

A photograph of a rocky forest path. The path is made of dirt and is surrounded by large, moss-covered rocks. There are several trees, some with thick trunks and some with bare branches. The scene is lit by natural light, creating a dappled effect on the ground and rocks.

PURGATORY

PRISONERS OF THE MIND

By James Kozlik

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

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The Legend of Purgatory Chasm

According to legend, an Algonquin Indian woman found herself in a tight spot (pun intended) shortly after she killed a white colonial settler. As she walked away from the scene of the crime, she encountered another settler who asked for her company on a short walk. Naturally, having just murdered one of his people, she was apprehensive and tried to run away. He lunged and grabbed her by the wrist. When she called out to the Native American god Hobomoko to save her, the second settler revealed himself as none other than Hobomoko in the flesh. Morphing into a devil-like guise, Hobomoko grabbed his captive by the waist and flew to Purgatory Chasm.

Colonists said that the devil's actions on that day formed the chasm. The deep depressions were allegedly the places he stomped and threw his victim. The large, deep cuts in the rocks were the results of a swinging tomahawk.

Historians say that the legend actually served a religious purpose in the colonists' efforts to Christianize Native Americans. By demonizing Hobomoko and creating a parable-like warning out of the woman's murder, they cautioned Natives out of their own faith with the hope of bringing them to Christianity.

Geologists have another opinion. They say that a mile-high glacier let loose a gush of dammed-up water some 14,000 years ago, leaving the walls intact but carving out the 70-foot-deep chasm.

“First realize that you are surrounded by prison walls, that your mind has gone to sleep. It does not even occur to most people to see this, so they live and die as prison inmates. Most people end up being conformist; they adapt to prison life. A few become reformers; they fight for better living conditions in the prison, better lighting, better ventilation. Hardly anyone becomes a rebel, a revolutionary who breaks down the prison walls. You can only be a revolutionary when you see prison walls in the first place.”

From Anthony de Mello

Introduction

There were times in my life when I felt trapped. No way out of “the grind” like being born in a caste system. Born into a free world I had been told. So, I would just keep on going in a direction not knowing what direction I was heading. And so I would sign up for workshops and events that promised freedom from a chaotic mind. Then I would let the liquor soothe me, or maybe some smoke, only to realize the numbing effect it would have. Always returning to be a prisoner of my mind. Religion? Spirituality? The disciplines were a shock to my system and way of life. Just like everything else, I felt trapped, trapped, trapped but not anymore. Nope, I committed a murder. I snapped one day, just reacted in anger and punched and punched and punched harder and harder until...well, you don't need to listen to the details. All you need to know is how long I have regretted doing what I did. I am John Sutton and I live in Purgatory now, you've heard of it. That place between Heaven and Hell, a place of waiting, a trap of sorts, waiting for my mind to be still.

My name is Asaad. Yes, I am Muslim and like a lion I am courageous and brave. I pulled the plug, on someone and on my life. I was a caregiver for an old soul who was suffering. And I was suffering just watching him hang onto to life. I don't think he knew that he was even doing that. Hanging on to life when you could possibly be in the next realm. Maybe he thought that he needed more time. You know, extend life thinking he needed to work on forgiveness? Anyway, he was letting out agonizing screams and I couldn't bear it any longer. So I pulled the plug, he gave his last breath and I plugged his life support system back in, but they figured out what happened and here I am between Heaven and Hell. So what happens now you ask. When you are sentenced to die, there is solitary confinement and the wait diminishes the inspiration to live. The wait is excruciating and one becomes a prisoner of the mind.

I look over at Asaad as we sit under the “Tree of Forgiveness”. It’s the only tree in the yard. All of the other trees are on the other side of the guarded wall. I call it the wailing wall, because where I live I will never get a chance to pray for redemption, at the Wailing Wall. Asaad is Arab, the same as the young man who soiled my daughter. I shot him in the back as he ran from my house. It’s not that I hate Arabs, it was the fear that maybe my daughter should not associate with an Arab. Maybe he was a Muslim. But my name is Abram after Abraham whose considered the founder of Hebrews through his son Isaac and by Muslim's through his son Ishmael. And why do I fear the Arabs who live as my neighbor? What thoughts have caused these misperceptions that we are enemies? The actions of a few? My daughter loves an Arab. I should love my neighbor. So here I sit with John and Asaad, waiting for death and allowed this last short glimpse of life out of solitary confinement as we sit under this tree of forgiveness. That is what we named it as it sits up the top of a small swale. I am reminded of Jesus on the cross between two other criminals.

