

The Quest

Vol 6, Issue 5

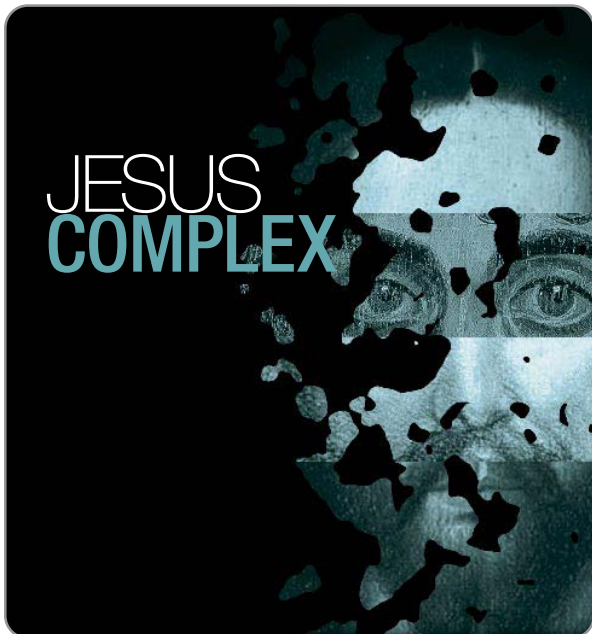
for mind, body and spirit

Path to Love

The self is the source of love, and therefore it is more real than the things that block love - anger, fear, egoism, insecurity and mistrust. Those qualities are temporary and grow up over time. The Self, by contrast, is secure in peace and safety; it knows only love because its experience is only of love.

These two months

Sep 3 Kumari Yatra
Sep 16 End of Kali Yuga
Sep 25-28 Dashain Festivals
Oct 16-19 Deepawali Festivals
Oct 24 Chhath Festival
Nov 2 Guru Nanak Anniversary



Have you ever met somebody with such personal magnetism that they are always the center of attention? Possibly their personality or intelligence — but something about them is enigmatic. Well, that's the way it was two thousand years ago with Jesus Christ. But what makes Jesus relevant even today into the 21st century are the claims he made about himself.

As an unheralded carpenter from an obscure village in Palestine, Jesus made claims that, if true, have profound implications on our lives. According to Jesus, you and I are special, part of a grand cosmic scheme.

It was primarily Jesus' outrageous claims that caused him to be viewed as a crackpot by both the Roman authorities and the Jewish hierarchy. Although he was an outsider with no credentials or political powerbase, within three years, Jesus changed the world for the next 20 centuries. Other moral and religious lead

continued on page 5

अंक
सातको
महिमा

हिन्दु धार्मिक ग्रन्थअनुसार ब्रह्मा, विष्णु, महेश तीनै अलौकिक शक्तिका द्योतक ब्रह्माले सम्पूर्ण जगत्को सृष्टि गर्नुभएको भन्ने उल्लेख गरिएको पाईन्छ। ब्रह्माले सृष्टि गर्दा पहिला सात लोकको सृष्टि गर्नु भयो। ती सात लोक थिए— स्वर्गलोक, भूलोक, महलोक, जनलोक, तपोलोक र सत्यलोक। ब्रह्माजीले सात लोकपछि अतल, वितल, तलातल, महातल, रसातल र पातालसमेत सात तलको सृष्टि गर्नुभयो। सातलोक र सात तलपछि सम्पूर्ण पृथ्वीलाई सात द्वीपमा विभाजन गर्नुभयो। ती द्वीपहरू हुन्— जम्बुद्वीप, प्लक्षद्वीप, शाल्मलीद्वीप, कुशद्वीप, क्रोच्यद्वीप, शामद्वीप, पुष्करद्वीप। यी सातैवटा द्वीपहरूले विभिन्न आकारमा यस पृथ्वीको भू-भाग ओगटिराखेका छन्।

