



Of God and Humans
Insights from Bible Stories

The Supreme Master Ching Hai



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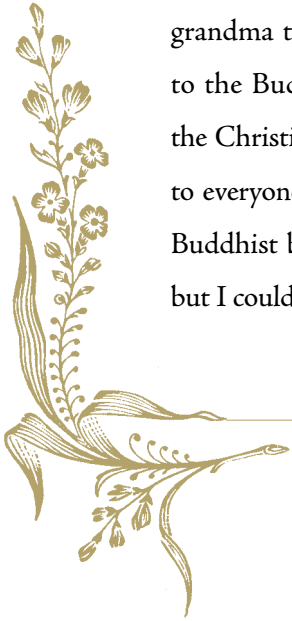
Of God and Humans

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The Supreme Master Ching Hai

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



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

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

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

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



Springtime in Hungary, 2005



REVELATIONS FROM BIBLE STORIES

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

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

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

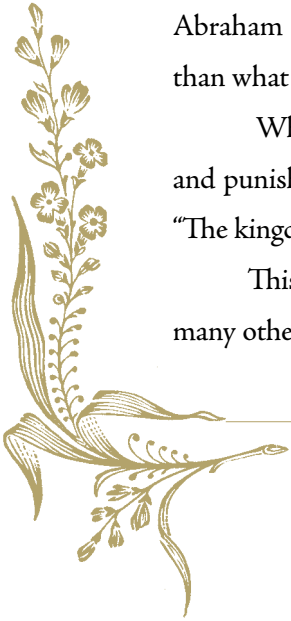
According to Supreme Master Ching Hai, this tragic story of Paradise lost symbolizes humankind's turning away from God: "God' is the creative energy behind everything in the universe. It is given different names in different religions; for example, God, Allah, the Supreme Master, Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi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

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

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

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

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



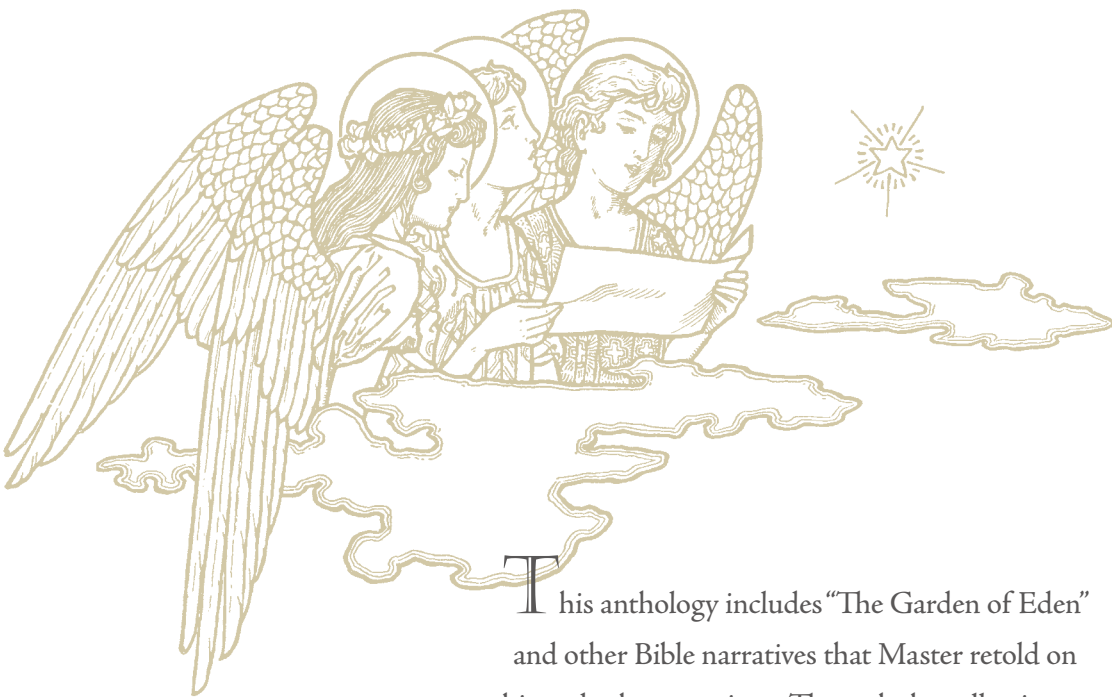
brings us an identical message: that God is none other than our own Supreme Wisdom and True Nature (Lecture 7, The Ten Commandments, in this volume). And if we place our trust in God or our own inner Supreme Master, focus on our wisdom center and follow God's will, not only will we be blessed but the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