Chapter 1

I look over at Abram and Asaad as they appear to be in deep contemplation. We are shackled to say the least, with two guards holding shot guns across their breast. What do they think we are going to do? The life blood has been sucked out of us. We are here to enjoy our last breaths of fresh air as we look at the prison yard. We watch the free prisoners doing their time with hope of a quick release back into the rhythms of life.

“Asaad, who’d you pull the plug on?”

“A Jew, an old Jew who never stopped talking about the fear of losing his motherland.”

Abram looks up and turns his head in the direction of Asaad. “How long have we known each other with a wall between us? Did you ever get a chance to talk to me. Your neighbor in confinement?”

“Oh, so now you are going to tell me about your God and diminish the value of Muhammad, the true messenger of God. Why would you not acknowledge that he preached the same teachings as did Moses, Jesus and Abraham.”

“No, I had plenty of time to think until I could think no more. I do not know you because of the wall that separated us. All I know is execution is what bonds the three of us as one.”

“John Sutton, do you both know my name? Do you want to know why I sit here with the both of you?”

Heads turn and peer over at John. Asaad is first to respond, “John, from the USA, a Christian who did wrong and now has to pay for his sin?”

“John Sutton, so when did you become Christian? You are saved perhaps, but from what, and who saved you, your God? Certainly not from death.”

“You sound bitter Abram, my friend.”

“I don’t think I am any friend of your’s nor you Asaad. We don’t know each other. All we know is that we are all sentenced to death.”

“I killed someone, with my bare hands, fighting like an animal who is trapped into a corner. I was so present with my anger that the one I laid hands on was no longer a human being. Every punch I threw was as if I was just beating the big pillow my therapist had me hit. Just let it out John, what are you feeling? He was screaming louder than me, that’s when I went after him. All of my hate, and frustration, every punch became harder, every thought that was buried deep within surfaced. And even when his screams became a whimper asking me to stop, I hated him, the therapist. What right did he have to inquire about my past history with killing. He didn’t know anything about killing another man, and children and women.”

“I am glad you are shackled John, you are scaring me. Look, someone is coming and it does not look like the Chaplin,” observes Abram.

They all peer in the direction of the prison yard. All of the free prisoners are gone. Back inside where they belong. Confined, crowded into cells and work spaces. To learn their lesson of retribution. There is a third guard with a shotgun across his chest walking slightly behind and to the right of the man dressed in white. One guard for each man, shackled, destitute and destined to die. The man in white approaches with a demeanor of confidence, kindness and joy. Why is he smiling, nothing joyous about the situation.

“Good afternoon men.”

There is no response. Just stares - six eyes fixated on the man in white. Waiting for their final instructions prior to execution. There is silence and an air of calm. A leaf gently floats toward the bare ground. They watch as it flutters to the ground.

“You chose your final contact with this earthly environment wisely. Look beyond the cyclone wired fence. Here is the only place where trees prosper in this area. They are connected with this lone tree, that connects each of you to the outside world.”

“I wouldn’t start that conversation chaplain,” it’s Abram speaking, “I don’t know who my daughter is anymore, and my wife? I wonder if I even have a wife anymore. The only connection I have in my mind is the boy that I killed. His soul, that is whom or what I seek, to talk to, ask it for forgiveness. And I don’t even know if what was once my blind faith is valid anymore.”

“What do you mean by your blind faith, Abram.”

“I am not in a mood to have a discussion with you. What happened to the other chaplain, Frederick.”

Abrams question is ignored. Now I find that intriguing considering this is our last day to be outside for the remainder of our human existence. “Did they pull the plug on old Frederick? And your name, please.”

I am your executioner. We do not give out our names. You are fortunate to partake in a new type of execution. The guards will take you to your cells. Tonight you will contemplate on contempt. Observe your past and all that you had contempt for. What impact did that have on you at the time and what was the consequence.

Asaad is aghast at the thought, “we call this tree the tree of forgiveness. I came here with full remorse for what I did. I have recalled my past actions so many times that I bleed the guilt for what I did. Now I must die because I pulled the plug on someone who was dying a miserable death.”

“You have come with three guards armed with shotguns. Why not just shot us and end this farce of an execution? There is nothing human with the time spent in solitary confinement.” The anger was building

up in John Sutton. His fist clenched and the chains on the shackles rattled.

It was time to go. The guards poked their rifles into the shoulders of each man. They instructed them to start moving. And so they did, slowly taking their final walk under a clear blue sky.

