INDEX

 POEMS

1) Upstairs Man … … 2

2) Proper Noun … … 2

3) Your silence tells … … 3

4) Who God Is … … 4

5) Remembering … … 5-6

6) Pieces of Cloth … … 7

7) Keys-Knives … … 8

8) The Cube … … 9-10

9) Oh Holy Night … … 11

11 Holy Spirit … … 12

12) Synodality - … … 13-15

13) In Covid Times … … 16-17

14) Tantur- ??????? … … 18--21

15) Vipassana Retreat 2017 … 22-23

16) Vipassana Retreat 2016 … 24-27

17) Vipassana poems … 28-31

18) Bent Double No More

 **ARTICLES**

) In the Eyes of Biblical Patriarchs and Matriarchs … … 21-28

 Rosary

 What I saw as I campaigned in these elecs

**STORIES**

Jyoti and Zoeya

1**) UPSTAIRS MAN**

Upstairs Man Come downstairs Be our Saviour King Take our hands Walky walk with us Talky talk to us Your children

Help us all, walking, talking eve ry step of LIFE---. Nourish us in to- getherness.

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 **2) WRITTEN FOR A CHILD WHOSE PARENTS DO NOT WANT THIS TO BE PUBLISHED** (proper noun)playing hide and seek,between mummys legs bow, wow, wow.I saw yóuproper nounbow, wow, wow.Do play againand againI like it bow , wow, wow. |
|  |

**3)** **CONFIDENTIAL UNPUBLISHED**

Your silence tells a story,   you are hurt.

I look into myself,

examine myself.

I think I realise

what you are hurt a bout.

You asked me to take

the vaccine,

I did, both doses

forgot to inform

 you about it.

Nor did you ask. My

h*eartfelt apologies* *for this.*.

**4) WHO GOD IS**

God, formless, nameless,

known in love faceless,

personal, social.

Life evolving in       God,

*Adisamnyasi*

Jesus, face of God,            turned towards us

Holy Spirit--God loves us.

Breaks appearing small

Patriarchs

Abraham, Joseph, Moses,

Matriarchs

Ruth, Esther, Mary,

biblically unnamed men, women

in listening bodies enable                                this evolving flow          LIFE               known in Science

partnering God in God’s plan of evolution-- likes attract, unlikes distract    in God's love.

We, I can

smash shells divisive        in God’s love                consciously sing AL     LELUIA                                                                  (group sing  Handel's chorus together THANKING GOD for evolution)

**5) REMEMBERING**

Friend, of friend saying, Judy will like Berkeley. Berkeley similar to Pune. True of Poona of--- good old days, unrecognized then!!!

Arriving in Berkeley, imagining its homeliness- nil, similar in appearances too, led to partial psycho- logical collapse, unknown then, knowing it not physical.

REMEMBERED later, Berkeley no intimacy, strangers. different with sis; in spite of family bonds; resulting-- intimacy of a kind. Yet, desire for a respectful independence never, never found.

REMEMBERED. end of first year, say- ing to myself ”Ah! I can survive in this country”; Si- multaneously RE MEMBERING many wanting come to India, but saying, “India so difficult to live in,” Asking not how millions here live.

REMEMBERING feelings, on unknown roads late in the night, in Pune, “I comfortably reach safely home,” In Berkeley, “how to get back safe, from unsafe roads;

Writing this poem, tells me--I, students, prepared for differences material and huge , not tiny specks of culture, though they be really, truly, significant, existing

in ME AND ALL, in spite of common religion, divulging the importance of culture originating before religion.

**6) PIECES OF CLOTH**

Pieces of cloth of different colours and designs cut to shape and size sewn to a big, beautiful quilt. Many have worked on you sitting together chatting, laughing, designing cutting, sewing, telling stories great and small. You will cover the diwan, all will see, admire you. Family sitting together on holidays playing, chatting as they recreate you. Pieces unwanted, left over cloth -- People of all shapes and sizes, colours and designs-- design the quilt—LIFE.

**7) KEYS--KNIVES**

Here are keys only keys big, small keys medium sized and bunches of keys, shiny, dull KEYS, which open only after a struggle.

Would that I had also, knives to splice through me, small and big knives, medium sized knives, sharp, blunt knives, single and bunches of knives, shiny knives loosening my history, slicing through layers and layers of resistance cutting through closed doors.

Me, a silent spectator filled with wonder at the miracle of life, the power of the Spirit in me. Sometimes this will be rushing, tumbling, bumbling through life.

Knives arise in me, strong, powerful, so I play, joyfully, peacefully, surrendering all.

YET, shudder I, to be my own surgeon

 -

**8) THE CUBE x**



I AM THE WAY THE LIFE AND THE TRUTH

Expressing theme, rainbow colours, rubix cube-- cross yellow, gold, six sides, with other six colours, rest of cube.

Rainbow, symbolizing one- sided covenant. God’s promise infinite unconditional love, naught expected, naught returned.

 God’s infinite love ground of personal, universal union, with Her/Him.

God offers truth, life. Cross of Jesus, our cross at deep levels—reality, our innermost sanctuary, finding truth in life, we find GOD. GOD plays no dice, Einstein  with Cezanne saying, We live a rainbow of chaos expressed, following,

“A fish cannot drown in water,
A bird does not fall in air.
In the fire of creation,
God doesn't vanish:
The fire brightens.
Each creature God made
must live in its own true nature;
How could I resist my nature,
That lives for oneness with God?”
**―**[**Mechthild of Magdeburg**](http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/1260765.Mechthild_of_Magdeburg)**,**[***Meditations from Mechthild of Magdeburg***](http://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/2940316)

*'The day will come when,
after harnessing space,
the winds,
the tides,
and gravitation,
we shall harness for God the energies of love.
And on that day,
for the second time in the history of the world,
we shall have discovered fire.'*  ***The Adisanyasa???!!!*  Pierre Teilhard de Chardin**

**9) O Holy Night**

O Holy Night love shines bright sin side lighted grace highlighted. Strength takes flight You are weak in delight In your might.

In fright by this and excited by it in confusion high we cite our plight to You believing You will set things right.

With no gold frankincense and myrrh like Levites we offer our mite to you RULER/KING OF THE UNIVERSE

ALLELUIA –FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH

**1O) HOLY SPIRIT**

Holy Spirit in cracks in business with your people.

Holy Spirit, a comic God, a Johnny Walker.

A Johnny Walker luring, wooing, chasing us in kenotic love. (Johnny Walker is the Indian equivalent of Charlie Chaplin)

**11) SYNODALITY**

Playing with children, Brings to mind Forgotten Marathi nursery rhymes —

*“Gadi ali, gadi ali* (the train comes) *jugg jugg jugg* (jugg,jugg, jugg)  *shiti kesi vazti* (how the whistle sounds) *kukk kukk kukk”.* (kukk, kukk, kukk).

The train of synodality comes, comes, comes bringing gifts of life. Powered by God created by us, carrying us onward.

Game playing , acclaiming in song ‘Forward march ye brave Christian soldiers”. Train derailed, chauffeur God, sad. Yet, sings, whistles, harmony in tunes syn, syn, synodality.

Holy Spirit says, journey towards Me *jugg jugg jugg;* my whistle blowing syn, syn, synodality. In guidance, surrender your will *jug, jug, jug gadi.*

I am infinite, respecting you, loving you so very much. THOUGH rejecting me in stubborn weakness makes me sad. YET, I keep loving you infinitely.

Please do not derail me, do not play games with Me, aligning with Me. deeply united with Me, in your *zug zug zug gadi,*

*y*ou will enjoy peace-- migrants, refugees, women, all the dispossesed of the earth happy, all SHARING, CARING, no one in poverty. justice peace reigning CAUSE I AM ABUNDANCE.

One compartment in *zug* *zug zug gaadi* is called Indian Synodality with internal migrants, refugees, and those mass poverty blinds binds

We acknowledge, ask pardon, hurting brothers/sisters, YOU. We undermine economic rights, social rights-- livelihood, education, housing, medical care; in patriarchy rigid - poor gang raped every minute. We no longer believe in *vasudaiva kutumba kam*, (universal family) we are colonial, refusing to understand interconnections religion/culture/ duality.

Asking your pardon, grant liberation, as we contemplate *Popat.*

*Popat, popat boltosh ghod* (parrot you talk vey sweetly) *Pun zala krod* (but you are very a angry) *kha na zara peruchi phod--* (eat at least a slice of guava) *bhau/bahin rannanth za-iil* (I will fly to the forest)  *fale kha-iil* (eat fruit) *fhandivar bassoon zoke ghe-iil .* (swing from its branches)

Brother/sister I will fly to the forest of the non institutional church-- the gift of nature in love.

