefore, when we're separated from our lover or family, we're in a lot of pain and feel sad. That's because we don't understand that we'll all die sooner or later and no one can live forever. Even if we say that we love a person very dearly, if he dies tomorrow, will we die with him out of love? (Audience: No.) Of course not! We should live on.

Among ancient romantic stories, there's one about a couple named Liang Shanbo and Juh Engtai (known as "the Butterfly Lovers"). It's said that they reincarnated seven times as human beings and wanted to get married during each lifetime, but they were always hindered. During their last lifetime together as human beings, although they weren't hindered, one of them died first and the

other, due to extreme sorrow, fell ill and soon passed away too. Then they turned into two butterflies. They had to become butterflies to overcome the obstacles between them. That was a very difficult situation.

Therefore, if we cling to anything, our souls are harmed and our freedom is limited. Being butterflies seems carefree, but how many of us would like to give up our precious human bodies and become butterflies? Those two turned into butterflies because they clung too much to their love. They both had very strong willpower so they stuck together and became butterflies. Since they loved each other so much, God couldn't be too harsh on them because if they had reincarnated again as human beings, they would definitely have suffered and been hindered again. They were destined not to be together as human beings.

In these kinds of stories, people who are indebted to each other or have an adverse affinity with each other always like to stick together, while those who have a smooth affinity with each other don't like each other much. The person in front of your nose you don't like much, but rather you like the one who lives in the mountains very far away. The worse the affinity we have with each other, the more we like each other. This is human nature. People like complicated things or things that they've obtained through fighting. Only then do they think that these things are valuable.

The reason the world is full of suffering is because people don't understand that there's actually no suffering at all. Even when we lose our own lives, we



shouldn't feel sad, let alone when others lose their lives. We've had many children, life after life. We've also had many spouses, life after life. Even when we don't have any, God will arrange one for us.

You can see that the world's population has long been balanced between numbers of men and women. Don't think that there are more women than men. No, that's not true. It's possible that there are more women in this place and fewer in that place, but the total numbers of men and women in this world are balanced. For example, there are more women in one country while there are more men in another country. There would no longer be any problem if they could get together. But there are problems because worldly people don't get together. It's not that God hasn't given us what we need.

It's said that during wars, many men are killed, but many more women will get pregnant and give birth to more male infants. Is that true? (Audience: Yes.) This is a statistical conclusion, which has been obtained after lengthy research. So there's always one man for one woman. That's why God made the rule that no one can have more than one spouse at a time because should you have two, someone else will have none. Or if you're too greedy and have two spouses in this lifetime, you may have none in your next lifetime because you'll have to compensate. Therefore, God said that each person should have only one spouse so that he/she can have one in his/her next lifetime.

It's possible that Liang Shanbo and Juh Engtai each had two or three spouses in their previous lifetimes. So as a result of the Law of Cause and Effect, they couldn't have any in their later lifetimes. They couldn't even marry their most beloved. This was due to the Law of Cause and Effect. If they had wanted to break free from this retribution, they would have had to become another kind of sentient being. Since they had strong willpower to break free from the retribution, they became butterflies.

The Guidelines Provide a Balanced Life for Us

The guidelines are intended to enable us to live a balanced life and not have too much of everything this time and too little next time. This applies to eating or spending money. Don't consume anything too much because you may run short of it tomorrow. Whatever we use, we should use only the proper amount of. Similarly, the guidelines are set up to enable us to balance Yin and Yang. They're designed to save us from suffering, not to oppress or restrain us.

In the first story that I read to you about Adam and Eve, why did God withhold the apple from them? Because they had too many things already. The entire Garden of Eden had been given to them. The Garden of Eden refers to



Heaven, where there were all kinds of things. Adam and Eve didn't have to work or look for anything. They had enough of everything. However, consuming one apple made them suffer a lot.

If our so-called ancestors hadn't eaten that apple, we probably wouldn't have to suffer today. If they hadn't eaten the apple, they would have been pure and unaware of good and evil, and would have had no discrimination.

They wanted to become like God. I don't know what the good of becoming like God is. Is it possible that God is a miserable person? I think that Hes is because Hes had to create everything and has to take care of all the planets, all the people and all the sentient beings. Hes must be exhausted. Those who want to be God must be the most stupid among us.

So I advise you that you don't have to become God and you don't have to become a Buddha as long as you're happy and peaceful, live moderately, and live with an ordinary mind. Why do you have to pray for eternal happiness? What for? The more we covet, the more we suffer. Yearning for anything is painful because we covet what we lack. Yet the more we covet, the more hurt we feel.

Take the romance of Liang Shanbo and Juh Engtai as an example. If they hadn't yearned to marry each other, they wouldn't have suffered. Why did it matter for them to marry? They could have taken their time and looked for someone else. Even if they couldn't find anyone, it would have been fine for

them to become a monk and nun. They suffered simply because they desired and coveted each other. Why bother?

Similarly, we spiritual practitioners shouldn't ask for too much, but should practice step by step. When the time is ripe, we'll get the results. Of course we must practice diligently. However, our sincerity is the most important thing. "The Buddha is in our hearts." When we're sincere, Hes will come out. If we do everything and even pursue spiritual practice for Hiers sake, we'll eventually get to know Hirm and become one with Hirm.

Three Kinds of Practitioners

There are three kinds of spiritual practitioners. The first kind believes in God and obeys God; the second kind works for God; and the third kind, the highest of all, becomes one with God. Those who are one with God or become God attain this state naturally, not because they expect it. They're very sincere, of course, but they don't expect anything. Sincerity is different than expectation. I don't know how to tell you the difference between them, but it comes naturally. It's difficult to explain it in words. Sometimes we may get confused and think that expectation is sincerity, but they're actually different.



The first kind of spiritual practitioner likes to worship God and obey God, and then they're satisfied. They're happy to be able to worship God every day and think that there's a God Who's higher than they are and Who's taking care of them. If they can pray to Hirm every day, they're happy and don't ask for other things. This is the first kind of practitioner.

The second kind of spiritual practitioner recognizes God so they like to work for God. Whatever they do is for God. However, after they work for a while, they become more fond of their work than of God. So they begin to find more and more work to do and forget that their goal is to work for God. This kind of spiritual practitioner can earn a lot of merit. They can do many good deeds to liberate sentient beings, such as give lectures, build temples, become monks or nuns, and so on.

However, after they've worked for a long time, people may worship them, adore them and think that they're virtuous. People may keep praising them, and the more people praise them, the more they indulge in their work. Gradually, they become attached to doing good deeds and hence are never able to become one with God. These two kinds of spiritual practitioners can't attain the highest level because one is attached to worshipping God and the other is attached to working in order to please God.

The third kind of spiritual practitioner may also worship God and do good deeds to please Hirm, but they know that these things are only secondary.

What interests them most is the question "Who is God?" They not only want to worship God, not only want to work for God to please Hirm, but also want to know who God is in order to get hold of Hirm. This kind of spiritual practitioner will ultimately become one with God. However, very few people can attain this level. It's easy to talk about it, but it's hard to realize it.

What we see in our meditation every day represents our inner qualities. If we see the Light, we know that we're the Light. If we see darkness, we know that our inner qualities are still in the dark. Therefore, we can't stop our spiritual practice even for one day. We must keep seeking, just like we must eat every day and not stop eating for one day. Well, not eating for one day may be fine, but not for many days. The same applies to spiritual practice. We may think that it's boring to be vegan and meditate for two and a half hours every day. However, we eat every day, and why haven't we gotten tired of eating? The food is similar every day, but we still eat it because our bodies need it to grow and our cells need it to be nourished. Similarly, we meditate for two and a half hours every day; we do the same thing every day because our souls need it to develop.

Don't think that spiritual practice has to be complicated and you should do this hand gesture today, that head gesture tomorrow, and another foot gesture the day after tomorrow in order to do spiritual practice. No, you don't have to. For example, it's good enough if our food is simple. The more sophisticated our food is, the more trouble we'll make for ourselves because the



purpose of eating is to nourish our bodies anyhow. The more sophisticated the food that we eat, the heavier the karma we incur. Besides, sophisticated food may not really be good. Our stomachs may not be able to take it. So we won't be able to digest it and then we'll get ill.

When we encounter a painful situation in which we have to part with something that we cherish, we shouldn't sink into sadness. Instead, we should think, "Will I die if I don't have it?" or "Is there any substitute that may be better than this?" In fact, there is. Sometimes we think that the person whom we have is the best, but after he leaves, we eventually find another person who's better and more suitable for us. Is that not so? When we get hold of something, we forget to look at anything else. Actually, it might have been better if we had taken time to search for something better.

Attachment Is a Kind of Habit

There's nothing that we really can't part with. We hold onto a thing because of habit and because we cling to it too much. When we stand in a place, we just stand there and don't want to move. When we get hold of a person, we just hold onto him and don't want to switch to another one. If two people get

married and have a good relationship, of course they should be loyal to each other. However, if there's a problem such as he or she dies or one of them doesn't love the other anymore, the other person should retain an ordinary mind and shouldn't lose himself or herself because of that person or because of anything else.

When we're in grief, do we usually forget about our faith? Do we? (Audience: Yes.) If we grieve over the loss of a person, we may forget that all of creation is one, that nothing has ever existed, and that everything is from the same origin. We shouldn't cling to a person's physical form. When the form disappears, the person will go to another place and find himself another form.

For example, sometimes we love a rose or another kind of flower very dearly and when the flower withers, we feel sorry. We can't bear to part with it and wish that it could exist forever. However, if every rose existed forever, how could there be more roses to come?

For another example, suppose there's a beautiful mango and we don't have the heart to eat it. We think that such a beautiful mango should swing on the branch forever; so we don't eat it. However, if we don't eat it, its seed can't fall onto the ground. When the mango tree gets old, it won't bear any more fruit, nor will we have another mango tree to replace it.

This applies to all other things in the world as well. We shouldn't grieve



too much when we lose anything. It's possible that we'll get something more valuable tomorrow. There's a Chinese story about an old frontiersman who lost his horse. You're all very familiar with the story, but you still don't appreciate the value of pain and suffering.

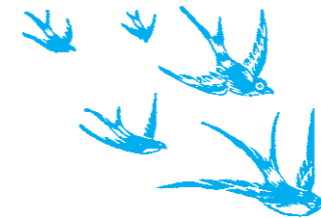
Each time I've undergone surgery or gotten ill, my karma has been cleansed a lot. I've been very grateful! You may find this hard to believe. Sometimes I've even said, "If this can truly cleanse a lot of disasters, suffering and karma, let me get more illnesses." I was really glad.

Of course when I was ill, I cried because it was very painful and I couldn't stand it, but that didn't mean I was unhappy or unwilling to accept it. No. Even though the pain was great, I was still willing to accept it.

When we're ill, it's truly the most glorious time of our lives. It can eliminate a lot of our darkness and heavy karma. If I hadn't had suffering, illness or pain in my life, I couldn't stand it, I couldn't digest the karma of sentient beings. Even if one has a lot of merit, one still can't digest that much karma all at once. I could have repaid it slowly, but then when would I have been finished with it? There are many sentient beings so I don't have enough time to do it slowly.

So God has His own system. He can help us cleanse our karma. Since

He has let us take along so much "garbage," He will help us once in a while by sending a "vehicle" or people to transport our "luggage." So when you experience a disaster or illness, don't complain, but be grateful to God instead. Without suffering and illness, our spiritual level can't be elevated because we have too much karma. Even if we have no karma ourselves, we're still carrying the karma of our ancestors.





Q: We keep five precepts and practice ten virtues, but we don't meditate. After death, can we get liberation or not?

M: We cannot be liberated by keeping the precepts or doing virtuous deeds alone. We can only be liberated when we know that we are liberated. Then we know our nature is liberation. Then we truly know that we are eternal. That is when we are liberated. We cannot be liberated when we are still blindly doing virtuous deeds. That means we still know there are things to be done, there are things to do to achieve liberation. We are still ignorant. We do not know our real Nature is liberation. You can keep as many as 500 precepts or do 10,000 virtuous deeds, not only ten or five, but you still cannot get liberation. It is like cooking sand and hoping it will become rice.

--Supreme Master Ching Hai



Spoken by Supreme Master Ching Hai, Hsihu Center, Formosa

June 17, 1990 (Originally in Chinese)



The Birth of Moses

One of Abraham's descendants was Jacob, who had many descendants. When his country Israel was passed on to one of his descendants, his country became very big, famous, powerful and wealthy. At that time, there was another country called Egypt and the Egyptians began to be afraid of the Israelites. Therefore, the newly enthroned Egyptian king decided to deal with the Israelites before it was too late. He wanted to attack them before they would fight against his country.

So the king took all the Israelites back to be his slaves, and sent many fierce taskmasters to ruthlessly watch over the slaves. Each day, the slaves were forced to build houses and palaces out of stones for the king and the royal family. They had to work from morning till night and couldn't rest. Although they worked hard, they still bore many children. Well, this was strange! So the Egyptian king became fearful and gave an order: "Cast all newborn Israelite boys into the Nile and drown them."

At that time, there was an Israelite woman called Jochebed who had just given birth to a son. She had two children already – a boy named Aaron and a little girl named Miriam. When the woman saw that her newborn baby was a boy, she was worried for his life. So she hid her baby in a small house for three months. However, the baby couldn't just lie there all day long and wouldn't always be a baby. What would she do if he grew up and ran around? So she kept thinking about it and then came up with an idea.

She found a basket and carefully daubed its exterior with pitch so that it wouldn't sink when it was put into water. She made the basket into a small boat and put her baby into it. Then she brought the basket to the river bank and hid it in high reeds. She let her daughter watch over it because she knew that the king's daughter would come to take a bath there.

As expected, when the princess came to take a bath, she saw the basket. When she picked up the basket and opened it, she saw the baby



in it. Oh! It was a very beautiful baby boy. She had never seen such a beautiful baby before. Although she knew that he was an Israelite baby, she liked him very much. It happened that she didn't have a child so she took the baby home to raise it and named him Moses. When she found the baby, she also saw Miriam, the woman's daughter. Miriam went to the princess and said to her, "I'll find a woman to nurse him," and the princess was pleased about this. Of course, the daughter went to get her mother to nurse the baby. Great! (Master and audience laugh) It was truly convenient.

So Moses grew up in the palace. He learned all that he could learn there and learned very well from the Egyptians. Gradually, he grew up and became a person who had good manners and was handsome, tall and big. However, one day, he found out that he was an Israelite, and seeing that his countrymen were treated so ruthlessly by the Egyptians every day, he was annoyed.

One day, he saw an Egyptian soldier beating an Israelite worker and treating him cruelly. When the soldier almost beat the worker to death,

Moses couldn't resist fighting with the soldier and in fact killed him. Oh! Moses was now in danger, and he was afraid that the king would create trouble for him. So he ran away into the desert and became a shepherd. He then married a shepherd's daughter and took care of his father-in-law's sheep.

The Messenger Chosen by God

One day when he was taking care of his sheep, he saw a fire constantly blazing around a bush. However, it was strange that the bush wasn't burnt up. He felt curious about it and went closer to have a look. Then there came a voice that told him, "Don't come near! Take off your shoes. You're now standing on holy ground." Upon hearing this, Moses became afraid and trembling; he backed up a few steps and took off his shoes. Then the voice said to him again, "I'm the God that your ancestors worshipped frequently. Since I see that the Israelites are suffering a lot, I choose you to be my servant. Go to Egypt, free the Israelites and bring them here to see me."



Moses answered hesitantly, “What shall I tell them? What shall I do? They won’t listen to me. Please choose someone else!” But God said, “No. I’ve chosen you. Find your brother Aaron. He will speak for you.” (He was more eloquent.) “However, I’ll give you another language” (This meant the Sound Stream.) “This language, a special Sound, will give you great magical power and you’ll be able to do anything with it.” What God meant was that Hes could do anything with it and there was nothing that Hes couldn’t do.

Then Moses and his brother Aaron went to the Egyptian king and said, “We have a demand. Our God said that you should let our people go into the desert and give them a farewell party.” The Egyptian king answered, “I don’t know your God. What does your God have to do with me? What use is Hes to me? I won’t let the Israelites go.”

Then the king became more and more angry and unreasonable, and gave an order that from that day on no straw was to be given to the Israelites. The Israelites mixed straw with clay to make bricks. That was

why the king gave the order not to give straw to the Israelites anymore. Instead he made them find the straw themselves. However, he still required them to produce the same amount of bricks as before. He thus deliberately made trouble for the Israelites.

Moses was very disappointed about this and asked God for help. Then God said, “Just wait and see what I do to the hard-headed Egyptian king. I’ll let him know that I’m God and make him release my children. Now go to see the king again and tell him that if he doesn’t free my children, I’ll make many disasters for the Egyptians and Egypt.”

Then Moses and his brother went to the king again, and the king said to them, “You should show me your magical powers to make me believe you.” So his brother Aaron cast a rod onto the ground and the rod turned into a serpent. They thought that this would be enough, but some Egyptian wizards could also do the same thing. So the king laughed at them and said good-bye. (Master and audience laugh) He drove both of them away.



A Very Stubborn King

Then God became angry. Because He said that He would make all kinds of disasters, many terrible things truly began to happen. Each time before a disaster occurred, God warned the Egyptian king. However, he neither listened to God nor believed God because he believed in another god of war. First, the water in the Nile became like blood – red, dirty and smelled stinky. Then the fish in the river all died. This meant that the water had become poisonous. One week later, frogs began crawling all over the country. So the king asked Moses to take the frogs away. After Moses got rid of the frogs, the king still wouldn't free the Israelite slaves. So later, God sent many insects down to eat all the crops and destroy everything. There were insects, flies and damaged crops everywhere except where the Israelites lived.

At that time, the king cried and said, "All right! All right! You can go!" Then the insects disappeared. However, the king went back on his promise and said that they couldn't go. He always deceived the Israelites

like that. Ordinary people all behave capriciously like that. So God sent another disaster. This time, many cows, sheep and other animals died of a pestilence. All the animals died except those that were where the Israelites lived. However, the Egyptian king still insisted on not letting the Israelites go.

Then another disaster happened. God made all the people in the country get painful, dirty boils all over their bodies. Even the wizards had boils. However, the king still wouldn't let the slaves go. Oh! This king was truly terrible. I don't know what his head was made of. His head must have been harder than our fellow initiates' heads. (Audience laughs) Fortunately, he didn't come to receive initiation. (Audience laughs) Otherwise, what could we do with him?

Then Moses and his brother Aaron went to see the Egyptian king again and told him, "Now you've seen the power of God. If you don't listen to His instructions and let the Israelites go, bigger and greater troubles will befall your country." Moses told the king, "There will be a typhoon tomorrow."



Truly! People had never seen that kind of typhoon. Well, it destroyed everything and killed all the animals! But of course, nothing happened where the Israelites lived. Right after this, many locusts appeared all over the country except of course where the Israelites lived. The locusts ate up all kinds of things and all the green plants. Then there was no sun for three consecutive days. It became very, very dark everywhere, except where the Israelites lived. (Master and audience laugh) Maybe the Israelites were initiated. It might have been.

At that time, the king began to feel frightened. However, he still wanted to bargain with God and didn't want to release the Israelite slaves. Well! He was so strange. How could this kind of person become a king? Even at that point, he still wouldn't let the Israelites go. Then an even more frightening thing happened. In just one night, the eldest sons of all the Egyptian families suddenly died, including the eldest prince who couldn't escape even through good fortune. This happened as well to the eldest sons of the lowest class Egyptian slaves. But, of course, the Israelites weren't affected by it.

The next day, the Egyptians couldn't wait to drive the Israelites away because they couldn't bear it anymore and couldn't do anything about it. What happened was already too much for them. If they kept the Israelites one more day, they would have more disasters. So they were frightened. They not only drove the Israelites away, but also gave them many gold and silver vessels, good material for clothing, good clothes and good food upon the Israelites' request. However, by the time the Israelites had walked halfway out of Egypt, the Egyptian king changed his mind and sent his army to try to capture them.

By then, the Israelites had already come to the sea. There was no road in front of them and the Egyptian army was chasing after them. So the Israelites became frightened and cried. Moses then waved his hand over the sea and God sent a wind from the east that suddenly made the sea part. The Israelites quickly ran across the sea and when the Egyptian army chased them and were crossing the sea, it closed and all of them were drowned. So the Israelites all escaped.



Settling in the Desert and Beginning a New Life

At this point the Israelites weren't slaves anymore and had money and food. When they came to the desert, they sang and danced very happily and had a banquet to show their gratitude to God. They worshipped God, sang for many days and kept dancing. After a period of time, they forgot their miserable lives of the past, but began to complain and miss Egypt. They forgot God but thought about onions, fish and meat. They said, "Well! The fish in Egypt tasted good. Oh! The watermelons in Egypt were juicy. The onions in Egypt were delicious!" (Master and audience laugh) They even missed onions. For them, onions were more important than God. They said, "Oh! Don't forget the cucumbers there. Well! What can we eat in the desert?"

Since they had eaten all their food, they started to complain and forgot about the rods that had beaten them in Egypt before. They forgot about the fierce hearts of the Egyptians. They even forgot the times when they had shed tears, sweat and blood and were beaten almost to death and

oppressed. They only thought about food and drink. They began to blame Moses and Aaron for taking them to this remote place where there was no food to eat. But of course they had water to drink. When God took them to the desert, He produced water in the wilderness. However, the Israelites weren't satisfied with that and they all complained, "Oh! We'd rather die in Egypt than die of hunger here."