पृथ्वीको अधिकांश भाग ओगट्ने यस अथाह र अपार जलराशीलाई
वाँकी पृष्ठ ३ मा

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SEP 2009

THE QUEST MAGAZINE
www.thequest.org.np/magazine

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सुरक्षा र अनुशासन

जे. कृष्णमूर्ति

मलाई लाग्छ, जीवनका सबैभन्दा ठूला अवरोधहरूमध्ये एउटा हो— कहीं पुनका लागि, केही हासिल र आर्जन गर्नका लागि हुने यो निरन्तरको सङ्घर्ष। हामीले बाल्यकालदेखि नै हासिल गर्ने र आर्जन गर्ने प्रशिक्षण पाएका छौं। मस्तिष्कका कोषिकाहरू आफैले शारीरिक सुरक्षा पाउनका लागि उपलब्धिको त्यस ढाँचाको सिर्जना तथा माग गर्छन्, तर मनोवैज्ञानिक सुरक्षा भने उपलब्धिको त्यस क्षेत्रभित्र पर्दैन। हामी आफ्ना सबै सम्बन्धहरूमा, प्रवृत्तिहरूमा र क्रियाकलापहरूमा सुरक्षा चाहन्छौं तर हामीले देखेकै छौं, वास्तवमा त्यहाँ सुरक्षा भन्ने कुनै कुरै हुँदैन। कुनै पनि सम्बन्धमा कुनै पनि स्वरूपको सुरक्षा हुँदैन भन्ने कुरा तपाईं आफैले पत्ता लगाउनाले— मनोवैज्ञानिक रूपमा कुनै पनि कुरा स्थायी हुँदैन भन्ने महसुस गर्नाले— जीवनप्रति पूर्णतः एउटा छुट्टै दृष्टि र पहुँच दिन्छ। निश्चय पनि बाह्य सुरक्षा— गाँस, बास र कपास हुनु अत्यावश्यक छ तर मनोवैज्ञानिक सुरक्षाको चाहले त्यस बाह्य सुरक्षालाई नष्ट गरिदिन्छ।

चेतनाका सीमाहरूभन्दा बाहिर जानका लागि अवकाश र मौनता आवश्यक छन्, तर एउटा दिमाग जुन आफ्नै स्वार्थमा अन्त्यहीन रूपमा यति सक्रिय छ, त्यो कसरी मौन हुन सक्छ? कसैले यसलाई अनुशासित गर्न सक्छ, नियन्त्रण गर्न सक्छ, कुनै स्वरूप दिन सक्छ, तर यस्तो यातनाले दिमागलाई शान्त बनाउँदैन; यसलाई बोधो मात्र बनाउँछ। वास्तवमा दिमागलाई शान्त बनाउने आदर्शपूर्ण उद्यम आफैमा निरर्थक छ किनभने तपाईं यसमाथि जति जोर गर्नुहुन्छ, यो अझै बढी साँघुरो र निष्क्रिय बन्छ। दमन गर्ने जस्तो कुनै पनि स्वरूपको नियन्त्रणले द्वन्द्व मात्रै उब्जाउँछ। त्यसकारण नियन्त्रण र बाहिरी अनुशासन सही तरिका होइनन्, न त एउटा अनुशासनहीन जीवनको नै कुनै अर्थ छ।

हाम्रा अधिकांश जीवन समाजका मागहरू, परिवार, हाम्रा आफ्नै पीडा, हाम्रा आफ्नै अनुभवद्वारा एवम् निश्चित वैचारिक अथवा तथ्यगत ढाँचासँगको आबद्धताले गर्दा बाह्य रूपमा अनुशासित हुन्छन्— अनि त्यस्तो स्वरूपको अनुशासन सबैभन्दा घातक कुरा हो। अनुशासन भनेको नियन्त्रणविना, दमनविना, कुनै पनि स्वरूपको डरविना हुनुपर्छ। त्यस्तो अनुशासन कसरी आउन सक्छ? पहिला अनुशासन अनि त्यसपछि स्वतन्त्रता होइन; स्वतन्त्रता एकदमै सुरुमा हुन्छ, आखिरमा होइन। स्वतन्त्रताको यो बोध, जुन अनुशासनको ढर्राबाट मुक्त हुनु हो, त्यो नै अनुशासन हो। सिकने क्रिया नै अनुशासन हो (आखिर अनुशासन शब्दको मूल अर्थ सिक्नु हो), त्यही सिकने क्रिया नै स्पष्टतामा परिणत हुन्छ। नियन्त्रण, दमन, भोग र आशक्तिको सम्पूर्ण स्वभाव र संरचनालाई बुझ्नका लागि सतर्कता चाहिन्छ। तपाईंले अनुशासनको अध्ययन गर्नका लागि त्यसलाई थोपनुपर्दैन तर अध्ययनको यही क्रियाले नै यसको आफ्नै अनुशासनलाई जन्माउँछ, जसमा कुनै दमन हुँदैन। ☺