I will eat its fruit, swing from its branches, whistling the song SYNODALITY-- participation, mission, communion, in pitches harmonious.

**12) IN COVID TIMES**

In COVID times work put aside, as passionate about films,. yet in guilt rewatching *The Scarlet and The Black*

The film not remembering, one scene excepting – Peck at the white line standing, at window looking gun at him pointing, defiantly, in binoculars grinning. .

Other acts of faith noting guilt dissolving, film with new eyes seeing reflections making.

Reflections---- impossible working, people saving, life risking, never reacting, always proactive being; impossible unless a relationship in God rooting never the movie highlighting, never the film portraying to a people purity committing.

In the movie possible, emulating, Monsignor Hugh Flaherty.

Watching the film *Bravados*  leading role-- Gregory Peck killing three, sparing next WHY, WHY, WHY???? .

Peck, this man’s wife looking their child carrying back to the village riding straight to church going, at Mary looking, baby Jesus carrying, his own experience remembering too not another widow/er wanting, NOR a parentless child. The deed by his own hand committing, himself faulting, the priest convincing, never the four his wife raping/killing, himself judge, jury acting the deed performing, the three executing.

Art, in faith God ex- pressing; subjective relationships in God implicitly rooting; as viewers the films reviewing, biology, materiality grounding, inter subjective growing, individuals, community maturing, subjective-objectivity developing Incarnation implicit- ly living.

Thus, in films and life and vice versa--- in concepts— subjective and, objective, faith inter-connected with culture leading to better understanding-- making faith always present, always a gift, a present, leading to understanding in kenotic Love.

**TANTUR – A JOY-- A DEEPENING FAITH ---- 6 WEEKS COURSE FEB 12TH--MARCH 23RD 2020 not pub**

PARTICIPANTS 11 apostles, 5 continents**---** 4 Western women of religion, 3 Western men of religion, 1 woman of religion born in Lebanon, migrating to Australia as a child, 1 African priest in Australia for ten years, thoroughly inculturated in Western Christianity, 1 Thai priest I, an Indian lay woman, all over 65 years of age, FORMING our DEMOGRAPHIC, CULTURAL back ground, REVEALING constraints Tantur works under-- 11 applied, 11 accepted.

6 WEEK COURSE- 6th day God created us in God's image, grow in God's image making Tantur a chapter in our historical-spiritual lives.

Never a commercial tour of Jerusalem- lacking depth, too rushed, Tantur, a good replacement.

Thus-- first heard, saw, stayed in kibbutz, first heard, visited archaelogi- cal park, sites, Mass in Bethlehem, other sites where Jesus suffered, died, walked, talked, prayed, giving deep feeling God’s presence in life.

With tour guides-- seemingly handpicked, well informed -- biblical, historical, geograhical, cultural, prayerful, committed, passionate, walk- ing the extra mile with us.

 CLASSES-- not passionate about them. Companions, unstimulating, unquestioning, except explanations requiring clarity understanding, neither resource persons nor class raising issues relating to purpose, meaning of life, on topic of the day.

Absence--hierarchy on groups makes reflection, expressing life possible; reading trilogy Y.N.Harari, concept-- intersubjectivity, clarifying talk on Narrative, seeing Resurrection, Pentecost as inter subjective ob- jective, too, recognising God immanent, the secular as sacred.

Concepts-- subjective, inter subjective, objective, reminding of Mindfulness Meditation teaching to be sub- jectively objective. .

No class-- culture, garb of religion making interfaith dialogue, inter cultural dialogue. Interfaith dialogue a primary focus of Tantur, in a monocultural world, in which 11 apostles rooted. No reflective sessions on dialogue, sad- Tantur blind extension of monocultural world, not counter cultural as Jesus was.

Reminded again-- spirituality arises from life. Priests western, Western Christianity dominant, Thai priest never at Mass, evening prayer. Evening prayer-- largely Taize style, I found beautiful, too short for quiet.

De Foucault, whom we had class, gave up all**,** evenMass, to live in desert, writing poetry, grammar for Tuaregs, witnessing to life of spirituality, integrated with culture; easy in this class living in Jerusalem, just returned from Nazareth. where hidden life at Nazareth, central to spirituality of C. Foucault.

No class—brain, consciousness, Big History, ethics of modern technology, Bio Technology, AI, etc. Tel Aviv University, next door to Tantur, Harari, spe- cialists there, NGOs in Tel Aviv. BUT dialogue with religions poor, none with secular culture.

Did not put dots together to form a picture. Reasons, atmosphere, Tantur pure. Trust spontaneously, giving other benefit of doubt, the doubt taking time to lead to personal conviction, leading to………??? Each dot on the spot unrecognizable in connec- tion with other dots to form a pattern. . Infinitely difficult infinitely important understanding, accepting other cultures-- participants unaware of meaning greet with *namaste,* equating it with "Good morning, Good evening." But a *namaste* means "I greet God in you; I see God in you;" Christian terms-- "You are temple of the Holy Spirit.”

Reminded of instances, importance of culture, faith arising from life-- end *Vip* retreat , 30, 45 days-- people leaving meditation hall end of retreat, tears in eyes, greet each a *namaste,* unable speak, in silence say-- **"**been on the mountain top, communing with God. I see God in you."

Another instance, first *Vip*—ex- pected bow before Teacher, explanation is, “Not bowing to Teacher, but Wisdom in Teacher", YET, good Catholic that I am, I could not do it. It took me awhile to learn experientially through *Vip* and otherwise, God-- SUPER DUPER TALKER, WISDOM, PERSONAL , PANENTHEISTIC, IMMANENT, in our BODIES.

**ADDENDUM**

BE NOT AFRAID, I GO BEFORE YOU AL- WAYS, COME FOLLOW ME I WILL GIVE YOU REST IN COMMITMENT TO ALL especially IN-- WOMEN’S GROUPS, *VIP*, INTERFAITH SPIRITUALITY. THANK YOU GOD.

**VIP 2017**

Last week of 45 day retreat I go for a drink of water before group meditation 8am-9am Reaching the water can feeling the earth under my foot turn, having a toehold to balance on; I lurch forward, my arms around water can.

Looking behind me I see vast emptiness, vast, vast empty space, no Tapovan; a fright.

Turning, seeing a square wooden plank floating from *Dhammagiri.* consciousness in it looking for my attention, happy it has been seen by me.

I tell the teacher this; reflectively she says, “This is why they say not to leave the premises after Noble Silence ends.” I am unable to say, “panentheism”; she believes pantheism. Knowing there is far more than she sees, says, I LOVE HER.

Reflecting on it I feel it was my consciousness in wooden plank telling me I was migrating from duality to non duality and happy about it— IMMANENT GOD.

Feeling, it took the form of a wooden plank, a very material form, I had done *sewa* in Dhammagiri. Chore-- open, shut, morning, evening big heavy door of meditation hall, which on touching was strong electric shock, throw- ing me back with its vibrations.

Teacher said, filled with Guruji’s vibrations— did much meditation here when he became inactive.

**Vip 2016, , 45 days, Group meditation 6-7pm.** Seated on a chair 10th, 12th day-- *Anapana,* struggling, chain a monkey mind to awareness of touch of breath below entrance to nostrils, above upper lip I am an empty container, the size of my trunk no physical boundary.

I say to myself, “No heart, lungs, stomach, kidneys”, but I feel the chair on which I am seated, solid.

In the empty container is bright light- it does not dazzle, it can be gazed on; It has a dense inner core at its base, so dense as to be quite dark, darker than the fag end, dusk, not yet night lightened by its light around.

The core springs. Wondering, how high can it a- scend in a container. BUT, as it rises I say to myself, “I am falling, am falling”, and gently tenderly It descends.

I wonder how it descends, I look round interiorly what made it descend? what made it arise?

Subsequently, look- ing at the experience again, seeing what had been seen--it rose, descended, its own power; It lowered itself in response to my fear, gently, tenderly, personally responsive. Also, aware that I was aware, seeing another I outside the container smaller yet observing all, quieter, more silent, observant than me.

A perennial gift empty container filling with awareness of Consciousness; becoming the I outside me.

A non-sequential experience not first emptiness then light though expression sequential; it was all one, life in eternity, eternity in life.

Now, knowing the difference between free flow, *bhang;* meaning of “experience whole field of sensation”- the implicate order- God’s immanence, God personal, YET transcendent; legatee of Western Christianity, Eastern spirituality-- East and West meeting, in our humanity, in non dual, non monistic God.