When God heard their complaints, He told Moses, "Tell your people that I shall give them everything that they ask for. I saved their lives. How can I not provide food for them to eat? Don't complain too much. Today I shall give them a lot of food. Tomorrow I shall give them bread. Each morning, I shall make food for them to eat. However, on Friday I shall give them double the amount because I shall take a break on Saturday and you won't have to work either." So Moses conveyed what God had said to the people. That night, God truly gave them many things to eat. From that day onward, each morning, bread and other food appeared for them. They just lived on like that. They wouldn't starve to death and didn't have to work.



However, they encountered another problem. Since the sun was very hot, they didn't have enough water so they complained again. Upon hearing this, God told Moses, "Go to such-and-such place and hit the stone with your walking staff. Then water will come out." And as expected, water did come out. There was enough water so that no matter how much they drank it was no problem. The author of the story writes, "They shouldn't have tested God!" Even though they did, God forgave them and gave them food to eat and water to drink for forty years. Hes took care of them like this every day. Hes gave them food to eat and all they asked for because Hes wanted them to believe in Hirm. Gradually Hes taught them to have faith in Hirm so that they wouldn't have any more problems. (Exodus1:1-17:7)



God's Grace Is Infinite

I don't know why God liked the Israelites so much and had such patience. Hes gave them food to eat for forty years and gradually taught them to have faith in Hirm. However, do you think they would have faith? (Someone answers: "Yes, they would.") For how many days would they have faith? All right, whether they had faith or not, I'll tell you about it next time. If we have faith in God, we'll have everything. People will suddenly give us food, come to chat with us, and resolve our problems and difficulties. All these things will be done by God. If we truly have faith in Hirm, Hes will take care of everything for us, no matter whether it's a big or small thing. Hes truly will.

Otherwise, how can we take care of ourselves? Where are we from? Do you know that? You don't know it at all! You also don't know where you'll return to. Some people know it and some don't. Those who practice more and have attained higher levels know it. Those who don't practice much don't know but only have some ideas about it and know that there must be a safe place for them to go. Now we've repented and been saved. Even if we did something bad in the past, it's no problem because we were ignorant at that time. Now we've been enlightened and know that we should repent. So God will forgive us and help us.



God can make everything happen, but we must have the purity in our heart to accept it. We must have the power of faith to make it come true. We can reject it, by our own expectations of a God. Already everything is there, God made everything already; but if we don't know where to get it, if we are blind, if we don't have enough faith, it doesn't come, it doesn't materialize.

--Supreme Master Ching Hai

Although there were so many Israelites, God took care of the whole country for forty years. They were even in the desert, and yet Hes bestowed everything on them, let alone living in a city. Why won't Hes take care of us? It's just that our situation isn't urgent and we can take care of ourselves. So God doesn't have a hand in it. But Hes has been silently taking care of us. If Hes hadn't done it, we wouldn't be alive. Even if people in the world who don't believe much in God occasionally have difficulties and ask God for help, Hes will help them and do it for a long time. However, later we forget and complain again and then we have difficulties again.

The reason that we have difficulties sometimes is because God wants to remind us to look for Hirm inside: "It'll be all right if only you ask me! Why don't you call me?" Hes lets the situation develop and forces us into difficult circumstances where we have nothing to depend on, when doctors can't even cure us, and our relatives and friends can't help us. Only at that time, will we kneel down in front of God and beg for something. Hes is waiting for us! Hes has many gifts (Master laughs) and will give them to us at any time, but it's a great pity that most people don't believe in Hirm.

One Person Practices and Many Generations Are Blessed

Why did God take care of the Israelites so well? It was because their ancestors practiced spirituality and believed in God. The Israelites were Noah's descendants. Remember that in the stories of Noah and Abraham, God promised to take care of their descendants. That's why we say that if one person practices, five, six, seven, eight or one hundred generations of his family will be liberated. God will take care of many generations, not only this one. That's why even though the Israelites didn't practice spirituality, were not even vegetarians, and thought about God for a while and then about fish for a while, God still took care of them.

God is very merciful! If you believe in Hirm, Hes will take care of you and your children, because Hes is very merciful and generous. Hes gives us things endlessly. Unless we truly refuse Hiers love, then Hes can't help us. Because of these stories, the Israelites believed in God very much. Each time God appeared, Hes would remind them: "I was the God worshipped by your ancestors!" This means the inner Master's or God's loving power. Since God promised to take care of five or six generations of their descendants, Hes just continued to do it. But later, the descendants became more and more degenerate and did more and more excessive and unforgivable deeds so their merit and loving power became less and less, and gradually disappeared.



One day another person who practiced well emerged from their country and reminded the people to believe in God again and to be connected with God. Then God promised to take care of them again. Otherwise, why did God love the Israelites so much? It was because Noah, Abraham and his wife worshipped God so his sons, grandsons and later generations also received the bounty. That's why people say, "If one practices spirituality, nine generations of one's family will go to Heaven." Those stories weren't ordinary. Even the Israelites knew them. Although the Israelites didn't have a Master at that time, they continued to believe in God because of these stories. It was just that they couldn't communicate with God. So it was a pity. Some Israelites may have been able to communicate with God. If they had found a Master and the method, they definitely could have; but not everyone in the country could.

Even nowadays, the Jews still roam about in many countries and not every country welcomes them. This is because they haven't really been able to communicate with God. Besides, they've done many nonsensical things and killed too many people, which doesn't comply with God's rules. So their merit has been greatly reduced. God doesn't seem to take care of them much. Besides giving them a lot of money, He doesn't give them many other things. God has said that since they did many bad deeds, they wouldn't have their own country for a long time and would become a roaming race. That truly happened and it's recorded in the Bible. If the Jews can really find God like their ancestors Abraham and Noah did, they will definitely regain their position and their country's reputation.

Those Who Truly Believe in God Are Rare

Most of us haven't learned to believe in God. That's why we have many problems. Sometimes we say that we believe in God, but we don't. It's just like when you say that you believe in me, but you don't. How many of you believe in me? Very few! When you're tested a little, you'll be different. If I personally test you, you'll be even more different. When I scold you, how many of you are glad about it? Raise your hands and let me see. Right! Only two or three people are. It's good that you're honest. I admire you for this merit (Master and everyone laugh), to be true to people and not to deceive others. Only those who were truly glad about it raised their hands. (Master laughs) There were only five, six, seven or eight of you. As for the other people, you may become angry, but don't be angry for too long. (Laughter) The longer you're angry, the less your merit will be. Remember to repent after you calm down, all right?

Ordinary people can beat and scold you, but why can't I do the same? Sometimes gangsters have nothing to do with you but when they see you, they beat you. You don't dare to do anything to them and don't dare to get angry, but beg them

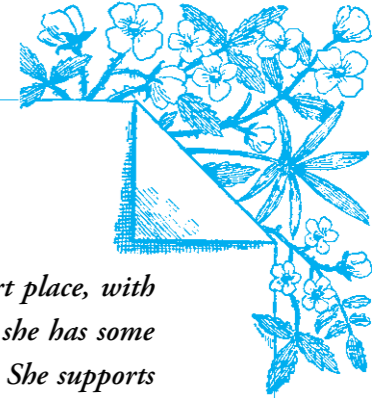
Faith can overcome a lot of things. But it is a gift, also; it's not that you want to have faith and then you can have it. Some people are so poisoned for a long time; even though they pray for faith, they can't have it. So these people, you must feel sorry for them; it's not their fault. They have been brainwashed in all kinds of negative influence and thinking, so that it is very difficult for them to stand up. If you believe in me, that means you're so pure; no matter if I'm good or not, you're so pure that you believe, and this faith will protect you from everything. And it makes you a blessing, a gift, to this world and the next.
--Supreme Master Ching Hai,





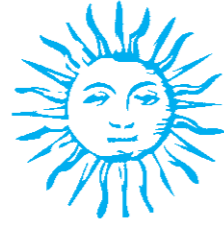
for your lives. (Laughter) I've saved your lives and taught you many things, but you get angry when I scold you only once. This is a contradiction within human beings.

Therefore, you say that you believe in me, but you don't believe in me for long and don't believe in me much. Your faith is very weak. (Master laughs) It breaks when touched. It's hard to take care of your faith, but that's why you should take care of it. The more faith you have, the more comfortable and happier your lives become. Then when you encounter any situation, your faith won't shake, which is a very comfortable state. However, I know that it's hard to attain this state, so I have to train you. God took good care of the Israelites and gave them all kinds of food to eat for forty years, but they still had problems. Later, God had to slowly teach them to believe in Hirm.



Sometimes we think the Earth is an inert place, with no feelings. But sometimes we feel that she has some power, some feelings and some arrangement. She supports everything, and transmutes all dirty things into beautiful things. But sometimes she can't bear some bad people. So she kicks them out through disasters, or swallows them up, digests them, and puts them in the bottom of her stomach, out of sight. You see now. Even though if we don't have wars, we have natural disasters. It seems this is a natural evolution or natural arrangement, to regulate the world, to make things maybe more beautiful or more balanced, and destroy some decayed and useless part of the world, or maybe some very ugly mentalities in some part of the population of the world.

--Supreme Master Ching Hai



7

Commandments

Spoken by Supreme Master Ching Hai, Hsihu Center, Formosa

June 24 & July 1, 1990 (Originally in Chinese)



Keep the Commandments to Become Special Friends of the Lord

Moses led his people out of Egypt to the desert and then came to settle at the foot of Mount Sinai. One day, the Lord spoke to the Jews through Moses and said, “I’ve taken you out of Egypt to this place. I’ve been protecting you and giving you plenty of good food because you’re my favorite people! I’d like you to become my special friends. Will you obey my words?” And they answered together, “We will!” Then the Lord said, “The day after tomorrow, I’ll come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.” So the people started to cleanse themselves and wash their clothes because the Lord was going to see them.

Indeed, when that day came, the people all heard thunder and saw lightning and a thick cloud upon Mount Sinai. They all trembled because they knew that the Lord was coming! Would you tremble when you saw God? No? Of course you wouldn’t because you haven’t seen Hirm. (Laughter) However, they deemed, as recorded in the Bible, that

the thunder they heard and the lightning they saw were in the sky. In fact, that wasn’t true! They were from inside. We’ve all had these kinds of experiences. When Moses and Aaron, two friends of the Lord, climbed up Mount Sinai, the Lord bestowed on them the “Ten Commandments” and instructed them to tell the people that only when they kept these commandments could they become special friends of the Lord.

The Lord also said, “I’m the Lord. You should worship me and respect me only. You must not make any graven images or bow down to them. Each time you mention the name of the Lord, you must do it with veneration. Also, you should rest on Sunday.” (This meant meditate.) Originally, the sixth day was the Sabbath Day. Since Jesus Christ resurrected on Sunday, the Sabbath Day was shifted to Sunday. However, the Jews still observe Saturday as their special Sabbath Day. On this day, people aren’t supposed to work, but only do things for God, such as chanting the scriptures, reciting God’s name, meditating, or getting together at church to remember God’s name. It simply means to stop doing any worldly work!



An example of this is that you come here today and we study the scriptures of God, do God's work together, meditate, and remember God's great name in order to serve Hirm. This is correct and is to Hiers liking. So you see, the wind stopped as soon as you came here today. (Master and audience laugh. Audience applauds) After you meditated for a while, even the rainstorm stopped. There was supposed to be a heavy rainstorm! This shows that God is pleased! (Master and audience laugh)

The commandments include being filial and respectful to parents, not harming other sentient beings, being loyal to one's spouse and refraining from having relationships with other men or women. They also include refraining from stealing, telling lies, and coveting things that belong to others.

This is just like what I've told you, that you shouldn't covet things that belong to other people. We shouldn't take anything that doesn't belong to us or that people don't personally give to us even if it's only a blade of grass, because it's not worth ruining our reputation and gentleman's manners, not to mention breaking the precepts. It's very bad

already that our self-esteem has been damaged!

Do we have to wait for people to put us in jail? Being human, our self-esteem is very important. There's no need to wait for others to tell you whether you've broken the guidelines or to judge whether you were right or wrong. No matter what other people say, we know what we've done. This means that God knows or that our inner Master or God inside knows that we've done bad deeds. This is bad already! Therefore, we actually keep the guidelines only for ourselves.

What I've just read to you are the Ten Commandments set out by the Lord. The Lord explained to Moses how to apply these commandments in various worldly situations and wanted Moses to explain them to the people. When the situation was different, the commandments were to be applied accordingly. The commandments were meant to protect people, not the other way around. For instance, a person almost starves to death and is very weak. He and his wife and children are dying of hunger or his parents are dying of hunger. If he goes out and steals some bread or rice to feed his family, he's not breaking the commandments. I'm



speaking frankly. If this person stole from me, I wouldn't accuse him; instead, I'd give him more. In doing that, he wouldn't be breaking the commandments. In this kind of situation, we can't say that he stole.

On the other hand, if we have enough to live on or people have offered us enough to live on, yet we desire to be more comfortable, more beautiful and more glorious, in this case, even if we steal only a blade of grass, it's stealing because it's unnecessary! Therefore, we should make a judgment only after we've clearly understood the commandments and considered the intention and situation. In another instance, I've told you not to accept other people's offerings and not to casually accept gifts from others. However, if you're ill and have no money because other people haven't repaid you, in that case, if I give you some money, but you still refuse to accept it, you're being really stupid! (Laughter)

At that time, it's not that you're coveting it, but that you truly need it. If you don't need it, even if you accept only a dime, you'll incur heavy sin! However, if you really need it, it's no problem no matter how much you accept.

Therefore, we shouldn't cling to the commandments, but should see if it's suitable to apply any of the commandments in a given situation. Of course, we ought to strictly keep the commandments in the event that we might harm others by doing otherwise. Sometimes when others try to harm us, we should do our best to protect our lives. In case we're killed, we shouldn't harbor any hatred against them, nor should we kill them to save our own lives. It might not be bad for them to kill us because they might help us to get liberated from the life and death cycle sooner. (Laughter) In that case, we ought to be grateful to them!

Therefore, when Jesus Christ, Shakyamuni Buddha and all the other Masters of all the ages were harmed by others, They didn't resist like worldly people usually do. Although worldly people may be good in some respects, when they aren't treated well, they still have the notion of killing or taking revenge. As spiritual practitioners, we leave everything to God no matter if it's good or bad. So we have nothing to fear.

Then, Moses began to explain the commandments to the people. Hence, the people promised to keep and respect the Lord's commandments.



Then Moses went up to Mount Sinai because the Lord told him that Hes would write the Ten Commandments on a big stone tablet, and he climbed up to get it. However, Moses might have stayed in samadhi for too long this time. He didn't go up there only to get the commandments. He might have studied the commandments while sleeping. He might have meditated, become tired and after some rest, continued to meditate. He might have wanted to have a retreat. Before he received the commandments written by the Lord, he might have wanted to purify himself and strictly keep the commandments first in order to have more wisdom to understand them. So he might have meditated there for too long.

Knowing that he had been away for forty days, the people who were waiting for him down the mountain became impatient. They began to get angry and sway and their faith became weakened. They murmured to each other, "Well! I wonder what happened to Moses and why he hasn't come back!" They told Aaron, "We want another God and a different master. Moses led us from Egypt to this place. So he's our only master. However,

since he's gone now, we need another one. Let's have one quickly, OK?"

(Laughter) They even placed a fast delivery order for a master!

Aaron was rather dumb so he agreed with the people and asked all of them to give their gold and gems to him. Then he molded the gold into a calf. He proclaimed, "This is your new master." He then made an altar to put the calf on to let people bow down to it. Then the people were pleased. With the passage of time, they forgot what had happened before and said, "Oh! It was this golden calf, this master, who led us here out of Egypt and liberated us from slavery." They kept worshipping it and reveled in dancing and singing, while worshipping the golden calf god.

Seeing that in such a short time period people had broken what they had just promised to Hirm and worshipped another god, the golden calf, the Lord became angry. It's written here that the Lord was in wrath. I don't know whether God would be angry or not. However, if Hes was angry then, I wouldn't blame Hirm. When Moses came down from the mountain and saw the people dancing, singing, and worshipping the golden calf, he also became angry. At that time, Moses' anger was very



intense. He cast the tablet carved with the commandments of the Lord down the mountain and it was broken into pieces. He then burnt the golden calf and ground it into powder.

Moses scolded the people, saying, “How could you do such a terrible thing? You’re senseless and stupid!” He kept scolding them, not simply like that. He might have scolded them a lot, but only a couple of sentences are written here. After the reprimand, since Moses always deeply loved his people inside, he prayed to the Lord to forgive those ignorant people, to not be angry with them, and to give them another chance to repent and become good again.

The Lord was also very patient so He wrote down the commandments for them again. This time when Moses took the Ten Commandments back to the people they behaved well, didn’t sing or dance, didn’t mold another golden calf as their master, and didn’t worship other gods. They became very humble and listened attentively and patiently to Moses when he expounded on the decree of the Lord, the Ten Commandments. From then on, a covenant was made between the Lord and the Israelites, and everyone was pleased. (Exodus 19:1-20:26)

Thou Shalt Have No Other Gods Besides Me

To comply with your request, I’ll explain more about the commandments. The first commandment is “Thou shalt have no other gods besides Me.” When people follow Buddhism, they need to keep a similar precept. The Master will demand the disciples to vow: “From now on, I’ll follow the Buddha, the noble teachings and the practicing assembly. I won’t follow any immortals, celestial beings, gods, ghosts or any other beings.” This means the same thing! Following the Buddha is the highest level, that is, the level of supreme enlightenment or the level of God. The noble teachings come from the Buddha as only the noble teachings spoken by a Buddha are the true teachings. So they’re also the supreme teachings. The practicing assembly is also developed by the Master. People in the practicing assembly are the children of the Buddha or the children of God. Therefore, they’re the supreme sentient beings.

Of course, it wouldn’t be good for us if we went in the direction of an inferior level. For instance, if we want to make a friend, we should find the best person, or if we’re going to elect a king or president, we should go for the best, the most virtuous and the wisest person. If a bad president is elected – we wanted the best president but we voted for an inferior person – it’s of course no good for us! Similarly, if we want to worship, we ought to worship the supreme and highest God. It’s not right if we worship demons and deities such as local



gods, water deities, mountain deities, a sun god or any other gods because their powers are all limited.

Only the Supreme God has the supreme and boundless power. No matter whether you venerate Hirm as the Supreme God, the True Lord or the Buddha power, Hes is the highest. You should understand inside that Hes is the supreme power of the universe. So you shouldn't bow down to local deities or local gods, or it will be no good for you. Therefore, the Lord said, "Thou shalt have no other gods besides Me." Hes wasn't being autocratic, but only speaking the truth.

For instance, since we have a president in our country, we might just as well respect him. Why should we pay respect to a false president or a presidential candidate as our president? Even if such a person claims, "I'm the president. I would like to be the president," he hasn't been elected. If we pay respect to him as our president just because he says that he'd like to be one, is that appropriate? If we entrust our feelings and political opinions to him and ask him to manage the national affairs, for sure it's not appropriate! We already have a president who was elected by the people. We know that he's the best and superior. So we might just as well support him. Therefore, when our president tells us, "I'm the president, the chief official of the country. Don't listen to any other president. Listen to me only." Is it appropriate for him to say so? (Audience: Yes.) Similarly, God also told us to worship only Hirm.

In fact, God is the inner Master, the highest power. Hes had been taking care of the Israelites' ancestors for many generations until the time of Moses. This was because their ancestors practiced the Quan Yin Method, which had incredible power! Even after many generations, God still continued to take care of their offspring. Since Hes had been taking care of them so meticulously, Hes had the right to say, "Thou shalt have no other gods besides Me." When the Israelites as well as we happen to meet God, the inner Master, who takes good care of us, of course we should worship Hirm only and not seek elsewhere. When the Lord told Hiers people, "Thou shalt have no other gods besides Me," it wasn't for Hiers own benefit! Hes knew that it was good for the people who worshipped Hirm. The more the people worshipped Hirm, the better they would be. It was not due to Hiers arrogance, but Hes told the truth for the benefit of the people.

Similarly, those who have children take care of their children in every possible way every day. The children get whatever they want, including an allowance for school. Their parents also take care of their physical health, cook nutritious food for them, and prepare sufficient clothing for them. If the children then take the people next door as their parents, there must be something wrong! Those people have nothing to do with the children and they didn't even give the children a dime or a set of clothes. They don't love and care for the children. So the children can't just take whomever they like as their



parents simply because of a similar outward appearance. Only their real parents are their parents!

Therefore, if our parents tell us, “You should only take us as your parents, not anyone else,” they’re not being arrogant. They’re saying this for the good of their children. If we always go to our neighbors, today this neighbor and tomorrow that neighbor, to take them as our parents, what will happen to our physical health? What will happen to our identity? Then even our real parents can’t take care of us because we aren’t around. So this won’t be good for us.