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

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

Editors~ Golden Year 3





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



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The Tower of Babel

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



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The Noah's Ark

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



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The Angels Rescue Lot

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



God Tests Abraham

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

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The Ten Commandments

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

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The Perfect Example of a Great Saint

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

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The Exodus

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



Samuel

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



The Sermon on the Mount

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



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The Boy Jesus in the Temple

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

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

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

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The Return of the Prodigal Son

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

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

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



1

The Garden of Eden

Spoken by Supreme Master Ching Hai, Hsihu Center, Formosa

May 27, 1990 (Originally in Chinese)



Adam and Eve

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

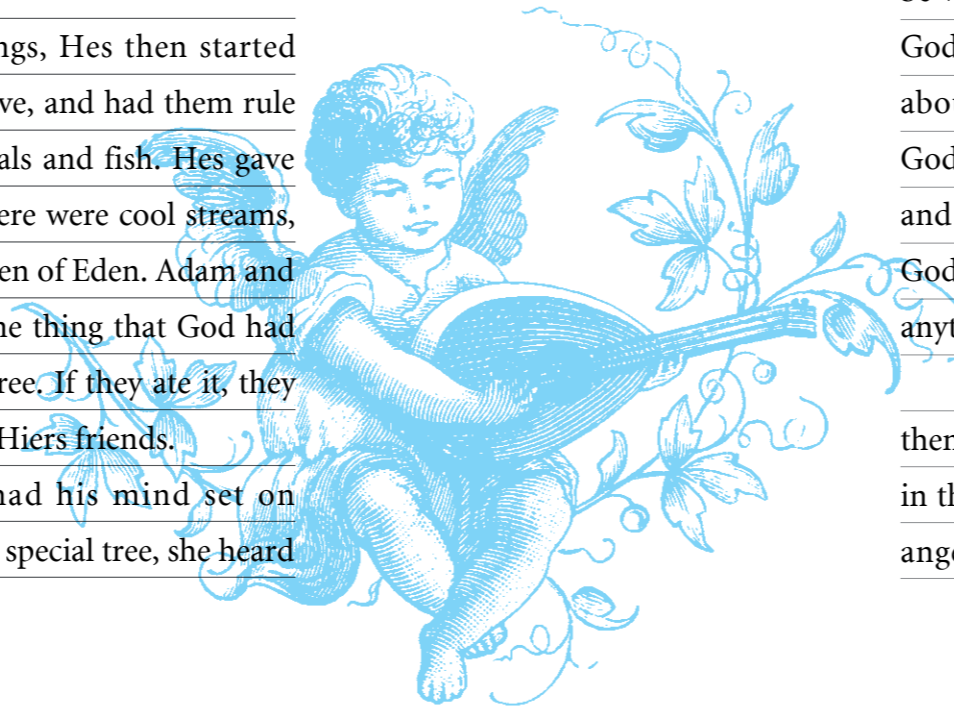
As the universe was meant for human beings, Hes then started creating man and woman. God made Adam and Eve, and had them rule the world, which included the plants, birds, animals and fish. Hes gave them a beautiful place in which to dwell, where there were cool streams, shady trees and a variety of fruit.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

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

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

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

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





hands, never to allow Adam and Eve to return.

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

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

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

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

God's Wishes Are Not Extraordinary

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

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

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

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

--Supreme Master Ching Hai





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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Beware of the Ego

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

The Greater the Goal, the Higher the Price

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

--Supreme Master Ching Hai





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

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

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

Don't Mistake Lack of Discipline for Freedom

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Introspect at All Times

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

--Supreme Master Ching Hai





The Latter Part of Eden

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

--Supreme Master Ching Hai





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

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

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

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

History of the Earth

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