All through Vip during groupmeditation much unexpected coughing by many, sometimes more, less sometimes.

Unexpected as deep *sankaras* lying low, in depths of unconsciousness dissolved by now seemed to be surfacing.

Seated on a chair near the wall, and recognized from the direction of sound, someone on my left, seated on the floor, in the same row as me, near the aisle, coughs.

Instantly, I see a thin tube rapidly moving towards the wall. Yet, not leave the source of origination, it being the point, at which I first saw it, in front of the cougher though higher than her mouth; elastic like stretching itself, yet rapidly racing towards the wall; in front of my throat making 90 degree turn, entering my throat irritating it. Coughing twice my throat is clear.

Another day, the row behind me, closer to me than the aisle a cough, my throat is irritated. I cough quite a bit, free myself of its ir- ritation.

Reflections-- Science says all matter in waves and particles; both times saw neither wave nor parti cle; tube swiftly racing, to wards wall, YET, front of me makes a U turn. How? Why? Was there consciousness in this? whose consciousness, the coughers? Is matter particle, wave and consciousness? Is this the meaning of “explore whole field of sensation” that Guruji talks about in his discourse? Immancence in Transcendence Transcendence in Immanence; no space, no emptiness only God

**VIP SHORT POEMS (published Shantivanam website)** 1) Wed in Vip[[1]](#footnote-1) now marital rape. 2) Vip Taliban Kalashnikov at my head 3) Vip Colliding, crashing smashing to smithereens sounds of thoughts. 4) Volcanic tsunamic Vip sculpting new interior forms; bewildered surrendered singing God’s song in strange forms. Vip tectonic shifts innumerable dancing God’s song. 5) Vipassana—mirroring thoughts ruminative, soulful. 6) Voice of John Word proclaiming Vipassana--tent of God Word appropriating. 7) Vip bucket Christian well Christian bucket Vip well One Spring. 8) Croton Bush leaves shades red yellow aflame unconsumed sacred ground *Dhamma giri* [[2]](#footnote-2) 9) Deluged *Tapovan[[3]](#footnote-3)* feather floats leaf trembles JEMS lie low [[4]](#footnote-4) Polished in blustery *Vipassana*. Deluged *Tapovan* feather floats leaf trembles JEMS lie low Polished in Triple Gem. [[5]](#footnote-5) 10) Circling pregnant *dhamma* wheel birthing the kingdom. 11) Hill, foot of *Dhammagiri*  in clouds of thick mist wrapped reviving Moses’ descent, tablet of ten Commandments our *sheila*.[[6]](#footnote-6) Hill, foot of *Dhammagiri*  in clouds of thick mist wrapped reviving Moses’ descent cresting 40 days on Mount Sinai face aglow God in him akin, forty five days Vip each with folded hands bowing to the other.

12) Vip Widows coin, two sides-- dancing in stillness God’s people in our hearts 13) Your unconditional gift                                                      In plenum life fulfilled, we your people.   14)

Vip

 no zipping

 to the infinite.

15) God

incarnate

a pain in the arse

16) God incarnate bugging us in cyber war wrestling 17) God, not grumbling describing relationship 18) Ploughing stony self duality to non duality 19) Life call incessant Unable to breathe 20) Axial Age One Word Burnished spirituality laminated. Cosmic Covenant dyed. Axial Age Two Truth discovering in women, in nature,

in marginalized, in Godly Human Life. 21) Life infinite spiritual transcendently immanent Immanently transcendent. 22) Life numinously physical physically numinous 23) Vip Dualities transcending im/personal God.

24) Vip dangle in love from ladders hung in love

***For formating***

*Though written long ago for a women’s seminar, now edited and included here because it has affected my understanding of life.*

**BENT DOUBLE NO MORE  (pub *In God’s Image* vol 12:4)**

I am

Judith Dias my paternal grandmother,

Judith Borges, my maternal grandmother,

Judith, prophetess of the Old Testament.

Called to be

Judith Siqueira, a prophetess- the New Testament,

a sign of the Kingdom of Justice.

My path of justice is strewn with thorns,

my path of justice is my cross, crown,

my cross and crown, my Holofernes is, society that says, BIOLOGY IS DESTINY.

Born to be wife and mother,

play with dolls, tea sets, sewing kits,

cook, sew, clean the house,

be pleasing, docile, humble, submissive,

be responsible, manage siblings,

have not your ownwill,

accept choices made for you,

parents, those in authority, know what is good for you,

meet their hopes, though unexpressed, be, what you are hoped to be-- a good wife, mother,

never be yourself.

In High School

being discriminated a- gainst, on grounds poverty, learning to believe I was no good, clumsy, and could never grow, learn.

Develop- ing inferiority, insecurity,

negative self image, a constant fear of rejection,

constant guarding of myself ; .

no counseling, no vocational guidance,

but constant “fishing” for vocations,

Being submissive, religious,

I was a good “catch”.

Life in High School- confusion, pain, poor grades.

Ability to

theorise and conceptualise,

to express myself creatively--

in languages,

in art forms,

was marginalised.

Area of sex learnt

 sex sacred

sex secret,

sex a mystery

should not be an Eve, charming, and tempting .

 INTERNALISING these messages,

 is love, sacrifice,

 is sharing, caring

 is living the life of Christ

BUT gift of Resurrection, mine by birth,

 mine in sacraments,

mine in numerous events of my life,

 and qualities of my person,

 enabling me rise,

 from the destructive dying-

 of patriarchal system,

to death in the passion of Christ,

 giving new life to myself, to society.

Experienced the resurrection in positive messages that I got.

**In school** it was the messages-- democracy, freedom, dignity, responsibility;

glory of freedom struggle,

leaders like Gandhi, Nehru.

Silently I vibrated with this,

teachers passive, dull,

monotonously performing their routine;

ardently with stray teacher,

alive, sensitive. Participated-- curricular activities, won awards,

sensitive to religious teaching, spiritual values, to

inspirational reading;

gifted abundantly by relatives.

A rich religious, social involvement in college, with caring, supportive, appreciative friends, did contribute to xxx personality development,

not touching roots, i- dentity formation.

**At home**, I got same positive, negative messages from both parents

giving me the strength to be rooted within myself, to

 find within myself the power- search, discover, grow,

even when all of life says,

do not be independent,

life is not process,

life is not growth, life is what commanders say

be guilty, feel rejected,

when you feel and do the opposite

of what society has taught you to do. I saw my parents work hard to give us the best they could materially;

preserveing their independence and autonomy in the case of interfering relatives and friends

while preserving close family ties.

Being closely knit family made breaking from it difficult,

but it gave me roots within myself,

discover—values, hard work,

responsibility, love, share, support.

As a teenager,

wondering what God’s call was,

did not seem God calling to 18th century type of religious life, of oppression, discrimination, of irrelevance to life.

Dreaming romance, motherhood, in its patriarchal form;

vaguely feeling led,

what, why, when, whom, how, I don’t know only the feeling of God’s presence;

unknowing discernment,

no pastoral counseling,

Tony D’Mello, later.

This unseeing, confused, groping continued for years more,

confounded by

insecurities early professional life,

in new town,

away from sheltered, protective family for first time;

loss of a job more than once,

consequent search another

in situations of communal discrimination, patronage,

the question what God saying in this,

living secular consecration

in traditional society,

and a traditional church

in throes of upheaval, due to Vatican II,

opposition to, rejection due to one’s choice of vocation, the search for a meaningful, relevant form of community, prayer, involvement, poverty, chastity, obedience, building new structures,

lack of understanding friends

pushed by them,

living as paying guest, no privacy, independence,

constantly shifting residence,

due to jealousy, retaining small degree of independence, privacy.

This blind search took an acute turn with

termination of services thrice in the same college,

with numerous other forms of harassment-- professional and financial; each termination meant a battle on the-- home, legal, academic, economic fronts;

I saw that authority is not good and benevolent,

as made out to be in childhood,

but manipulative, domineering, exploitative;

different subsystems of society are interrelated, and must connive with each other,

to preserve their power and position.

Family, church, law, economy, polity, education,

it is all the same--

patriarchal and capitalist.

I felt guilty at challenging authority:

physically this expressed itself in

severe body and headaches, nausea, diarrhoea, acute exhaustion,

in spite of ten hours of sleep per day.

I suffered from severe chronic colds most of my life;

I felt insecure and inferior;

I felt demeaned and humiliated;

I struggled against my obstacles in doubt and fear and trepidation;

my studies did not reveal life to me,

experiences in life made my studies meaningful and relevant,

helping me to discover my vocation, and

the presence of God in my study;

I felt I was being led to work for liberation,

that there cannot be social liberation without personal liberation.