God loves Hiers people just like parents love their children. So Hes tells them to recognize Hirm and believe in Hirm, and only then will everything be fine. This is Hiers intention. Sometimes, a Master tells us to believe in Him, and pray to Him in any situation, but not pray to any other gods. This is for our own good and He knows that He can give us everything. If we go to someone else, we won’t get anything but will instead waste our time and miss the opportunity for the Master to take care of us. That’s why He tells us, “It’s enough for you to believe in me only. Don’t believe in anyone else.” He’s not being jealous. Why should He be? The whole universe belongs to Him. He can get anything that He wants. So why does He have to compete with other people and be jealous? Whether we believe in Him or not, He won’t lose anything, because we’re His in the first place, just like we’re our parents’ children.

Our parents don’t need to compete with others about this because it’s a fact! However, if some children don’t recognize their parents, they may have hard lives, which is no good for them. They may not get their legacy, and their parents may not be able to look after them. If they’re never around, how can their parents take care of them? They don’t know the children’s whereabouts. So it’s bad for the children, but not for the parents. (Applause)

When we follow a Master, we know that He’ll take care of all our major and minor affairs both within and without. Therefore, when He tells us to believe in Him, it’s easily understandable. The more we believe in Him, the more opportunities He’ll have to take care of us. He tells us so only for our own benefit. If we’re ignorant, we’ll think that we belong to ourselves and have nothing to do with Him. However, He knows clearly that He has an affinity with us. We’re just like insensible children.

Sometimes when parents are strict with their children, the children get upset and run away, thinking that their parents don’t care about them and don’t love them. But this isn’t true! Parents are strict only for the good of their children. They know that their children are related to them. They know that they want to take care of their children out of love. They wish their children to be brought up well. However, children may not understand this. So they may run around, blame their parents, and do strange things that make their parents worry and make it hard for the parents to look after them.



The same thing applies to God (or a Master) and Hiers disciples. God clearly knows that we're Hiers children and Hes ought to look after us. Hes will do anything that we want Hirm to do. But it's we who don't understand this. We think that we have sovereignty and that we take care of ourselves. So we make a mess. And the more we do, the more trouble we make. We're just like a child who tries to take care of himself when he hasn't grown up yet and has no wisdom, intelligence and ability. The more he messes around, the more upset he'll feel and the farther away he'll be from his family. This will only make his life more dangerous and difficult, and make his parents worry more about him.

Therefore, we should recognize God and believe in Hirm because Hes is our supreme wisdom! Hes is no stranger; Hes is our most beloved kin. If we reject Hirm, go out to worship wooden Buddhas, mountains, deities or ghosts, we'll only become more upset. This is all because we've forsaken Hirm, rejected Hirm, and won't let Hirm take care of us.

I teach you meditation so that you can find your own Nature. I want you to recognize your own God and wisdom, and let Hirm appear to you so that Hes has opportunities to guide you and make your lives brighter and more comfortable. That's why I tell you not to worship outer deities, ghosts or Buddha statues. All statues are useless! The Buddha is in our hearts and God is within us. If we don't look for Hirm inside, where else can we find Hirm? All methods of seeking outside are wrong. (Applause) So I don't have to tell you a lot to get you to understand.

Here the Lord said, "Thou shalt have no other gods besides Me." Hes was right! Worship "Me," the inner wisdom, not any idols. What Hes said was correct! Hes didn't try to intimidate people. Hes is indeed the supreme, the greatest and the highest. Hes doesn't need anyone to worship or admire Hirm. If we recognize Hirm and believe in Hirm, it's only our good fortune. Hes teaches us only because of our suffering and sincere prayers. So Hes says, "All right! If you want to feel good, want comfort, and to be wise, intelligent and relaxed, believe in Me and worship only Me. Then you'll be fine."

God didn't force anyone. Hes only spoke the truth. Apart from the truth, what can you tell your child? You can't only out of politeness tell your child, "All right! It's fine whether you recognize us as your parents or not. You can go next door and take the people there as your parents." Can you tell your child that? If he does what you tell him, he'll go astray, live a difficult life, wander around and have no money and no food, and no one will take him as their child. People usually don't take care of other people's children. Although he may get food and clothes in an orphanage, he won't have a comfortable life, family feelings and the pampering love of real parents. Humans not only need food and clothing, but also the love of parents. If children are brought up by their neighbors and have no relationship with their parents, they'll look dull when they grow up.

Due to love for their child, parents should clearly tell him, "You're my child. If you leave home, you'll have a hard time. If you want to have a nice,



comfortable life, just trust us and let us take care of you!” Do parents have to be polite or feel embarrassed to say that? When we tell the truth without being arrogant, we shouldn’t feel embarrassed.

Sometimes when you hear what I say, you think that I ought to feel embarrassed, but I don’t. However, I would feel afraid and embarrassed if I were deceiving you. Could I deceive so many of you? No way! Some of you are teachers, doctors and business people with high IQs. I couldn’t deceive you for long. So I just tell you the truth. Since I tell you the truth, it’s all right whether you believe me or not. I won’t feel embarrassed. If we want to be good to a person, we should always tell the truth. Only when someone has a bad intention for others will he speak cautiously.

We’ve Drifted Too Far from God If We Worship Graven Images of Hirm

We’ve gone halfway through the second commandment, which is, “Thou shalt not make any graven images; thou shalt not bow down to them.” Why was God especially concerned about these things? Because human beings have intelligence, wisdom and the ability to do things. So if we worship a piece of

wood or a stone that doesn’t move and has no consciousness, aren’t we being very dumb? Then why do some people still do it and think that they’re fine?

The father of our nation, Dr. Sun Yet-Sen, was wise. No wonder people revere him as a national father. He broke a wooden statue and asked people why they said that it was the Buddha, didn’t he? (Audience: Yes!) I think that he was great. A person who has wisdom possesses strong charisma. No wonder he succeeded and is still venerated by people today. We can’t envy him because he deserved it!

I heard that he saw Quan Yin Bodhisattva when he went to Putuo Mountain. This indicates that he had faith and was pure. He was a Catholic. If he had been attached to the Catholic idols, he would have seen only Jesus Christ. Since he saw Quan Yin Bodhisattva, it meant that he had no discrimination and was really pure. Hence, the Bodhisattva didn’t discriminate against him, saying, “It’s all right that you worship Jesus Christ. I’m just appearing to you to let you have a look.” This indicates that he was very pure and was a very good person.

Of course, he had taken part in battles and possibly killed some people, but that was inevitable. I’ve told you that you should apply the precepts according to the situation! If you’re a soldier and you have to kill the enemy to defend your country or due to your national law, then you don’t commit a crime. Even if you kill a hundred people, you don’t commit crimes or break the precepts. However, if you only injure a person due to personal animosity, you



incur heavy karma. It's because of your intent to kill. But soldiers are different; they're compelled to do it so they don't break the precepts.

Therefore, you can't judge yourself by how many times or how badly you've broken the precepts, how many people you've killed or what your morality is like, but by the situation and your intention. We can't only look at actions. Sometimes, it's very difficult for ordinary people to judge others. We have to be very careful in distinguishing between good and evil. Otherwise, we always misjudge. When we see that a person kills, we say, "Oh! He's bad!" When we see a person donating money to build a temple or hospital, we say, "Oh! He's good!" But it's not necessarily true! We don't know where his money came from and what the intention of his donation is. He may want to become famous or get other things by donating the money.

In that case, he won't gain any merit from his action. If we worship an image, it means that our level is too low to be repaired, that we have no wisdom and no ability to make a judgment, and that we don't know that the image is only made of a piece of wood. If we worship this piece of wood, it's the same as worshipping any piece of wood. Then it'll save the time and effort of carving and painting as well as the money. To worship an image means that we can't tell good from bad, don't know where our wisdom is, and don't understand what's recorded in the scriptures, that "The Buddha is in our hearts" or "God is within us." We just ignore the scriptures, ignore the teachings of all the Masters, and

ignore the words of God and the saints. We've gone too far and been too ill! Even if we have a little bit of wisdom left, when we bow down to an image, our wisdom is gone.

There's an Indian story in which a woman acknowledged a Master. Once she saw her Master appear to her inside, and she was very happy. However, when she mixed with other people, she forgot about it. Hearing people making pilgrimages to mountains and rivers, she followed them. One day, she was ill and wasn't healed after she prayed to her Master. Perhaps her Master deliberately let her become ill in order to erase her bad karma. But she blamed her Master for not helping her. So she worshipped images! There are many gods in India. If you go there, you can see all kinds of big gods, small gods, medium gods, fat gods and thin gods. So she just bowed down to them. Before that, she could see her Master appear to her for a while. But after she bowed down to the images, her Master disappeared.

When she came home, she thought, "How strange! How could this happen? The Master was there a moment ago. But as soon as I bowed down, He disappeared." She felt sad and kept thinking about it for several days. She didn't want to eat, but meditated, demanding that her Master appear to her and explain why He had suddenly left her. (She blamed her Master again.) Since she was quite sincere, her Master was moved, appeared to her, and told her, "When you worshipped the wooden statues, you degraded me to be even lower



than they were! So I didn't have a place to stand. Since it was too low for me to stand, I had to run away.”

Why are we called “human beings?” Because we're different than animals; we can distinguish between good and bad, high and low, moral and contemptible. We have the ability to make our own choices. Animals are different. They'll become whatever they are trained to become. Even tigers can be tamed to behave like cats by people in the circus. Lions and elephants can also be trained to do whatever they're told to do and dare not resist. In this respect, animals are rather stupid and can easily lose their independence.

Human beings aren't like that. Sometimes even when people are imprisoned, they'll try to escape. When they're oppressed, they'll try to resist. When they're wronged, they'll try to clear themselves. This is because human beings have wisdom. If our great wisdom has been deceived and becomes confused so that we worship the statues of ghosts and deities, of course we'll become very miserable and drift too far away from God! It's stated very clearly in the Buddhist scriptures: “The Buddha is in one's heart, and you can't perceive the Tathagata (Buddha) through tangible light and sound. Rather than worshipping tangible forms, it's more meritorious to go home and worship our parents.” This is the truth.

If you like to worship, go home and worship your parents. They're Living Gods and they have God's Nature within them. If you break wooden statues

to have a look, you won't find anything inside them. Even if your parents are ignorant and haven't recognized their God Nature, at least they have God's Nature within them. It's just that they don't know about it. However, there's nothing inside of wooden statues! If you truly want to worship wooden things, just worship trees. At least there's a little bit of God's power in living trees. Without God's power, nothing can go on living. So if we worship dead wood, a material form of a very low level, of course our wisdom and level will be degraded to an inconceivably low degree.

Therefore, God particularly reminds us to be especially cautious! Hes keeps telling us not to create images and worship them. This is because Hes is very compassionate and wants us to preserve the tiny bit of wisdom remaining within us. If we keep worshipping images, we'll be finished! Our tiny bit of wisdom can be developed or destroyed. When we're with spiritual people and wise friends, our wisdom will glow more brightly and develop more. But when we're with ignorant people and follow them to worship images, we'll be contaminated and pulled down by them and our level will be degraded further. The Lord wanted Hiers people to avoid this undesirable situation so Hes told them not to do such things; because if they did, the tiny bit of wisdom that they had would have disappeared.

Suppose you have a little money left. If you save it, you can use it to buy bread. However, if you're cheated by people and use the money to buy stones,



you'll lose the money and then starve to death. Besides, you'll have to carry the stones and become more exhausted. You're tired already, and yet you have to carry the stones. How can people be so stupid and be cheated to such an extent? How can stones be edible?

Therefore, your parents advise you not to buy stones and save your money, because they know that this is all you have. If you save it, you can sustain yourself for a while and think of a way later. Perhaps when you've regained your strength, you can find a job. But if you use it to buy stones, you'll be finished. You're weak and hungry already, but you'll have to carry the stones; then how can you survive? You'll die immediately! Similarly, when we worship images, we're incurable! But if someone quickly pulls us up and imparts the superior wisdom to us, we'll be cured; otherwise, we'll keep sinking down.

Yesterday, I let you watch a documentary film about a group of people in India – how they make pilgrimages to mountains and rivers, how sincere they are when they bathe in the Ganges, and how sincere they are when they worship gods. However, you can see that the population in India hasn't decreased, but instead it's increasing. And they're getting poorer. This is because they apply their sincerity in the wrong place! Therefore, before when I saw them doing such things, I got furious. I kept scolding as I came down from the Himalayas. (Laughter) I wasn't satisfied to scold by myself. So I told some monks about it and let them scold with me. (Laughter) I was angry with those gods! I pointed at

their noses and scolded them fiercely. Of course they didn't hear me; I was only venting my wrath. They were made of wood so how could they hear me? I knew that very well, but it's just that I was really mad.

I saw that millions of people were being deceived, and had wasted a lot of effort, vitality and money, as well as risked their lives to climb to the summit just to make a bow. They didn't know whether they would be able to make it home alive because the road was very dangerous. Some people were very poor. They could only borrow or earn just enough money for the trip and would have no money after returning home. In order to gain merit and worship the wooden statues, they had to come a long way. Sometimes, they had to walk on foot and their soles cracked and bled. Some of them were too poor to have shoes so they had to walk barefoot on the icy road. I cried when I saw that! Innumerable people were deceived. Even though they were sincere, it was useless.

If we have no spiritual friends, our wisdom will become smaller and smaller and gradually disappear. Then, we will transform into animals, plants, stones or minerals. The less wisdom we have, the lower our status will be; while the more wisdom we have, the higher our status will be. It's similar in society. If you're more knowledgeable and more intelligent, your work is more effortless, your social status is higher, your job is better, and you can make more money. But if you have no knowledge, aren't intelligent, and have no ability, you have to do low level work. The lower level your work is, the more toilsome it is and the less money you'll make.



A similar situation happens in the universe. If we have more wisdom, we'll become superior sentient beings; conversely, if we have less wisdom, we'll become inferior beings. Therefore due to differences in wisdom there are all kinds of sentient beings in the world, including insects, frogs, animals, cows, human beings, immortals, enlightened beings and God. We should aim to go upward instead of downward because we suffer more on lower levels. It's not that we're afraid of anything but that if we have a choice, why choose to suffer? If you choose to suffer for the benefit of others, like what I've told you earlier today, I agree with you. However, if you choose not to suffer alone, but also involve the offspring of five or six generations of your family, I beg you not to do it!

I've chosen this hard path and I'm willing to stay here because of other people's needs, and because I want to make them happy and encourage them to pursue spiritual practice and rise to higher levels. Therefore, I willingly take on this hardship. If I'd chosen this hardship because I liked it, it would be different. (Applause) Our world is very painful already. So if you can choose happiness, just do it. Don't say, "Since Master has chosen hardship, we should do the same." Then you're being too stupid! If we can make many people happy by our individual suffering, it's worthwhile. However, if we deliberately look for suffering, we're idiots and it's just like committing suicide, which isn't good!

Thou Shalt Not Take the Name of the Lord Thy God in Vain

Now let's talk about the third commandment, which is, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." Who is God? How can we respect God if we don't even know Hiers name? If we don't know Hiers name, we can't revere Hirm as God, the Supreme Master, Anuttara Samyak Sambodya or Buddha power! We mustn't make use of Heirs name to swear, to vow or to curse others. Even when we use it to swear to God, it's no good. You shouldn't say, "I didn't do this. If I'm lying to you, I'll be struck by lightning..." or things like that. We mustn't force others to take oaths, nor must we swear in the name of God. Some people are even worse. They use God's name to wage wars. They use God's name to kill people, to invade another country, or to abuse other people's children or women. These are examples of making bad use of God's name.

When God sends a person to Earth to represent Hirm, such as Jesus Christ or Shakyamuni Buddha, when He's in the world or after He's gone, we must respect His name, too; that is, we must respect God's name or a Master's name. We mustn't slander or joke about Their names or say Their names casually without respect.

Why does God want us to respect Hirm or Hiers representatives? It's because the more we respect them, the greater blessings we'll gain. Otherwise,



we may never see Masters and the sun for many lifetimes; we may fall into a dark place where there's no sunlight, no parents' names and no Masters. That's why God tells us to respect Hiers name or Hiers representatives' names; that is, the Masters' names. Only then will we have light and our inner Master will have a chance to develop. When there's a cause, there's a consequence. Like attracts like. If we don't respect God, we'll have bad consequences. God reminds us about this only out of Hiers compassion.

It's not that God needs our respect. Many people have been worshipping Hirm or not worshipping Hirm throughout the ages, but Hes has never changed a bit. Hes is forever neither unborn nor destroyed and neither defiled nor cleansed. Hes only gives but never takes. Hes doesn't need anything because everything in the universe was created by Hirm.

The Seventh Day Is the Day for Group Meditation

The next commandment is, "On the seventh day, thou shalt not do any work. Respect the Sabbath Day!" In the Bible, it's stated that God created the universe in six days and hence rested on the seventh day. I'm doubtful about why God needed a rest. Hes doesn't need it at all! You also think that I don't

have to rest. So, every Sunday and holiday, you always come here for a vacation and tire me to death. In that case, God is more fortunate than I am because Hes can take a rest on the seventh day.

Hes even asked us to rest with Hirm. Why? Because Hes worried that we work so hard throughout the whole week that we don't have time to remember our Selves and God. God is our inner kingdom and our inner Buddha Nature. What Hes meant was that we should get together for group meditation on the seventh day! It's stated clearly in the Bible that people must not do labor or physical work and can only get together to worship God. This implies that we should practice spiritually to look for our highest status and the greatest wisdom within.

This tradition has been passed down to the present day. Every Sunday, people group together in church to recite scriptures written in the past. However, they just come to a church, read the Bible, and then go home. Besides, they have some refreshments. They eat biscuits that aren't blessed. In the past, biscuits symbolized the blessed food from the Masters for biscuits were cheap, light and convenient to store. Since there were too many people, they made biscuits very thin. People ate them not for the taste but for the blessing power contained in them.

Our popcorn here is also not very tasty but looks rather cheap. You can buy popcorn easily with money yet you like to get it here because ours is different!



You'd be even happier if I personally gave it to each one of you. This is what it meant. It's possible that when someone outside sees me handing popcorn to each one of you, he'll think that you came here only for popcorn. Then he may build an ashram and hand out popcorn every day, without knowing the real meaning. The person who gives popcorn must have power so that the popcorn will be blessed; otherwise, doing it is meaningless.

We spiritual practitioners naturally emit loving power that attracts people to us. After they leave us, they feel that they've lost a very important thing, as if their vitality has been taken away. When I left Costa Rica, people cried like babies. They said, "Oh! It seems like my flesh is being cut off, or a part of me is being cut off and taken away." That's why we like to stay together with spiritual practitioners, not because of their attire or that they're Buddhist monks with their heads shaved, but because the intangible vibration emitted from them makes us feel very comfortable. This is just like if we have water to drink when we're thirsty, have food to eat when we're hungry, or have effective medication when we're ill. We feel very comfortable, but we can't describe it.

Similarly, the blessed biscuits are good only when they're given by a powerful person; otherwise, they're nothing if they're bought from outside. However, the biscuits are useful. They can remind people of God. Then when they go home, they may ask, "Who is God?" They may long to see Hirm. Later, they may hear someone giving a lecture and saying, "I can help you to find God."

Then they'll go to that person quickly out of curiosity. In that case, the biscuits are useful; otherwise, they're virtually useless. It's not that we should group together and recite all day long, "I long to see God. I love God." No! Although God is within us, Hes can't help us if we don't find Hirm.

Respecting Our Parents Is Respecting God

The next commandment is "Honor thy father and thy mother." Perhaps, in Moses' time, children weren't filial so this commandment was necessary. If everyone were filial, no one would know what "not being filial" is. If people were all beautiful, we wouldn't know what "ugly" is. If all the people in a country were rich, no one would talk about poverty. For instance, this is a Buddhist country so there are monks here. However, people in some other countries have never seen monks so they don't know what monks are and won't talk about monks at all. Similarly, people then weren't well disciplined. The Bible describes the chaotic situation at that time. After Moses was away for only forty days, the people gave up the Lord and worshipped a golden calf. They were low in spirit and lacked morality so they changed their master in only forty days. Of course, we're becoming more civilized and more advanced. We used to live in caves and eat raw food and live animals. We had no fire, no houses, no airplanes nor any civilized tools. Now we're more civilized because



throughout the ages, extraterrestrial beings have been coming to impart modern knowledge to us and make us become more intelligent and our children more clever.

For instance, you're now following me to practice spiritually and the children that you bear are also different! Those who were vegans since they were in their mother's womb look plump and rosy. Have you ever seen their arms? They have at least three to four folds of flesh. I wonder where they get the nutrition. They only drink milk! These kids will definitely grow up to become more intelligent than we are, and those who've been initiated in their mother's belly may become even more extraordinary when they grow up! And their children, of course, may be even more outstanding, being morally stable, emotionally steady, mentally happy and more developed in wisdom. So our offspring will become better and better.

Look at the time of Moses. It was really chaotic. People's wisdom was at a very low level. God had given them a lot, manifested Hiers magical power many times, and protected them in every way. Yet, after their Master was away for only forty days, they abandoned God and worshipped a golden calf instead. Can you imagine that? In modern times, some people are also like those who worshipped the golden calf, but they're relatively few in number. Few people who follow me will regress. This means that you're more stable and you have more wisdom. It's possibly because I have more merit so that God sends me the best disciples. Don't

take my word for it before you check your own hearts. (Master and audience laugh)

Why must we respect our parents? Because God's love takes care of us through the law of cause and effect and through the love and physical forms of our parents. Respecting our parents is respecting God. In fact, it's not the physical forms of our parents who look after us, but it's God's love that does so. We should understand this point clearly! Life after life, the Supreme Mother through our physical mother and the Supreme Father through our physical father have been taking care of us, teaching us the basic virtues, compassion and love. Because our parents love us, we know what love is when we grow up. This is a fact! If we're raised in a stable, loving family, we'll become more loving, and feel more secure when we grow up.

