

A photograph of a stone path winding through a dense forest. The path is made of large, flat, grey stones and is covered with fallen brown leaves. The trees are tall and thin, with green foliage. The path leads into the distance, creating a sense of a journey.

The Journey

Joseph Dawson

The Journey

This small volume contains a powerful message for these times of global capitalism, environmental destruction, and religious intolerance. In his first title, this controversial author focuses on achieving spirituality without the dogma and control of organised religion, using apt sources from across the globe to reinforce his points.

The core teachings of Jesus, Muhammad, Moses, Buddha, Lao Tzu or any of those who were enlightened are exactly the same - they are about the nature of man, the nature of the universe and the nature of God.

This book brings together the author's view of life combined with eclectic teachings from throughout the world, in an attempt to bridge the religious divide.

"The Journey combines the author's thoughts with eclectic teachings from throughout the world... thought-provoking."

Evening Herald

"This small book is one of those unusual publications that you can read in half an hour but leaves quite an impression... It reads like a gentle conversation and I very much enjoyed it - picking up some insights along the way. "

Immrama Magazine

"A handy small reference and reminder of the essential unity of every spiritual path."

Touchstone Magazine

"An interesting and accessible read... it has a positive message."

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The Journey

Joseph Dawton

Introduction

The core teachings of Jesus, Muhammad, Moses, Buddha, Lao Tzu or any of those who were enlightened are exactly the same - they are about the nature of man, the nature of the universe and the nature of God.

How is it then that we can have ignored so much of the gifts of wisdom that they brought to us? How can countless generations have fought over what is essentially the same beliefs? The answer to that question has puzzled mankind for almost as long as wars have been fought, and maybe no sufficient answer can be found. Regardless of why we have failed to understand one another's view, we must continue to search for unity of understanding if there is to be any hope for mankind.

Priests of all faiths continue to shout at us of the evil of our ways, our failure to adhere to the codes and doctrines laid down and they decry the heresy of other sects and other religions. Perhaps it is those who would be our spiritual masters who have lost their way and can no longer impart the wisdom with which they have supposedly been entrusted.

The purpose of this book is not to divide but to show the unity of belief that exists in the world. I believe that we are at a point in human history that if we cannot re-evaluate our relationship with our fellow man, with our environment and with God we will perish.

The path has been clearly marked for us and re-drawn many times yet collectively we chose to ignore what is staring us in the face. It does not matter which book of God you pick up, the answers to all the eternal questions are there if you have eyes to see them. All that we will ever need to know is here and has always been present within the hidden depths of our hearts, if this little book can lead one person to see this then my time has not been wasted.

Note: Where I have used words such as God, man, mankind etc it is intended to cover both genders and they are used simply for brevity and convenience.



Part i

*The
Hidden
Path*

The One True Path

Many paths lead to the divine. There is but one God although he/she is known by many names and faces. When mankind crawled from the belly of the earth, struggling for consciousness was not God God, as now and for all time? It is not God who has changed but mankind.

As no two lives and no two men are the same, the expression and experience of God is as infinite as time itself. All the great prophets and sages down the ages knew this, it is not mankind who defines what God is, it is God who lives through us and all existence and God who defines us.

It is our greatest folly that we seek to know the unknowable, to follow the one true path, and in doing so it has torn mankind apart and led us further away from that which we most desire.

"The supreme science is to know nothing."

Johann Valentin Andreae



"There is one road that none may travel but thou alone."

Anon



"It is you who must make the effort.

The great of the past only show the way.

*Those who think and follow the path
become free of the bondage of mara"*

Gautama Siddhartha (Buddha)

Giving

It is a common adage that it is better to give than to receive, however many do not truly believe this. It is a paradox that in giving we receive more than we could ever hope to by hoarding gifts. Is it not true that the more love we give the deeper grows the well of love within us? One cannot run out of love except by refusing to give it.

“If you have money don’t lend it at interest.
Rather give it to someone from whom you won’t get it back.”
Yeshua Ben Miriam (Jesus of Nazareth)



“Woe to those who pray but are heedless in their prayer;
who make a show of piety and give no alms to the destitute.”
Muhammad



“He who acts after giving up all desire, who is free
from any sort of ‘mineness’ or egoism, he alone attains tranquility.”
From The Bhagavadgītá

Time

Time is a concept unique to man, as far as we know no other creatures on this earth care for it, if they are even aware of it. We live our lives obsessed by the the passing of time, looking to regain the past or discover our future rather than living in the moment that is now.