In all this God has been saying--

I have created you in my image and likeness;

I have redeemed you restoring my image and likeness in you,

I sanctify your efforts at growing in my image and likeness,

my glory lies in human beings fully alive, build my kingdom of justice,

I am with you until the end of time.

God has revealed her presence in life—

In the Ph.D often as intensely as in the Eucharist and retreats,

in secularity as much my pearl of great price as consecration;

in leading me into the specific area of work for justice,i.e. gender justice.

This was discovered only around ’84, through sessions for the Streevani project,

my own feeling that God was leading into a specific area,

prayer and discernment,

contact with Streevani,

the two trips abroad,

the call slowly growing in me.

Living in a house of my own, I came to realise:

sex roles are stereotyped;

much that is considered a man’s role

one has to play to meet one’s needs of existence,

giving rise to conflict, personal and social.

living independently

one challenges social norms,

resulting in guilt and self doubt,

resentment, jealousy, suspicion,

efforts subtle and manipulative,

to keep a woman in her place.

Sex is not

primarily an expression of love or lust,

but primarily an expression of power, a form of control;

with the middle class this is subtle,

with the poor it is direct and overt;

as an upper middle class woman

unwittingly

my upper middle class status

has been a protection for me,

in this class conscious society.

It is assumed

that a woman needs love, living alone she needs help,

someone to turn to at least in an emergency,

she is offered what she needs for a cut,

which is material and especially sexual.

Some friends

expecting a single woman always to be a burden kept aloof, others would help on the unstated condition, that,

I be obligated to them on their terms,

these being a surrender of my independence;

some would be protective,

sex expected for an imposed offer of protection.

A woman’s independence is

as sexually provocative

as a physically provocative word or gesture,

calling into question a man’s manliness;

a contradiction here is,

men like talking to independent women,

they are more interesting, however

their wives get jealous,

the man’s ego is easily hurt,

a woman may be independent

but not with him.

People assume that a single woman is to be pitied,

she is lonely,

they do not realise,

she can choose to stay single,

grow in fulfilment;

her independence causes jealousy, resentment,

a single woman is not expected

to live successfully happily,

one is closely watched,

professional and other rights are denied,

a slow acceptance is slowly developing.

Living in a flat of my own,

has revealed to me,

the patriarchal messages I received and lived;

before this I was unconscious

of patriarchal structures.

God reveals the path of liberation

God hounds

gently and relentlessly

respectful of human freedom, yet

leaving one no chance to say “no”;

God speaks in dreams-

the loss and search for identity

repeatedly occurring in dream,

though identified much later;

regular directed retreats,

even a thirty day retreat;

Vipassana;

prayer for healing;

regular prayer and reflection;

sharing and support with friends, especially men friends;

some counseling,

moments of union with nature,

workshops, reading, minor activities.

Efforts at healing have been

long and arduous,

sometimes the cause is touched

sometimes the conditioning,

creating the traumas of change,

the labour pains of new life,

resulting in a view from the mountain heights

of God’s fidelity to her promises,

her nurturing presence in life,

confirming for me,

that stone walls do not a prison make,

nor iron bars a cage.

I was taught

that love is unselfish,

to love one’s self is a sin.

Today I’ve learnt that self love is

unselfish, universal, creative, redemptive.

As I strive to answer God’s call, I am a sign of God’s presence,

cocreating and coredeeming

myself of personal sin,

society of structural sin,

announcing the good news,

that the Kingdom of God is here.

Judith the prophetess of the Old Testament,

seeing the need of her people,

prayed and fasted

as she prepared to answer her call;

free of guilt,

at enticing him with her beauty,

and chopping off his head,

she set God’s people free.

With the woman at the well, and

like the woman at the well,

I was seeking for things the world cannot give,

and then I heard my Saviour speaking,

draw from my well,

that never shall run dry.

Fill my cup Lord,

I hold it up Lord,

come and quench

this thirsting of my soul,

Bread of heaven,

Fill me,

Till I want no more

Fill my cup, fill it up

And make me WHOLE

I see life as evolving historically and culturally and therefore most of our limitations keep on arising unconsciously from society. In this poem I did see my life in community. Now the stress is far greater on an apparently uncontrollable evolution making us more dependant on God. With this poem I thought healing was complete and now I had only to do God’s will—a very functional approach to God and people. Yet there were relational aspects in this poem which in grace have grown. This has given rise to a consciousness, first of historical and cultural evolution in my life—hence there is better understanding ; and second is why healing expressed in the poem is incomplete—historical and cultural conditioning is ongoing, making nature from nurture indistinguishable. A few people felt I had been healed and were disappointed. Just as evolution is ongoing making biological life evolutionary, so also healing is continually essential in history and culture, both being subject to evolution and necessary for the touch of God. Therefore, as consciously as possible both must be offered up**.** Because only personal experience was offered, not historical and cultural it did not result in total healing.

 **MY MOTHER**

Mother gifting life

nurturing, caring, sustaining

over protective in fierce control

bruising, crushing the tender reed.

Biological mother Anne

Hebrew-Hannah-Grace

And from you

father Victor,

the grace of victory,

in the razor’s edge of vulnerability recovering identity, individuality,

inter dependently growing,

in the victory of grace.

From you my mother

the grand-maternal genes of

Judith Borges, Judith Dias,

never known in life,

discovered  in memories— ancestral,

few and far between,

untold but hinted,

by a generation now gone,

painful, pleasant, life-giving,

letters stray, frayed, preserved, yel- lowed; images faint, meagre,

in the maternal garden of

roses, thorns, crosses and crowns,

through many a link,

chipped and clipped

in the chain--

grace in victory

victory in grace--

THANK YOU MOTHER MINE

FOR MY FATHER, VIC.

In the biblical genes of Judith-

Prophetess of the Old Testament.

beautiful, bold, brave,

strong, sublime, spiritual, in presence of her God,

for the people of her God,

figuring mother Mary.

Mother mine

unchained by time, space

freer in death than in life

appearance-- a dream,

setting-- childhood scene

embracing, caressing, heal- ing,

strengthening-- interdependence, individuality, identity,

gifting anew life in death

to be God’s jem,

(Judith Elsie Maria)

living as the apple of Her eye

victory in grace.

Dream, I dare,

pray I do

as I see

children of another generat- ion

gifted  with

grandmother Grace,

grandfather Abraham

to claim and reclaim victory in grace and faith.

**19) MY ALTAR (published *In God’s Image* vol 32:1 June 2013)**

“I will go unto the altar of God…”

the altar of life

“To God the joy of my youth”.

youth perennial,

spring and fountain of joy eternal.

A psalm from the Latin mass

prayed in English as a child

living green

in the granary of my heart,

nurturing life.

Blowing in the wind

on the altar of life

family and motherhood

assumed,

a castle for a home,

professional life fulfilling,

leisure to enjoy creativity,

touched by family inheritance

bequeathing this touch

weaving a patchwork quilt

of brilliant colours

in daily circumstances

on the altar of life.

Blowing in the wind

on the altar of life

and like the deer

riding on the wind

in the swift tumble of life

seeking listening

with the eyes and ears of the heart

to the answer blowing in the wind—

deeper and different

calling for coherence

with people,

in a global footprint

possible!

living as a surgeon

in self performing surgery

in the rush and rumble of life,

in a chance encounter,

in a chosen session,

splicing through layers and layers of conditioning,

seeking biophilic living

with a surgeon,s hand,

doubtful, shuddering, persistent

joy, wonder, breaking forth,

at the banquet

adorning the daily turmoil of life,

and pole vaulting towards it

through the winter of life,

to bequeath its beauty and fecundity

in a flower,

enjoying breath of wind and ray of sun

blown on the wind

around the world

one with the universe,

renewing life

living eternally

youthful joyful

at the altar of life

**20) The Altar of Life (published *In* *God’s Image* vol 32:1 June 2013)**

Staring at the blank screen

at 68 –

grey haired, wobbly kneed,

I pace the house, sip water,

check the empty fridge,

take a deep breath,

remind myself—

“I am in the presence of the Holy Spirit”

ask for words

to link the chain of symbols

revealing me to be

an expression of the creative power of God.

Though growing—

in faith, a setting sterling,

strength, virtue developed in adversity,

power perfected in infirmity.