Sometimes, we see that some children do evil deeds, become scoundrels or are accused of being criminals and imprisoned. Don't blame them too quickly! It may be because they lacked loving care and education when they were young. It may be because their parents died very early or were too busy to look after them. Or it may be because their parents were not loved by their own parents before so that they couldn't treat their children with love.

As the sequence repeats itself, people have less and less love and make more and more trouble. When they go out into society, they may be treated



unfairly or oppressed and lose their sense of security. Later, when they're bullied or misunderstood, due to their inferiority complexes, they'll resist, revolt and resist society more and more. The more they resist society, the more they'll lose themselves and their love, and the more their hatred will grow. Eventually, they'll end up miserable in jail.

For the above reasons, we should be filial to our parents. If our parents don't treat us well, we ought to think that it's our own retribution and unfavorable destiny. Perhaps we owed our parents something in our previous lives and didn't repay it. Perhaps we were bad parents in our previous lives so that we have to have bad parents in this lifetime to learn our lesson. So we have to endure it and be filial. This is good for us as well as for our parents.

In Costa Rica, there was a fellow initiate who was a little more than twenty years old. Two or three days after she was initiated, she came to me crying! I asked her why she was crying and she said that she couldn't get along well with her family, especially her father. Her mother had passed away and her father didn't treat her well. He was cold, stern and hard to communicate with. He always oppressed and dominated her. So she couldn't bear it.

I asked her, "Have you ever thought that you might be just as cold and stern to your father, and that you've shelved your love for him? Have you ever thought that your father also needs your love. It's not only that you need his." She was stunned and then said, "What should I do? It's possible that I've never

expressed my feelings to him." I told her, "When you go home today, buy a most beautiful red rose. Then kneel down in front of your father and offer the flower to him, hug him and tell him, 'Although I've never shown my love to you because I forgot, I was young and not sensible, nevertheless, I love you very much.'" So she did what I told her. As a result, the two hugged and cried together. Since then, they've become very good to each other.

So one of them had to open his or her heart first. Parents work outside. They're often exhausted physically and mentally. They have many worries and debts. In addition to heavy family responsibilities, they can hardly laugh when they're home. However, children may not understand the hardships of their parents. They may keep demanding and expecting a lot and not realize that their parents also need support and love. On one side, parents may be stern and say, "We're your parents!" They may be strict because they worry that their children won't respect them; and in addition to their heavy work pressure, they can't laugh out loud. On the other side, the children think, "Our parents are very strict. They don't love us and don't give us this and that." Then the children may get upset or harbor enmity, thus deepening the misunderstanding between both sides and broadening the generation gap. In fact, both sides are anxious and eager to hug each other. They love each other very much, but can't express it.

You can just try to express your feelings; you don't have to feel embarrassed. They're your family members. If you really can't communicate



with them, try this method – that is, hug each other first and talk later. When you talk to them truly out of sincerity, your words will be touching. You'll gradually communicate with each other and understand that the other side also has feelings and love, and then you'll reconcile with them. Family members always love each other. But sometimes they're too proud to be the first to speak out. So both sides lock themselves up and wait for the other to knock. However, no one ever knocks first. (Laughter) And then both sides become anxious.

Sometimes this happens to husbands and wives, too. They want very much to reconcile, but both wait and no one takes the initiative. As days go by, the atmosphere remains tense and stern. Although they've forgiven each other inside, they can't put aside their pride and worry about losing face and what the other party may think of them. "Will he/she ridicule me for giving in?" In fact, that won't happen. It doesn't matter even if your husband laughs at you; he's your partner! It's also fine if your wife laughs at you! In fact, she won't. She's only waiting for you to apologize to her. Now you understand!

Why do we have to respect our parents? Because they work hard for us. The precious bodies that we're able to have were given to us by our parents, not by the physical entities of our parents, but by the grace of God's love acting through them. Therefore, we should respect them in order to respect God. Everything is created by God. He gives us birth through the bodies of our

parents, but it's not that our parents do that themselves. However, since our parents have God's love within, that is, since they have God inside them, when they love us, they have God's loving power. They're very noble, gracious and superior beings. So how can we not respect them?

The Subtle Meaning of "Thou Shalt Not Kill"

Now the next commandment is "Thou shalt not kill." It means to refrain from killing. I've expounded on this millions of times. However, don't always think that it's good enough if we simply don't kill; sometimes when we try to save a life, we kill. Have you heard me tell the story about two nuns trying to save a centipede? I don't have many examples to cite on. I only remember that story.

One day when I went to take a bath and brush my teeth, I saw a centipede in my cup. The cup was covered with a piece of cloth. When I lifted off the cloth, I saw a centipede in it. I was frightened, of course. The centipede was also frightened. (Laughter) So I screamed, "Ah!" (Laughter) That was a natural reaction. Since the centipede couldn't go "Ah," it jumped so both of us were scared.



Hearing this, two attendants outside quickly ran in and asked, “What’s the matter, Master?” I said, “I’m all right. There’s a centipede in here.” (Master and audience laugh) Then they said, “Okay. Master, please go out and let us handle it.” I said, “Okay. Be careful! Handle it if you wish!” There was a basin outside. So I brushed my teeth there.

A long time after I had brushed my teeth, I still didn’t see them come out. (Laughter) So I asked, “Are you done with it?” They replied, “Not yet!” I said, “How can two of you not be able to handle only one centipede?” (Master and audience laugh) I then went inside to have a look. Well! I heard a noise, “tze, tze, tze, tze.” I asked, “What are you doing?” They said that they were trying to drive it away with the shower head, but the centipede wouldn’t move! I said, “Of course, it won’t. It’s surrounded by water.” (Laughter) If I sprayed you like that with the shower head, wouldn’t you drown? The centipede was very small and was surrounded by water. It could hardly breathe. How could it possibly run away? It didn’t know where to run!

Well! The centipede almost drowned. I saw it going “hu, hu, hu.” It was calling for help. So I said, “Stop! Stop! Stop! Let me handle it myself.” They were really great and compassionate for not killing it, but trying to drive it away with water, flushing and surrounding it with water – even if we were the centipede, we would have drowned. The centipede was very small. When they kept doing that, the centipede couldn’t withstand it! So I said, “Forget it! Leave the centipede alone!” So that was how they were trying to save a life.

Therefore, it’s not good enough to just refrain from killing. We have to be cautious. When we walk, we have to be careful and watch out for insects. The sink where we wash our faces and brush our teeth should be covered up or drained to prevent insects from drowning inside. The oil lamps in temples are also professional killers. They’re supposed to be offerings to the Buddha, but they’re filled with corpses of insects. Since the oil lamps are uncovered, insects are killed instantly as soon as they fall in.

When I lived in a temple before, each morning when I wiped the altar table, I always saw the lamps filled with dead sentient beings and supposed that the Buddha wouldn’t be pleased with it! In ancient times, since there were no other kinds of lights available, people had to use oil lamps. But now we have electric lights, yet people still stubbornly insist on using oil lamps. In ancient times, people used oil lamps and fragrant oil to make offerings to the Buddha.

Why did people light oil lamps to make offerings to the Buddha? Because oil lamps could illuminate the road for Him. In addition, they were used to light up the face of the Buddha to let people see it. They were also used to light the hallways in the temples, just like our road lamps here. However, in ancient times, people covered up oil lamps. Shakyamuni Buddha also instructed that when oil lamps were lit or put out, they should be covered up to prevent insects from being injured or burnt. Nowadays, people use big pots of oil as oil lamps. In the temples in Tibet, hundreds of oil lamps are lit all day and all night. First of all, they waste oil. Secondly, they kill lots of sentient beings. When we pursue



spiritual practice, we're supposed to refrain from killing and deliver sentient beings' lives, but we actually harm them instead.

Therefore, we must be careful. Refraining from killing includes a broader sense. Not only killing with a knife is killing. Of course, we should avoid killing if possible. We don't intend to kill by lighting oil lamps. However, we can avoid it by not using oil lamps. The Buddha didn't say that we must make offerings to Him with oil lamps. In case some places have no oil, how can people make offerings? Whatever we offer, the most important thing is our intention. Besides, the lamp actually refers to the lamp within us! Of course the scriptures point out that all temples should light lamps or fires all the time so that people can see the paths and go to meditate. It's the same in our ashram! When we come at midnight or during a seven-day retreat, we get up at three or four o'clock. If there were no lamps in temples or ashrams, how could you see where you're going? You might step on other people's heads, or some male practitioners may go to sit in the females' place and some females may go to sit in the males' place, causing embarrassment. So this is the reason for having lights. It's not that the Buddha needs any lights!

For instance, when I sit here, you always shine bright lights on me to let people see me, but it's not that I need the lights. So all kinds of lights are fine as long as you can see me. However, as to wooden Buddhas, no one comes to see them at night. Visitors only come in the daytime. So no lights are needed at all at

night. Besides, all the temples have electric lights now and it's easy to turn them on to allow people to practice their morning and evening services.

What I mean is that we should avoid killing if possible. There are many other things, but I can't go through all of them. As to any insects or bugs, we should avoid killing them if possible. Similarly, we should avoid cutting grass and trees if possible. If there is no other way, we can cut them, of course, to build houses or for hygiene. We can do it when necessary. However, it's different if we destroy them with a vicious heart for no reason.

Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery, Not Steal, and Not Lie

Another commandment is, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." That is, to refrain from having more than one husband or wife. I've explained the reason. If you have too many husbands, you won't have any next time. Suppose you have seven husbands. Then in the next seven lifetimes, no one will marry you because you once had too many! For example, you make ten thousand NT a week. If you spend it all in one day, of course you have no money left for the rest of the week.

The next commandment is, "Thou shalt not steal." This everyone understands and I've talked about it many times. There are many kinds of



stealing, and stealing money is only one kind. It's OK to steal if you're starving, but don't do it if you have money. Stealing also includes casually receiving offerings from people. Also, you mustn't hint at people to offer to you! Sometimes when we talk too long, we're also stealing; that is, stealing people's time. When people become impatient with you, you still keep babbling – that's also stealing.

If we sell something for ten dollars when it's actually worth only two dollars (if we say that it's very good when it's actually not and only worth two dollars, but we sell it for ten dollars) and cheat others to buy more, this is wrong and is stealing, too. Stealing doesn't only mean going out and stealing. When we go to work and see that the boss isn't there, and then slip away and go home early, it's also stealing. If we take something home from the factory that the boss didn't give us, that's stealing, too. When we live in a group, there are many things there for the public, not only for us. It's stealing if we take something that isn't given to us.

The next commandment is "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." You already understand this one, and I've also talked about it many times. It's explained at the time of initiation, too. There are many kinds of lying. The worst kind is when our spiritual level is low but we cheat others, suggesting that we've attained a higher level by saying some mysterious things. We coax people into believing that our level is higher than theirs by talking about mystical things. We hide our real level and make people think that we know

many things that they don't know. To cheat people in this way is the biggest lie. For another instance, after a Master passes away, some people like to become masters and then cheat people, saying that they're the successors. By doing this they incur the worst karma.

Sometimes we make a mistake. And when people ask us about it, we don't admit it, but let Master or our boss punish the whole group. This is also lying and is bad, too! If we admit our mistake, it's fine, but don't involve other people in it. Sometimes, I have to punish those people. It's okay if they make a small mistake, but they don't admit it and the issue becomes worse and involves the whole group. They wouldn't have been punished because of the small mistake, but since it involved the whole group and made a lot of noise, I have to punish them. They didn't admit it, but forced me to bother the whole group and question people one by one, and still didn't confess, so of course I have to punish them. I punish them for lying, but not for their trivial mistake.

Don't Covet Other People's Belongings

Another commandment is, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house." Of course we shouldn't covet other people's belongings. We shouldn't accept them even if people give them to us, not to mention coveting other people's



things. I've told you that if we accept other people's offerings that we don't deserve, we're only taking their karma. However, we don't know whether we deserve it or not; so we'd better not accept any unless people really force us to accept it. If we have no alternative, we should just accept it and then give it to someone else or give them something in return.

I think that the Chinese understand this rule very well. During the Chinese New Year, people give gifts to each other. After gifts are passed on too many times, however, the gift that you gave earlier may come back to you. Is that not so? This is also fine! At least we won't owe others anything. The Americans have a tradition; that is, when two people go out for coffee, each one pays his own bill. This is also good! They don't have to display false courtesy, and then fuss about who drinks more and who drinks less (Master and audience laugh), or they may feel embarrassed.

There's a very funny Aulacese story on this subject. Two people went out to eat a kind of food called jackfruit. It's a kind of fruit that has spines outside and looks very ugly. It's this fat and this big with many seeds and sweet knobby flesh inside. These two people reached an agreement: "We don't know who will eat more and who will eat less, of course. So we'll count the seeds, and then we'll know how much each person should pay." After they both agreed, they went out to share a big jackfruit together.

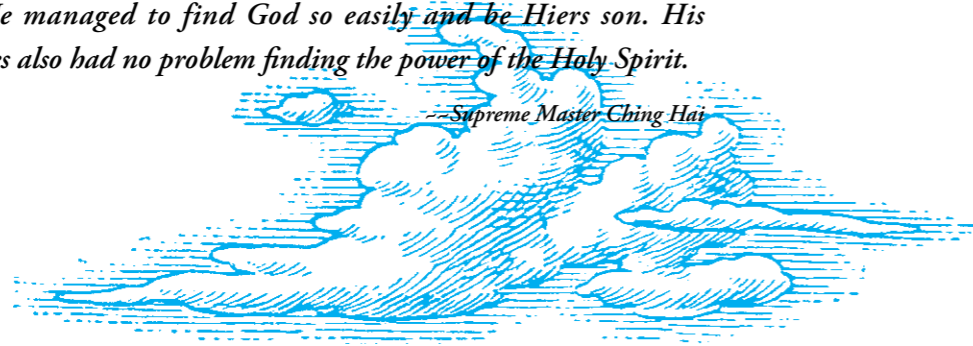
One of them was very honest, but the other swallowed all the seeds. (Master and audience laugh) Seeing this, the first person didn't say anything. After finishing eating, the first person suddenly screamed, "Oh! My stomach hurts very much! My stomach really hurts!" He rolled on the floor and kept screaming. The second person wasn't done eating yet so while eating, he asked, "What's wrong with you?" And the first person said, "I accidentally swallowed a seed. Now it's growing. Oh! It's getting bigger and bigger. Oh! It's grown up to here now! (Master points to Her chest) Oh! It's up to here now! (Master points to Her throat) Oh! Quickly think of a way to save me! Why is it growing so fast?" The other person was frightened to death and asked, "You swallowed only one seed and it's grown this big. (Laughter) What will happen to me since I've swallowed five seeds?" (Master and audience laugh. Applause) So don't swallow any fruit seeds! (Master and audience laugh)



***T**his almighty power has always been with us. We don't have to buy it or get it from someone. No one controls our almighty power, and no one can hide it. It has been in the open all the while, ready to serve us and to let us use it anytime. It is a great pity if we don't use it. It is just that our attention is constantly distracted by the outside. We look outwardly, worship the saints outside, and seek external powers. We worship deities and ghosts, mountains and rivers, and saints' relics, which are bones in another form. Do we want to become bony saints?*

...Therefore, Jesus Christ said, "The Heavenly kingdom is within you. You are the great temple, the grand church of God, and God dwells within you." Such is the meaning of His words. That was how He managed to find God so easily and be His son. His disciples also had no problem finding the power of the Holy Spirit.

—Supreme Master Ching Hai



8

Samuel

Spoken by Supreme Master Ching Hai, Hsiu Center, Formosa

May 27, 1990 (Originally in Chinese)



“If the Lord Gives Me a Child, I’ll Let Him Serve Hirm All His Life.”

There was a village called Ramathaim-Zophim located on a hill near Jerusalem, where a man named Elkanah lived with his two wives. One was called Peninnah and she had many sons and daughters. The other wife, Hannah, didn’t even have one child and felt sad about this. Although she knew that her husband loved her more than his other wife, she still felt very unhappy.

Each year Elkanah would take the whole family to a place called Shiloh to worship their so-called God. After worshipping, they would have a party and everyone would assemble in the temple. The wife that had many children would be surrounded by her children but Hannah was always alone.

Seeing that the other wife was surrounded by so many people, Hannah looked at herself and felt sadder than ever. When the feast was over she left the party and walked alone to one corner, feeling very bitter

and telling God in her heart that she was very sad. Then she prayed, “If the Lord gives me a child, I’ll let him serve Hirm all his life.”

The Lord Answers Hannah’s Prayer

God heard her prayer just like Hes hears any of our prayers, but when a priest named Eli saw Hannah, he thought that she was drunk. Then Hannah said to him, “Priest, don’t think that I’m a wicked woman. I’m also not drunk. I only feel very unhappy, very grieved.” Then she told Eli about her circumstances and he then said to her, “If you want to have peace, you can pray to the Lord to grant you the child that you’re yearning for.” Having heard the priest’s words, Hannah wiped away her tears and felt better after going home.

Then the Lord answered her prayer and gave her a very beautiful child whom she named Samuel. Hannah said, “When my little child is a bit older, I’ll bring him to Shiloh so he can become a monk. He’ll stay there all his life to serve the Lord. This is what I promised Hirm.” She



really did keep her promise and brought the child to the priest Eli, saying, “This is the child that the Lord has granted me in response to my prayers. Now, I give him to you because I want to give him back to God. Please take good care of him and train him to work for the Lord.”

Then a few days later, their family returned to Ramathaim-Zophim, and Samuel was left behind with the priest Eli. God knew that to be separated from her own child was a very painful and difficult decision for Hannah but Hes did not disappoint her.

With the passage of time, Hes granted her three more sons and two more daughters so that she could make use of her motherly love to take care of more children. Every year when they went to Shiloh, Hannah would go to see her little Samuel and brought him clothes that she had made herself by hand.

Samuel had now grown up to be a very lovely child and everyone who saw him loved him. Now that the priest Eli was old, he very quickly had to prepare his children to minister the temple of God. However, Eli’s children were unlike their father. They were all greedy and had no love

or respect for God. And God warned Eli that Hes would not give the job of being a priest to people like his children. The Lord said, “I will choose a priest. This priest must be loyal to me, listen to me and do everything that I request.”

The Lord Calls Samuel

Then one night Samuel was partially awake while sleeping in the temple of God and heard someone calling his name. So he ran to Eli, but the old priest had not called him. A similar thing happened again, and then Samuel asked Eli, “Are you calling me? I’m here.” But Eli had not called him. However, the old priest knew that it must be the Lord calling Samuel.

So when the voice came again a third time, Samuel answered because Eli had taught him what to say when he heard the voice again. At that moment, Samuel said to the Lord, “Speak, for Your servant hears.” Then the Lord said to Samuel, “I want to punish Eli’s children. No one



from their family can become my priest!”

The next morning when Eli asked Samuel what God had said to him, Samuel didn’t tell Eli what the Lord had told him the night before. The old priest then commanded Samuel to tell him and he reluctantly did so. Having heard that, Eli felt very sorry. However, he said, “Let the Lord do what seems right to Hirm.”

After a while, Israel had a battle with a group called the Philistines, and Israel sent a special box, an ark, to Shiloh. The ark contained God’s power and they believed that the little box would bring them luck on the battlefield. So Eli’s children brought it to their camp. However, the box seemed to be of no help to them because the Philistines still won the battle and also got hold of the holy box and killed Eli’s children. Eli was now very, very old and almost blind in both eyes, so when he heard the terrible news of the defeat, he broke his neck.

Next the Philistines returned to their city in glory and placed the holy box in their temple of Dagon (a Philistine idol) as a symbol of victory. The next day, their idol – the statue of Dagon – fell down before

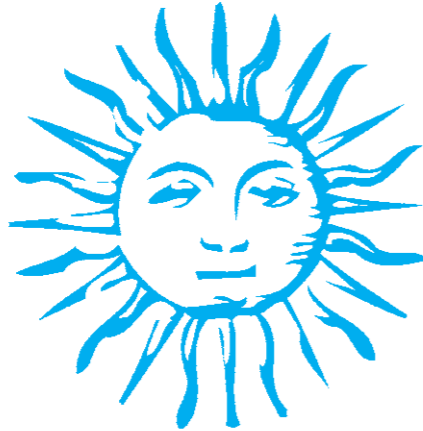
the holy box and its nose was broken. They then put the statue back in its original place. However, it fell down again the next morning. This time, it was completely broken and then a plague began to spread throughout the city. Everyone became very frightened, saying, “The God of Israel is starting to work now. Let’s quickly get rid of this holy box!”

So they sent the ark to a place called Gath. However, the plague still continued to spread. Thus, the Philistines became very worried and confused and said to their sorcerers and priests, “We have to send this box back to Israel quickly. Moreover, we should include a present as an offering to God.” They were now afraid of the God of Israel, thinking that He was the real God with unlimited power and some of their wise people gave the following advice: “Only by doing this can we be saved. You have to remember what God did to the Egyptians before!”

