

The Mystic Spring

An introductory guide that may help some people cope with suffering.

Bob Boardman – June 2015 – Rotorua



To Live in this Existence is To Suffer

Our world has many beauties and wonders. There is much to smile and be joyful about. However, it is also the fundamental truth that life contains difficulties and we die. Accidents, sicknesses, job losses, crimes, broken relationships, meaninglessness, mental illness, abuse, grief, loss, death. To live in this existence is to suffer and then to die. These things are inescapable. They hit home with all of us sooner or later. Sometimes they become so severe or relentless we want to die.

Sure, many will suffer more and die sooner than others. Many are born in poverty and without education, living to see loved ones die through disease, oppression, famines and wars, before themselves being ravaged by infirmity. How amazing if the poor can smile and forgive after all their suffering!

Others may be born to have material wealth and education that enables them to exploit the world and benefit themselves. But sooner or later suffering and death comes to all the privileged too. Some in their wealth will realise that all the riches in the world cannot buy happiness. Others in their knowledge will recognise that their exploitation is the human path to apocalypse.

Then, if we believe our science when we hear it say that we live in a closed system, that there is nothing beyond our evolution, what is the point and meaning to our existence beyond self and now? What is the point to anything? Certainly, to ponder on that leads to suffering too!

“The Mystic Spring”

The aim of this booklet is to suggest a guideline that may help some people cope with suffering in their lives. My aim is certainly not to get anyone to join (or leave) any church or religious organisation, or to give (or not give) any money or time to any cause. I simply think that what I have learned in my own journey has been helpful to me and it may help some others too. I know it won't be for everyone and that's okay.

Believe Science and Develop Appropriate Strategies

The basis of my guideline begins with the view that it is helpful to do two things to survive and thrive in this existence:

Firstly, it is helpful that we base our actions on scientific facts. What does human science teach us? It teaches many things but I suggest it teaches us two fundamental truths:

- A. It teaches that the unfit suffer and die. Science teaches that life on earth, including human life, evolved through survival of the fittest and that those who are no longer fit will die. This is the underlying Law of Nature that rules our existence. It could also be called the Law of Self. Thus, we have a scientific basis to both the Law that rules our world and to believing the evidence before our eyes that the result of this Law is suffering that ends in death.
- B. It teaches that our universe is vast in space and time and that we are not. Our science says that we as a species have existed merely for a brief flash of time, living on a speck of dust in a vast realm estimated to be thirteen thousand million years old and seventy five thousand million light years across (each light year being 10 million, million kilometres). Thus, our science provides a scientific basis to believing the evidence before our very eyes that there is potentially far more to be known than what our 300 year old modern science has so far revealed. *(And so it becomes a matter of faith, just as in any religion, to have a faith in science when we hear our science say to us that there is no more to our existence than what science has so far revealed.)*

Secondly, it is helpful to develop appropriate strategies to exist based on these two scientific understandings. I suggest considering the following strategies:

- A. That we seek to live in a way that manages our suffering and knowledge of eventual death. There are quite possibly many strategies for us to seek to cope with our suffering existence but in my personal opinion the best approach I have come across to date is to follow Buddha's "Four Noble Truths" (which are summarised in the next section).
- B. That we develop a sense of meaning and purpose based on an understanding, hope and goal that there is potentially so much more than here, that potentially there is a limitless realm beyond what we currently know. Again, there are possibly different ways to do this but in my experience the only effective approach I have discovered so far comes from considering "Christ's Whole Community" (which I have also attempted to provide an outline of in the pages that follow).

Buddha's Four Noble Truths and Eightfold Path

1. **All life knows suffering.** Nobody gets what they want out of life.
2. **The cause of suffering is ignorance and clinging.** Wanting it is the problem.
3. **There is a way to end suffering.** By learning not to want it.
4. **This is the way to end suffering: The Eightfold Path.**
 - i. **Right Understanding.** Learning the nature of reality and the truth about life.
 - ii. **Right Aspiration.** Making the commitment to live in such a way that our suffering can end.
 - iii. **Right Effort.** Just do it. No excuses.
 - iv. **Right Speech.** Speaking the truth in a helpful and compassionate way.
 - v. **Right Conduct.** Living a life consistent with our values.

- vi. **Right Livelihood.** Earning a living in a way that doesn't hurt others.
- vii. **Right Mindfulness.** Recognizing the value of the moment; living where we are.
- viii. **Right Concentration.** Expanding our consciousness through meditation.