So

strong in weakness

opening to the steering work of the moment

into Infinite Creative Power

through the rigours of *Vipassana*--

spine erect, shut eyed and still,

room shaded from light and air,

focused on the moment

in acceptance of the moment

in the agony of a prickly porcupine

in the resurrection

the past a present

now transcendent

in an unconditioned presence of the past

and

past gifts a presence

each becoming one with the other

until I no longer know which is which

and feel thrilled and enchanted

with the porcupine

becoming

in deep still underwater a coral garden

its quilts cacti in luscious bloom

with fish swimming

in and around me

in serenity

living, moving, having my being in love.

Holy Spirit in **(2020 UNPUBLISHED)** cracks in business with your people.

Holy Spirit, a comic God, a Johnny Walker.

A Johnny Walker luring, wooing, chasing us in kenotic love.

 (Johnny Walker is the Indian equivalent of Charlie Chaplin)

IN THE EYES OF BIBLICAL PATRIARCHS AND MATRIARCHS:-- A GENEROUS GOD, GENEROUS WO/MEN. (**WRITTEN 2023**)

**Commentator**: --- God created the universe expressing the origins of life. In the Middle East patriarchy arose as people first migrated there, as this was the area nearest to their origin. This affected whole world. Do tell us more about yourself, Ur, and your times.

**Ab**.:-- I left Ur with my father and possessions. Ur was a part of the Babylonian Empire of Hamurabi. My father was a busy trader; I learnt his trade. He traded in dyes in the huge markets of Ur. By age 75 he was determined to leave Ur; he saw no prospects there for himself and his children. Introspecting, God had different plans for me using my family to lead me along His chosen path. Itwas an instance of the sacred in the secular in a special way, though God is always present in life.

**Commentator**;-- What was it like leaving Ur for you?

**Ab**:-- Mother had died; I was very attached to her, so it was not hard to leave Ur. Perhaps this was a reason for my father leaving Ur. I did find it difficult in a way-- I had friends and knew life there. En route I would be with strangers; my father did not know where he would settle; just as well; I may have become attached to that town. The journey out of Ur was safe except for *idyah* -- a natural problem preventing rescue of Ayatollah’s American hostages. In Haran, my father died being 210. I felt lost, the next generation became my responsibility.

**Commentator**:--That you left Ur when mother died was an instance of the sacred in the secular, revealing the sacredness of life. To be first human, then Christian, then religious each stage nurturing the human in us is our first duty. Besides God does not discriminate---God spoke to you, called you long before there were Jews, whose great grandfather you are.

**Ab**.:-- God first spoke in Haran after father died promising his blessing, making me father of many generations. I would look into myself, see God, which I learnt from mother. The feeling of finding God in my heart grew after this first experience of meeting God in my heart and with my head. Looking back on the areas we passed in Ur, the whole Empire of Babylon was polytheistic. Mother was monotheistic influencing father. I did not ask for details; I wish I had pushed her harder. Today, you need a subjective-objectivity to see and hear God with heart and head, which is another way of saying that faith is faith plus reason. Faith is subjective and objective, to those seeing, hearing, with their hearts and heads, leaving Faith to God who alone knows the depths of our hearts and heads. Faith like much in life cannot be quantified by us.

Leaving Urs, I travelled 700 miles reaching Iraq’s borders, 700 to Syria, 800 to Egypt, and settled in Canaan. Today this is impossible to replicate, nationalisms being hefty.

In Bethel, I wondered how I would inherit the promises when I had no son, and my wife old. It was unthinkable that a female could be chosen by God to inherit God’s promises—an instance of the lack of belief in the sacred and secular on our part. Of course, if a daughter inherited the promise, which was through her for the world, patriarchy would have the boot with two hoots. But this was the Early Bronze Age. These insights did not come to me all at once but grew slowly in consciousness as I had to see life with the eyes of my heart. I understand your feminist activists fighting the church but loving God in Jesus. In Mary, God wiped out patriarchy.

**Commentator**:--­ This is very interesting talking about faith being subjective-objective, God’s revelation to and through you, patriarchy in the early Bronze Age wiped out in Mary.

**Ab**.:-- I feel matriarchy existed before patriarchy, which developed from a matrilineal system. Matriarchy was important because women were important in the home. Her importancearose from her functions, not from the power they resulted in, a resulting key being non duality leadingto happiness. Functions were important not power. This reveals the skewed relationship between power and function which effect your entire life. Life at home was largely tribal unlike in nuclear families. This life is clouded in the mist of antiquity. An effect between power and function was a development of patriarchy in varying degrees of severity.

**Commentator**:--Great Abraham. We also remember your heart being sore at you slaying Isaac.

**Ab**:-- Believing under the influence of culture thatGod wanted me to slay Isaac, but listening to God in my heart told me the opposite, that Isaac would inherit the promises. I believed this with all my heart and soul. God talks to us through the circumstances of our lives, expressed culturally, never going against the laws of nature, directly intervening in life only in Mary’s pregnancy, never in the consequences of it---Mary-Joseph sorrowed when Jesus was lost in the temple, she died a thousand deaths during his passion and crucifixion, she and Joseph made the journey to Bethlehem in an advanced state of pregnancy and the birth of their Son was in a stable, Simeon’s prophecy came true. Thus faith is difficult to distinguish from culture. Only in looking into our hearts can we make this distinction in faith. Thus a subjective objectivity is very, very important, taking time to develop.

Culture has a colossal power over us. You must understand the role culture plays in interfaith marriages. It is easier for couples in an interfaith marriage, if both are of a secular culture, a high tec culture, easier to live together but harder on the children growing up with secular values which are not enough for life. I feel you have a long way to go existentially. Instead of banging your head on a wall, it would help to resolve issues arising from a secular culture, mindful of values in it discriminating its uses in humane ways, like Queen Elizabeth who believed in God and in respect for secular values and people.

**Commentator**:-­ We now turn to Jacob and Joseph for trends expressive of redemption.

**Jacob**:-- I was a liar and cheater yet I stood for Rebecca accepting what U. Laban said, it being cultural. I think God does not see evil in us; human consideration of evil being mainly cultural. Culture changes. Besides, I listened to God with my heart though my surroundings were unsupportive. It is difficult to distinguish between culture and God talking.

God helped me on my way to Canaan and back, even wrestling with me when I surrendered my ego, after a battle with Him when He promised to keep Her/His promises. I recognized God who is always faithful though faithless we be. God’s promises being expressed culturally, are generally considered spiritual not cultural. We do our part, often unknowingly, helping God to move the plot of ongoing redemption in daily life. I did not know that I was part of the plot in a significant way. This is where faith comes in making this redemption business tricky being expressed in culture and faith. Living in a pluralistic world makes it necessary to accept all people of different faiths and cultures.

Faith known to us in our bodies in a growing consciousness, listening with head and heart, makes us a part of the plot of redemption. I feel, like grandfather Abraham, I met God with head and heart, holding nothing against anyone, not against U. Laban, not against Esau -- who was one of us when father died seeing us around him together. Grand father Abraham fought for certain causes, believing in family, rescuing U. Lot, and most of all in God. Sinceyou are to move into the noogenetic age, you need to be largely concerned about current social issues and never to neglect talking to God. Grandfather Ab and U Lot lived in a simpler society than you.

**Commentator**:--What do you think this means for us in our day and time when nuclear families have/are broken/breaking up?

**Jacob**:-- U. Lot broke away from grandfather as the resources of the land could not support both. Grandfather was not greedy and gave U. Lot first priority, so they broke up peacefully. Grandfather rescued U. Lot from the kings of Choaladamer. With you too distances, break ups, must be peaceful both sides keeping in touch with each other to the extent possible, neither being righteously, aggressively, demanding of the other, because God cares for all God’s children. Our bodies tell us to be aware of our culture**,** our humanity too. We call God OUR FATHER. God comes first—before parents, siblings. Therefore Jesus said, “Where were the other 99?; only one returned to give God thanks and praise”. Lk.17, 17-18 Jesus also said, “Who does the will of my father, they are my mother, siblings.” Mt. 12, 48-50. Jesus was not Catholic, not Christian, but he did it. My grandfather too did this though he was from ancient Mesopotamia. I think I tried to be humane and this is what God wants, to the extent of making us self healing, being gifted with self reflectiveness. I introspected; every human is a co-creator; I took this seriously.

**Commentator**:-- Historians say history is transcendental. Our humanity is an eternal value, making history transcendental. Personal circumstances, history and culture change, but our humanity remains; it has utmost priority. We needto be reminded of this supporting each other. We now turn to Joseph. What does his life teach us?!!! --- Hi Joseph. We look forward to hearing about you.