Therefore, they sent the box by placing it in a cart pulled by two oxen and waited to see what would happen. The oxen were very tame and just like they had been trained to do so, brought the box across the border and walked straight to a village in Israel called Beth Shemesh. When



they arrived at the village, the people rejoiced at seeing God's holy box returned. Through this experience, the Philistines knew that the God of Israel should be well respected. (Samuel 1:1-6:15)



It's Best to Offer Everything to God

Do you know what the most touching part of this story is? It's the part about the woman who was yearning very much for a child. Because of having no children she felt very lonely and sorrowful and was teased by others. Then she ran to God and cried. Even after having longed so much, she offered her little child to God after his birth! When I see someone offer their child to God, I'm very touched. One can only do this when one's heart is the purest. If it were us, we probably couldn't let go because it's really very difficult to do so, getting one after such yearning and then offering it to God. However, because she had offered one, she got five more children.

That's why it's said that we shouldn't be greedy. We also shouldn't think that when we get something, it's supposed to be like that. One really can't say! We should never forget God, and then we'll have everything. If we want to get something, we have to know that everything belongs to Hirm. When Hes gives something to us, we shouldn't think that it's ours. If we need to use it, we should use it. When other people need to use it, it can also be shared. It's best if we offer everything to God. The more we offer Hirm, the more we'll have.

Just like with her child, Hannah could have said, "I offer him to God but there's no need to give. Just offering him in my heart is enough." We also always say things like this: "It's good enough for me to have the intention! God



If we always devote our lives and concentrate our love to God, everything we need will come. Everything, absolutely everything, without effort. I make no effort. You know how long it takes me to paint a picture, or how long it takes me to design clothes? Everything comes along just because I don't care for these things. I just care for God and then everything belongs to God. If I care for God, everything belongs to me too; very simple and logical.

~Supreme Master Ching Hai



recognizes my sincerity. It's the same wherever it is! When my child is here, he also belongs to God. Since every place belongs to God, being next to me also means belonging to God! Then simply put him next to me; God is omnipresent! Since Hes is everywhere, it will be enough for Hirm to know that I have the intention of offering!"

It's not the same, however because the love between a mother and child is very deep. To be really separated from the child is different. Also, to be able to put down the heart and offer the child to God is truly different. Isn't it said, "To say it in the heart is good enough; then no matter where he is all will belong to God. It's the same whether he's in church or at home"? But it's not the same. When we give an offering totally from the heart it's not the same as just saying it. If we're able or unable to put down our heart, it's not the same! Because of this, God was touched and gave her five more children. Originally, she had no children and there was no hope but eventually she had six!

This isn't just a matter of children; it's the same in any situation. If we aren't greedy and can put down everything, we'll have more. Really, this is my personal experience. I



haven't given anything that I haven't been able to get back! Besides, I don't even think about it and then it comes back. It really comes back by itself!

Put Down Your Possessions and More Will Return to You

It's just like the story I told you before. When a farmer went to cultivate his land, he dug up a jar and took it out to have a look. Oh! In it was real, glistening gold. He then put it to one side and continued to cultivate. After that, he went home and told his wife, "Hey! You know what? Today I dug up a jar of gold! It's full and very shiny."

His wife said, "Where is it, where?" And the farmer replied, "It's still in the field. I dug it up and put it to one side." So the wife said, "You're so stupid. Why did you leave it there and not bring it back?" Then she continued to scold him and he said, "Ayah! If it's really meant for us according to our fate, it will 'crawl' here! Only when it crawls to my door will I think that it's mine because digging it up doesn't mean it's mine!" Maybe that person had practiced the Quan Yin Method so he was like that. One wouldn't think like that if one didn't practice the Quan Yin Method.



The wife was aggravated to death after hearing this, but she couldn't say anything because the field was rather far away from their home and the path was not that easy to walk on. The farmer comforted her, saying, "It doesn't matter. If it's ours, it will 'crawl' to our door." He really said "crawl." Using a word like this is more fun! Otherwise, how can gold crawl? While they were talking to each other, there happened to be two burglars outside who heard everything. Originally, the burglars wanted to steal the couple's things, but having heard the farmer's story, they became very happy and didn't want to steal their small things anymore! Then they hurried to the field to get the jar of gold and when they got there, there really was a jar. So the burglars said, "Ayah! Our fate is so good. We'll be billionaires!" The two then sang and danced for a while and opened the jar to have a look. Oh! Inside there were only snakes and not one piece of gold! The burglars were scared to death, closed the jar immediately, left it there and quickly ran away.

The next morning, the farmer returned to the field and after cultivating his land noticed that the jar was still there. So he opened it, saw that the gold was still inside, closed it and left it there and went back to tell his wife, "I just want to tell you, the jar is still there. It wasn't stolen. Old woman, you just worry too much!" But the wife was very agitated and said, "Why did I marry such a stupid husband, who didn't bring the gold back? Why do you just keep looking at it over there all the time?" The farmer said, "No hurry! If it's ours, I tell you, it will 'crawl' to our door!" He continued to say that, and it so

happened that the burglars were outside, wanting to hear what the matter was with the couple. So they also became greatly agitated after hearing that and said, "He thinks the snakes are gold! OK, we'll just let it 'crawl' to his door!"

The burglars then ran to the field and seeing that the jar was still there, they opened it and saw that it was again full of crawling snakes. Then they said, "All right, we'll let it 'crawl' to his door!" and laboriously took the jar to the farmer's door and left it there. Before they put it down, they looked very clearly into it again to see if it really contained gold or snakes. Next, they very happily hid themselves and waited for the drama to unfold the following day. On seeing the jar in the morning, the farmer said, "Hey! Old mama, you see! I told you that it would 'crawl' to our door!" When the jar was opened, both of them could see that it was full of gold. They then took it and became rich. The two burglars couldn't believe it and continued to watch. At last, they couldn't bear it and asked the couple, "How did you turn the snakes into gold?" At that time, it really contained gold, not snakes. But before, when the two burglars saw it, it contained snakes.

Then the burglars spoke frankly to them, saying, "It's really surprising! Why did we see snakes and when you saw it, it contained gold?" The farmer then said, "Ayah! Because it belongs to me, that's why it changed like that. It 'crawled' to my door! I really didn't want it." Then the farmer felt sorry for the burglars and gave them one or two pieces. And at that time, what they



were holding was real gold. If they had opened it themselves, it would have contained only snakes.

To Be Natural in Our Work There's No Need to Push Too Hard

Why have I told this story? The meaning is that it's good enough for us to sometimes be natural in our work. There's no need to push too hard. So, some people who try very hard still can't earn much money. On the other hand, some people basically don't bother about money, and the money just keeps coming in and can't be used up. It's all because people have fate.

To us practitioners, we have God, meaning that our highest wisdom, God, will take care of everything for us. If we believe in Hirm, our life will be more comfortable. No matter under what sort of circumstances we're in, we can live very freely and won't worry too much.

Just like Jesus Christ knew that He would soon be crucified. Though He could have run away, He still accepted it! He understood clearly and told His disciples beforehand, "After a while, you won't see me!" He still accepted the arrangement although it wasn't a happy thing. Because we have faith and practice, unhappy circumstances will be fewer. Because our hearts are consoled,

we have insurance, have a sense of security, have a kind of courage and so we can face problems more bravely. It's not that we escape the unavoidable problems of the world.

We can never avoid the things of this world. Even if your driving technique is the best, sometimes you still might have a car accident. It's not that your driving is no good; it's because someone else's driving is no good. It's not that you're drunk; it's others who are drunk. Sometimes your car is no good. For example, a tire is punctured, you run over a stone, some animal bumps into you, or someone suddenly runs in front of your car so that you can't brake the car in time and so on.

All these things can happen. Therefore, it's really hard to be a human. If there's no faith, no practice, I don't really know how you can get through the days in your life! Why do all of you like to practice with me? Because you get some benefits! Just like when you get ill and need an operation, although it's painful, you still have to go. Without that little period of pain, it would be even worse later. Then, after the operation, you still need to recover and take care of yourself. It's not that after the operation all is well. Similarly, we also need to train ourselves through work. After accumulating many experiences, we can get what we want. So, in practice, you can't always ask me to only give the sweet and bright side to you. This is also no fun!



Our Brain Wants Many Things but Not Everything Is Good for Us

Even in such a comfortable and full of fun place like the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve still felt bored, so bored that they had to listen to the snake and eat the senseless apple! The taste must have been no good; there was nothing good to taste! With so much fruit, what did they lack that they had to eat that one? Everything was theirs. Only the fruit of that tree couldn't be eaten. But still they couldn't bear it! Because it was so boring, even when they had so many things, they still wanted something else, just wanted to change the scene.

Therefore when we practice, it's sometimes very difficult. I know this. Every now and then, one's faith decreases because the things we asked for we're unable to get, thinking that God isn't taking care of us, that the Master power doesn't care, and so on. Not really! Because sometimes what we requested isn't good for us just like the apple that God asked not to be eaten. It was not because He wanted to reserve the apple for Himself. It was because it wasn't good for them! After eating it, their minds really changed and became different. Both of them became impure and complicated. They began to know what shame was, and to say what was good and what was bad, and made a mess. It was different than when they were like children, so pure and so happy.

Similarly, our brain wants many things and it doesn't mean that everything is good for us. So, sometimes when we ask for some lousy things and can't get them we blame God and say, "God isn't taking care of me! Master isn't listening to my prayers." It's not like that! Even I have to work according to rules. I can't avoid things like operations. Like a doctor, if he needs an operation he has to be operated on by others. You can't say that because he's the best person to operate, when he gets ill he shouldn't allow another person to operate on him. He can't operate on himself!

Just like Master Vimalakirti (one of Shakyamuni Buddha's greatest disciples), sometimes he got ill. Then people asked him, "Why are you sick?" and he said, "Sentient beings get sick, and therefore I'm sick." He couldn't be without sickness! Sometimes, he had to get ill to let others know that he was the same as they were. Otherwise, everyone would think that being a Master means you can avoid all kinds of suffering from birth, getting old, being sick and dying. It's too good! Then everyone would want to become a Master because of this and wouldn't have the courage to be a human, thinking that one can avoid one's responsibilities or avoid human suffering.

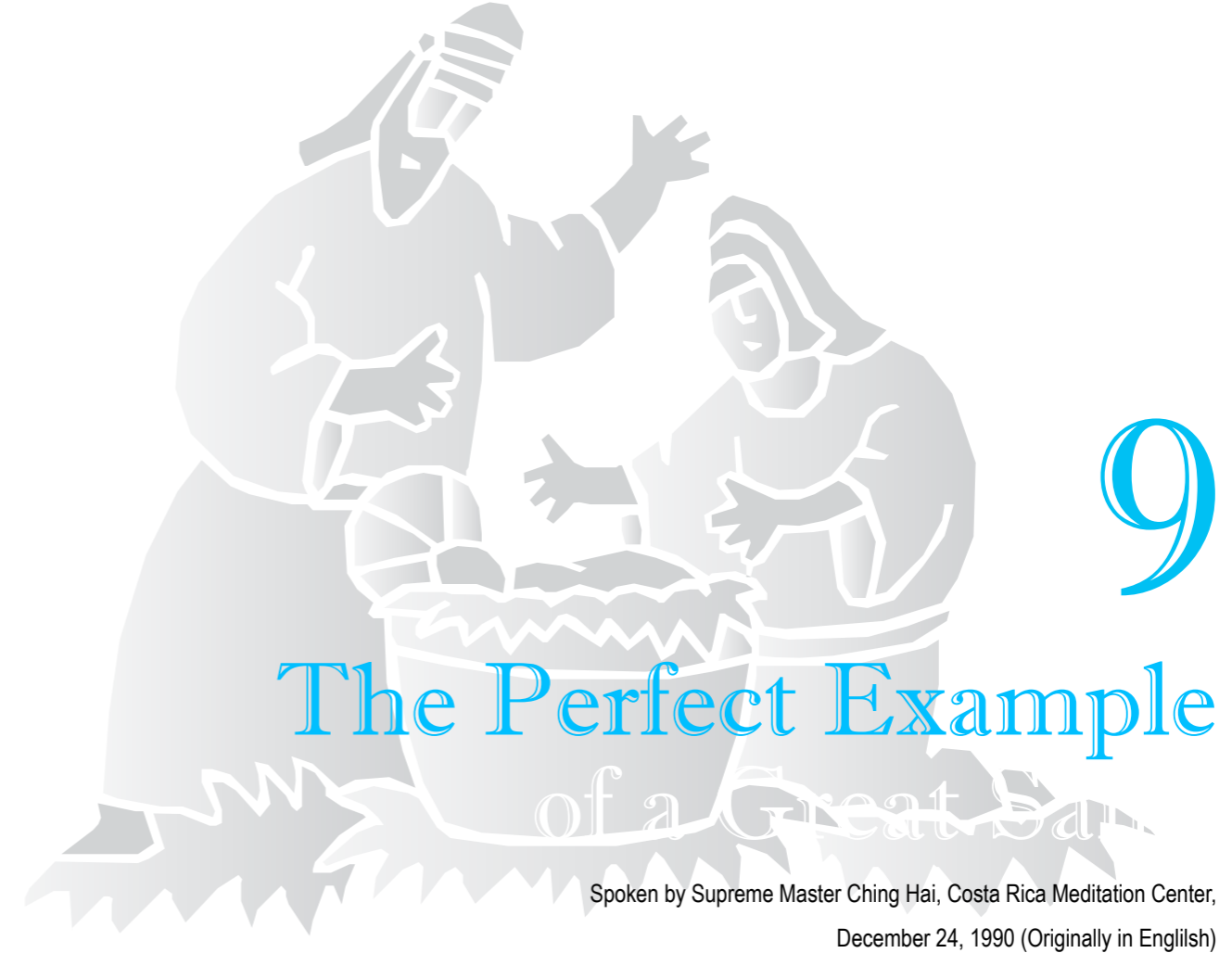
Thus, most of the so-called Masters suffer. They have to show some sickness and suffering to console sentient beings. Everyone is the same! Then when we're sick, we should remember that even our Master got sick so what about us? If a Master is too happy every day, people will wonder, "Is he made of



iron or copper? Because he's different than us he can practice. I'm different than you so how could I possibly practice?" It's the same! The bodily structures are the same.

The real Master is very ordinary, just the same as you are, and has everything. It's just that he can use what he has in a relatively good way. The average person has the same faculties but uses them in relatively not so good ways. For example, we have human emotions. A Master who has reached the Tao also has human emotions but He uses His emotions to help others, to be compassionate to others, to let others know that He can understand them since He also has feelings Himself. He can accompany others and simply chat with them. After chatting, the feelings are deeper and it's easier to liberate them. We ordinary people use these human emotions to bind others and ourselves.

Therefore, though it's the same thing, the use is different. Like with money, two people have the same amount but one uses it to scare others, to force others' wives, pretty ladies, to bribe people and to do other senseless things. On the contrary, the other person uses that money to help the poor and do something good. The value of the money is the same, but the use is not.





This is a story that happened two thousand years ago in the Bible. I'll just read a portion of it.

When Jesus was born, suddenly there was a blaze of light so bright that the men had to shield their eyes, and out of the brightness came the voice of God's messenger, an angel, who said, "Don't be afraid! I come with good news for you and for all the world. The Savior has come! God's promised king was born today in Bethlehem. You will find the baby asleep in a manger!"

Then the shepherds saw a great crowd of angels all praising God, saying, "Glory to God in Heaven! And peace to those who love Him on earth!"

When the angels left, the sky became dark again. Then the shepherds began to talk among themselves and said, "We have to go to Bethlehem and see what has happened. The Savior was born to save the people of the world. Glory to God! Glory to Jesus! Glory to all His children! Amen."
(Luke 2:8-21)

Shocking Us from Our Slumber

Now we remember that two thousand years ago a great being was born among us. He is so great that we have no words to praise Him. Only God knows his greatness; we mortals can't understand. We can understand only when we become as great as He is.

Now we often ask ourselves, "Why is it that Jesus had to die so quickly when He had just reached the peak of glory in His mission; that is, to spread the message of God?" If He had not left the earth in such a short time and in such a tragic way, His name would probably have been forgotten by now. God sacrificed Him in this way so that the whole world would remember, so that we would treasure a messenger of God by whichever name He came.

Since ancient times, our world has always been in trouble. People always err and forget God. So God always has to send messengers to remind us. But Jesus was one of the most remembered because of His greatness, because of His very short stay with us, and because of the way He left us and was resurrected. Now we say, "The great Son of God had such great power and did many miracles. So why didn't he change His own destiny? Why did He have to die in such a tragic way?" But he had to do it; otherwise we wouldn't be shocked out of our sleep. We would think the world lasts forever or the Master lasts forever.



There were also other Masters before Jesus, but now people don't remember them as much as we remember Jesus. When we remember Jesus, we remember God and derive some blessing because Jesus was the Son of God. In other words, Jesus was God personified on earth. He had to leave us very early. He had his purpose. He wanted to shock us out of our slumber.

Out of Humility He Surrendered Himself to God

Many thousands of years later, we're still shocked if we remember this story. Because of the ephemeral nature of our existence on earth, even the Son of God had to die! Everyone must go eventually. If even a man as great as Jesus can't preserve this ephemeral body and also can't be protected from the violence and ignorance of the people of this world, how can we feel safe? That's why he submitted himself to a punishment which He did not deserve. He suffered for the sake of everyone!

If we say Jesus used his blood to wash away our sins, it's not exaggerating. It's the truth because every time we think of Jesus we learn something. At least we remember the ephemeral nature of our world and our body or at least we learn humility because such a great one had to suffer in such a way. He was so

humble that He surrendered Himself to God and said, "Whatever God wills must be done!" Otherwise He could have escaped. We know He had a lot of magical power, including the power to be invisible, but He chose to go along with God's arrangement. So when we think of Him we should say, "Who are we to be proud, to forget God's will and not surrender?" But these lessons are hard to learn. If all people can learn these lessons well, Jesus' sacrifice was worthwhile and we're worthy to be His followers and worshippers.

Everything is arranged by God for some purpose. Our effort is necessary so that we'll know that we don't need to exert any effort. All the precepts, all the meditation hours that I've prescribed for you, and all the effort that you put into it are necessary, so that you'll finally learn to use no effort – no human effort – as Jesus did. He died on the cross just to give us a perfect example of surrendering. If we know this and learn it well, we're good Christians because during His great but brief mission, He always preached this lesson. The Bible also always emphasizes this: "Seek you first the Kingdom of God, and all other things shall be added unto you. Worry you not for tomorrow. Take care of today only. Do not worry about what you will eat or what will clothe you. Look at the lilies of the field. If the Father takes care of the lilies of the field, how can he not take care of us? Are we not better than they are?" (Matthew 6:28-29)



Try Your Best to Remember God

But many people in His time did not heed His messages. Many people nowadays still don't heed His messages, even if they call themselves Christians. So every year we should celebrate Jesus' birthday and try our best to remember to remind others how to surrender to God, and try ourselves to surrender to God, or at least try to remember God.

God is within us, but if we're too busy thinking about all other things and wanting all other things, then God has no chance to contact us or to put His message through, whether through silence in our heart or through a living messenger. I think Jesus sacrificed Himself just to let us learn this lesson: "Lay up not your treasure on earth, where moths do corrupt and destroy, but lay up your treasure in Heaven because it is eternal."

How do we lay up our treasure in Heaven? Should we build a safe and put money inside? No. In Heaven we don't need money. Everything is provided in plenty before we ask. So why did Jesus say that we should lay up our treasure in Heaven? He meant we should build up our merits and love God.

How do we love God? Keep His commandments. There are only ten. There are only a few and easy to keep, especially when we compare them with so many temptations and difficulties in this world, or when we compare them

with the amount of endurance we have to have in order to preserve a marriage, keep a job or study. We accept everything in this world for what purpose? Each one of us eats only about three meals a day and wears just a few clothes, but we work so hard to maintain everything. We keep all the rules of the factory if we want to keep a job or please the boss. But what does the boss give us? Not much. God gives us everything if we keep the commandments, but we just neglect them only because God is invisible to us.

God is so liberal. He won't come to us every day and say, "Hey, you didn't keep the commandments, you..." so we don't fear Him as we fear our boss, our relatives, friends, wife, husband, et cetera. Sometimes, when we're married, we have a very difficult husband or wife and he or she gives us a lot of trouble, but we bear it because we love our spouse or we fear that person. But we don't fear God and don't keep His commandments.

"Thou Shalt Not Kill" Also Applies to Animals

Many people ask me, "Why be vegan?" It's because the first commandment says: "Thou shalt not kill." Everything is made by God. We have no right to destroy it if God has not given us permission, which God never



did. If we remember, in the Old Testament God did not give us permission to kill animals. He only said, “Rule over them. They will keep you company.” And He said He made all kinds of food for each kind of animal. He also said, “I made all the herbs in the field and the fruit on the trees, which are pleasant to look at and taste good. These are your food.” (Genesis 1:29-30)

Never in the Bible have I found a sentence that says: “Animals are your food.” Neither the New Testament nor the Old Testament says anything like that. God never says things like that. Moses probably allowed someone to kill animals because at that time they killed each other. So at last he said, “Stop, stop! Kill animals instead!” Maybe it was like that He couldn’t tell them not to kill anything so he minimized the killing. But all these things are not God’s will but the people’s will. Therefore God destroyed the Earth, or at least some parts of the Earth, many times over and over again. Now, if we look at the history of humankind, when God destroyed some parts of the world or the whole world, we see that all the people in those parts died, but not all these people were killing other people. Some were even children. Some were sick or disabled persons. What had they done to incur God’s wrath? They hadn’t killed anyone. If we assume that “Thou shalt not kill” means only not killing people, then how did all those old, sick or disabled people and children kill anyone? So, what’s the reason? It must be because of the killing of animals; it must be because of the eating of meat.