The above are a brief summary. There are different approaches to the Buddhist path and much has been written which I don't intend to duplicate here. Three comments I would simply make are these: Firstly, to me, the Eightfold Path amounts to a well thought-out system/tool to assist me to love myself and to love my neighbours. Secondly, I do not worship Buddha as divine in any way. Some of his remains reportedly still exist and I understand that he did not see himself as divine.

My third comment relates to the fact that many Buddhists oppose killing. As a result they are vegetarians and will not up take occupations that involve killing (eg. become soldiers, butchers, weapon makers etc). I respect people who can take that approach but I personally don't see things that way. I believe the evidence that humans evolved as omnivore hunter-gatherers and this justifies to me my own enjoyment of hunting deer and eating meat. It is also reality that we live in a world where evil exists so I have no problem with self-defence and doing what is necessary to protect others. Another aspect is that I have a black belt in Tae Kwon Do, giving me some insight into the mental disciplines involved in martial arts. For all these reasons, I personally tend to favour an approach more along the lines of Chan Buddhism.

Seven Revelations about Christ's Whole Community

Is what we see all there is? When cavemen saw the stars did they see suns or lights on the sky ceiling? In the Dark Ages did the people understand nuclear weapons? In our age of science that has been in existence for just a brief flash in time, how much do we not understand? If we stare deeply into the mystic spring, what more might be revealed? This is what I saw:

1. **Unlimited Creative Power**
2. **There is Something More REAL than Here**
3. **Love Is Trinity**
4. **The Nature of REALITY is Wholeness**
5. **Meaning Comes from Knowing "Good" Exists**
6. **A Choice of Pathways**
7. **The Reason to Forgive**

Each of these topics represent what I believe are insights into "Christ's Whole Community". To me, the mystic spring I speak of is the same as that spoken of by Jesus in the Bible in John's Gospel, Ch 4.

Some Comments about Christianity

Before I continue further, I have some comments to make about Christianity.

Firstly, after 25 years as a Christian and being ordained a minister in two denominations, I no longer identify myself as Christian or belonging to any religion.

To me, the word "religion" has come to mean any belief system or framework for existence that leads someone to think they have some right to look down on others, and/or have a right to kill, enslave and oppress others. By these evil "fruit" one knows what religion is. If these are the fruit then ultimately there is no difference whether the religion is called; Christian, Islam, Buddhist, Hindu, Nazi, Communist, Capitalist, Humanist, Atheist, Science, Tribal or one of numerous cults or criminal gangs (eg. Mafia, street gangs), etc.

In my reading of the Bible, religion is what Christ opposed the most and what killed him in the end (in the form of the actions of the Jewish religious leaders). Because Christ opposed religion I think the worst form of religion is Christian Religion. To me it is the devil in sheep's clothing. It purports to be from Christ but it is actually the

principle enemy of the true Gospel of Christ's love. As a result, the word "Christian" carries a load of baggage I no longer want (eg. crusades, inquisitions, paedophile priests, self-righteous churches, etc). To be frank, for me the Church began as a wonderful place of hope but due to Christian religion too often became a toxic temple of suffering.

My second comment is that I have degrees in both science and Christian theology. Looking through the eyes of both disciplines, I find there is as strong a case for Christ's evolution as there is for his resurrection in the flesh, or vice versa. For me, when I researched the hard evidences, the "facts" that are available to make up the argument for each case, I found Christ "guilty beyond reasonable doubt" on both counts. I therefore came to believe in both, that Jesus is the Son of Man, descendant of apes, and that he is the Son of God, one of the Trinity risen from the dead. In regards to the latter I freely confess that Jesus is my Lord.

My third comment is that I see the Bible as a work of art (literature) where two "persons" are portrayed. One person is God, whose character is best understood by looking at Jesus through the stories of the New Testament. Jesus says, "If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well." (John 14:7a). The second character is ourselves, flawed humanity, which is also seen in all the Bible stories. When we listen to the stories openheartedly like a little child and come to know both of these characters intimately, a love relationship becomes possible between the two characters. That, to me, is the primary purpose of the Bible.