**Joseph**:----My father cheated at the instigation of my mother Rachel, lying earlier when she stole the family gods showing the link between faith and culture. Covering up for cheating father lied, yet he was a good hearted man. He realized he had made U. Esau’s life miserable which tells us why we should not lie. We learn from the experiences of life and therefore faith increases. U. Esau, being humane was near father Jacob when he died.

**Commentator**:-- Though the Bible does show that faith and culture are linked, its primary purpose is to show that God is the origin of all life though our understanding of the Bible is limited.--Tell us more of your personal life.

**Joseph**:-- I was born in the 1600s BC, in the middle Bronze Age to Jacob and Rachel, in Paddam-Aram**.**  I was the apple of my father’s eye. I don’t know why, probably, because he loved mother abundantly. I missed U. Esau much. I received bits of info about him. I tried meeting him secretly, as father would be angry.

**Commentator**:-- You must have felt hurt being sold to a caravan.

**Joseph**:-- I did not feel too hurt, I felt father loved me, besides being foolish, dancing in my coat of many colours, reveling in the jealousy of my brothers. Having sold me, coming to Egypt for food, family unknowing that I was in charge of the granaries, second only to Pharoah, I felt I was God’s instrument. God used my family to fulfill God’s plan, leading me into deeper interiority, causing me to listen with head-heart.

**Commentator**:--let us examine thislistening with head and heart in the lives of biblical matriarchs-- Tamar and Ruth.

**Tamar**:-- I risked going against culture; women were seen without minds. My family, my father-in-law, was very conventional but I defied culture, an instance of the sacred in the secular. God intervened in life through me and I am counted an ancestor of your Jesus. Jesus favoured the down cast, so did levirate law, providing for our social and economic security, having priority inGod’s sight. My twins Perez, the ancestor of King David, meant ‘break-through’ and Zerah meant East, brightness. He was considered my first born and inheritor. Yet, God treated Perez as my first born showing that God’s choices are primary--gender, genealogy, caste, class, religion, migrants, victims of sexual abuse etc are secondary. These issues are secondary not the people who make them. The inclusion of women in the genealogy of Jesus revealed the role of their men in their lives.

**Commentator**:-- In our highly secularized culture we need to recapture the values of family, sex and love. And so we turn to Ruth.

**Ruth**:-- I do not like when you sing about me at your wedding masses, and leave it at that, not being counter cultural in life, giving the feeling that you are pious and ritualistic. The story about Boaz and me is a love story, revealing God’s involvement in our daily lives. It is also the infinite love story of God for all people. When I requested Boaz to spread the corner of his garment over me (Ruth 3:9) it had cultural meanings, high lighting my desire to be a faithful part of God’s people. This is what I received from Naomi and the reason for sticking to her. The word for corner” in Hebrew means “wings.” I asked Boaz: to protect me like a bird protects her young, to be my redeemer like God. This is *hesed,* an instance of the sacred in the secular. I acted on Naomi’s instructions. I did not know much of Jewish culture. This showed my ma-in-law’s concern for me which I reciprocated. Concern for others is human and humane. My back ground was non patriarchal whereas in Indian patriarchy the mother in law is a problem, the result of culture and blind acceptance of it.

**Commentator**:--I admire you Ruth sticking to your ma-in-law when the situation was hopeless, cutting you off from family and society which though patriarchal provided minimal protection and provision; and gleaning in a low status job, when you could return home to your culture. Today immigrants miss their culture more than their families, though families embody social values too. Besides, it was highly non egoistical of you to ask Boaz to protect you. It reflects very beautifully on Jewish history and culture. You are a great inspiration to us.

**Ruth**:--I was rewarded for this, an instance of the sacred in the secular, seen in the circumstances of life, with a wonderful family life though forty and Boaz 80--it was so unexpected. Besides, I became assimilated unexpectedly into the people of God, the great, great grand mother of David and Jesus, physical proof of being assimilated into the people of God. GOD IS NEVER, NEVER OUTDONE IN GENEROSITY and God Is VERY, VERY PHYSICAL IN Gods EXPRESSIONS!!! because there can be no doubt about the physical. God meets us the whole way through. This is the primary way in which we can understand God, yet it is the way of FAITH.

**ROSARY ON 1ST JUNE 2017. ---** *this was an attempt to combine the devotional with a faith as people are generally devotional.*

Good evening and welcome to all of you to the quesquicentennial celebration of the parish in our area. Since the parish is celebrating families this rosary will focus on families. The model of the FAMILY BEING THE HOLY FAMILY, WE BEGIN WITH A HYMN TO MARY AND END WITH ONE TO ST. JOSEPH.

Both, Mary and Joseph, totally surrendered themselves to God and in this atmosphere of an awareness of the presence of God created by them, the child Jesus learnt the meaning of love. At the Annunciation Mary did not say, I will do your will, but “Be it done unto me according to Thy Word” i. e. let your Word happen to me; it is not I who does your will; your will happens in me. This involves a strong interior surrender which is apparently very passive but is interiorly very active. This is why Mary is called a virgin. Biological virginity in itself is unimportant. It is important only in its expression of total openness to God. Similarly, Joseph listens to God speaking to him in his dreams and acts accordingly, taking an already pregnant Mary for his wife, fleeing into Egypt, setling in Nazareth. Picasso has a sculpture of St. Joseph, lying down on his side, asleep. The palm of one hand is behind the ear, depicting him listening to God even in his sleep and one foot is ahead of the other, showing his readiness to act on the will of God that he has just heard.

It was this milk teeth faith that Jesus received from his parents that developed into an adult, mature faith open to his vocation as Son of God made known to him in his Baptism, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.”

So let us during this Rosary open ourselves so God’s will may happen in us as it happened in Mary and Joseph, and Jesus. Therefore after each decade instead of saying, ” my Jesus forgive us our sins … we will say, I am the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done unto me according to Thy Word.”

We will say only three decades of the rosary, offering the first for families in Lourdes Nivas, the second for Fatima Nivas and the third for the parish, the diocese and the universal church. As regards each of the first two decades, the first two hail Marys will be for small children, the next two for students, the third pair of Hail Marys will be for couples and all adults and the last two for the elderly in the blocks. You are welcome to focus generally or on a particular person as the Hail Mary is said. The person may be living, dead, not presently living in the blocks.

As regards the third decade, three Hail Mary’s will be for the parish fathers and the whole parish, three for the Bishop and the whole diocese, three for the Pope and the Universal church and one especially for the Pope.

This is what I saw, **as I campaigned in these elections (published *New Leader* [Jesuit paper]2009)**

We human beings are citizens of two cities – a heavenly city and this earthly one. Campaigning in the elections of 2009, I saw a grave split between this faith that we profess and our role as citizens of this earthly city—not because we wish to shirk our earthly responsibilities but because faith and life, perhaps especially political life, have been divorced from each other. Through the socialization process we unconsciously learn and therefore internalize certain contradiction; white is better than black, light better than darkness etc. These assumptions are unconscious, unhealthy, expressed in daily life and prevent us from living in the freedom and dignity of the children of God.

What were some of the contradictions I experienced as I campaigned in the elections of 2009 that prevent us from building this earthly city, the site of our redemption. I campaigned for a candidate who not only is personally honest, but through his entire career as a government servant, in spite of the heavy penalties inflicted on him for it, fought corruption unwaveringly, is committed to secularism. Due to his honest stand he needed public donations to help him through the elections. One of the people I approached, a highly qualified professional, in a tone of great arrogance that brooked on counter argument said to me, “I give money to religion , not to politics. There were others too who said this, that they would rather give money to the poor than for a political cause.

My question here is: When we support values of personal honesty and public transparency, non-violence and peace, justice and secularism are these not religious values being lived in daily life even in the area of polity and economy? When we support and help people actively crusading for these values are we not pastors and ministers? Are we listening to the voice of God in the world if we do not cooperate with people who are striving to build an earthly city that is humane? Are the poor not benefitted more from structural change than from charity? Here is a dichotomy between religion and politics created by our socialization process.

It was also my experience that area leaders and those active in arenas like BCC, St. Vincent de Paul Society and in different areas of church organization and works of mercy give great priority to such charitable and merciful works but are generally unwilling to support political efforts.

There were many areas where volunteers were needed and not forthcoming—to get people to register their names as voters (even many religious sisters failed to register their names), to participate in and organize “know your candidate” meetings in parishes (it is the experience of the Diocesan Catholic Association that people do not attend these meetings and it is very hard on organizers to invest time and effort when people do not come), to take old people to the polling booth, to function as poll agents etc. There is much apathy to such involvement.