Chapter 2

Calm - John: John slowly shuffles his feet towards the cell block. He stops and looks up at the sky, and blazing sun. When his eyes return toward the ground he sees dark spots. He chuckles, "I can't see yet. I have been blinded by the light."

The guard pokes him with his rifle tip, "move or you'll get the butt end of my rifle. Your last day on earth will be miserable if you don't keep moving."

Contempt, I sure didn't have to wait long to feel contempt. That therapist had to poke deeper and deeper into my soul until I was lost again, my mind programmed to kill. Here's what the enemy looks like. Here is where you will find them. This is what you will do. There was four of us. One to kick down the door, I was to swing into motion kneeling and gunning the lower part of the room. Joe moving from my right. Crouching just above my right shoulder and sweeping the middle latitude of the room. Pete standing taller was instructed to sweep the upper portion of the room with his automatic. There was no time to take in the scene. Just kill and move onto the next small one room house. Women screaming, children shouting and no time for return gunfire from the enemy.

The therapist probing, "how did it feel when you heard the screams? Why did you keep shooting?"

How dare him asking me questions thinking what, that he could deprogram me. That he knew what was cursing through my mind. He

had no clue what it was like. I didn't feel calm until the punching was all over. Until I was exhausted from killing again. That's when I rolled off of him, lay on my back, closed my eyes and followed his previous instructions to breath. "Just breath, John, slow deep inhales your exhale should be longer than your inhale. Keep breathing, focus only on your breath and slowly, very slowly calm your mind."

Acceptance - Abram: Why could I not accept the relationship between my daughter and her Arab boyfriend. Or was he her lover. Was I wanting to protect her so she would marry someone of Jewish descent? And who was the Arab boy, I do not know. He fled my house from fear and I reacted from fear. We did not get to know each other beyond our perceptions. I now must accept my fate. My loss of daughter, family and my life. All because of a contemptuous misunderstanding, with no regard for human life. No regard for another's choice. And now I recognize my contempt of God. I followed His word and I believed we were the chosen Ones. I accepted my self righteousness as spiritual superiority. And now I am supposed to accept my fate as fatalistic as it's outcome. Excruciated within the confines of solitary confinement until death. Given one last glimpse of life, shackled under the Tree of Forgiveness. And who forgives me? Not my daughter, not my wife, not the family of the Arab boy I killed. GOD? Why would He forgive my disobedience to the commandment "Thou shalt not kill." Whatever is next is what I am doomed to accept. I am afflicted by the pain and suffering I have caused. I am besieged by this prison, weakened by lack of the outside world. And I am in contempt to have to accept all of this nonsense. Who is this man in white leading us to a different kind of execution?

Peace - Asaad: We fight over a sliver of land. It's not even my fight. I could care less. Yet I inherited this belief that the Jews of Israel are not

in my best interest. Where did this thought come from? I looked at this Jewish man, aged and dying in agony. And what were his screams about? The pain of his cancer, eating away at his heart. Or was it wanting to leave this earthly plane in peace but still in contempt of his Arab nurse, me. My suffering was caused by my letting the external influences from those that govern, impact me. After awhile we begin to internalize these false claims. The Israelis become the enemy. Most of us ordinary people just want to live peacefully. We want to love one another without any cause or justification of who to befriend and whom not to. Love what is. I think that is some Buddhist notion I have heard in my lifetime. My patient became more than just someone assigned to me. He became all that I was supposed to hate. The screams from him reminded me of the screams from innocent people during an Israeli raid. They became war chants against my nation. And I retaliated, with contempt. I pulled the plug and the raid ended. I was at peace, finally.

Chapter 3

Guard number one is Running Horse, a native American. He is a big guy with a big heart. How he ended up with this job after serving in the military is another story. He opens the little door window. Today his job is to escort... "John Sutton, prisoner 1378965, it is time. You are going back to the Great Creator. Make your peace. Place your hands behind your back.