I think that when people view the Bible through the eyes of our scientific culture they risk falling into one of two traps about understanding its purpose. They will either be pro-science and see the Bible (with Jesus) as just a humanly authored history book (as many liberal Christians and atheists tend to) or they will react against that scientific view and proclaim the Bible as a divinely ordained, inerrant manual/rulebook for living supported by pseudo "creation science" (as fundamentalist Christians tend to). To me, both approaches can be illuminating but in their extremes lead to all sorts of "heresy".

Now, I simply believe in what I have seen and follow according to what I believe. The remaining content of this booklet is taken up by my attempt to explain what I have seen and believe.

First Revelation: Unlimited Creative Power

Once I asked God a question. I asked, "Father, how can 'anything' exist? Okay, the Bible teaches that universe was created by You but if so, how then do **You** exist? Isn't the natural state simply for there to be nothing at all – as in 'nothingness'?..... Pretty good question I thought.

The answer I received went like this. "Space, Time, Matter, Energy and **Nothingness!** All are part of My creation. 'Nothing', as you understand it Bob, is simply something else I have created. In another creation there may be no such thing as nothing. I exist outside of My creation, including outside of, and apart from, 'nothing'". It had never occurred to me that what we would describe as 'nothing', could also be a creation of God.

Once I also heard a parable intended to show something of the enormity of God's creative and transforming power. A parable is a story with a message inside that is designed to teach us something. For example, Jesus' "Parable of the Sower" teaches us that only some who hear God's Word will go on to provide a good crop.

In Jesus' time He would teach parables using agricultural themes, like the sowing of seeds. He did this because the people He spoke to understood those things. In our age we have computers, so this is a modern parable about a computer. I call it "The Parable of the Enormous Computer".

Think of the basic elements of life (carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen). Our science tells us that over billions of years a single cell organism developed from these elements.

Then, over hundreds more millions of years, our science also says, whether we believe it or not, that life evolved further into us - humans. Then, very recently, we humans built computers.

Now, let us imagine in the future we find the means to connect computers to our minds, and we collectively evolve to become a single super-computer – a great Mind capable of reason and accumulating all knowledge, which has been linked to our biological emotions.

*Then that great Mind searches and searches, and in time it discovers **all** knowledge knowable about our whole universe, and to store the knowledge the Mind grows to become the size of a star.*

Then the Mind decides that it is far too large to be the size of a star, and finds ways to shrink itself to become the size of a basketball, and then even smaller to be the size of an atom, and then even smaller still, eventually down to the size of the very smallest particle we now know of - a Higgs-Boson particle!

But even though so very small, invisible to us even under the strongest microscope, the great Mind still contains all the knowledge of the universe.

Then the Mind thinks to itself, “I will create my own universe within myself”. So within its Mind it creates a vast, vast new existence, with many creatures that can reason and make choices.

But the new universe is not the same as the last. It has no space and time and matter and energy and nothingness, but instead it is made of new elements and operates by different laws.

But for all its differences to the previous creation, it too is fully “real”, and unimaginably glorious to the senses of the creatures that exist there, so they too choose to worship their Creator.

Then the Mind says to itself; “Why should I limit myself to just one creation?” So the Mind makes yet other creations. And because the Mind’s knowledge is infinite it makes an infinite number of creations, each different from the last.

And then, each of these infinite creations too grow to become infinite Minds and make their own infinite creations. And in all of this, the infinite Minds are aware of each other and because their knowledge is complete, they all love each other so much, that they are all One.....

Now I emphasize, this story is **not** saying God is some vast computer. The story is simply a mechanism to help demonstrate how there could potentially be endless creative possibilities for an unlimited, all knowing and all powerful Creator.

If we believe in a Creator God who has no limits, could He not transform all reality through His creative ability? Could he not create all of us in an instant (by divine fiat) or in a prolonged process (by evolution)? Could he not by faith throw a mountain into the sea, or walk on water, or turn water into wine? Could He not materialise in the flesh in a locked room, or feed the 5000, or tell a paralytic to pick up his mat and walk? Could he not forgive all sins?

If God has no limits, what is death to Him? And if we destroy our whole world that has existed for four thousand million years, could He not come again and create a whole new heaven and a whole new earth? Why do we limit God’s ability to love? Could a God who has created more stars than humans not have more love to give than the space that surrounds all the stars?

Second Revelation: There is Something More REAL than Here

A prophet hit his fist solidly on a table. “*THIS is construct!*” he said. As we stare deeper into the mystic spring so we may begin to grasp the possibility that our existence here may be a construct, a creation that comes from another, greater, REALITY.