Perhaps the reason for this is the training we receive. We place great emphasis on good organization and on works of mercy. May be our faith formation did not nurture in us attitudes and values necessary to nurture this earthly city as a beautiful and dignified dwelling place for all the people of God. After all this is what God sent Jesus to earth for – to show us how to work out our salvation while on this earth by building it up. Jesus cured the ill and brought the dead back to life, he also challenged an oppressive political and religious system and this is why he was killed.

The Pastoral Council on the church in the Modern World affirms this when it says: “They are mistaken who, knowing that we have here no abiding city but seek one which is to come, think that they may therefore shirk their earthly responsibilities. This split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age,” (43)

To live in such a manner, this document suggests a “renewed education of attitudes and for new inspiration in the area of public opinion…” (82)

With our huge commitment to and investment in formal education we cannot ignore this and need to strive to inculcate values and attitudes that will enable us to participate in and contribute to the massive transformation taking place in our country.

Through the campaign and my duty as a poll agent on the day of the elections, the experience has widened and deepened my perspective in a manner which no theoretical learning can do. Sitting for 13 hours as a polling agent in a polling booth, being a micro part, and seeing a micro part of a macro process unfurling before my eyes is an experience and a blessing Ishall ever be grateful for. To know that there are thousands of booths in the constituency, which is only one of nearly 550 constituencies, five staff in eachpolling booth, well trained in operating the machines, knowing the rules for the conduct of the elections, with lakhs of voters in each constituency, of all classes, castes, religions and regions in a land so vast and varied as ours. This country is a mystery and a marvel making me feel very blessed to be a part of this unique process.

The number of people who voted in this election are 40.5 crores in 8.35 polling stations, manned by 47 lakh polling staff with 8.34 lakh booth level officers, 46.9 lakh security staff, a total of 8,070 candidates.

In reeducating ourselves to live as enlightened, participative citizens in the peaceful revolution that democracy is bringing about so that the marginalized can enter the mainstream and our composite culture preserved, we will not only be strengthening democracy in this country but living as the mystics did, which is what our call in baptism is really about. The mystics did not believe in the dualities referred to above. God is one and in all of life.

Juliana of Norwich says, “In this life we are to become heaven so that God may find a home here.”

**STORY (PUBLISHED J*IVAN* [Jesuit magazine]2020)**

**JYOTI BREAKS THROUGH**

Jyoti walked down the road in a pair of heeled slippers modern in design and matching a chic, ethnic *salwar kameez* set. She looked exquisitely elegant in the costume jewellery recently chosen with her friend Zoeya on a very occasional shopping spree. Jyoti enjoyed shopping with Zoeya as she not only had good taste and was thrifty, but was aware of Jyoti’s taste, and her weakness for costume jewellery. This evening, they were on their way to a friend’s birthday party. But Jyoti, though very outgoing and one who took the lead in party singsong and games, was unusually quiet. Zoeya who was a good twenty years older than Jyoti was still pretty and youthful. They lived on the same street but had become friendly only in the last two years when Jyoti began to work in the same company as Zoeya. Being in different sections of the corporate house they rarely met at work except occasionally on their way to and from work.

This evening Zoeya was surprised to see Jyoti unusually silent, even passive. She glanced at her occasionally but found no clue to her silence. Before the party ended as they said their ‘goodbyes’ and ‘thank yous’ Zoeya good naturedly linked her arm in Jyoti’s suggesting they walk home, though it was a good half an hour away. It was a full moon night, there was a cool breeze blowing and the side streets well lit.

As they walked along in silence Zoeya remembered Jyoti’s father - a short, bald, friendly, kindly man. She had known him by sight as they would pass each other - he on his way to work, she on her way to school with her own father who would go on to work after dropping her off at school. This suddenly gave Zoeya the idea of reminiscing with Jyoti about her family in the hope that she would open up. “You know, Jyoti, walking down this street and being with you reminds me of your father. I would see him often while he was on his way to work and I to school.”

“Yes, Zoeya, tell me about him. I don’t like asking my mother about him as it makes her cry. All I know is that they loved each other very much and she still misses him. He was a technician in the railways. My mother was very young when they got married - the daughter of the richest business man in town at that time. Today it has grown into a big bustling city. Within a year of their marriage my sister was born; four years later I was born. Soon my father died. So I never had the privilege of being carried, kissed, bathed, dressed and fed by him.”

“My mother who had never worked had now to go to work, run the home and bring up two small children alone. She got no help from either side of the family since they had not agreed to their interfaith relationship and marriage. My mother was very insistent that we get an education. After her SSC my sister got a small job and went to a night college. She got a better job after graduation, got married and continued her postgraduate studies. She and her husband are very happy though they have no children yet. Like my mother my sister got married to a Hindu who is a doctor. They come over to our place every year for a month at *Diwali* and we go to their place in May. You know I have never spoken to anyone about my father before. Thank you for bringing up the topic.”

Jyoti begged a reluctant Zoeya to have dinner with her as they had reached her house. As Jyoti busied herself setting the table Zoeya noticed that the linen had badly faded and the paint on the walls had peeled. But the house was spotlessly clean and well equipped with all the modern necessities of life - mixer, fridge, TV, washing machine – all bought by Jyoti. They enjoyed a good vegetarian meal cooked by Jyoti’s mother followed by ice cream as dessert. While Zoeya and Jyoti’s mother chatted, Jyoti cleared the table and washed the dishes.

One evening at the end of work Jyoti and Zoeya bumped into each other at the foot of the company staircase. Jyoti had reached the end of her tether and fell into Zoeya’s ever willing, ever open arms. Zoeya picked up some coffee and snacks and gently led her into a small quiet park on a side street. Jyoti was very depressed and responded only in an occasional monosyllable. With difficulty Jyoti agreed to see a psychiatrist but insisted on going alone to the ‘shrink’ as she called her.

After this, Jyoti avoided Zoeya for a while. Zoeya expressed concern and a willingness to accompany her but did not push, believing that only a respectful distance would result in Jyoti’s assent essential for long term deep healing. Though her heart ached for Jyoti and she yearned to reach out to her, she knew that this silent way of reaching out to her was the best way of helping her for the present.

Four months after Jyoti agreed to go to the psychiatrist she phoned Zoeya and talked to her. “I have been irregular in going to the psychiatrist. I need to go but don’t have the strength to make it. I feel miserable.” “Sweetheart I will come with you.” “Thank you, Zoeya. Is Saturday 10am okay with you?” “Certainly; I will pick you at 9.30 am.” At work the superintendent sternly warned Jyoti, “You have been very lackadaisical and totally careless in your work. On numerous occasions I have seen you dozing. On your worksheet I have marked the mistakes you have made. I take a very serious view of this.” At the psychiatrist’s Zoeya enquired whether Jyoti wanted her to sit in the waiting room or meet the doctor with her. The doctor was glad to meet Zoeya and talk with her about Jyoti’s needs.

Zoeya saw that the stigma of visiting a psychiatrist was something Jyoti found hard to accept though nobody but she knew about it. Zoeya had told her, “My dear, going to a psychiatrist is no different from going to a specialist for a physical illness.” A year later Jyoti was stable yet unhappy with herself and unable to fathom the reason for it. Zoeya was quick to remember what the doctor had said, “Medicine will regulate the production of dopamine which has caused the depression. This is only a temporary relief. It will not touch the root of the depression. It is for Jyoti to strive for fulfillment in work, in personal relationships, in various activities and, I dare to say, in prayer for inner healing. Prayer will help her to go through the pain of facing herself and her personal history.

 Zoeya, full of life and as bouncy as ever even at forty five, was involved in an interfaith based women’s group. Jyoti started to go for self awareness sessions in group dynamics, and art and creative writing workshops which Zoeya led. Zoeya and Jyoti went together for these sessions. Both enjoyed each other’s company, even going together for an occasional drama and concert. “But,” said Jyoti to Zoeya while returning once from a session at the women’s group, “I have benefitted so much from these sessions, yet deep down I feel an empty hole that nothing fills, and it gnaws at me.”

Some weeks later, Jyoti said to a colleague, “Hey, you look bright and happy today.” “Yes, I do feel bright and happy. I have just returned from a ten-day Vipassana retreat. I am on top of the world now, though two weeks back I had to grit my teeth and stick to the rigorous discipline. During the retreat twice I tried to abscond. I had severe nausea and headaches for three days. These were symptoms of deep underlying problems. Now the layers of conditioning have dissolved. I stick to routine meditation as only that helps. I will give you a flier about it.” Jyoti procrastinated for another year, feeling unhappy but unable to hit the nail on the head. Her colleague said to her, “Perhaps you are in denial mode.”