बहुप्रतिभित एवं सिध-प्रकाशोन्मुख पुस्तक 'ज्ञातदेखि मुक्ति' बाट उद्धृत
आफ्नो प्रति सुरक्षित गर्न कृपया आफ्नो नामसहित
९८४१-८९९-००० मा एसएमएस गर्नुहोला।

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पनि सातै भागमा विभाजन गरी ब्रह्माजीले यसरी नामकरण गर्नुभयो— क्षारोद समुद्र, इक्षुरसोद समुद्र, सुरोद समुद्र, धृताद समुद्र, श्रीरोद समुद्र, दधिमण्डाद समुद्र र शुद्धोद समुद्र । माथि उल्लेख भएका सातैवटा द्विपहरूलाई क्रमशः समुद्रहरूले नै बेरिराखेका छन् ।

यसरी ब्रह्माजीले सम्पूर्ण जगत्को सृष्टि गर्दा सातअंकलाई नै प्राथमिकता दिनुभएको देखिन्छ । भनिन्छ, ब्रह्माजीले सम्पूर्ण जगत्को सृष्टि पछि जीवात्मा शक्तिको सृष्टि गर्नुभयो । धर्मज्ञान, वैराग्य, ऐश्वर्य, अधर्म, अज्ञान, अवैराग्य, अनैश्वर्य गुण भएको बुद्धि पनि उत्पन्न गर्नुभयो । पुराण, ज्योतिषविज्ञान र धार्मिक मान्यताअनुरूप यस आधुनिक वैज्ञानिक युगमा पनि सात अंकलाई अति महत्वपूर्ण मानिएको पाइन्छ ।

पूर्वकालदेखि नै मान्यता प्राप्त विश्वका आश्चर्यजनक मानव निर्मित ऐतिहासिक सम्पदाहरूमा पनि सातैवटाकै नाम उल्लेख भएको पाइन्छ ।

यसरी पूर्वकालमा विश्वका विभिन्न स्थानहरूमा मानव निर्मित आश्चर्यजनक सात पुरातात्विक महत्वका सम्पदाहरूमध्ये इजिप्टका पिरामिडमात्र यथावत् अवस्थामा रहेका छन् । अरु विभिन्न कारणवश नष्ट भईसकेका छन् र केहि भग्नावस्थामा रहेका भए पनि त्यहाँ पर्यटकहरू गई अवलोकन गर्न सक्नेछन् भने उल्लेख भएको पाइन्छ ।

यसबाहेक विश्वमा प्राकृतिक सम्पदाहरू भनि हाल सातकै नाम उल्लेख भएको पाइन्छ । यी हुन्— ग्रान्ड केनोन, ग्रेट वेरियर रिफ, हारवर अफ रिओ दि जेनरो, माउन्ट एभरेष्ट, पोलार अरोरा, पारिकटिन भोल्केनो र भिक्टोरिया फल । यी सातलाई हाल विश्वप्रसिद्ध प्राकृतिक सम्पदासूचिमा राखिएको छ । विश्वप्रसिद्ध मानव निर्मित संरचनाहरू र विश्वप्रसिद्ध प्राकृतिक एवं पुरातात्विक महत्वका सम्पदाहरूको छानविन गरी त्यसको तथ्यांक, विवरण र लगत राख्ने कार्य युनेस्कोद्वारा हुने प्रावधान रहेको भन्ने उल्लेख छ ।