Our time here is so brief, the age of men is as nothing when compared to all the ages of the earth, from it's creation some 4.55 billion years ago. A single human life is but a drop in the ocean of time, even the life of the earth is little more than that when compared to the immeasurable vastness of time.

"The Universe is a lodging house for the myriad things
And time itself is a travelling guest of the centuries.
This floating life is like a dream.
How often can one enjoy oneself?"

Li Bai



"There was a water-drop, it joined the sea,
A speck of dust, it was fused with earth;
What of your entering and leaving this world?
A fly appeared, and disappeared."

Omar Khayyam

Knowledge

A person can spend his or her life studying philosophy, religion, science, art and all aspects of the human condition and yet at the end of it all still not know what lies within their own heart. To apply knowledge without wisdom and understanding is as pointless as to battle the wind with a sword.

“We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.”

T. S. Eliot



“If during the whole of his life a fool lives with a wise man,
he never knows the path of wisdom as the spoon never knows the taste of soup.”

Gautama Siddhartha (Buddha)

Mankind and Nature

In Genesis (from the Pentateuch or Old Testament) it states that mankind was created in God's image and that we have dominion over the earth. Mankind in his arrogance took the literal meaning of this as truth, failing to see that the story of Genesis is an analogy.

All things are created in God's image and if we have dominion over the earth that surely means that we are its custodians and we have a responsibility to protect it - it is not ours to rape and pillage.

"This we know: all things are connected,
like the blood which unites one family.

Whatever befalls the earth
befalls the sons of the earth,
man did not weave the web of life -
he is simply one strand in it.
Whatever he does to the web
he does to himself."

Seath, Suquamish Chief



"The best of men is only a man at best."

Kit Williams



"Does one measure by the hollow of a human hand the waters of the great ocean?

Are the heavens estimated by the span of fingers?

In one 1/3 of a measure can any contain the dust of the earth,

And weigh the mountains in a balance or the hills in scales?

Man did not make these. How can he measure the spirit of God?

Dead Sea Scroll 4Q511

The Spiritual Path

The spiritual path is long, narrow and arduous; often our destination is beyond sight and our task seems hopeless.

Never give up, to follow the path is as important as reaching your destination, even a snail will arrive where it is going eventually.

“Neither father, sons nor one’s relations can stop the King of Death.
When he comes with all his power a man’s relations cannot save him.
A man who is virtuous and wise understands the meaning of this
And swiftly strives with all his might to clear a path to Nirvana.”

Gautama Siddhartha (Buddha)



“Enter by the narrow gate. The path that leads to destruction is wide and easy.
Many follow it. But the narrow gate and hard road lead to life, few discover it.”

Yeshua Ben Miriam (Jesus of Nazareth)

Joy

True joy comes of giving of oneself. Those who gain pleasure through bad deeds experience a false sense of gratification and power through the suffering and subjugation of others. This is a fleeting pleasure and only leaves one deeper in the mire of one's own guilt and pain.

True Joy is to give without hope of receiving, to love without return. It is by the giving and receiving of love that joy is achieved. Joy is the gift of the divine, only when we can learn to give freely and know the greatness of the gift of life can we fully receive joy.

"The rapture of life... does not arise, unless as perfect music arises... by the confluence of the mighty and terrific concords with the subtle(sic) concords. Not by contrast, or as reciprocal foils, do these elements act... but by union. They are the sexual forces in music: 'male and female he created them' and these mighty antagonists do not put forth their hostilities by repulsion, but by deepest attraction".

Thomas De Quincy



"If you bring forth what is within you
what you have will save you.
If you do not have that within you,
what you do not have within you will kill you."
Yeshua Ben Miriam (Jesus of Nazareth)



"O let us live in joy, although having nothing!
In joy let us live like spirits of light!"
Gautama Siddhartha (Buddha)

The Nature Of Matter

The natural world is like a calm lake. Its surface appears perfectly flat and in balance or harmony with all around it. But look more closely and see that it is in constant motion, and beneath its surface unknown chaotic forces are at work.