We, existing “here”, begin by thinking that here is real, that we are the very definition of real, and that other possibilities (such as a spirit realm) are not real, or less real. But indeed, what if it is in fact the other way around, that we are merely constructed from a true and far greater REALITY?

Consider the possibility that true reality behind us, under us and over us is Spirit. Consider that we, in our bodies, and indeed our whole universe, are but a passing ghostly mist, shadows existing impermanently within Spirit. Consider that our flesh bodies are mere temporary containers, houses and temples for our spirits, and when our flesh and all that is material in this existence passes away, spirit will be left with Spirit.

We might well be mathematics fashioned into laws and programs to fulfil imagination within a Spirit matrix. Or at least, that is an analogy that might explain our existence. Yes, it is all solid here to us, in a similar way perhaps that a programmed ball bounces solidly off a wall on a computer screen. In the beginning, the Logos, the Word, the Spirit Mind, hovered over the formless deep and creation occurred. Our world, our universe and each of us down to every atom and effect, down even to the smallest particles interacting according to the laws of a Creator, all are perhaps our Creator's imagination made solid to us.

If we grasp this possibility for but a moment we may glimpse beyond to a possibility of what is REAL. What then may this say to us about how best we might live our brief lives here in this passing misty creation? Are we to fill our impermanent temples with idols to worship, things of no lasting value which exist only here in this shadow realm, or do we commit our temples here to worship an eternal Creator Spirit? Do we live for what is real, or for what is REAL?

Third Revelation: Love is Trinity

In the Bible it says that *"God is love"* (1 John 4:16b). But what does this mean? Does it mean that the biblical God is simply a vast bubble of love, and what then is this "love"? From the Bible, we also find the doctrine of the Trinity, which says God is three persons; Father, Son and Spirit. What does this mean also? Is the Christian God three Gods or one God with three faces?

These things make sense when we understand the biblical God as three persons so bound in perfect love that they are one entity, where unlimited love is found in the perfect relationships between the three. This understanding indicates that the biblical God who is to be worshipped is in fact a perfect family or community.

Biblically, this is the image in which we are created (Genesis 1:26-27) and so biblically this is our model and goal for all human living - for marriage, family, community and all of life, in this existence and beyond. The understanding is that we are called to be so perfect in our love for one another and in love for God that we are all one. We were created by the One to love the One and be one and become part of the One.

The Bible teaches that this was our purpose from the beginning and still remains our purpose. For example, the Bible speaks about Christ as the Groom and those who love Christ as his Bride. If we accept this analogy there is a clear intent and invitation to each of us to "marry" into the Trinitarian Community. This is the Community I mean when I speak of Christ's Whole Community. It is the Community where the Law of Self, as in our existence, does not apply. Instead the Law is that of Love.

Another example of love as Trinity can be found in Jesus' commands to love in the Bible (Matthew 22:37-40). His commands say, essentially; *"Love God above all and love your neighbour as yourself"*. Thus, there is another trinity we are commanded to love; God, neighbour and self. Then, from reflecting on these commands to love one may discover two truths. The first is this, that if we do not love God above all we will not do as he commands (that is, to love God, others or ourselves). The second truth is that if a person does not love themselves they will not, and cannot, truly love others – for observation will show that a person can only truly love others to the degree one has love for them self. (By self-love I mean having self-worth, self-esteem and most of all, self-forgiveness. This is quite different from "selfishness", which I define as the modern word for "sin").

Now there is one further thing I wish to say about perfect Trinitarian love where all is One. The thing that is most important is not the nature of an individual's abilities or the degree of their giftings but that when there is giving and receiving it is done in perfect love. In a perfect Community, no abilities or gifts are of any greater value than another. The greatest leader is no greater than the humblest follower. The greatest prophet or singer has no more value than the server of tables or humble gardener. All of these have no value to that Community of One if

there is not perfect love. Pride in individual abilities has absolutely no place. No one has greater good than another.

Consider this, that if the Whole Community has unlimited creative power, so much so that it can create our whole universe, what then are abilities and gifts, even if they would make us the most famous and powerful person on earth. The Trinitarian Creator Community could raise up a million such persons in an instant.

Fourth Revelation: The Nature of REALITY is Wholeness

What might be the nature of a Spirit matrix or realm more REAL than this existence? What might be the nature of that which created and contains our whole temporary universe?