Fear - John

I am not fearing this execution. It does not matter if it's a new alternative to electrocution. Maybe it will be a morphine OD, that's fine with me. What I do fear is having to look at what in my past led me to end up here. I fear how deep I must go to justify my actions in the village battlefield. Think about that, having to fight an enemy who use

innocent civilians as shields. Eyes and body language showing fear haunt my vision of a peaceful life. All I know is the chaos of the village raid. I will never know if I killed an enemy or an innocent. In my mind I could not escape the torment of suffering. The therapist attempting to pin point what caused me to suffer so much that I had to kill. Maybe I was killing my demons. Maybe it was the gossip I heard spread throughout my small home town. The gossip about the day when Jack, Stevie and I killed Mrs. Townsend's chickens and had them roasting on a camp fire spit while we drank our liquor by the river. We were quite satiated by the time the flashing lights and sirens came upon us. Scared, we ran towards the river. There were three of them. Officers with pistols pulled out of their holsters. We frantically ran into the river. Stevie could not swim and got pulled by the current. I looked long enough to see him grab for a rock. Later I was told he drowned. I hid with Jack on the other side of the river. We watched as the officers all headed for Stevie sensing he was in trouble. We made it back to Jack's house. His bedroom was in the basement of his folks house. It had a private entrance so he could come and go as he pleased and have some buddies over too. We got into dried clothes and I spent the night, after calling my folks. It was the next day when we heard about Stevie. There was no indication or description of who else the officers saw that evening. That memory stayed with me all through boot camp and deployment. Even though I feared for my own safety I was determined to protect my troop in the endless wars of the middle east where I was deployed. I feared death for anybody in my troop. So when a door got kicked open I never considered whom I shot at. All I knew was that I would never abandon "Stevie" again.

Guard number two is Hamza, a Palestinian refugee whose brother was shot and killed by an Israeli father of the woman that he was having a secret romantic relationship with. His family is from the west bank. He had been living in Jerusalem when it happened. Several years ago. He

was crushed by the thought that someone could hate so much because of a personal belief, that he or she would kill a human life. Total disregard of whom they shot. The thought that someone should not interfere in another's romantic life, two people who loved each other beyond the bias of race or culture. So Hamza came to America and chose this job not totally understanding why. Maybe, he thought, "I can see justice being served."

Possessiveness - Abram

"Let's go Abram, prisoner 1379062. It's your time to end your internal suffering."

Abram hears the small window opening on the cell door being shut. He finished his last meal awhile ago. He preformed a Shabath with bread and wine, that is what he had requested. Along with a full meal of chicken, kosher foods and a desert. There was nobody to share his final weeks' experiences on this earth. So he was full of thought and much suffering. The regret he felt for his action was a heavy weight that he has been carrying around for a longtime.

He rises out of his bed and as the door opens he looks at his executioner and sees a small Palestinian flag emblem sewn over the left pocket of his shirt. He makes eye contact.

"I know your history Abram."

Abram does not respond, yet. He has a despondent mood as it is. He understands that there is nothing left in his life but death. He looks at Hamza's eyes. There is no indication of compassion. No hate either.

"And what history about me do you know?"

"I am the brother of the lover of your daughter, whom you shot dead in the back."

“I see, you followed me here. So why not shoot me now. I am to die anyway. Maybe it is the honorable thing to do.”

“I have been thinking what I might say to you for a long time. When my brother was shot, our family was living in Jerusalem. We had no bias attitude towards Jews. We are all Arabs in a sense. I have listened to you lament as I stood guard outside your cell door. I thought how solitary confinement must eventually tear through one’s false beliefs until all that’s left is his truth. I heard you weep many nights.”

“What is your name?”

“Hamza.”

“Hamza, I now realize how I was so extremely possessive of my beliefs that I wanted to demand my daughters full attention and love. The same as with my wife. I failed to allow them their independence. I wanted them to believe what I believed was true. And what I believed to be true was not my truth. I never became independent from what I was taught as truth. I was so obsessive of my knowledge that I never knew wisdom.”

“Abram, I too became obsessive for avenging my brothers death. When I sat in that court room for your trial, I swore to possess you. It was I, that wanted to make sure justice was served and that you would realize your death. This time has come and what I feel now is not compassion, rather it is love for a brother. Causeless love is what I believe we can call it. To love each other as human beings. I have observed the obsessiveness of my people. Of how my sisters were treated different from my brothers and I. How the elders cling to what has been handed down to them from centuries ago.”

“Yes, and I was the same, clinging to dogma. As a people we possess our dogma or rather it possesses us until our independent thinking is no longer relevant to our life. And yet your family managed to live in Jerusalem, did it change your spiritual values?”

“I am not sure, I do know that I saw a difference in the way my father treated his women. I observed more tenderness and indifference to how a woman should be treated in a traditional Arabic structure. He was no longer possessive of my mother and sisters. They had their freedoms.”