कस्तो अचम्म, हाम्रो जीवनको दैनिक दिनचर्या पनि सात दिनमै विभाजित गरिएको छ । सात दिनलाई हप्ता तथा साता भनि नामकरण गरिएको पाइन्छ । मानौं, सात दिनको एक साता वा हप्ता हुन्छ तर सातै दिनलाई नामकरण कसरी गरियो भन्ने उत्सुकता हुनु स्वाभाविक हो । यस सम्बन्धमा विभिन्न मत-विचार भए तापनि प्रचलनमा रहेका सोमवार, मङ्गलवार, बुधवार, विहवार, शुक्रवार, शनिवार र आइतवार— यी दिनहरूको नामकरण प्राचीनकाल देखि नै ज्योतिषविद्हरूले यस ब्रह्माण्डमा रहेका ग्रह-नक्षत्रका नामबाटै गरेका हुन् भन्ने उल्लेख भएको पाइन्छ ।

रोमन साम्राज्यमा पनि सात दिनलाई नै एक हप्ता भनी मान्यता पाई प्रचलनमा रहेको थियो । पछि क्रिश्चियन चर्चले पनि यस परम्परालाई ऐतिहासिक मान्यता दिई ब्रिटिस साम्राज्य तथा विश्वभरि नै सात दिनलाई साताका रूपमा र दिनवारलाई पनि ग्रह-नक्षत्रकै आधारमा पूर्ववत् पाइराखेका मान्यतालाई नै अंगाली प्रचलनमा आइराखेका छन् ।

साताकै विशेषताबारे घतलाग्दो अर्को प्रसंग— इङ्ल्याण्डको इतिहासमा एंग्लो सेक्सनपछि नार्थम्बरीया, मेरिका, इष्ट एन्जिला, एसेक्स, केन्ट, ससेक्स र विसेक्स यी सात राज्यहरूलाई गाभी दशैँ शताब्दीमा इङ्ल्याण्ड अधिराज्यमा परिणत भएको भनी अभिलेखमा पाइन्छ ।

यस ब्रह्माण्डमा रहेका प्राकृतिक तथा जैविक आत्माहरूलाई जीवनदान दिने प्रखर सौर्यशक्तिमा पनि सात रङको संयोजन रहेको इन्द्रधनुषको प्रकाशले प्रमाणित गरेको छ ।

अर्को घतलाग्दो प्रसंग— मानव शरीरलाई पनि सात भागमा विभाजन गरिएको पाइन्छ । यसो विचार गर्नुभयो भने मानव शरीरको छ भाग जोर मिलेको पाइन्छ भने सातौँ स्थानमा रहेको उदर अर्थात् पेट विजोर छ । जस्तो कि शरीरको दायाँ र बायाँ भाग, शरीरको अग्रिम भाग छाती र पछाडि पिठ्यूललाई लिन सकिन्छ । शरीरको मध्यभागमा रहेको उदर अर्थात् पेट एकलो छ । शरीरको कुनै भागसँग यसको लगाव छैन अर्थात् विजोर छ ।

सातकै महानताको अर्को झलक— मनुष्यको आत्माभित्र निहित शक्ति जसले रोइरहेको आत्मालाई सान्त्वना दिन सक्छ साथै प्रफुल्लित आत्मालाई संवेदनशील बनाई दुवै नेत्रबाट आँशुको धारा बगाउन सक्ने सशक्त माध्यमको रूपमा मानिआएको संगीतको स्वर पनि सातवटै रहेका छन् । संगीतका सात स्वरका समुदाय हुन्— षडज, ऋषभ, गान्धारा, मध्यम, पञ्चम, धैवत र निषाद— यी विभिन्न स्वर रागाका विभिन्न महत्व र मान्यता रहेका छन् ।

पूर्वी नेपालमा रहेको कोशी नदी मानव कल्याणका साथै धनजनको पनि क्षति गर्दै विभिन्न स्थानबाट बगेर मिल्न आएका सात नदीहरू सुनकोशी, तामाकोशी, दुधकोशी, इन्द्रावती, लिखु, अरुण र तमोर यी सातै नदीलाई आफ्नो गर्भमा धारण गरी आज सप्तकोशी भनी प्रख्यात छ । परापूर्वकालदेखि हिन्दु-धर्मानुसार मान्यता प्राप्त पवित्र नदीहरू पनि सातैवटा छन् भनी धार्मिक ग्रन्थहरूमा उल्लेख गरिएको पाइन्छ । यी सात पवित्र नदीहरू हुन्— गंगा, यमुना, गोदावरी, सरस्वती, नर्मदा, सिन्धु र काभेरी ।