“Holiness” is the central characteristic of the biblical God. However, most people, including most Christians, have no clear idea of what this means. This is because the traditional definitions for holiness use religious jargon like: 1) “to be consecrated” (meaning to be set apart to God), or 2) “to be made perfect” (translated to mean avoiding sinning and being saintly), or 3) the word is used to describe priests, monks, sacramental ornaments etc. Because of this, holiness is often portrayed as something not for normal, average people.

However, the best way to understand “holiness”, and the central nature of the biblical idea of God, is as “**wholeness**”.

One way to get an idea of what “wholeness/holiness” means is to picture a perfect circle, eternal and complete with no fault in any way. And within that circle is a triangle representing a community of beings (eg. the Trinity and all of Heaven) existing in such perfect love, truth and openness they are all interconnected as One. Within that circle and community there is only light and nothing is hidden, and because there is only complete wholeness - there is no dis-ease or corruption or imperfection or anything leading to death, so there is only life in its fullest that goes on forever. It is an existence more REAL than here and unlimited by the constraints of this existence, unlimited by matter, time, suffering and death. It is only good. It is only joy. That is something of the idea of holiness.

When we understand Christ’s Holy Community in this manner (as wholeness) we see that the goal is no longer religious perfection, to be set apart from the sin-contaminated and non-religious. Instead the goal is all about perfect **healing**. The goal is for those hurt and damaged in this world – by corruption, lies, violence, addictions, fear, disease, etc – all the bad things that bring us pain, suffering, guilt, unforgiveness and death, to be healed and made perfectly whole. The Law of Nature leading to suffering and death in our existence simply does not apply in Christ’s Holy Community. The only Law that applies is that of Wholeness.

Fifth Revelation: Meaning Comes from Knowing “Good” Exists

What meaning is there in life if this existence is all there is or if what we do here makes no difference? Or, if there is an afterlife but it is a place of evil and suffering, who would want to go there? I have personally discovered that for there to be meaning to this existence it is necessary to believe there must be “good” somewhere. I have further discovered that to have hope I need to believe that it is possible that I can ultimately find that “good”. Lastly, I have discovered that for my life to have purpose I need to see a way for me to be involved in the finding of the “good”.

If the mystic well allows us to glimpse REALITY as an eternal spirit Community of unlimited creative power so perfect in love and wholeness that it is One, then surely that is “good”. I hope that people might also then begin to see that if there were any such Community their intent in creating us could only have been “good”. Furthermore, I hope that people might see that even now the intent of such a Community would continue to be “good”, in that they want their creation to become totally whole (holy) and one in love within their eternal Community.

(In fact if we refer to the Bible stories there is a core underlying message. After God had completed creation God said all was “good” in Genesis 1:31. This was before the “Fall” when Adam and Eve had chosen to disobey and evil entered existence, leading to suffering and everything turning “bad”, which God was very unhappy about – see Genesis 3:23 and 6:6. The basic teaching then is that when humankind was placed in charge of creation everything was one in wholeness and love, in the image of the One. However, when Adam and Eve chose to no longer obey the One, which amounted to no longer loving the One, all that was one under them could no longer be part of the One, the Whole Community. All in this existence had become unwhole/unholy, separated from the whole/holy and therefore subject to the Law of Self that led to suffering and death. God’s solution to this was to send Jesus, who obeyed the One, offering a path back to wholeness - see Romans 5:12-21.)

I think that if we glimpse deep within the mystic spring and see these shimmering images of an unlimited creative entity of ultimate “goodness” that only wants “good” for us we may begin to see a pearl beyond all price, a pearl that offers meaning, hope and purpose to enable us to cope with suffering and death in our existence here.