So it is with all matter, the greater harmony and equilibrium of the manifest universe is paradoxically upheld by change, discord, chaos and constant death and rebirth.

"The visible world is a symbol of the invisible world."

Jakob Böhme



"Light is born of darkness.

Forms are born of the undifferentiated.

The universal Self

*That is expressed in all particular selves
is born of Tao."*

Lao Tzu

The Material Body

Some would have you believe that the apparent world and even our own flesh is inherently bad and a corruption of the divine. If our wine turns to vinegar what profit is to be gained by blaming the glass that holds it? We should not blame our bodies for being a conduit of the senses; nor should we blame the body for what the heart and mind chose for it to do, for surely without the mind to direct it, it is as useless as a boat without a rudder.

All things are created in balance, light and dark, order and chaos, male and female, spirit and flesh. The universe flourishes and propagates itself through the continually shifting balance between polar opposites, that is the nature of all living things and of the universe itself.

“If you think you can have good without evil,
right without wrong, order without chaos,
you understand nothing about the laws of the universe.
You cannot have Heaven without Earth.
Yin and Yang only exist together.”

Chang Tzu



“Neither nakedness, nor entangled hair, nor uncleanness,
nor fasting, nor sleeping on the ground,
nor covering the body with ashes, nor ever-squatting,
can purify a man who is not pure from doubts and desires.”

Gautama Siddhartha (Buddha)

Civilisation

No-one knows how many civilisations have risen and fallen, but like all things they have a beginning and an end. Who knows what treasures have been lost to mankind down the ages? Some nine thousand years before the time of Jesus of Nazareth the sea rose rapidly carrying untold civilisations beneath its waves. Even now the remnants of great cities lie hidden off the coastlines of every continent. Perhaps what Plato wrote of Atlantis was a metaphor for this great loss, men have searched for Atlantis since his time and none have found it.

We should not be overly concerned by the loss or gain of worldly knowledge. What has been gained by mankind has been lost and regained, probably many times over millennia: if a man casts a coin into a pond it becomes lost to him, but surely if the coin remains, could it not be found once more?

“Trying to understand is like straining to see through muddy water.
Be still and allow the mud to settle.”

Lao Tzu



“As Long as heaven and earth endure, not one letter,
not a single jot of the Law will disappear.”

Yeshua Ben Miriam (Jesus of Nazareth)



“Nature is always like itself, so that you will not hope
for that which cannot be won and nothing will remain hidden from you.”

Pythagoras

Good and Evil

Good and evil co-exist as do night and day, one cannot exist without the other. No man is born entirely good or entirely evil. All of sound mind have the power to chose their actions; surely in our hearts do we not know the difference between the two? Knowing this it remains only to choose which path to take.

“May you be wakeful for learning by us
Those two spirits who are twins
talked among themselves
In thoughts in words and in deeds,
these two spirits are in this way better and worse.
Those who are possessed of good understanding chose truth
but those of wicked understanding did not do so.”
Zarathushtra (Zoroaster)



“One foot may lead us to an evil way,
the other foot may lead us to a good.
So are all things two, all two.”
Letakots-Lesa, Pawnee Chief



“The good & evil that are in man’s heart
The joy & sorrow that are our fortune and destiny,
Do not impute them to the wheel because in the light of reason,
The wheel is a thousand times more helpless than you.”
Omar Khayyam

Karma

The concept of karma is almost universal. The idea that you reap what you sow is common to all the major religions of the world. At times it may seem that wrongdoers prosper and that they do not receive what they deserve; likewise the good and just often suffer greatly. The fruits of one's actions are not always apparent, however even the most hardened of souls carries the weight of their deeds inside them, throughout life and into the beyond.