यस भौतिक युगमा बढी प्रचलनमा आइराखेका खनिज पदार्थ, द्रव्य धातुहरूमा पनि सातैवटाकै नाम उल्लेख गरिएका छन्— सुन, चाँदी, लोहा, पित्तल, तामा, टिन र राँगा ।

यस ब्रह्माण्डमा रहेका ग्रह-नक्षत्रहरूलाई पनि सप्तऋषिकै संज्ञा दिएको पाइन्छ । तर यस सम्बन्धमा वेद, पुराण, हिन्दुदर्शन, शास्त्रानुसार विभिन्न मत र विभिन्न नाम लेखिएको पाइन्छ । ज्योतिष विज्ञानले ध्रुवतारावरिपरी परिक्रमा गरिराखेका ताराहरूका समुह कश्यप, अत्रि, भारद्वाज, विश्वामित्र, गौतम, जमदग्नी र वशिष्ठ यी सातलाई सप्तऋषि भनेको छ ।

काठमाण्डौमा पनि मानव निर्मित हनुमानढोका दरवार, पाटन दरवार, भक्तपुर दरवार, पशुपतिनाथ, बौद्धनाथ, स्वयम्भु र चाँगुनारायण यी सातवटालाई पुरातात्विक महत्वका सम्पदा भनी विश्वसूचीमा राखिएका छन् ।

पुनः सात अंककै प्रसंगलाई अघि सारौं । यसो विचार गर्‍यो भने सात अंक वास्तवमा अति तेजस्वी, ओजस्वी, प्रभावशाली, विश्वव्यापी र अनन्त छ भन्नु अत्युक्ति नहोला । निरंकुश राणाशासनविरुद्ध देशमा भएको पहिलो आन्दोलनले दुई हजार सात साल फागुन ७ गते नै विजय प्राप्त गरी देशमा प्रजातन्त्रको जरो गाडिएको थियो ।

उपरोक्त अनुसन्धानका आधारमा नियालेर हेर्दा सात अंक अति प्रभावशाली विश्वव्यापी र अनन्त छ भन्नु अतिशयोक्ति नहोला ।

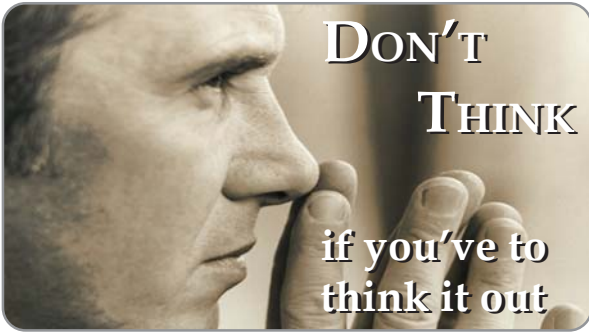
ईश्वर मानन्दरको स्मृतिका पानाहरू बाट उद्धृत



Spiritual Bombshell

God and sex go together. If God goes, sex goes too.

U G Krishnamurti



The next time you need to make a complicated decision, stop thinking. According to a new study, thinking too hard about a problem leads to poor choices - difficult decisions are best handled by our unconscious minds. While most people will happily buy new towels without much thought, they are without serious thought.

But Ap Dijksterhuis, a psychologist at the University of Amsterdam, argues that we might be getting these methods of decision-making the wrong way around.

He asked volunteers to pick their favourite car from a list of four based on a set of four attributes including fuel consumption and passenger legroom. He gave them four minutes to think about their decision and most people chose the car with the most plus points. When Dr Dijksterhuis made the experiment more complex - 12 attributes rather than 4 - people could only identify the best car a quarter of the time. This

result was no better than choosing at random.

However, when the researchers distracted the participants after showing them the cars (by giving them puzzles to do before asking participants to make their choices), more than half picked the best car. "Conscious thinkers were better able to make the best choice among simple products, whereas unconscious thinkers were better able to make the best choice among complex products," wrote Dr Dijksterhuis in a paper, published today in the journal *Science*. The problem with thinking about things consciously is that you can only focus on a few things at once. In face of a complex decision this can lead to giving certain factors undue importance. Thinking about something several times is also likely to produce slightly different evaluations, highlighting inconsistencies.