I remember in the Bible God said, “Don’t kill the she-goat and he-buffalo to make an offering to me because your hands are full of innocent blood. You must stop this and repent for your sins; otherwise I will not forgive you. I will not listen to your prayers.” So, it must be that we don’t know God’s commandments completely. So God used these disasters to remind us and to try to shake us out of our ignorance. If we’re very fond of these tastes, it will lead to other desires, we’ll commit more blunders and we’ll be more attached to this world. Therefore “Thou shalt not kill” is the first commandment.

My Kingdom Is in Heaven

Jesus left our world very young because He wanted to set a good example, to remind us not to cling to this world as there are more permanent worlds in God’s kingdom. Jesus didn’t refuse to die. He didn’t reject or protest because He was sure of Heaven. He always said, “My kingdom is in Heaven.” Thus He set a perfect example for us so that we should not fear death if we have faith in God. He said, “In my Father’s house there are many mansions.” Why should we cling to this world, which is full of misery and ephemeral, when our Father in Heaven has so many mansions and we could live with Him for eternity? Jesus’



death on the cross has many wonderful meanings and lessons for us. If we think about it, we could probably come to more conclusions and have more ideas.

Jesus was young, very young. He could have had a beautiful lover. He could have enjoyed the world, at least after He became famous. So many people loved him, but when He had to go He just went. He was attached neither to fame nor to the love of the people of the world. So why should we be, when we don't have that much, when we're older than He, not as good-looking as He, not as wise as He, not as much beloved as He, and not as respected and sought after as He?

He traveled all over the world for over ten years and learned a great many things. He had so much magical power that he could achieve anything He wanted, even turning water into wine. So, why should we labor all day long just for a little bit of fruit juice and not want to let go of this world?

So Jesus had to set an example for us through His silent sacrifice. That's why we remember Him. That is why until now people still shed tears for Him, including myself. Even recently, when I read how they treated Him, I was so hurt and suffered so much. Once I was alone in my room and I cried very loudly. I kept calling His name and crying very loudly. Of course I understand it was all God's will, too. I understand His purpose, but because we have a human body and a human heart, sometimes we can't help having these human emotions.

So, the best thing we can do to show our gratitude to Jesus is to try to live according to His teachings and to try to keep God's commandments because He said, "If you love me, keep my commandments," and that's all He wanted. To keep the commandments isn't good for God or for Jesus, but is good for us alone. God needs nothing from us. Jesus needs nothing from us. But God and Jesus know that if we keep the commandments, our world will become better and we'll have more benefit, more peace and more happiness. Even during our short stay on earth, He wants us to enjoy bliss and comfort and to glorify ourselves instead of suffering and being miserable most of our lives.

Knock Until You Find the Right Door

But sometimes we can't keep them because we feel God is so far away. We neglect God's commandments so we encounter disasters, we suffer, we cry and then we pray to God. So now God has to send a messenger down again, maybe with a different name, to remind us and teach us the way to eternal happiness. Jesus also said, "God will send comforters to you," meaning that the same spirit will descend in different bodies whenever human beings need comfort and correction in their way of life.



If there is anyone who teaches the same ideas or gives us the same comfort as Jesus did, as stated in the Bible, then we should know that he is a comforter that God has sent us. We may search for or choose anyone of them; there shouldn't be many. One is enough. If you don't think there's such a messenger or comforter, then you must at least keep God's commandments, think of God and pray to God all the time. Otherwise the grace of Jesus won't descend on us. His sacrifice will have been a waste to us, and we will show no gratitude to Him.

Now we say, "Jesus has come here and washed away our sins, so what's the need to repent, to think of God or to pray anymore?" But we must still do it. "Knock and it shall be opened. Ask and it shall be given." (Matthew 7:7) We must knock. We must ask. Otherwise God will say, "Don't bother to knock. Don't bother to ask. I'll give it to you anyway."

But He did give us everything freely. He did in the Garden of Eden. But we humans didn't appreciate it. So He sent us down here to learn through hardship. Now we have to learn quickly and go back to the Garden of Eden. Now we must ask. We must knock. It's not given freely anymore.

If we believe that Jesus had already washed away everyone's sins, then why are so many Christians still suffering? There must be something lacking. Maybe

we aren't sincere enough, maybe we don't understand properly or maybe we aren't connected inside because we haven't found the kingdom of God within.

Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is within you." If we don't find the way to find out where it is, we can't receive the grace of Jesus. It's just as if our father left a great treasure for us, but we don't know where the key is; then no matter how many times we say, "I have the treasure, I have the treasure, I have the treasure," it's of no use.

So, if we can find it by ourselves, it's good. But if we can't, we should ask. We should ask anyone who knows. Ask until we find the one who knows. We should knock on every door. Knock, until we find the right door, the door that opens the way to Heaven. Otherwise our life is so short, so ephemeral and always in danger and we have nothing to lean on.

OK. I won't speak too much. I'll let you rest, go home or enjoy further. Merry Christmas!

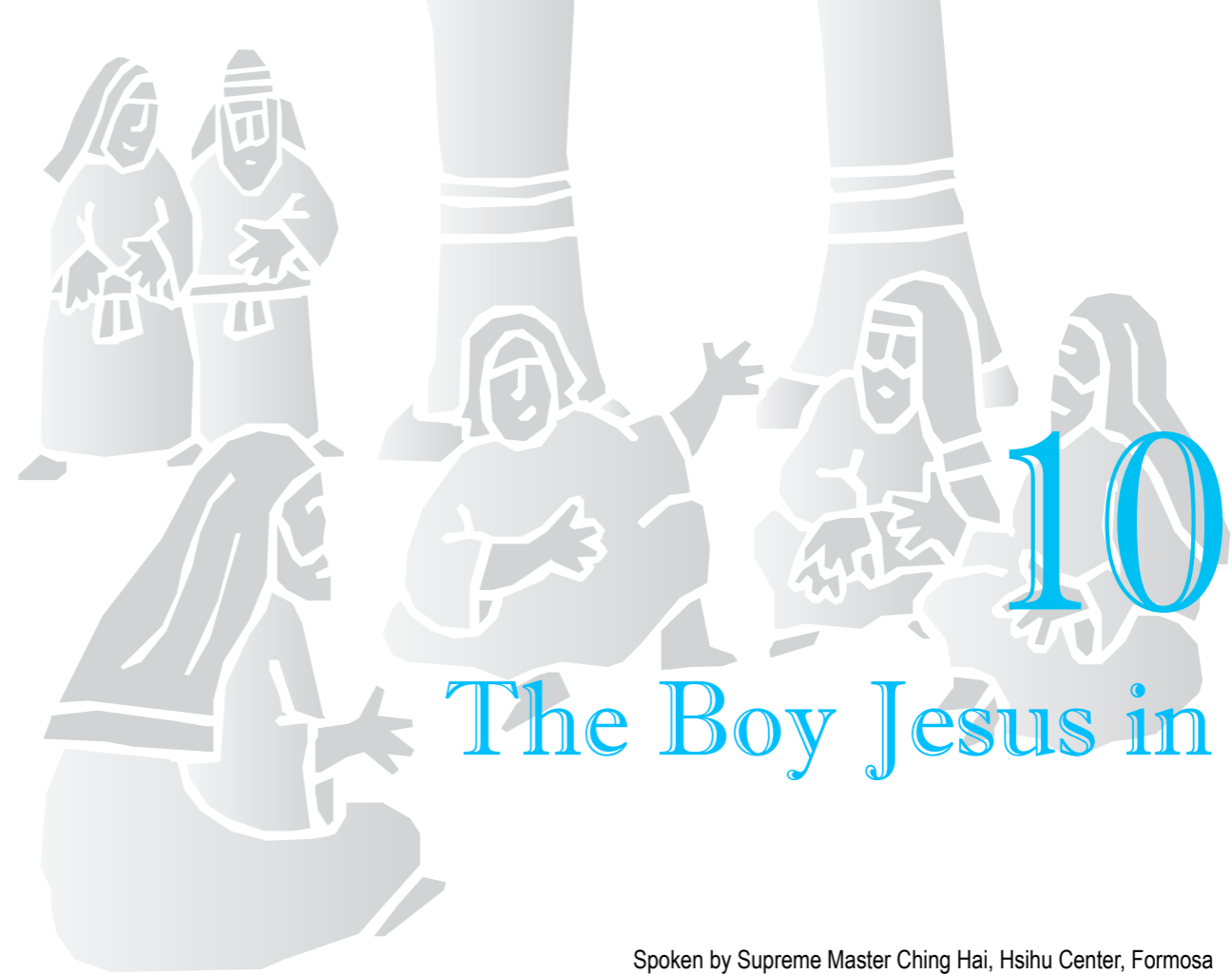




Q: When one becomes a Master, will he or she ever have fear, doubt or anger? We call Jesus a Master, however, according to the Bible, Jesus was frightened the night before He was crucified. And before His death, Jesus cried, “God, why have You deserted me?” Please explain, if Jesus had fear and doubt, how can we have no fear and doubt?

M: They probably would have fear and doubt, but that fear and doubt is not deep-rooted like us. If Jesus had no fear of the crucifixion, then his sacrifice was not so great. He had fear, but he accepted. Whereby we have fear and we run away and we try to blame it on others or we try to escape, we try to put that cross on someone else. That is the difference. We might have fear. We might have emotion, but we can withdraw it anytime or we can make use of the fear or emotion to the benefit of other beings. After enlightenment, all the feelings, all the emotions are still there, because we are made to have these in order to use them to understand other brothers and sisters. If you have no feeling, no emotion, how can you understand human beings? How can you help them? But the fears of the Master are different. The fears of the Master sometimes are also affected by the fear of the disciples. He takes the fear from the disciples so the disciples are fearless, but the Master will take some degree of that fear. But that is only very shallow and not deep-rooted. It’s only illusionary. And the Master on one hand has the fear but on the other hand definitely has no fear, you understand what I mean? He knows he has to have fear but he doesn’t fear the fear.

--Supreme MasterChing Hai



The Boy Jesus in

Spoken by Supreme Master Ching Hai, Hsihu Center, Formosa
July 15, 1990 (Master’s talk with Children. Originally in Chinese)



Do you know why Jesus Christ was so famous? Because He was an enlightened Master! An enlightened Master is a great person who has wisdom. Jesus was born in Heaven, and then helped people when He grew up – with respect to their souls, not money. Jesus Christ didn't have money, but He had great virtues and wisdom. Therefore, He was loved by many.

As He was growing up, His parents loved Him deeply. He was good at learning anything and was benevolent so many people loved Him. God also loved Him. He looked very dignified and was very clever.

Every year His so-called parents, Joseph and Mary, went to Jerusalem for the Jewish holy festival (Passover). During this festival, they would say prayers of gratitude to God to thank Him for helping the Jews live after life since ancient times, especially for delivering them from slavery in Egypt. Therefore, once a year they would hold a celebration to thank the inner God and the inner Master. They must have had an enlightened Master then. Jesus was twelve-years-old and was more than

happy to accompany His parents. There they would celebrate an exciting, delightful and boisterous festival day.

When it was time to go home, His parents, Joseph and Mary, left Jerusalem. Assuming their child was either in front of or behind the group of travelers, they didn't notice that Jesus wasn't with them. Usually children seldom stay close to their parents; they either walk in the front or behind. In the evening, they discovered that Jesus was missing. They started to search among their friends and others for Jesus. He was only twelve-years-old; where could He have gone? Joseph and Mary were so worried that they couldn't sleep the whole night.

Early the next morning, they returned to Jerusalem to look for Jesus. After a whole day of searching, they finally found Him. Guess where He was found? (Audience: In the temple.) Right! In the temple! They eventually found Him in the temple, sitting among the spiritual practitioners asking the teachers and priests about spiritual practice, about God's law and about morality, which were things adults discussed.



Everyone there was so amazed and delighted to see a twelve-year-old child having such intense interest in spirituality, being so respectful toward God and with the ability to ask so many intelligent questions.

As you know, if we're not intelligent enough, we may not be able to ask a question even if we have one. Just like when you're in school, the teacher may ask you: "Do you understand? Are there any questions?" Then some ask very clever questions, but some ask stupid questions. Jesus Christ wasn't stupid; He asked very clever questions so everyone was amazed and delighted.

I Must Be in My Father's House

When His parents found Him, His mother, Mary, asked Him, "Child, why have you done this to us? Why did you leave without saying a word? We've been so worried that we couldn't sleep." She reproached Him just like your parents would if you weren't behaving well, or when they found you after you had been missing. Usually the mother has more

to say. As His mother began to chide Him, Jesus seemed surprised at what she was saying. He thought His mother shouldn't question Him like that. So instead of answering her, He asked, "Why didn't you know that I would be here? You should have known that I would be in my Father's house!" He meant the temple. He was amazed and asked His mother, "Did you not know that I would be in my Father's house?" Mary and Joseph didn't know how to answer His questions. Perhaps they were not as enlightened as Jesus was. (Luke 2:40-49)





Parents are not necessarily more clever than their children. Very often this is the case. Some children are geniuses; they're already great when they're only ten, seven or four years old. They can ask many questions that their parents could never answer. At that time, they had forgotten that Jesus was not an ordinary child and that His father is God. God only borrowed their bodies to give birth to Jesus, and to bring Him up for a certain time; they were not really Jesus' true parents. Nevertheless, Jesus went home with them, and was obedient and nice to them just like He used to be.

Why was Jesus Christ so interested in the temple and God's teachings? Do you children know the answer? (Audience: I know.) What do you say? (Audience: It was because He's the Son of God!) The Son of God, right! It was because He's the Son of God! He had this enlightenment when He was born. He had practiced spirituality for many lifetimes, and He's the Son of God.

I'd like to ask you another question. If He's the Son of God, then who are you? (Audience: Human beings!) So you're human beings! Who do you think you are? (Audience: We're spiritual practitioners.) You're spiritual practitioners; at least you're slightly better than him (Master refers to the first questioner). You're initiated and he's not. Correct! We're spiritual practitioners; not bad!

Is there anyone who has any different ideas? Who are we? (Audience: Sons of God!) Sons of God? Who is that? Who dared to say that? Show your

face and let me see you. So you're the son of God. When did He tell you? (Audience: We're all God's children. As human beings were created by God, we're God's children. That was what Master told us.)

So those were my words. (Master and everyone laugh) There's no point in quoting my words. I thought you realized it yourself. All right, if we're all God's children, then why are we different than Jesus Christ? (Audience: It was a different time and we're of a different race.) You're too enlightened. Since we're from a different race, should we reincarnate as Jews to become God's children? What do you mean by different races? Didn't you just say that we're all God's children? (Audience: They were from a race different than the Chinese.)

We Are All God's Children

We're all God's children, sons of God. However, some of us are obedient and some are not. There may be three or four children in a family born of the same parents, but some are obedient and some are naughty; some are clever and some aren't. Some are pretty, but some are ugly. Some are disabled, and some are even mentally slow. They were born of the same parents, who did not discriminate when they gave birth to their children. They wouldn't make



the decision of wanting one child to be born wiser than the other. And, when they had another baby, they couldn't say, "Wow! I dislike this baby even before he's born. I want him to look ugly." No parents would have such thoughts. Parents give birth to children and love them wholeheartedly. Nonetheless, some children are ugly, some are pretty; some are obedient, some are naughty; some are dumb, and some are clever. All the same, we're God's children, not only Jesus Christ. It was only because He had already recognized His Father that He could say with confidence, "I know who my Father is."

We're separated from our Father so we don't recognize Him. The truth is, we're all the same. We have the same status as Jesus Christ; there's no difference at all. He was very diligent because He deeply missed His Father – the real Father, the God in the Heavenly kingdom – so He persistently pleaded with God, His real Father, to show Him where He is and reveal to Him Their true relationship. However, we don't miss our Father. All the time, we only miss our worldly friends and relatives. Since we don't long for our true parents, they can't force us to think about them, nor can they appear to us. We're too busy to think about them. Why are we so busy? Because we're engaged in worldly matters, fame and wealth, all kinds of things, and in taking care of our so-called friends and relatives in this world.

In this story, Jesus Christ didn't say, "You're my parents." He really knew that He is the Son of God so He told His parents: "How could you not

know that I would be in my Father's house, working for Him?" He had this realization when He was only twelve. He knew who He was. He knew the power of the Creator, but He didn't understand ephemeral human relations and emotions. He didn't recognize ephemeral human feelings. Well! Jesus Christ realized this when He was twelve, and He admitted that His true relationship is with God. However, He was still filial to His parents and continued to be an obedient child.

So, our children who pursue spiritual practice should do the same. We know that the world is ephemeral, and that we're related to our friends and relatives only by karma. We know our true parent is the Creator. However, while in this world, we still have to be obedient and respect the elderly, our parents and teachers, and love all our friends and relatives, just as Jesus Christ did. If Jesus Christ respected His parents, we should do the same, and even more so! He knew that His father is God, the Most High, yet He still fulfilled His obligations to the world. We should do the same, and even more so, since we have yet to attain this realization!



11

The Sermon on

Spoken by Supreme Master Ching Hai, Penghu, Formosa

March 6, 1989 (Originally in Chinese)



One day many people, including His disciples and followers, came to see Jesus. The followers were those who believed in Him but hadn't practiced with Him, and probably hadn't been initiated into the Quan Yin Method by Him. They only followed Him and came to see Him. Then Jesus went up onto a mountain and sat down. It might have been like that because there were so many people; He had to speak on a mountain to let them see Him.

Jesus first said, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven."*

This means that those who are humble and know that they lack wisdom will be blessed and loved by God.

Then Jesus said, *"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."*

This is just like what I often tell you: Our sickness is also a reward because we're blessed in that situation.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Here Jesus meant that those who comply with the will of God will be rewarded.

He also said, *"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."* I translated this into Chinese only briefly.

Then Jesus said, *"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. And Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."*

We know this already. Among our fellow initiates, those who are the clumsiest, the most humble and the least troublesome have the best inner experiences, and those who make the least noise and never show off in front of me gain the best rewards. During the experience report sessions at meditation retreats, a few people, whom we have never noticed before, may suddenly come out and report their very high-level inner experiences. They are the purest and most humble.

Jesus said, *"Blessed are the peacemakers,"* that is, those who pacify the world and reunite enemies, *"for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. And Blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you"*



falsely for my sake.”

“For my sake” meant for Jesus Christ’s sake at that time. That is, if one is humiliated and slandered for his Master’s sake and for believing in his Master, one is greatly blessed. When Jesus was in the world, His disciples were slandered, persecuted, and bothered. Jesus said that those disciples were greatly blessed. He told them to be at ease and not to worry about such tests.

Then Jesus continued, *“Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in Heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”*

That is, if you’re persecuted and slandered in that way, you’ll become a Master and attain God-realization. Therefore, all the religions say similar things.

Jesus Christ said, *“Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.”*

That is, giving two pieces all together to that person would make

him look better. When we read the Bible or the Brahmajala Sutra, we know that we shouldn’t treat those who slander us and act badly toward us in the same way that they treat us. We should treat them with double love and kindness. If you only let him slap you on your right cheek without reacting, he may think that you’re afraid of him or you don’t know how to react. But when you also turn your left cheek to him, he may wake up and wonder, “Well! Why did this person react this way? It’s not that he couldn’t react, but that he didn’t care about being slapped and has forgiven me.” Only then will he benefit. That’s why Jesus told us to turn the other cheek to that person also. Otherwise Jesus would have said, “When anyone slaps you in the face, don’t slap him back.” If we also turn the other cheek to him, he will think, “This person is alert and not muddled. He’s capable of reacting, only his reaction is the opposite of my action.” Only then may he wake up. So, I think that Jesus Christ was the greatest. What do you think? (Audience: Yes.) (Applause)



Shakyamuni Buddha reacted in the same way when a person who had killed ninety-nine people wanted to kill Him. The Buddha didn't fight with him but lifted him up to the level of Arhat. That was the correct reaction. Because we've pursued spiritual practice and sown virtuous seeds in many lifetimes, we'll react the same as what Jesus said, "*Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.*" We'll naturally react that way and won't know why. It's because we've become used to reacting that way and we react that way automatically.

For instance, when we're young, we can't ride a bicycle. Then we keep practicing riding and then know how to ride it. In the beginning, we feel happy about it, but after we get used to it we feel that it's not difficult. We can talk while riding a bicycle and don't feel that it's a big deal. Some people can even get onto top of a bicycle and stand up there while riding. Some can ride a bicycle backwards and feel that it's easy to do. Similarly, if we perform virtuous deeds and feel that it's natural, it means that we've sown spiritual seeds in many lifetimes and that we're blessed and virtuous.