"Perfect mindedness is thine.
Thine is the wisdom divine of creating the world.
O Ahura Mazda. Thou hast fixed the path
(of awarding due reward) to him who passes his life with industry
and one who is not industrious or idle."
Zarathushtra (Zoroaster)



"We were taught to believe that the Great Spirit sees and hears everything,
and that he never forgets; that hereafter he will give every man a spirit home
according to his deserts."
Hinmatom Yalalkit, Nez Percé Chief



"The wrong action seems sweet to the fool until the reaction comes and brings pain,
and the bitter fruits of wrong deeds have then to be eaten by the fool."
Gautama Siddhartha (Buddha)



"What is sown - love or anger or bitterness: that shall be your bread."
From The Egyptian Book Of The Dead

The End Of Everything

One day the world will come to an end as do all things. When this will come to pass is unknown, many have predicted the end of the Earth yet it spins on regardless.

Some believe the universe will collapse in on itself, returning to a state of pure energy before manifesting once more. Others believe in an apocalypse, the end of time, the end of all creation or a day of judgement. No-one can be sure of what will befall God's creation at its end, all we can be sure of is that it must end at some point.

Is it not best to spend one's energy in living well? The end will come without doubt, surely we do not need to know the manner of its coming?

"When the sky is rent asunder; when the stars scatter
and the oceans roll together; when the graves are
hurled about; each soul shall know
what it has done and what it has failed to do."

Muhammad



"The glorious chariots of kings wear out,
and the body wears out and grows old;
but the virtue of the good never grows old,
and thus they can teach the good to those who are good."

Gautama Siddhartha (Buddha)

Part ii

*Master
& Pupil*

*A master set before his pupil 5 glasses of water -
"Take one, drink from it and be renewed."*

*The pupil looked at the glasses and back to his master:
"Which one shall I take master?"*

*And the master replied:
"It is of no consequence, for are they not all clean vessels?
Is not the water within drawn from the same well?"*

The Master and Pupil

Until recent generations the wisdom gained with age was given due respect. It is the fashion now to seek immediate resolution to all things, however knowledge, wisdom and understanding are not subject to rules or to mankind's need for immediate gratification.

Across the world, in all religions, and in most disciplines known to mankind the acolyte learned from his or her master until they too achieved mastery and took on pupils of their own, thus continuing the process in a never-ending cycle.

The great strength of such a system is that, regardless of doctrine the essence of our experiences of life can pass from one to another in a way that no book alone can achieve. It is true that the pupil can become blinded by seeing the master as some kind of Guru and in the case of the corrupt master who is a charlatan, the pupils become indoctrinated and mere servants to the master's will.

In it's purest sense of the master-pupil relationship, the master aids the pupil to teach himself and indeed the master might even learn a thing or two from the pupil.

In the world that we live in where do we go to find a true master? How many truly wish to take on that role? Here the imaginary master is of the universal religion and subscribes to no doctrine that is written down and the pupil asks only questions that transcend the religious divide. I have formulated this part of the book in this way hoping to impart some of what others have taught me and also give answers to what one might consider universal questions, by drawing from the pool of knowledge provided by all the religions of the world.

*How can there be a God when so many people have
different beliefs? Surely not everyone can be right?*

God is not judgmental, God does not misunderstand or mislead. It is mankind that contradicts and misinterprets, as someone once said - to err is to be human. Most of us have so little understanding of our own existence, how can we expect to fully understand the nature of the universe?

If one looks beyond the corruptions and the doctrines dictated by man, to the mystical path at the core of all religions, one can see that they all lead to the same source. What all the religions point to is that the answers are right in front of our faces if we only have eyes to see them. If we can only learn to plumb the depths of our own hearts that is all we need to do, for God is everywhere and in everything that ever existed.

*"The Great Spirit is in all things; he is in the air we breath.
The Great Spirit is our Father, but the earth is our Mother.
She nourishes us, that which we put into the ground she returns to us."
Bedagi, Wahanaki Alganquin*



*"Three things which from which never to be moved,
one's Oaths, one's Gods and the Truth."
Celtic Triad*

How should I pray?

With your heart, your mind and your soul. Let no man tell you how to pray for you alone can find your own path to God.

Do not waste your time in praying for bad things, for you will ultimately visit harm upon yourself.

“Praise the name of your Lord, the Most High,
who has created all things and proportioned them;
who has ordained their destinies and guided them;
who brings forth the green pastures, then turns it to withered grass?”

Muhammad



“My Mother taught... me to kneel and pray to Usen for strength, health, wisdom and protection. We never prayed against any individual, we ourselves took vengeance.