Sixth Revelation: A Choice of Pathways

It seems to me that what we believe is our choice and that there are basically five choices of base beliefs below that determine human behaviour in our existence:

1. **Believing “this world is all there is” – often leading to selfishness (sin):** If we believe this world is all there is we will probably strive, often in a selfish way, to get as much as we can from this existence of that which we think will give us “happiness”. And if this belief then leads us to a place where we see ourselves in a meaningless existence we may well find life not worth living
2. **Believing “we will not be held accountable” – also often leading to selfish behaviour:** Even if we believe there is some god or gods or afterlife beyond this existence, if we believe that everyone will get there, that we will not be held accountable for the evil we do in this world, this may then lead us to do what we like and think we can get away with.
3. **Believing we can work our way to somewhere better – often leading to “religions of works”:** If we believe there is a heaven or afterlife of some sort we may well strive in a different way to be good and do good in this existence to earn our way to a better afterlife, perhaps not realising that our “do gooder/martyr” motives may be just as selfish as in the first option.
4. **Believing “we can never be good enough” – often leading to behaviour based on unworthiness or shame:** We may believe there is an afterlife but if also deep down we believe that our “sins” are such that we can never be good enough (or forgiven) to achieve “heaven”, we are likely to revert to similar behaviours as in the first option.
5. **Really this leaves just one other option I think – “divine grace”.** This is believing in a loving Whole One (Holy One) who will welcome us into their loving Community, not because of any good or power to do good inherent within us, but because we are simply willing to choose and allow the Whole One to make us good enough. Of course, if we do not really believe in this Whole One, how can we live in the Whole One’s grace?

As I said earlier when speaking about love in the Trinity, love is arguably what the One created us for – to love the One, to love as one, and to love as part of the One. However, choice is necessary for love. A programmed machine that has no choice does not love. We are not robots. It is because we have the ability to choose that we can love. However, choices have consequences and if we choose badly it leads to suffering and death. That is the fundamental teaching of the first chapters of the Bible. The Whole One is said to have created us “good” but to be able to love we also had choice. Thus the story teaches that when our choice was bad and unloving it led to suffering, death and the destruction of creation.

At the same time we can see in this a purpose of suffering. It can bring correction and help guide us along a right path. Our greatest learning and growing often comes out of our times of crisis and hardships. If we put our hand

in a fire and suffer pain we may learn that is not a good thing to do. Similarly we can see purpose in suffering from the following poem:

The Purpose of Darkness

*The deepest wounds bring the greatest darkness,
but in such darkness light shines its brightest.
The beacon that we ignored, an unnoticed speck,
changes to a glimmer of hope, then a blazing sun.
And as the light overcomes the darkness,
so we forget we are victims.
Let this be the purpose of darkness,
that what we would not see,
becomes a blazing sun.*

Now we have another choice. We can, if we wish, choose the path that leads to wholeness. This is not a simplistic path of departing this existence to get to the next through suicide because we can no longer bear our suffering here. Such a path is not about giving our life out of love (as Christ did) but about taking our life. The path to wholeness is also not simply the choice to follow the Eightfold Path or Moses' Law or any other code of living. While these tools are helpful to cope with suffering and move towards goodness the risk is that they become "religions of works", and when we fail in our efforts (our "works") we will then default to believing that we can never be good enough.

Ultimately, the only choice that does not follow all the other pathways to selfishness and suffering in this existence, is the free choice of "divine grace". To repeat, the choice of grace is not about doing anything other than choosing to believe in the divine. However, it is not just about believing in any "god". It is about believing specifically in the Whole One – the Holy One, who offers us unconditional perfect love and has the power to heal us, make us whole, and become part of their Community.

Of course, if we believe in that Whole Community, but then do not seek to begin orientating the way we live our lives according to that belief then I would suggest the deeper truth is that we still do not actually believe. Instead we will still have a perverted belief that does not enable us to receive grace. We will in fact be reverting to one of the other base beliefs (a religion of works, unworthiness, unaccountability or self).

(According to the Bible, the ultimate demonstration of the divine grace offered by the Holy One, and the means of receiving that grace, is found through believing in the sending, suffering, death and resurrection of Christ eg. John 3:16)

Seventh Revelation: The Reason to Forgive

The order of things in our existence is that when people cause us a debt of suffering we want justice. In our hearts we want to restore a balance. Until this sense of balance is restored, our hearts are often filled with anger and hatred against those who we believe have caused our suffering.

Now, essentially there are two ways I know of where this balance can be restored, and our anger and hatred put aside. There can either be retribution, extracting payment for the debt through vengeance and revenge, following along the path of eye for eye, tooth for tooth, life for life, dollar for dollar, and also aiming to get some interest as well, for all our troubles. The other alternative for restoring the balance is to forgive the debt, to simply forget what is owed, wiping the slate clean.