“Hamza, my friend we are not as different as we are made out to be. Why do our cultural differences possess our beings? You have given me peace of mind. I am honored that you have been my guard. I am grateful that you heard me weep. And now lead me to my execution and you will have your divine justice.”

“Let us go in silence, my thoughts are not centered on seeing justice being served anymore. I am grateful for our brief connection.”

Guard number three is a Hindu. He goes by his American name, Robert. He chose the name when he was working as a website builder for GoDaddy. He was still living in India, Along the Pakistan/Indian border. He moved his family to Pennsylvania and purchased a convince grocery and gas store. One of the little ones with a two island gas pump in a suburb of Philadelphia. He had studied the history of when the Muslims had been targeted by hate groups. The internal conflict during Mahatma Gandhi's reign. The peace maker who had to agree to a new state (Pakistan) where Muslims could live in peace. Then one unforgivable night two Muslim men robbed his uncle who was working the register, and shot him in cold blood. He sold the store and after years of grief and despondency he became a prison guard. He had a fantasy that someday he would see his uncles perpetrators in jail and get revenge. His mind was still in conflict.

Inclusiveness - Asaad

So many decades have passed since my homeland was created. Pakistan is still considered a Muslim country. And still today our instinctive behavior is to listen to the old history of why we are different. Yet whenever I meet a Hindu, or Arab or anyone for that

matter, I just want to be included into their world. I want to disregard the differences of culture. I'd rather merge with the cultural aspects of what makes us different. That has nothing to do with how we think of each other.

“Prisoner number 135209, Asaad from Pakistan, this is your lucky day. It is time, your last chance to claim your remorse. Or did you do that under the tree of forgiveness? Muslims killed my uncle.”

Asaad looks at the guard. There is no anger in his body language. His facial features show resolve. “I do not know of what you speak. What I do know is whoever killed your uncle had no identity of race.”

“Their identity was proven to be Muslim. Where I come from, our history shows that Muslims were band from our country. My upbringing taught me that we are different. That Muslims can not be trusted.”

“And what if I were to tell you that being raised along the Pakistani and Indian border, I had Hindu friends. What if I were to tell you we only new each other by our friendship and brotherhood.”

“You killed someone, so your friendships aren't all inclusive.”

“I killed someone out of compassion. The dying man was in agony and pain. He did not know where he was. He screamed “kill me” and wouldn't stop screaming until I silently killed him by interfering with his life support. The doctors were killing him with morphine.

“It's time to go my friend.”

Chapter 4

John is the first one to enter the waiting room. Shortly thereafter, Abram had Asaad enter. John's guard opens the door and motions with his shotgun to move aside. He nods and the other prison guards motion for their prisoners to move through the door. There is a long hallway, with a set of stairs at the end of the hall. It is a slow walk, very intentional as Abram leads the way. They make it down the stairs and go left about fifty feet and come to a large handicap door with an automatic open button. Abram's guard presses the button and motions all to enter. The room has a large chair for electrocution or a drug induced execution. There is also a small conference table off to the left of the execution chair. It's new to this room. There is a tempered white glass top that is illuminated. This conference table is in the shape of a four corners intersection. It looks like a first aid cross. There is a chair at each end. The men are shackled to their chairs. The open chair remains unoccupied, for now. The guards leave the room, through another, opposite door. They go down a short hallway and enter the gallery room. There are others already seated, peering through large glass shatter proofed window. These are the prisoner's closest family and also the families of the victims. The man in white enters the execution room from the door that the guards just exited. He walks to the empty chair and sits.

“Gentlemen, you are meant to be here at this time in your lives. Each of you have had plenty of time in contemplation during your solitary confinement. Surely you have all been stripped naked of your outer garments and looked within. Your special guards have given you voice to speak. They were assigned to you by Divine source. The source you have believed or not, that dictated right and wrong up to this point in your lives. Your perceptions of others and self have inflicted the burden you carry to your death. We are at the four corners of your soul reincarnation. At this intersection your choice of redemption shall be

determined. This is not a time to ask for forgiveness. This is a time for your truth to be spoken.”

The middle of the table vibrates every so slightly with a pulse of illuminated light.

Abram, “you who will not give us a name. You who are not a Chaplin, you speak in parables.”

“Gentlemen, prior to this execution you were left with your personal thoughts. Now you will share amongst yourselves with quality connection. Now you will observe your feelings, with compassion for self and others.”

There is a silence. The sound of a slow deep inhalation followed by a long exhalation comes over a hidden speaker system. The men react with eye movement that relays an energy amongst them. They nod at each other and close their eyes. The breath sounds continue until it turns into calm ocean waves lapping up on a seashore. After a time the sound stops.