We were taught that Usen does not care for the petty quarrels of men.”

Goyathlay, Chiricahua Apache Chief

Is It Wrong to Want Possessions?

We must know that possessions have only a small importance within our lives. Jesus of Nazareth said "People cannot live on bread alone" and Buddha spoke often of the foolishness of pursuing material wealth. All men need to live, to eat and be sustained in life, but when all our physical needs are met, what more do we need of the world?

What we acquire in our lifetimes cannot be taken beyond the point of our death, our material greed only serves to deprive others of what they need - enough is as good as a feast.

"Wealth destroys the fool who seeks not the Beyond. Because of greed for wealth the fool destroys himself as if he were his own enemy."

Gautama Siddhartha (Buddha)



"Men love what they may grasp in their hands,
Yet they do not love the ground that supports their weight."

Anon



"Fortunate are you who are poor, for yours is the realm of God."

Yeshua Ben Miriam (Jesus of Nazareth)



"Riches would do us no good. We could not take them with us to the other world.
We do not want riches, we want peace and love."

Makhpiya-Luta, Sioux Chief

Is it foolish to believe in the supernatural?

Just because these things are unproven by science it does not mean that they are false. Less than 200 years ago man had no concept of radio waves, X-rays or television signals. If these things are accepted as part of every day life even though we cannot see or feel them, why should we reject the supernatural simply because it cannot be seen by the majority?

There is a whole vista of creation invisible to the human eyes, which we are only beginning to discover; God's creation has not changed, it is merely our perception of it that has changed.

*"Those who realise Me as existing in the physical plane, the divine planes...
have a mind which is focused and know Me even at the time of death."*

From The Bhagavadgītá



*"There is nothing hidden except to be made visible;
nothing is secret except to come to light."*

Yeshua Ben Miriam (Jesus of Nazareth)

What Is The Third Eye?

The third eye, is known by many names, to some as the inner eye, inner vision, second sight, enlightenment etc. It is the ability to see beyond our own limited existence and catch a glimpse of how things really are.

“His disciples said to him “When will the kingdom come?”

*It will not come by watching for it. It will not be said ‘Look here’ or ‘Look there!’,
Rather the Father’s kingdom is spread out upon the earth and people don’t see it.”*

From the Gospel of Doubting Thomas



*“The man who sat on the ground in his tipi meditating on life and its meaning,
accepting the kinship of all creatures, and acknowledging unity with the
universe of things, was infusing into his being the true essence of civilisation.”*

Standing Bear, Oglala Sioux Chief

How Do I Open My Third Eye?

There is no correct answer to this question it is different for every person, however there are tools that man has used to aid him in that task. For most it is by finding the stillness in your soul that moments of enlightenment come - achieving that is the difficulty. Meditation is a practice common to all religions of the world which can be greatly effective in this task.

Paradoxically we must learn to truly listen to all our senses but at the same time learn how to switch them off, so that we can pursue the inner journey without distraction.

For most enlightenment is not a flash or thunderbolt that changes one forever, it is a fleeting moment of connection to the divine. Just as our eyes do, the third eye can close as well as open.

“Blessed are the eyes that see what you see.

*For I say to you many prophets and kings desired to see what you see
but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it.”*

Yeshua Ben Miriam (Jesus of Nazareth)



“Teachers open the door, but you must enter by yourself.”

Chinese proverb



*“He who’s soul is satisfied with the wisdom of spiritual knowledge,
who has attained complete control over his senses and is unshakeable,
to whom a lump of earth, a stone and gold are the same,
such a yogi is said to have attained realisation.”*

From The Bhagavadgítá

How Did The World Begin?

Every religion has a creation myth, and that is exactly what they are - myths, a symbolic account of creation, not to be taken literally, although many have made that mistake. Even now scientists cannot be entirely sure of the origins of the universe and they will never know what caused it to come into being.

What we can be fairly certain of is how the Earth and our solar system was created. The Earth and all the planets were formed from fragments of the swirling mass that became our sun. It is from this source that all living creatures originate and that same source sustains life on this planet. The earliest known cultures knew the importance of the sun and worshiped it as the giver of light and life, it is indeed the source of the world and all life upon it.