On the other hand, if any one of us or other people do bad and vicious deeds to us or other people, we should pity him, knowing that he hasn't sown virtuous seeds in his previous lifetimes or his virtuous seeds have become rotten or haven't grown. Then we should pray to God to help him to open his heart and make him understand. We can't let him stay that way. To those who are bad to us,

we should give them a chance to introspect on themselves. Having no reaction when they slap us in the face isn't good enough. We should do something that's better for them.

Now I understand the reason I always treat people better when they treat me worse. That's why I was called a "living saint." I was lovingly called a "living saint" by some people even before I started to pursue spiritual practice. They didn't mean that I was actually a "living saint." What they meant was that no matter how badly they treated me, I treated them better and better; so they couldn't do anything about me except to say, "She's a living saint." It was those who treated me badly who later called me a "living saint," not other people. Other people didn't know who I was because they didn't know me. Only those who knew me called me that.

Ye Are the Salt of the Earth

This speech of Jesus Christ on the mountain is exactly the same as what is stated in the Brahmajala Sutra in Buddhism. This speech is very famous and everyone knows it. It's called "The Sermon on the Mount."



In it Jesus also said, *“Ye (the disciples) are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?”*

This means that we spiritual practitioners represent virtue, but if we aren't diligent and virtuous, who else can help us? Who else can make us become virtuous? Who else can be our role model? We should be our own role models. Jesus was correct.

This is why I emphasize that we pursue spiritual practice not only for ourselves, but also to be role models for others and to let others feel our sincerity and hence follow us. If we say that we're spiritual practitioners but seek pleasures, eat meat and drink alcohol like ordinary people do, if we harm sentient beings instead of protecting them, if we slander other people, quarrel with others, fight with others and gossip about others, who else can help us? Who else can save those who don't pursue spiritual practice?

I've been telling you this for a long time so you can't say that you don't have to be serious about the precepts when you pursue spiritual practice. If a person isn't virtuous, no matter how high a level he's attained, no one respects him or trusts him because no matter how high his inner level is, if he looks low outside, people are afraid of him. People are ignorant so how do they know that his level is high? If he doesn't look good outside, people will say that he's bad. We can't blame them. Therefore, even if some people say that one who eats meat

and drinks alcohol can also attain God-realization, we shouldn't listen to them. We want people to know that we can give up certain cravings in order to be diligent in our spiritual practice, in order to be role models, and for the sake of the pitiful animals who are mortally afraid of death.

Jesus continued, *“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.”*

This means that everyone will notice it if we practice diligently. We'll emit light and a kind, virtuous and peaceful atmosphere. Then people will feel it and sense it so we can't hide and we don't have to hide. Even if we don't say anything people will notice us. *“Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.”*

Jesus said, *“Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Who is in Heaven.”*

This means that when they see how great we are, they'll know that our Father is even greater, and that if we want others to adore God, we should first purify ourselves and be good role models to let them know that we truly represent brilliant virtue and noble ideals, or in other words, the noble God. Was Jesus correct? Yes or no? (A:Yes.) (Applause) So do you see why I praise Jesus Christ? Because what He said was very good! Since you don't know how



good Christianity is I'm introducing it to you today, and also to prove that whatever I say is correct, that I have reasons for praising Jesus Christ and I have reasons for praising the Biblical teachings or the Christian teachings.

Some Christians may go to extremes, do bad deeds, show disrespect for other religions or be violent, but this is the problem of individual people. It's Maya who uses them to sneak into the group and ruin it. It's not that Christianity isn't good. There are also many extreme, disturbed and violent individual sects or individual people in Buddhism, which isn't a problem of Buddhism as a whole. If there are such people in any religion, including Christianity and Sikhism, we can't say that that religion isn't good. If I happen to purchase a Sikh scripture, I'll read it to you. There are also good teachings in it.

Keep the Commandments

Jesus also said, "*Whosoever therefore shall break one of these commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven. For I say unto you (Jesus was referring to the monastics and followers) that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness*

of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven."

The reason Jesus said this might be because at that time the so-called priests and monastics were not righteous. They sought pleasures and took donations from others to build big churches but didn't do anything good. They had a lot of money and became arrogant but were respected. They weren't righteous but were praised. They didn't have merit but were worshipped. They didn't do any work but accepted offerings from other people every day. That was why Jesus said that their karma was heavy. He said that His disciples should be more righteous and pure to be able to enter the kingdom of Heaven.

Just as I told you, the monastic disciples here should be better than the monastics outside. You shouldn't look at other monastics and wonder, "How come can they accept offerings? Why doesn't Master allow us to accept offerings?" You can accept offerings. It's no problem, but then you won't be my disciples anymore. If you stay with me, you shouldn't accept offerings. When you go out alone and have no money, you can accept one or two meals and some money and I won't say anything about it. But most monastic disciples out there have accepted too many offerings and enjoyed too much without having done anything beneficial for the country and society. Maybe they don't fulfill their duty, have no manners and aren't virtuous, so we can't blame others if they think that the monastic people aren't good.



When you follow me as monks, you should take care of your manners. If I'm strict with you, you should know why – otherwise you'll have bad habits. Seeing that the monks outside are more relaxed and have many good clothes but our clothes are simple, self-made and we only have a few of them and we don't have personal money, you may wonder what kind of monastic life this is. However, our manners and ideals can't be bought with material things. So you should remember this clearly and not forget that our manners and virtue can't be purchased with money and can't be represented by good clothes. We have inner light that can be projected to make others feel good and respect us. These are our natural impressive manners and dignified clothing. It's not that we'll be respected if we wear good clothing; it's not necessarily that way!

Jesus Christ continued to explain to His disciples, *“Ye have heard that it was said by them of olden times, ‘Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment.’ But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother (our neighbors or people we know) without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment, and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council.”*

It can be to such an extent! If we're angry with others for no reason; that is, if we abuse others mentally, we'll go to hell or incur karma. How horrible this is! Don't think that we'll go to hell only when we kill, but we should also keep our thoughts, speech and actions clean.

Therefore, Jesus said, *“If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.”*

Jesus meant that it's useless when we make offerings to God if we aren't pure and kind. Jesus also told His disciples many other things.

“Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer and thou be cast into prison.”

This means that we shouldn't engage in lawsuits and shouldn't fight with others but instead reconcile with them quickly.

Jesus continued, *“Ye have heard that it was said by them of olden times, ‘Thou shalt not commit adultery.’ But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”*

Jesus was referring to our thoughts, speech, and actions, which is the same as the Buddhist teachings, isn't it? (A:Yes.) What Jesus said previously about not engaging in lawsuits but being at peace with others was the same as what's stated in the Brahmajala Sutra in Buddhism or the Buddhist monastic precepts.



Therefore, we can't say that Christianity isn't the same as Buddhism. They're the same.

Jesus said, *"And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out."*

It was to such an extent! But don't pluck it out. Please take it easy. (Laughter) That was not what Jesus meant. He was merely emphasizing virtue and the commandments.

He said, *"For it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."*

This means that we should be strict with the commandments. If we have bad thoughts, we should repent immediately and not wait until they become actions. You should quickly repent, recite the Holy Names and think of me or God, but don't pluck your eye out or you'll look ugly. (Laughter) I wouldn't.

Jesus said, *"Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of olden times, 'Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths.' But I say unto you, Swear not at all, neither by Heaven, for it's God's throne, nor by the Earth, for it is Hiers footstool."*

This means that every place belongs to God. So we mundane people can't swear in the name of the noble and holy spirit.

"Neither shalt thou swear by thy head."

For example, some people swear, "If I treat you badly or something, may I be beheaded or be struck by lightning." Well! That's horrible! Jesus said that we can't swear like that, and that if we do, we're looking down upon both Heaven and Earth. We should respect them and shouldn't swear in their names. We shouldn't even swear in the name of our head, because *"thou canst not make one hair white or black."*

We don't have the right to swear in the name of anything. This physical body is also created by God so we can't use it in just any way we want.

Jesus said, *"But let your communication be, yea, yea; nay, nay, for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."*

Jesus explained this very clearly! Well! He was stricter than I am. Oh! Congratulations! (Applause) From today on, I'll learn from Him (laughter) and become stricter with you.



We Should Learn the Impartial Attitude of God

Jesus continued, *“Ye have heard that it hath been said, ‘An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say unto you that ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away.”*

This means that we should help the needy. But if anyone wants to borrow money for gambling, of course we should turn him away; if he borrows money for alcohol, we should persuade him not to and not give the money to him.

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy.’ But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you that ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”

So we should learn the indiscriminating attitude of God. (Applause)

“For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans do the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans do so?”

This means that we spiritual practitioners should be higher, less discriminatory and better than they are.

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.”

Jesus Christ said that His Father is perfect. The Buddhists say that their Buddha is perfect. They all say the same thing.

Jesus said, *“Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.”*

This is the same as what Shakyamuni Buddha said: When one does alms without thinking that one is doing alms, one is truly doing alms. It's truly like that. What I have taught you is exactly the same as what Jesus and Shakyamuni Buddha taught Their disciples. (Applause) We do good deeds out of benevolence, righteousness, courtesy, wisdom, faith, duty and love, not to be praised. So we shouldn't sound a trumpet and advertise it in the market.



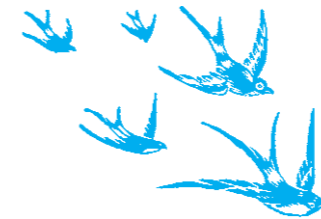
Jesus said that those who sound a trumpet while doing alms have their reward, but those who do alms quietly will have the reward of their Father which is in Heaven. The “noisy Bodhisattvas” who sound a trumpet while doing alms will only have Earthly and ephemeral rewards, but we’ll have the eternal reward.

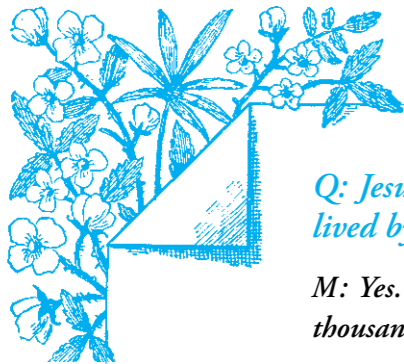
Jesus said, *“And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. And but thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.”*

Jesus explained this very clearly. Only we who practice the Quan Yin Method understand where the secret closet is! (Master laughs) (Applause) This is very beautiful!

Jesus also said, *“But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathens do, for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. But be ye not therefore like unto them, for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.”*

So don’t pray to God repeatedly outside. You don’t need to do that loudly. Don’t pray with loudspeakers or you’ll wake up the whole village. (Laughter)
(Matthew 5:1—6:8)





Q: Jesus was with the Essenes. The Essenes were a holy order who lived by the Dead Sea. Do You know about it?

M: Yes. He was from the Essene order, who were always vegetarians for thousands of years, and they had a lineage of transmission, at that time.

Q: At that time?

M: They were the “White Brotherhood” who transmitted the Light and the Sound. At that time it was very difficult to enter that order, and you had to take a vow of celibacy, and vow never to openly transmit the teachings outside. Anyone who entered that order had to be introduced by some elder members, and they had to pass through many years of tests before they could get the initiation of the final order. Then they could wear the white robe.

And this order, they were fantastic. They were love incarnate. And Jesus was the one who broke the promise of keeping silence, but it was by the order of the Most High, of course. He got the inner message. Otherwise no one from His order had ever preached openly like that before - first, because of the vow, and second, because of the danger.

Therefore, after Jesus openly preached, and before His crucifixion, all of the “White Brotherhood” were watching Him closely, trying to protect Him in many ways. But they couldn’t help it. It was they who snatched Him from the cross, or from the cave.

Anyway, I have talked too much. I talk too much about unnecessary things. Ask some other question.

--Supreme Master Ching Hai



12

Two Stories about the Seeds of Spiritual Practice

Spoken by Supreme Master Ching Hai, Hsihu Center, Formosa

July 7, 1990 (Originally in Chinese)



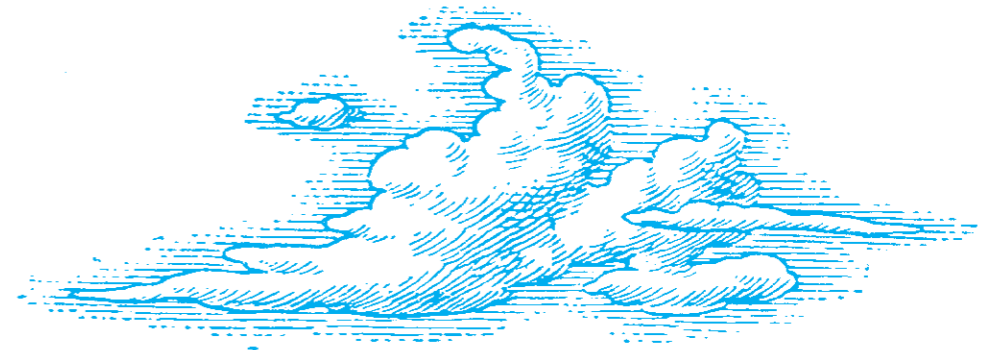
People liked to listen to Jesus Christ speak, and He often used short stories to explain the Truth to His audiences. The following is one of these stories.

Once there was a farmer who went out and sowed seeds to grow corn. As he was sowing, some seeds fell by the side of the road, and then birds came and ate them up. Some seeds fell upon stony places, and when the sun rose, they were scorched. Some seeds fell among thorns, and as the thorns sprang up and choked them, they couldn't grow big. Yet other seeds fell onto good, fertile ground and they began to germinate and gradually grew into stalks of corn.

Jesus Christ explained that this story was a metaphor for the teachings of God. Upon hearing God's teachings, some wicked people might obstruct the teachings and not let others know them. Other people might like to listen, but after a while when they experience difficulties and trials, they might lose their faith. These people believe in the teachings when they first hear them. However, after a period of time, they might feel that the worries in their daily lives or the feelings of their husbands,

wives or families are more important than God's teachings. So when they're oppressed by their worries or bound by their feelings, they forget God's teachings.

However, some people are like the corn seeds that were sown on good, fertile soil. They listen to and clearly understand the teachings, develop the teachings that they've understood and make the teachings part of their lives. We know this from looking at how these people live because they've made God's teachings a part of their daily lives. That is, when we look at their lives, we can tell whether they meditate, whether they keep the precepts or whether they're enlightened. It's very clear and there's no need to explain much! (Matthew 13:1-18)





A Farmer Who Sows Seeds with the Same Effort

Many people have come for initiation and only a small percentage of them have lost their faith. Whatever I've sown has grown and very few have fallen by the wayside and been eaten by birds, and very few have fallen on stony places and been unable to grow. Most of you grow quite well, while some of you grow slowly but are trying to grow. (Master and audience laugh) You can't be seen since you're blocked by your taller initiated brothers and sisters. Nevertheless, you still try to compare yourself with others and say, "All my neighbors are taller than I am. (Master and audience laugh) But that's OK! Some people who have come after me are shorter than I am." So you just grow happily and slowly.

However, those who grow very slowly give me a lot of headaches. No matter how much I water them, they can't grow taller and hence make trouble for me. Sometimes I get fed up with them and then stop watering them. I say, "Just grow by yourselves!" (Master laughs) Some of you are like seeds that fall on stony places or by the wayside and are eaten by birds or dried up by the sun, unable to grow.

Similarly, upon hearing the teachings of God, our lay or monastic disciples sometimes understand right away. Their souls realize and their minds also suddenly understand. However, after a while, due to their carelessness or

ignorance, the newly germinated sprouts fall down when blown by the wind or dry up when the sun rises. Worldly worries and all suffering and trials are like the sun, wind or rain. If you aren't strong enough and don't grow up, you can't endure the trials.

Sometimes I'm very surprised to see that some people change their minds very quickly. Today they're very faithful, enthusiastic and have the ideal, but tomorrow they just go "Pu, Pu, Pu," (laughter) like a leaky balloon that's been pierced by a needle. When a balloon is pierced by a small needle, it'll go "Tss, Tss, Tss" and become very small. The balloon looks big originally, but since it's empty inside, when it's punctured by a needle, it'll go "Tss, Tss, Tss" and disappear. If a big piece of bread is poked by a needle, however, it won't be affected.

Many people like to boast about big things. They talk about something before they actually do it. They criticize others for not being able to do it and boast that they can do such-and-such. However, as soon as they encounter obstacles, they just go "Tss, Tss, Tss" like a leaky balloon. This sometimes surprises me!

It's said in the scriptures that the seed of inner wisdom is planted at the first time you are awakened by the inner Sound. But most people have no idea what the Sound is or what "contemplate the original Self" means. You will understand this more and more after you believe in and practice the Method. The pressure on your shoulders will become lighter, and you'll feel more and more relaxed. This means that your seed of Wisdom is gradually growing and you will one day become a Sage.

--Supreme Master Ching Hai





Do you know why these people are like that? It's because they've accumulated too many impressions in previous lifetimes. Among them there are too many bad seeds and very few good ones. This is just like the story that Jesus told. Some seeds fall among thorns so they're choked and can't grow. Even if they sprout a little, they can't compete with the thorns so they just die!

As to our lay or monastic disciples or anyone who comes to get initiated by me and follow me, I treat them equally and give each one the same thing, just like a farmer who sows seeds with the same effort and same expectation. However, some seeds can grow while some can't.

“Should We Remove the Weeds?”

Here's another story about a farmer. This farmer cultivated his land and planted wheat. However, the farmer's enemy destroyed his work. When the farmer and his family were sleeping one night, the enemy came to his land and sowed weed seeds without letting anyone know. When the weeds started to sprout and grow, the farmer's servants came to ask him, “Should we remove the weeds?” And the farmer said, “No. You can't tell which are weeds and which are wheat plants. I'm afraid that you may root out both.” He then said, “Just let

them both grow until the time comes and we can root out the weeds and gather our harvest of wheat.”

After Jesus finished telling this story people left. Then His close disciples asked Him, “What does the story mean?” The closest disciples understood Jesus “the best,” and that's why they could ask such a “brilliant” question! Everyone else understood the story and went home! (Master and audience laugh) So Jesus Christ answered, “The farmer and the field that I cultivate symbolize the world! The good seeds are those who belong to God and believe in God and me. The weeds are the negative, satanic powers that belong to the enemies of God.” Nevertheless, harvest time will come eventually. Although the two kinds of seeds grow together, look similar and mix when they're just growing, it's no problem. When they all grow up, we can tell which is which.”

After some thought, I think that our initiates or spiritual practitioners all look similar when they first start to practice. In the beginning, they don't feel its significance hence they don't have much faith. They believe in the Master for one day and don't believe for three days. They're just like a mixture of one corn seed and three weed seeds. They follow the Master for one day and then follow the world for three days.

Today they want to become monastic disciples and follow me, but tomorrow they want to go home and get married or be with their parents, sons or other lovely debtors, and so on. They're just pulled around and struggle hard



inside. They don't listen to me but argue, "I believe in Master. Master is a saint. But anyway, I have to leave. (Laughter) I'm going to do what I want to do. It's right only when I think by myself. I know how to take care of my life and know what I should do."

They're all like that. However, after a while, they regret it and come back again. But then they leave again and come back again, wasting a lot of time. However, after struggling for a while, they settle down and realize that we're different than worldly people who don't do spiritual practice. When they realize this clearly, they become very stable and then even lightning can't shake them.

Initiates Experience Light of Differing Brightness and Vibrations

If you read the magazine that was published in Tainan, you'll see an article about a person who isn't our initiate but does spiritual practice. Many people did spiritual practice in their previous lifetimes and also practice other methods in this lifetime. So they have some experiences. That's not to say whether their experiences are the ultimate or not; they just have experiences. One can have

experiences if one is sincere. So when that person read my books, he saw bright lights. And when he came to listen to my lecture, he saw many Heavenly beings coming down onto the stage with me in the venue where I was lecturing. He also told an interesting story. He said that he noticed a big difference between those who were initiated and those who weren't! Those who were initiated all had light, whether bright, dim or of different colors. (Master and audience laugh)

Why are you laughing? Do you think that those who aren't initiated have no light? They do! Some of them are brown or black colored. (Laughter) But only our initiates had light of different brightness and vibrations. We all had light, but some of those who weren't initiated had no light at all. That was what that non-initiated person said and this happened in Tainan.

Although we look like ordinary people and are similar to them, our invisible power and invisible light are really different! I look no different than you do, but some people say that I have tremendous power. For instance, yesterday, the Aulacese person who played the zither said that he couldn't sit too close to me because he felt a great power like a great electrical current, which was unbearable to him (but not to others).

There was also a person in Penghu who did spiritual practice quite well, not just ordinarily, so he was very arrogant. He was never initiated by anyone and never listened to any discourses. When I went there, he knew it in advance and



had seen my light. He liked it and then came to listen to my discourse.

One day, he told me, “Master, Your power can kill!” I asked him why and he said, “There’s a cloudy thing around You. When I come near you, it feels like it can kill and it’s oppressive.” I told him, “If you have no bad intentions, you won’t have any problem. It’s because you’re not pure.” So the invisible power is protective! He could feel it because we two had different vibrational levels. If our vibrational levels had been similar, he wouldn’t have felt anything.

When we people sit together, we feel comfortable. But what do we feel when we sit together with animals? For example, can you imagine sitting alone with goats, pigs, cows and chickens around you? You’d smell different things and the atmosphere would be different, too.