"Participants who chose their favourite poster from a set of five after thorough contemplation showed less post-choice satisfaction than participants who looked at them briefly," said Dr Dijksterhuis.

Jonathan Schooler of the University of British Columbia in Vancouver told *Science* that while the new study builds on evidence that too much reflection is detrimental in some situations, he is not yet ready to dispense with conscious thought when it comes to complex decisions. "What I think may be really critical is to engage in conscious reflection but not make a decision right away," said Schooler. ☺

Excerpted from *The Guardian*

Water: Nature's Skin Healer

Benjamin felt prematurely old. His company hired many younger men and he feared being held back in favor of others. While he kept a healthful diet and used skin oils, he still had less-than-satisfactory skin appearance. He soon learned that the skin needs exercise for a pep-up and tone-up just as do muscles and joints.

Here is how Benjamin was able to use water to heal skin blemishes and exercise the skin.

1. Wash the face in warm water that is gradually increased to become as hot as comfortably tolerated. Use a wash cloth and apply to the skin to provide a homemade steam pack. Continue for five minutes.
2. Now wash the face in cool water that is gradually made to become as cold as comfortably tolerated. Again, use a wash cloth and apply to the skin to provide a homemade cold steam pack. Continue for five minutes.
3. Now turn on both faucets and use hot water and then cold water alternately to splash your face. Finish with a brisk tepid water rinse. ☺

Cure Diseases with Grapes

1. Anemia and sour pain in the knee and waist due to kidney deficiency: Prepare wine made by fermenting grape juice. Apply 10-20 ml twice a day.
2. Bacillary dysentery: Pound rinsed fresh grape and ginger, 500g and 200g, respectively. Wrap with clean gauze to obtain juice separately. Boil concentrated green tea. To each cup add 50ml grape juice and 20 ml ginger juice. Add a little honey and drink hot.
3. Thirst in febrile disease: Obtain some grape juice. Boil and concentrate the juice to from sticky jelly. Add a little bee honey to from paste. Add a teaspoonful of the paste to a cup of water and drink.
4. Bloody urine: Crush 120g fresh grapes and 280g fresh lotus roots. Obtain juice and consume the juice. This may be repeated 3 times a day.

Tao - the Way

It is said: "All professions are equal; every profession produces its own leading authority."

Sages in the past also said: "Every man must give full play to his talents and work conscientiously."

From *Shaolin Temple* available at Quest Books



Jesus Complex ...

ers have left an impact — but nothing like that unknown carpenter from Nazareth.

What was it about Jesus Christ that made the difference? Was he merely a great man, or something more?

These questions get to the heart of who Jesus really was. Some believe he was merely a great moral teacher; others believe he was simply the leader of the world's greatest religion. But many believe something far more. Christians believe that God has actually visited us in human form. And they believe the evidence backs that up. So who is the real Jesus?

As we take a deeper look at the world's most controversial person, we begin by asking: could Jesus have been merely a great moral teacher?

Great moral teacher?

Almost all scholars acknowledge that Jesus was a great moral teacher. In fact, his brilliant insight into human morality is an accomplishment recognized even by those of other religions. In his book *Jesus of Nazareth*, Jewish scholar Joseph Klausner wrote, "It is universally admitted ... that Christ taught the purest and sublimest ethics ... which throws the moral precepts and maxims of the wisest men of antiquity far into the shade."

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount has been called the most superlative teaching of human ethics ever uttered by an individual. In fact, much of what we know today as "equal rights" actually is the result of Jesus' teaching. Historian Will Durant said of Jesus that "he lived and struggled unremittingly for 'equal rights'; in modern times he would have been sent to Siberia. 'He that is greatest among you, let him be your servant' — this is the inversion of all political wisdom, of all sanity."

Some have tried to separate Jesus' teaching on ethics from his claims about himself, believing that he was simply a great man who taught lofty moral principles. But it was not Jesus' lofty moral and ethical teaching that polarized his enemies and altered 2000 years of history. In fact, as we will see, if Jesus' claims about himself weren't true, then he couldn't have been a great moral teacher. For that reason some merely call Jesus a great religious leader. Perhaps flawed, they may argue, but nonetheless, great.