“The divine Surya is the refuge or home of innumerable wonders.
All the creatures that inhabit the three worlds have flowed from Surya.”

From The Mahabharata



“Praise be to God, Creator of heaven and Earth!
...He multiplies His creatures according to His will.
God has power over all things.”

Muhammad



“Who Smootheth the ruggedness of a mountain?
Who is He who announceth the ages of the Moon?
And who, the place where falleth the sunset?”

From The Song of Amergin

What Is The Greatest Secret Of The Universe?

The greatest secret is that there are no secrets, everything we need to know is already revealed to us. If we fail to perceive this truth that is because we simply do not see what is right under our noses.

“Three candles that illuminate every darkness:
Truth, Nature and Knowledge.”

Celtic Triad



“Preoccupied with the quest to learn what they do not naturally know,
men lose the intuitive knowledge they already naturally possess.”

Chang Tzu

What Is Love?

Love is a much used and often abused term. Some never know love, some cannot give love and other cannot receive it but in our hearts we all understand what love is.

To truly love another is to touch the divine, it is beyond description; when we love we create something truly beautiful.

“Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude.

It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;

It does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.

It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

Saul of Tarsus (St. Paul)



“The wise aren’t full of themselves,

the more they do for others,

the more they feel fulfilled.

The more they give to others,

the more they feel they have.”

Lao Tzu



“Do you not wish God to forgive you?

God is forgiving and merciful.”

Muhammad

Why Is There Suffering In The World?

Mankind brings suffering upon himself. We live in paradise but we turn it to wasteland through our own foul deeds. God does not bring suffering upon us, even natural disasters are part of the cycles of the Earth, they are neither caused or prevented by God. For the most part our sufferings are of our own making or of those around us, and often the pain we bare is passed from one to another until someone is able to break the chain of suffering.

Although there is much unnecessary pain and torment, suffering is not without value, for it teaches us humility, wisdom and the ability to value what gifts life has given us. Many of the most valuable lessons in life are gained through bitter experience - suffer to learn.

"I have known many sorrows,
most of which never happened."

Mark Twain



"Swans follow the path of the sun
by the miracle of flying through the air.
Men who are strong conquer evil and its armies;
and they rise far above the world."
Gautama Siddhartha (Buddha)



"Three things increase wisdom: Misfortune, Illness, and Enemies."
Celtic Triad

Is There Such A Place As Hell?

The concept of hell has been used down the ages to manipulate the masses, as an instrument of fear and suppression; the traditional image of hell is probably far from reality. Hell is a place of our making and it is not necessary for us to die to visit it. For those who have any understanding of their own deeds, the wickedness they unleash upon the world also accumulates in their own hearts, creating their own private hell. Even those who appear impervious to any form of retribution are not beyond the all-seeing eye of God; for if they do not pay in this life, the truly evil will surely reap their bitter harvest in the next.

Our destinies lie in our own hands; we have the power to nurture this planet or turn it into a living hell. Likewise, in our individual lives, we can chose a path towards hell or enlightenment; although we may stumble, stray or fall, in our hearts we still know which path we follow.

“For the bases of the mountains shall melt
And fire shall consume the deep places of Hell
But thou wilt deliver
All those that are corrected by Thy judgements.”
Dead Sea Scroll IQH



“Some people are born on this earth,
those who do evil are reborn in hell;
the righteous go to heaven;
but those who are pure reach Nirvana.”
Gautama Siddhartha (Buddha)



“Oh, would that you knew what the Day of Judgement is!
It is the day when every soul will stand alone and God will reign supreme.”
Muhammad

Should I Fear Death?

Death is part of life, without it the world would be choked. All things have their time and pass away; even the sun, who's life seems infinite if compared to a human lifetime, will eventually fade and die.

It is the natural order that all things shall decline to make way for the new, we do well to accept the inevitable. Perhaps instead of fearing death, we should fear the waste of what life we have, every day is precious, for one day it will be our last.

"The night is at hand and it is good to yield to the night."

Homer



"There is no death, only a change of worlds."


Sealth, Suquamish Chief



"Death is to life what returning is to going away.

Death is a return to where we set out from when we were born."

Lin Lei



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