A voice gives instruction, “John, speak of your surrender to what you perceive as your fate.”

Surrender - John

John takes a deep breath, “I am feeling anxiety right now. Now is what you want from us, right? The present feeling is anxiety every time I recall the time in Iraq, the killing machine I was. Fearing for my life. I was fearing for my comrades too. We were a unit, sworn to our loyalty to the group. I surely had no compassion for whom I blindly massacred. And you are asking me to surrender this past behavior even though the entire scene is embellished into my being. I was not fighting for my freedom at the time. That I know for sure. The assignment had no relevance to my life except that I was following someone else’s orders. I had no control of the situation.”

Assad speaks, "One has no control over fate, until they change. 'Allah never changes the condition of people until they strive to change themselves' (13:11). It is said, "If a Muslim performs Haj or gives charity he is automatically contributing to his good fate, that Allah will give to Him during his life."

"I killed twice. And if there is a life hereafter, my time to make amends or go to a pilgrimage is over. I am confined to this execution now. In my mind I asked my God for forgiveness. I did this not having a true belief in a God. I have so much shame of self that it is difficult to be here right now. Shame that's my feeling. Surrender, is that my need? Surrender to what, the flow of life? That might be my request. I watched my friend Stevie drown in the flow of life. I killed three times, I have no grand destiny to look forward too."

Abram speaks, "my brother, seek redemption. By this I mean, you have wrestled with your lesser self. From now until death, as we share, seek what might be the standards of seeking a higher spiritual self."

"I do not know a spiritual self."

The man in white speaks, "Surrender your ego. Let your ego become ignorant of all that you know about yourself. Listen to your brothers who share the same fate. And what is fate but the flow of life. It is okay to feel too much within, connect now. We are here for you, my brother."

The breath sound is back on and without instruction, John, Abram and Asaad close their eyes and wait for the waves. There is a woman's voice that leads a meditation "Sacred Surrender to the Divine" she instructs to place hands over the heart and see a golden ocean without waves, an ocean of Divine consciousness of sacred surrender. See yourself being cared for, supported, and nurtured by the Divine..."

The table top becomes more illuminated. The white light extends in all four directions of the intersection. The glow seems to be elevated like a low ground fog one might see early in the morning when the cool air comes in contact with a warmed earth.

When the meditation music ends, the man in white speaks, “ Abram, speak of all you know, concerning ego.”

Ego (All knowing) - Abram

“This small room has a limiting affect concerning my beliefs. I have so much time with my thoughts. I have dwelled in so much regret. I know now that forgiveness does not relieve my suffering. My inner hurt is the cause of my suffering. My belief that my daughter should not have a Palestinian boy friend. My perception of him because I identify with beliefs that do not serve all people. Who am I to judge another’s beliefs. It was my perception of a young man whom I met a few times and never took the time to connect heart to heart. I dishonored my daughter by not showing an interest in her relationship with him. I only know the knowledge of my beliefs. There is a knowing of wisdom that is beyond what I know. My disregard of the teachings of Jesus, of Buddha, of Allah, of other masters, gurus and philosophers limit my journey of mysticism beyond Hebrew tradition.”

Asaad speaks, “I feel that I can call you a brother now. We three are brothers searching for our final truth. And yet we don’t have the knowing that you speak of. What is the mystical connection we seek. We regret our past. That which we can not change. We know our future but even that is unknown. What happens beyond our sure death? And now all we can do is share our insights.”

John speaks, “The military has programed my mind. Or did I let that happen because I accepted a belief of fighting an enemy? Now as you both spoke, I am recognizing that it is up to me to reprogram my thoughts of despair. Feeling so limited and trapped within my mind. Now I am open to seek a different connection with pure consciousness, if that make sense.” He looks in the direction of the man in white. The fog of white light rises, chest high. The man in white becomes translucent, and says, “my brothers, you are no longer trapped in solitary confinement. You are free to realize your true existence. Strive for it. Asaad, speak of hate.”

Asaad speaks, “Hate you say? I can sense my judgements, that seem to be critical of another, turn into annoyance. And the annoyance turns into an ongoing thought of the inner voice saying, ‘I hate what effects me.’ As I dwell on the annoyance, whatever effect I am feeling affects me in a negative way. As a caregiver, I did not feel my compassion. So I was unable to feel the other persons pain. When I pulled the plug on my patient, I was annoyed. I convinced myself that I was doing the man a favor. I never felt an ounce of compassion for him. My job was to wipe his ass and bathe him. My job I did with no joy.”