The problem with retribution is, so often there is not a restoration of balance but quite the opposite. Yes, if there are effective human laws and policing these may go a great way to maintaining balance and keeping hatreds and suffering in check. However, often there is corruption or other limitations and the debts simply keep on growing. The path of vengeance leads to more debts of suffering, drawing in and damaging an ever widening circle of those around in an unending tit for tat cycle of evil. We just have to look for an instant at the various religious conflicts in the Middle East to see this.

Why then do people not simply forgive? The reason is that they do not believe there is a REALITY outside this existence to redress the balance. Thus they feel obliged to take matters into their own hands and do their best to ensure the payment of debt is made here and now. From this we see that a significant contributor to the ability to forgive others comes from belief in a REALITY where all will be made whole and good in the end.

Now, if we stare deep into the mystic spring and see a glimpse of the REALITY of the Whole One where all is love and good, then we will also see a realm where everything is in perfect balance. In such a realm there can be no place for imbalance, for vengeance and hearts filled with hatred over unforgiven debts. To join with that Whole Community all must be forgiven. There must be no debt that we must pay and no debt that we expect others to pay.

When we receive “divine grace”, all and any debts that we owe are never to be held against us by the Whole One. All and any suffering that we have caused to any others, and to ourselves, whether small or terrible, is forgiven. Even if we have done terrible things; rape, torture, murder, genocide, the slate is wiped clean. Why is this? Again, the reason is that the degree of debt we incur in this world is quite irrelevant to the fact that absolutely no debt (small or large) exists or will be allowed to exist in the Whole Community.

Now, the idea that someone who commits evil (like genocide) could be forgiven may appal many people’s sense of justice. However, consider this. Just as to exist in this world is to experience suffering, so to it is to cause suffering to others. Similarly, just as to be born in a certain time and situation may determine our degree of suffering, our misfortune, so too may fortune determine the degree of suffering we cause. Those who are born to experience wars may suffer terribly and conversely they may also cause terrible suffering. In a given set of circumstances perhaps most, if not all of us, have the potential to be concentration camp victims or concentration camp guards.

Does this mean then, that we in this existence should not be subject to human justice? Definitely not. Does it also mean that someone can deliberately do terrible things in this existence, knowing there is a greater REALITY of perfect love and good, and automatically expect “divine grace”? Absolutely not! Such a person is still ruled by the Law of Self and unless they become ruled by the Law of the Holy One they will never enter Christ’s Whole Community.

The thing is, if divine grace applies to us it applies to all, even to those who have incurred great debt to us by causing us to suffer terribly in this world. In a greater REALITY of Whole Community, for us to receive divine grace is for us to give our grace, irrespective of degree. To be totally forgiven for causing others to suffer (whether to a small degree or large) is to totally forgive others of all the suffering they have caused us (to a small degree or large) and to totally forgive ourselves too. There is simply no place for any unforgiven debt or imbalance in a REALITY that is totally loving, good and whole (holy).

Conclusion

At the beginning I spoke about how science showed that our current existence is ruled by the Law of Nature, the survival of the fittest, which is also the Law of Self, and this causes suffering and death. Now, when I said this I did not mean that there is no good or love in this existence. Right at the beginning I also said that our world has many beauties and wonders, that there is much to smile and be joyful about. However, I think the beauties and joys are like fruit trees and rose bushes struggling, blooming and dying in a poorly cared-for garden overgrown with weeds.

In this regard I see our world as a halfway place, halfway between Heaven and Hell, halfway between the REAL and the unreal. There is still the beautiful remnants of a garden that was once whole/holy, still with fruit to be enjoyed and flowers to be appreciated amongst the weeds and ruin. Thus, the wise will see that happiness found in this life must be found today, and often amidst perseverance through suffering, for suffering is all around and does not end.

In fact, if we assume that the Law of Self will follow its trajectory, unwholeness and unlove that breeds suffering, death and destruction will increase. Presumably there will ultimately be no good or life or REAL left, only some residual spiritual elements in a realm aptly called Hell.

I then sought to offer a glimpse of a greater REALITY, the realm of the eternal One, ruled instead by the Law of Wholeness, the Law of the Holy One. I described this as Christ's Whole Community, where there is only joy everlasting that comes from an existence of perfect Trinitarian love, truth and good.

What I have seen in the waters of the mystic spring is wonderful to me. However, the waters are deep and what I saw difficult to put into words. My hope is that I have provided insights to offer at least some people sufficient meaning, hope and purpose to assist them to cope with suffering in our world.