Great religious teacher?

Does the title, "great religious leader" best describe Jesus Christ? Surprisingly, Jesus never claimed to be a religious leader. He never got into religious politics or pushed an ambitious agenda, and he ministered almost entirely outside the established religious framework.

When one compares Jesus with the other great religious leaders, a remarkable distinction emerges. Ravi Zacharias, who grew up in a Hindu culture, has studied world religions and observed a fundamental distinc-

Thought, beauty and silence



Every beauty and greatness in this world is created by a single thought or emotion inside a man. Every thing we see today, made by past generations, was, before its appearance, a thought in the mind of a man or an impulse in the

heart of a woman. The revolutions that shed so much blood and turned mens minds toward liberty were the idea of one man in the midst of thousands of men. The devastating wars which destroyed empires were a thought that existed in the mind of an individual. The supreme teachings that changed the course of humanity were the ideas of a man. A single thought built the pyramids, founded the glory of Islam, and caused the burning of the library at Alexandria.

Real beauty is a ray which emanates from the holy of holies of the spirit, and illuminates the body, as life comes from the depths of the earth and gives colour and scent to a flower. It lies in the spiritual accord called love. Beauty has its own heavenly language, loftier than the voices of tongue and lips. It is a timeless language, common to all humanity.

Speech is not the only means of understanding between two souls. It is not the syllables that come from the lips and tongues that bring hearts together.

There is something greater and purer than what the mouth utters. Silence illuminates our souls, whispers to our hearts, and brings them together. Silence separates us from ourselves, makes us sail the firmaments of spirit, and brings us closer to Heaven; it makes us feel that bodies are no more than prisons and that this world is only a place of exile.

Adapted from The Broken Wings by Kahlil Gibran

tion between other religious founders and Jesus Christ.

Whatever we may make of their claims, one reality is inescapable. They are teachers who point to their teaching or show some particular way. In all of these, there emerges an instruction, a way of living. It is not Zoroaster to whom you turn; it is Zoroaster to whom you listen. It is not Buddha who delivers you; it is his Noble Truths that instruct you. It is not Mohammad who transforms you; it is the beauty of the Koran that woos you. By contrast, Jesus did not only teach or expound His message. He was identical with His message.

The truth of Zacharias's point is underscored by the number of times in the Gospels that Jesus' teaching message was simply "Come to me" or "Follow me" or "Obey me." Also, Jesus made it clear that his primary mission was to forgive sins, something only God could do.

No other major religious leader ever claimed the power to forgive sins. And according to Huston Smith in

The World's Great Religions, Jesus distinguished him-self even further. Smith writes, "Only two people ever astounded their contemporaries so much that the question they evoked was not 'Who is he?' but 'What is he?' They were Jesus and Buddha. The answers these two gave were exactly the opposite. Buddha said unequivocally that he was a mere man, not a god—almost as if he foresaw later attempts to worship him. Jesus, on the other hand, claimed ... to be divine."

Did Jesus claim to be God?

Clearly, from the earliest years of the church, Jesus was called Lord and regarded by most Christians as God. Yet his divinity was a doctrine that was subjected to great debate. So the question — and it is the question — is this: Did Jesus really claim to be God (the Creator), or was his divinity something invented or assumed by the New Testament authors?

Some scholars believe Jesus was such a powerful teacher and compelling personality that his disciples just assumed he was God. Or maybe they just wanted to think he was God. John Dominic Crossan and the Jesus Seminar (a fringe group of skeptical scholars with presuppositions against miracles) are among those who believe Jesus was deified in error.

Others who say he didn't claim to be God include Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Scientists, Unitarians, and a few other religious groups outside the borders of traditional Christianity.

Christians insist that Jesus did claim deity. As a deist, Thomas Jefferson had no problem accepting Jesus' teachings on morals and ethics while denying his deity. But as we've said, and will explore further, if Jesus was not who he claimed to be, then we must examine some other alternatives, none of which would make him a great moral teacher.