Chapter 5

There is a formless translucent white blob at the head of the crossroads. The speaker has some euphoric background frequency music playing. The woman’s Hindu voice emerges with an instruction. “Touch your thumb with your index finger. You will take eight deep breaths with the exhalation being longer than your inhalation. You will use you thumb to count the breaths touching each finger. This we will do throughout the meditation. Start now with your breaths, focus on the breath. If your thoughts wonder, come back to the breath.

There is the sound of a gentle breath. The men start. Then finish in cadence with the sound of the breath.

Next the woman says, “now you will take eight breaths and on the exhale you will hum like a buzzing bee.”

The sound of the inhalation is followed by a slow pitched extended hum. The room is reverberating with the hum. It is heard over the speakers that lead to the gallery room for family and victims. They have listened, transfixed, throughout the execution process.

The woman’s voice with it’s Hindu accent, is forcefully soothing. “Now we will count eight breaths this time notice the slight pause between the inhale and exhale.”

Once the eight pauses are finished the instruction is given for the next eight breaths. “When you exhale this time you will silently say to yourselves, Ah Hum, which means “I AM”. I am unlimited consciousness.”

There is a transformation happening with the men. Some of the people in the gallery have taken up the meditation. Now they all have their eyes closed.

Finally, “see the light of pure consciousness. It may have a form or not. As you see yourself enveloped in this light make an intention, maybe you have a desire. See it, feel it, be it.”

The music dissolves into stillness. The voice of the translucent man resonates as an angelic voice, “We have come to this crossroads, the final earthly existence you will know. There will be no need to comment on the other’s truth. John, you will speak of the internal impact of what you believe to be true now. Abram, you will speak of acceptance of what is true to you now. Asaad, you will speak of causeless love. John will begin.”

Internal Impact of what you believe to be true.

“My mind has constant thoughts. Some I cling to and some I ignore or dissolve. What I cling to has an immediate impact of my actions. I become my thoughts, unknowingly. I say unknowingly, because if I don’t take the time to pause and feel the impact of the thought internally, then the external impact might have a consequence that does not benefit myself or others. So now I notice that the external cause, is not the result of my internal state. When I dissolved into the light of pure consciousness I felt joined with other light beings. We were all translucent like the man in white who you started out to be and are no longer. It’s as if you are me and I am you.”

The voice speaks, “Running Horse, place your weapon down and stand next to brother John.”

Acceptance of what is true.

“I am sensing that which is greater than me or any man. Someone once told me that God not only gave us his son to teach us the way, he also gave us His spirit which is the soul that He is. It is His power that we too can possess if we accept the Oneness that we are. I know now that there is no color, no organized religion or belief, there is nothing other than body, mind and soul. This is my truth now. I am ready for my execution and resurrection into the Oneness of the universe. That which was created. That which exist in my knowing.”

Hamza, put down your weapon and stand behind Abram. Place your hands on his shoulders.

Causeless Love.

“I know compassion now. I have witnessed a change as my brothers have spoke. I have felt their regret and pain. I have also witnessed their transformation. I have listened to them with no judgements, no perceptions. I just listened and felt a transformation in my heart. I felt my heart open wide to receive the Ah Hum the I am. I found myself whispering I am unlimited consciousness. What happened next is that I saw my body temple and realized the importance of keeping it healthy. I saw my mind and realized that it is my thoughts that I have dominion over. And then I saw a band of connected white circular lights. Fused together as one. What came to me is that the soul, the being part of ‘human being’ is hanging out waiting for me to have beautiful thoughts. Surrender to the Divine and being present to the moment. Then my body/mind can preform right action. Action that is love without cause. Whether it is hugging a tree or admiring an animal. Loving others as our brothers and sisters. Having a positive impact. Appreciating the existence of this creation. Loving the whole of the material plane for no other reason except that ‘It Is.’”

Chapter 6

Gratitude, an opportunity to let go.

The translucent being presses a button and the prisoners chairs turn one hundred and eighty degrees. There are bowls filled with hot water. Under the table. A voice says, "Guards, unshackle your brothers. Running Horse you will wash John's feet with ginger water to ease his anxiety. Show him the benefits of observing the natural world. Hamza, you will wash Abrams feet with the special mud bath to reduce his angina and open his heart. Robert, you will wash Asaad's feet with dry sand from the Sahara. You will preform Wudu and will pray with Asaad for gaining wisdom from the Divine. Pray to Allah and to Krishna.