The More We Practice the Less Ego We Have

So if we spiritual practitioners truly practice the Quan Yin Method for a long time, we don’t have big egos. When our levels are higher, our egos can’t exist. Even if they did exist, we wouldn’t feel how great we are. We look like other people and gradually we’ll know that we’re different. However, we don’t

have anything to grasp, to prove, or to tell others. That’s why in the Heart Sutra it states, “There’s nothing recognizable, nor can we tell that we’ve attained the Truth.”

When we meditate to a high level, we don’t even have bodies, speech or thoughts. So how can our egos exist when our bodies don’t exist? And how can we possess anything if our bodies don’t exist? Therefore, it’s not bad to practice this method. (Applause)

The more we practice the less ego we have, and the more we practice the less we get. However, it’s not that we don’t get anything, but that we don’t have anything to feel proud of. The more we practice, the more relaxed we become; the more we practice, the fewer burdens we have; and the more we practice, the less we have to talk about. Those who don’t practice much talk more, while those who practice more talk less. That’s why Lao Tzu said, “The one who has wisdom doesn’t talk, while the one who talks doesn’t have wisdom.” So it’s very safe to practice the Quan Yin Method. Besides, this method is very simple, not complicated.



Beyond Moral Standards

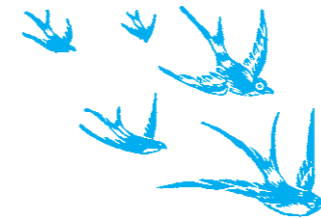
Spoken by Supreme Master Ching Hai, Tien-Shan Center, Hong Kong

April 1, 1994 (Originally in Chinese)

Once Jesus was speaking in public and suddenly many so-called highly reputed, intellectual and learned people came with some others who were highly esteemed in the church, like priests, for example. They dragged behind them a woman who had committed adultery. At that time, any woman who committed adultery had to be stoned to death. There were about three ways of executing sinners at that time: One was to stone them, another was to throw them into a lion's cage, and the other was to crucify them. Jesus was crucified, but this woman was supposed to be stoned to death.

Those honorable men then challenged Jesus by asking, "According to Moses' laws, this woman should be stoned to death. What do you think?" Jesus said nothing, but just wrote on the sand with His finger, "A group of

liars." Those people kept pushing Him, so He finally said, "Any of you who has not sinned and who considers himself the purest and holiest may cast the first stone." Upon hearing this, everyone silently and quickly slipped away. (Master and audience laugh.) At last, Jesus was left alone with the woman who had sinned and He asked her, "Where are your accusers? Has no man condemned you?" She replied, "No man." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I want to condemn you. You may go home now." (Master sighs.) (John 8:3-11)





Worldly Morality and Ethics Differ from What Real Saints Perceive

This story reminds us of something. There's no one in this world who hasn't sinned. Besides, whether one has sinned or not depends on the situation, one's background and one's level of enlightenment. The so-called morality and ethics of this world are different than what real saints perceive. Those who have attained the highest level of enlightenment see no such things. They don't even imagine or think about these words. I don't know how to describe this level to you.

When you first begin spiritual practice, you see the difference between good and evil. But the distinction gradually fades away as you practice more. This is very strange and hard to explain to other people, but you just know it. And you won't think so much about what's good or bad, except when you teach your disciples because they're at such a level that you have to explain it to them in those terms. Otherwise, you don't really want to talk about such things, and nothing really matters to you because you have a different point of view. You look from the top down and become very tolerant like you're seeing a movie. You don't angrily scold the bad guy because you know he's only playing his role. And you don't profusely praise the good guy because you know he's just playing his role, too.

What we call good or evil in a person is the habit or behavior, not the soul of that person. Our souls can realize a lot of things, but I can't name them



all, and they're hard to describe although I know them very well. Regarding so-called very serious crimes in our society, I have a different point of view, but I can't tell you every detail. Many people wouldn't understand, and I couldn't put it very clearly either.

That's why I told you to meditate every day, and then you'll realize it on your own. I just gave you an overview to direct your spiritual realization. As you go farther, you'll gradually understand why I said we won't discriminate between good and evil when we've had more results from our spiritual practice.

When we're free from this discrimination, we forgive our enemies easily, and we're not very angry about those who hurt us. We forget about the whole thing very quickly and don't feel very bad. Even if we do feel bad, it will be for those people instead of for ourselves.

Universal law has two classes. The first one is the law of absolute love and grace. The other one is the law of action and retribution. When we are in a higher dimension of the kingdom, we have only love and grace. That's the only law. And when we are in the lower scale of the universe, such as this physical dimension, we have to abide by the law of cause and effect, meaning, "As you sow, so shall you reap," as it states in the Bible. So, most people who are not in contact with God have to suffer the law of cause and retribution. But the people who can ascend to a higher dimension enjoy only grace and love. God never judges us.

--Supreme Master Ching Hai

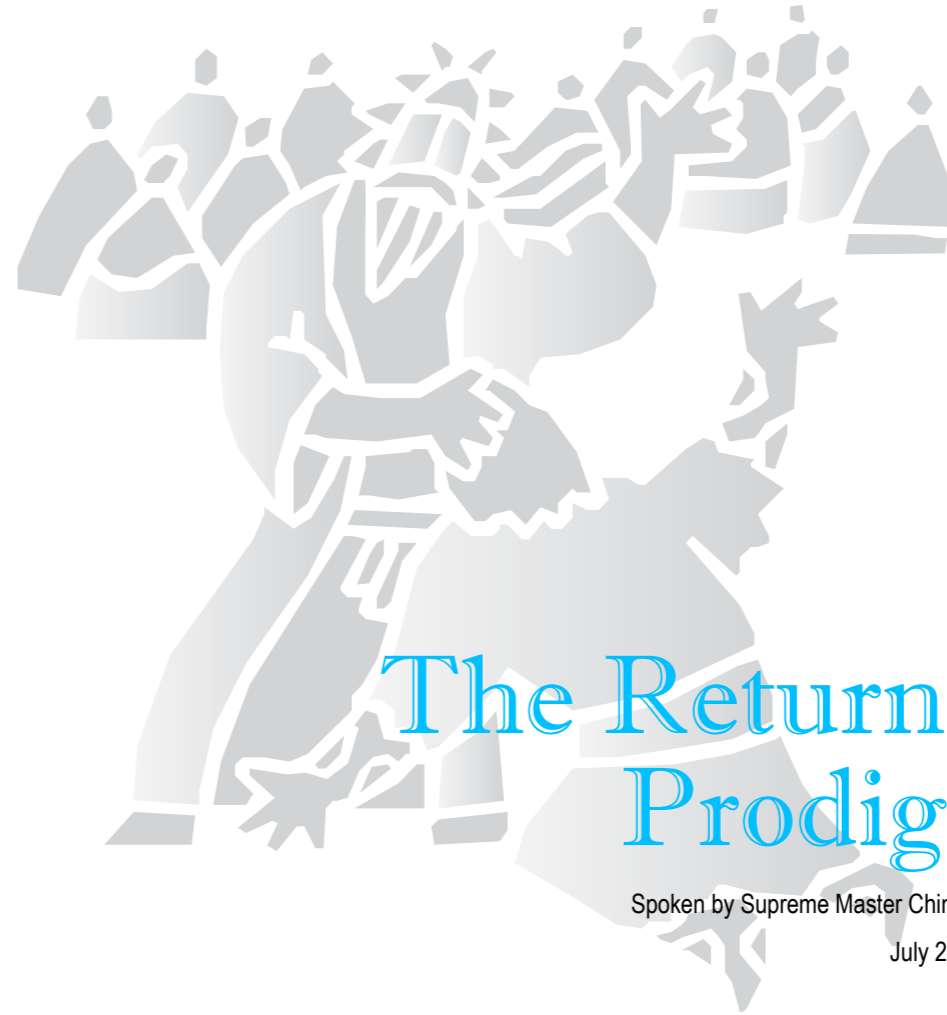


Q: Since You have talked about shopping, would You consider initiating someone who has been initiated by another Master?

M: I would only if that person truly believes that I am more able to take her or him to a higher level and faster. Otherwise it is better to stick to one's own Master if one still feels very much attached, and has much faith in that Master. If you believe your Master is the best already, then don't change. If you still have doubt and if you still have not got the Light and Sound which I have mentioned, then you should try. Yes, because Light and Sound is the standard measurement for a real Master. If anyone who is not able to impart you immediate Light or Sound he is not a real Master, I am sorry to say. The road to Heaven is equipped with Light and Sound.

Just like you go to dive into the sea, you have to be equipped with oxygen mask and all that. There are things for different purposes. That's why you see all the Saints with the halo on them. That's Light. When you practice this method, you radiate the same Light like they draw on the pictures of Jesus, and people can see it. If the people are psychic, they can see your Light. That's why they draw Jesus with the halo, and they draw Buddhas with the Light around Them. You can see practitioners of high degree with this Light if you are opened. Many people can see that.

--Supreme Master Ching Hai

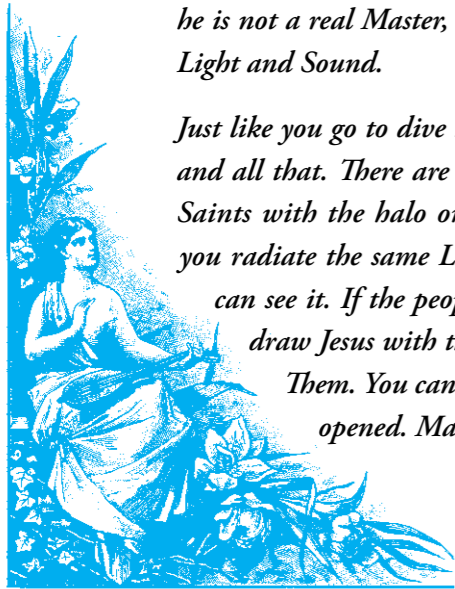


13

The Return of the Prodigal Son

Spoken by Supreme Master Ching Hai, Hsihu Center, Formosa

July 23, 1990 (Originally in Chinese)





Only When You Have Become a Child Again Can You Enter the Kingdom of God

When Jesus grew up, He went out to preach and glorify God. He travelled to many places introducing the true doctrine to people. Here is a story told by Him when He was preaching in a certain region. The story is about two sons. Jesus showed no discrimination and treated everyone very nicely regardless of who they were. He often mixed with all kinds of people – the poor, the sick, the elderly, the ugly, the beautiful and children. He loved all of them and had very good relationships with them. The people also loved and respected Him very much.

Jesus Christ really pampered them, especially the children. People from all walks of life brought their children to see Jesus Christ, and asked Him to touch their heads to bless them. Jesus Christ had many principal apostles or you can say good friends, who would bar the children from seeing Him if too many of them came. They'd say, "Please! Don't disturb Him! Why are you troubling Him like this?" Then Jesus Christ would say, "No, no, no! Don't stop them. Let the children come. The kingdom of God belongs to the children, or people who have a pure heart like that of a child. Should we want to return to the Heavenly kingdom, we must become as innocent as a child." Taking this opportunity, Jesus Christ told us that we must become like children to return

to the Heavenly kingdom. We shouldn't be too complicated. We must not mind too much about everything. Even when we grow up, we should preserve a heart like that of a child.

To fulfill our obligations to society, naturally we should go to work when we grow up, get married or study hard. However, we should still keep our hearts pure just like when we were small. Don't compete with others; don't long for profit and fame; don't be mean and calculating, but be forgiving instead. People may have treated us badly but we should still treat them well and love them. Such is the heart of a child. If we can preserve this heart of a child, no matter how old we grow we're still God's children.

We won't go to hell or fall into undesirable situations. Our life will be smooth; at least our heart will always be happy. We'll face all problems cheerfully. No obstacles will make us feel frustrated or worried as we know we can overcome them. We'll easily forgive others, and feel very free. We may be rich or poor, our position may be high or low, and despite where we live or with whom we stay, we just won't mind. Such is the heart of a child. It's not definite that we can't be a child again after we grow up.



Children Can Easily Forgive Others

Jesus Christ was a big child and so was Shakyamuni Buddha. They were very affectionate and pure, not complicated in mind. Therefore, They didn't mind what people did to Them. They wouldn't fuss about or remember enmities, nor would They try to take revenge. During His whole life, Jesus only did good things and worshipped God. He never did anything harmful or competed with others for power, wealth or fame. He taught people to do good deeds, spread God's love to the whole world, and saved many souls.

Nevertheless, some people were still jealous of Him because He was too famous and was loved by too many. Out of their love for Him, people revered Him as king – the Great King. Worldly people think that being a king is the highest position on Earth so we revere whomever we love as the Great King.

Consequently, the real king became jealous and feared that Jesus Christ would challenge him and seize his throne. Jesus Christ was crucified due to this jealousy. However, He kept His child-like heart even when He was nailed to the cross. He begged God to forgive those ignorant people who didn't know the Truth. A child can easily forgive others, and won't harbor enmity against them. Since Jesus Christ often mixed with all types of people, the so-called monks or monastic people at that time criticized Him. Each religion has its monastic people. For instance, the pastors and nuns of Catholicism and Christianity are

monastic people so they're respected by others. There are also Buddhist monks – bhiksus and bhiksunis. Hindu monks are called swamis. Other religions also have their monastic people. Though they wear different clothes and live in different ways, they're regarded as monastic people. Being monastic means that they've renounced everything for God, to serve God and spread God's Truth to the masses. They put aside their human emotions and affection for their families, consider the whole world as their family and see all men as their brothers. Their ideal is really noble and great so they deserve our veneration. We shouldn't revere only the monastic people of our religion and not those from other paths. This is wrong! Of course, in every religion, there are some monastic people who don't understand this ideal, but seek money and fame in the name of their religion. They aren't really monastic people. They wear the same clothes but their hearts are not the same. Fortunately, however, there's only a handful of them.

The Real Monastic People

Monastic people truly deserve people's admiration, not because of their outer appearance but because of their inner ideal. They're really keen about serving the multitude, and their hearts extend to the whole world. This is why



we admire and respect them, not because of their attire. It doesn't matter what clothes they wear because they have lofty ideals and are broad-minded. They care little about personal feelings and see the whole world as one illusion – all beings are one; there's only one God, one Truth and one Tao. They want to spread this Tao to everyone and remind us that this Tao is the only way we should quest. These people who have severed their personal affections we call monastics. Becoming a monastic or “leaving home” means forsaking the binding affections of one's family.

Every religion bears the same ideal to extend its heart, and go beyond birth and death. When Jesus Christ was alive, some of the so-called monastic people (rabbis) of Judaism complained about Him. They criticized Him for mixing with prostitutes, beggars and very poor people who were the lowest in society. He mixed with them, made friends with them, and taught them some doctrines. The rabbis thought that that was a shameful and inappropriate thing to do. They thought that the Jewish people were the best so the teachings should only be imparted to the Jews or people belonging to the higher classes, and not to the so-called lowly people who were despised by society. In their opinion, the prostitutes were the untouchables, and they were so bad that their lives could never be changed. However, Jesus Christ could change them. He would, and He had the power to do so. Any bad persons would change for the better after following Him, or after looking at Him just once.

No One Is Good or Bad

Good or bad people are created by social circumstances. Someone might be a good person for many lives. But suddenly he's cheated in this life or his family is separated because of a war in his country; perhaps he suddenly loses his parents and so his security – he feels lost as to what to do and becomes a so-called bad person. These kinds of people may become prostitutes, villains or even robbers, yet they may not be bad by nature.

If our heart is pure, it will shine with some polishing, just like gold. Gold is gold even if there are tons of earth burying it. When we first excavate a diamond, it's covered by a heavy layer of dust. After cleaning and polishing it, a diamond is still a diamond and its value won't depreciate because of the dust. Similarly, our Heavenly kingdom or the innocent God Nature within will never be contaminated by dust or karma. It's only our misunderstanding!

Therefore, I often tell you that no one is a sinner to me. It's only because our minds don't understand that we can't forgive ourselves and then make a mess. If there is someone to remind us or tell us the Truth, we'll know how to dispose of the karma, how to forget or change our so-called habits, and then we'll be exactly the same as the Bodhisattvas or saints. That's why Jesus Christ said that we're all God's children. However, we must revert our hearts back to the state of an innocent child, and be determined not to submit to bad habits again.



Two Sons

The monastic people then criticized Jesus Christ for acting improperly against the canon as He mixed with all kinds of people. Therefore, one day Jesus Christ told them a story relevant to this issue. The story went like this:

A person had two sons. The younger son demanded that his father give him his share of the family wealth, which his father duly granted him. Upon receiving the wealth, the younger son went out enjoying pleasures and traveling around the world, and thus foolishly spent all his money. Eventually he became penniless! Coincidentally, there was a famine at that time in his country so everyone was starving. He then went to work on a farm where many piglets were being raised. He was so hungry that when he saw the piglets eating food in a trough, he wanted to fight with the piglets for it. He was very hungry and homesick. One day, he said to himself, “Oh! What an absurd life I’m leading here. Even one of my father’s laborers has more to eat than I have now. They have more than

enough to eat while I’m starving here. This is illogical. It’s about time I went home. I’ll apologize to father and tell him how sorry and remorseful I am for my ignorant behavior in the past, and that I was young and stupid. I’ll admit that I’m not fit to be his son, and then perhaps he’ll accept me as one of his workers. That would be fine too! At least I’ll have enough to eat.” He kept saying this to himself on his way home.

Seeing that his son had returned, the father ran to embrace, greet and kiss him. He was very happy to see his child home again and told his servants, “Quickly get some new clothes for my son, and bring him lots of good food and things to drink.” The father was busy telling people to get the food and then he said, “Come! We should celebrate.” He told the servants and his family, “We should celebrate the return of my son. My younger son is home!” He then delightedly prepared a big feast and invited everyone. When the older son came home, he was angry and jealous and complained to his father, “I’ve worked for you for so many years, but you’ve never held a feast for me, nor have you given me any special things. Today you have all the best food and clothes for your rotten



son. You also give him the best to drink, and even hold a big feast to celebrate his return. What's this all about?" The older son angrily pressed for an explanation, so the father said, "Don't be angry. You know very well that all my property is yours. There's no need to hold a feast for you because everything is already yours! As to why we have to celebrate today, it's because we originally thought that we had lost your brother. Now that he's found again, we have reason to rejoice." (Luke 15:11-15:32)



We Always Deserve God's Grace and Love

The father had no discrimination. To him, his wealth was not as dear as his son so he didn't mind spending a lot of money, letting bygones be bygones. He was very happy to see his younger child return home safely. So is God. Hes doesn't mind how greatly we've sinned as it was all in the past. If we're sincere about repenting and being a good child again, Hes will welcome us Home. This is precisely what I'm reminding you of all the time. Therefore, you can rest assured and don't need to be anxious. Our spiritual practice may be good or bad sometimes. Sometimes we see great Light and hear God's deafening Sound, but sometimes we seem to have nothing. It's because we're veiled by our so-called preconceived ideas, or our pure heart is affected by social influences. Then our guilty feelings emerge again, and we think that our sins are too heavy to deserve God's grace and love.

The truth is we're always worthy. How could God mind how much you've ruined Hiers wealth? Hes is the Creator. Hes can always create a wonderful, vast world or universe. Hes wouldn't mind. As we destroy, Hes creates



Just remember God. Even though you don't see Hirm, Hes is forever merciful. Hes is not a vengeful God; Hes is not a jealous God; He is forever loving. She is forever loving, forgiving. So at the time you die, you must remember that God is the only one, and God is forever loving you. Just remember this so that you can go directly to Heaven. Do not believe in hell; do not believe in punishment from God. God loves you always, no matter who and what you are because you are Hirm.

~Supreme Master Ching Hai



again; no problem. For instance, we've killed human beings or animals before or broken the rules of the world, and now we sincerely repent and ask for God's forgiveness. We humbly become His slaves or servants and meditate every day. If we can admit that we're God's children, we don't have to meditate. If we think that we're very worthy, we'll be proud of ourselves and won't repent, meditate, or check on ourselves every day. However, because we're still humble and remorseful for our past karma, God will forgive us. We have the same position as those Heavenly children who haven't violated the precepts and nothing less.

It's only because we are not Home yet that we're still repenting here. When we reach Home and see the Father, we're all the same. He will give us the best clothes to wear, the best abode in Heaven, all the best things to enjoy and eternal life just like Hirm. Therefore, you don't have to rush. Prepare for it well while you're here; you can enjoy it as soon as you reach Home.



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This Biblical story is not just about a piece of fruit; it has a moral. The ancient teachers, for fear of trouble, didn't dare put things in a straightforward way, so they used various parables to get their ideas across to the people... The first story in the Bible has given us many good points to ponder and study. It's not just a matter of fruit; it's a matter of discipline, mutual respect, cooperation and ego.



When they fell to Earth, however, their power was gone... their wisdom had been severed and forgotten! As soon as they left the spiritual center, they got lost and couldn't return.

Jesus said, "The Kingdom of God is within you." If we don't find the way to find out where it is, then we can't receive the grace of Jesus. It's just as if our father left a great treasure for us, but we don't know where the key is.

Jesus also said, "God will send comforters to us."... If there is anyone who teaches the same ideas or gives us the same comfort as Jesus did, as stated in the Bible, then we should know that person is a comforter that God has sent to us. ~The Supreme Master Ching Hai