Even a superficial reading of the Gospels reveals that Jesus claimed to be someone more than a prophet like Moses or Daniel. But it is the nature of those claims that concern us. Two questions are worthy of attention.

➤ Did Jesus actually claim to be God?

➤ When he said "God," did Jesus really mean he was the Creator of the universe spoken of in the Hebrew Bible?

To address these questions, let's consider Jesus' words in Matthew 28:18, NLT: "I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth."

What did Jesus mean when he claimed to have complete authority in heaven and on earth?

"Authority" was a well-understood term in Roman-occupied Israel. At that time, Caesar was the supreme authority in the entire Roman world. His edict could instantly launch legions for war, condemn or exonerate criminals, and establish laws and rules of government. In fact, Caesar's authority was such that he himself claimed divinity.

So, at the very least Jesus was claiming authority on a par with Caesar himself. But He didn't just say he

had more authority than the Jewish leaders or Roman rulers; Jesus was claiming to be the supreme authority in the universe. To those he spoke to, it meant that he was God. Not a god — but the God.

According to former skeptic and Oxford professor, C. S. Lewis, Jesus' claim to be God hit both his followers and enemies like a thunderbolt:

'Then comes the real shock,' wrote Lewis: 'Among these Jews there suddenly turns up a man who goes about talking as if He was God. He claims to forgive sins. He says He always existed. He says He is coming to judge the world at the end of time.'

Did Jesus claim to be the Creator?

But is it possible that Jesus was just reflecting God's authority and was not stating that he was the actual Creator? At first glance that seems plausible. Yet Jesus' claim to have all authority seems to make sense only if he is the Creator of the universe. The word "all" encompasses everything — including creation itself.

As we look deeper into Jesus' own words, a pattern seems to emerge. Jesus made radical assertions about himself that, if true, unmistakably point to his deity. Here is a partial list of such statements as recorded by eyewitness accounts.

➤ I am the resurrection and the life. (John 11:25, NIV)

➤ I am the light of the world. (John 8:12, NIV)

➤ I and my Father are one. (John 10:30, NIV)

➤ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. (Revelation 22:13, NIV)

➤ I am the way, the truth, and the life. (John 14:6, NIV)

➤ I am the only way to the Father [God]. (John 14:6)

Once again, we must go back to context. In the Hebrew Scriptures, when Moses asked God his name at the burning bush, God answered, "I AM." He was telling Moses that He is the only Creator, eternal and transcendent of time.

Since the time of Moses, no practicing Jew would ever refer to himself or anyone else by "I AM." As a result, Jesus' "I AM" claims infuriated the Jewish leaders. One time, for example, some leaders explained to Jesus why they were trying to kill him: "Because you, a mere man, have made yourself God" (John 10:33, NLT).

But the point here is not simply that such a phrase fumed the religious leaders. The point is that they knew exactly what he was saying — he was claiming to be God, the Creator of the universe. It is only this claim that would have brought the accusation of blasphemy. To read into the text that Jesus claimed to be God is clearly warranted, not simply by his words, but also by their reaction to those words.

Excerpted from *Y-Jesus* Vol II

The Master's Voice

By meditating on the knowledge 'I am', it gradually settles down at its source and disappears, then you are the Absolute.

Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj

Inspiring Story

Double-crossed

A man, lost in thought, was leading his ram on a rope. A thief came up behind him, cut the rope and ran off with the ram. Quite a while later the man came to - and loud were his cries as he ran here and there. But, of course, no one had seen his ram.

In a little while he came to a well near which a man was wailing piteously:

"Alas, alas, what shall I do now?"

"What's the matter?" asked the first man.

"My purse - I've just dropped it down the well. If only I could find someone to go down and get it out, why, I'd give him a fifth part of what is in it."

"And what is in it?" asked the man.

"A hundred dinars."

A hundred dinars! thought the man. That means that if I recover his purse, I'll end up with twenty dinars - worth ten rams at least! "I'll get it!" he cried. He took off all his clothes and dived in.

And the thief ran off with his clothes.



Spiritual Bombshell

Your present sufferings are of a man sitting in a comfortable room with wife and children. You *will* have to face the wilderness!

Shivapuri Baba



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& all other unnamed people who made this issue possible.
Thanks to all.

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