Teach each other to pray to whom you follow as your God or the form you perceive as God. All of you can pray for Divine intelligence to permeate your being.

The feet are washed. Prayers are said. The button is pressed again and the chairs swivel back. The guards place their hands on the prisoners shoulders. They face each other at the crossroad.

The light that has engulfed this table that the three men have sat at for their execution, has now permeated the entire room. The man in white, his form that disappeared quite some time ago is lost in the light. Now all appear to be formless. They are instructed to state their names and give their last thoughts. Family members and close friends are sitting outside the execution room. There is a large window with oneway glass, to see into the room. All that is visible is a bright white light, like the brightest star.

The family members and friends are blinded by this light. All they can do is leave or cover their eyes. In the room a voice instructs the prisoners, “This is the last request. I ask you all to contemplate on what you are grateful for. John, you will be first, then Abram followed by Asaad.”

John, “ I have left this plane and am in a state of bliss floating above the clouds. I like it here, my mind is coherent but only to this time in space. I am grateful for forgiveness. Not how we think of forgiveness, rather than asking for forgiveness I have healed my internal suffering.”

Abram, “I have risen into the realm where a golden ocean exists. I float on a waveless ocean. My heart swells with gold. I aspire to value all life and my relationships with integrity, compassion, generosity and goodness.”

Asaad, “I am in Jannah the heavenly paradise I was destined to ascend here. I have asked for my salvation and have a good heart. Now I feel compassion for self and others. I have gratitude for all that is and all beings on this earth.”

The light is gone. The execution room is empty. What remains is a normal conference table with a few chairs. The execution chair and a single 65w light bulb that gives off a soft glow.

Those who remained in the gallery, look at each other with a quizzical stare. They leave and enter the hallway. There are no guards. They stand there just starrng at each other. There is some nervous shuffling. John’s wife approaches the therapist’s wife and they hug with tears flowing. The others start to do the same, no words are exchanged. When the hugging and tears subside, they slowly march down the hall to exit.

THE END



“The true healing lies
not in others forgiving
you, but in you
becoming free of your
emotional hurt.”

SRI PREETHAJI & SRI KRISHNAJI



Authors Notes:

I am on my way home, in Ossie's RV, driving back from the Field of Awakening a four day event with Preethaji and Krishnaji. They are special people, gurus the term used for spiritual teachers. I'd say they are influential teachers. They talk about living in two states, a suffering or non suffering state. Judgments lead to all sorts of suffering. Judging might make us feel superior to others. Until we start judging ourselves.

What's the biblical parable about throwing the first stone? When we are in a non suffering state we are better connected to others with a sense of clarity. We can feel the others hurt or joy. What I took away from the four day immersion is this (and this is just my personal take away); We are connected in some way as one. I'll call it soul, a soulful connection. I read once in the Bible that God gave man the holy spirit,

the power to live a life like Jesus. I saw how keeping my body physically healthy, and my mind free from suffering thoughts - opens the portal to my Divine self (soul power). Then I am guided with right action. And when I flow like this with all of life, synchronistic

"happenings" occur. I was with my wife of 46 years, and as the event unfolded we both kept looking at each other with smiles, knowing that

we still need to work on our relationship, towards our personal liberation. We know that as we live more and more in a non suffering state we become better friends with each other and the people we come in contact with. It's pure joy, to live with causeless love.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I want to give a shout out to the Guru's. Preethaji whose humble, gentle energy I feel deeply. Especially when feeling the force of her teachings. And Krishnaji whose quick sincere smile fills me with immediate joy. And the depth of his teaching sends a penetrating message that touches my soul. Together their motivation and intention is for our enlightenment. It is to free us from suffering thoughts and elevate our awareness so we can experience the joy of life.

I also want to acknowledge my brothers and sisters who seek to be one with all of life. For me the seeking has ended, for I have found a simple way to flow with life. I am older now, and I am observing a whole new age that is leaning towards artificial intelligence. I suggest that one does not lose touch with the pure essence of Divine Intelligence. If you are reading this and are young, or mid-age check out Krishnaji and Preethaji, you might resonate with their message.

I invite you to go to the Breathing Room app there you will find a multitude of guided meditations. You will have to pay a small fee then scroll down or search for “In Love With the Divine” and connect with Body, Mind, and Soul in union with your Divine.

<https://www.breathingroom.com/videos/in-love-with-the-divine>