With a sharp yet blunt nudge from Zoeya Jyoti went for a Vipassana retreat. As she later told Zoeya, “It was brain surgery, with no one around you like in an ICU. You had to continue to keep the rigorous time table. No amount of yearning led any *sevika* to drop even a morsel of food and a drop of water into your mouth to satisfy hunger and thirst. You just dragged yourself to the dining room and collapsed after that.” Jyoti soon became a regular practitioner and split her annual vacation to go twice in the year for *Vipassana*. She said to Zoeya, “I do feel far better now. ‘The truth shall set you free’ but first it makes you miserable. The only way I could cross this barrier was infinitely painful. Only prayer for the gift of patience, forgiveness and surrender helped. I would often say, ‘God you forgive in me. Help me to go through this.’”

Zoeya said, “I thought prayer was frowned upon in Vipassana.” “Oh no,” said Jyoti. “It is only ritualistic faith, blind and escapist, that is discouraged; not an enlightened faith that helps you to face and accept reality. The reality I have come to face is that my father’s brother once visited us. He looks exactly like my father. His photograph is on the wall over the dining table. With my mother’s permission he took me to the park where he molested me. I often pray, ‘Holy Spirit, give me strength to accept the reality that as a little girl I was molested by a close relative. I cannot forgive him and neither can I trust any man now. You move my heart to forgive. Free my heart, cleanse it and help me to get on with life. Help me to grow in your image and to help those in a similar predicament to grow in your image.”

Jyoti and Zoeya held on to each other and as they kissed they thanked each other for what each had been to the other, promising to continue to walk together.

***REIGN OF GOD***

 ***UNIVERSAL GIFT, UNIVERSAL ANTIDOTE TO FUNDAMENTALISM*** *Judith Siqueira* **(published Shantivanam website)**

I begin this paper *The Reign of God* with a short story (*Prema and Sonia)* and a poem (*Inside-Outside* both written by me) for two reasons. Art is an important medium of communicating ideas and values too deep to communicate without the divisiveness of various social categories like caste, class, religion, gender etc. I focus on living in the Reign of God as an antidote to fundamentalism so rampant in this 21st century due to rapid changes arising from scientific and technological advances and haphazard socio-economic development. All humans are created by God to live and grow in peace and justice. Art brings out our common humanity better than the rational.

PREMA AND SONIA It was peak summer season and Prema was limp with the heat even though the fans were spinning, the doors shut, the curtains drawn and the air conditioner on low as she was allergic to it.  This was Prema’s first free evening in months.  She switched on the TV and a few minutes later switched it off.  She wandered around the house and switched on the TV again and then the music player and then the DVD.

Prema was a pretty woman, 5’ 3”, slim, wheatish in complexion, with close cropped hair.  She had done investigative work on a rape and murder case that had national and political implications.  She had pursued it relentlessly for the last six months and was now rewarded with a promotion as editor of the regional news section of the prestigious national The Hindu Daily.  And at just 28 years of age!  Prema knew that it was more than the heat that was making her feel limp.

Collapsing after a light dinner Prema tossed and turned in bed.  Never had she been so restless.  As the evening drew to a close tucking herself into bed her phone rang.  She ignored it – the persistent ringing --  “what the hell” she screamed and picked it up as she lay sprawled in bed.  Her heart started to thud.  One could hear the thrill in her voice as she responded.  The next moment she was out of bed jumping in glee.

Dawn, just breaking she was like a lark warbling as she dressed, breakfasted and drove to work.  “Good morning Prema, You look extraordinarily bright this morning”.  “Good morning Mr. Pal. Thank you”.  And so it was for a good half hour with each of the staff commenting on her glowing appearance.  Prema felt the morning swiftly fly and without a glance at her usual lunch buddies, raced to Old Joe’s, once her favourite eatery, secluded and tucked away by greenery on a tiny side road.

On the dot of 1 pm the bells around the eatery chimed.  Prema’s heart leaped—there was Sonia standing in front of her.  They fell into each others arms laughing and crying at the same time.   As they collected themselves and placed their orders, the conversation began to flow.

“So nice to see you, Prema, sweetheart!”

“Aren’t I glad to see you too my darling, darling, Sonia!  I can hardly believe we are finally here enjoying steaming South Indian coffee in silver mugs and eating *idli sambhar* as we did in the good old days”.  They spent a good hour and a half reminiscing and laughing as they walked down memory lane.  There was Prof. Kulkarni’s boring literature classes to bunk and his drawling voice to imitate sending out peals of laughter among the students who were always hanging out at this favourite joint of theirs.   They remembered the cartooning that Sonia did of all that went on in class and at Old Joe’s and how it seemed that the walls would burst with the laughter of the bubbly students.  And often it would be Prema strumming her guitar, crooning the latest songs and favourites of these youngsters bursting with life and laughter.  They certainly were a pair the college had never seen and was unlikely to see again!!

As they slowed down on the reminiscing Prema asked, “How’s Shayan?”

“Shayan?  Shayan’s fine.  I meet him every day after work.  We finish work at the same time and his office is down the road”.

“You never have time for me though”.

Sonia quickly gave her a hug with a “I do love you Prema.  I cannot forget you and the glorious time we had as students”.

Prema ventured, “I see Shayan often on my return from work as I pass his office on my way home”.  “Then you know how Shayan is. I’m sure you often stop to chat and even have a cup of tea together”.

Prema was silent.  The discomfort continued as Sonia vehemently said,  “Oh! That is why he has been late a number of times in meeting me”.  In this suddenly overheated atmosphere Prema took the risk of revealing herself most explicitly, “Oh! sweet heart, darling, I do love you very, very much.  I’d like to be with you always as we were in college!”.  Sonia still reminiscing in the world of girlie love and companionship assured Prema, “I know you love me as you have always done.  I remember the picnics we enjoyed in the youth group, even the moon light picnic on the beach at Colva”.  Prema not giving up, “We were a pair then, inseparable”.   However, she was crestfallen as Sonia said, “that’s where I first met Shayan”.  Prema was now wild with anger, “Oh, Shayan! Shayan! Shayan!”.  Sonia simply and sweetly stated herself, “I love Shayan”.  Prema, not giving up hope, “I love you Sonia, very, very much.  I want to spend my life with you”.  Soniarose, kissed Prema warmly and said, “See you soon sweetheart”.



Prema could not move for a good ten minutes.  Stunned to near unconsciousness and though unaware of her surroundings she could yet hear old Kulkarni’s boring drawl, “T’is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all”.  And as Prema started to come around she glimpsed herself solicitous and serious at her favourite hobby in the most cosy corner of her bed room-- poetry writing.  And a poem she once wrote came alive in her again--

INSIDE-OUTSIDE

Outside, compound swept, brushwood neatly piled

Inside, emotions inarticulate, thoughts stumble;

Outside, the *mali*will soon ignite sticks dry, short and long,

Inside, old edifices slowly smoulder

as my pen squiggles on paper

my thoughts incoherent, dry,  infertile.

Outside, the fire crackles

yet

Inside, I feel the heat

old habits die hard.

Outside, the dry sticks are consumed;

Inside, my passion flashes, rages, glows

in efforts to show not tell,

paint images not describe

as we ourselves recreate.

Outside, sparrows chirp,

crows caw,

eagles swoop down;

Inside, my words sing,

Outside, auto rickshaws speed, screech,

scooterists dodge and curse,

cyclists sweat,

cars honk;

Inside, my words make music.

Outside, people are

on foot about their daily chores,

stopping to chat with heavy bags,

or dressed chic to work--

youngsters in jeans and swanky tees,

and those

living on the roads,

cooking, eating, sleeping,

naked children play with stray dogs

Inside, I wonder whether I am indulging in a luxury--writing!

though in a hall with only basic physical conveniences

. And recollect lines from Yeats:

“The friends that have it I do wrong
Whenever I remake a song
Should know what issue is at stake,
It is myself that I remake.”

And Eric Fromm

[Wo]man’s main task in life

is to give birth to [her]himself.

Inside, in a pensive state

pen in hand, brow puckered, I continue

my struggle

believing my writing

will help many to birth themselves too

and

in a shared endeavour.

painting word pictures

recreate ourselves

live as cocreators

I witness

the ashes of smouldered edifices

sprout tiny green shoots

A few months later Prema answered a phone call. “Hi, Prema sweet heart. We have fixed the date of our wedding and I want you to be my chief bridesmaid and to help me with my wedding preparations.” “I am delighted sweetheart and thank you. I will take my leave at that time to be with you. It is an important time for us all.”

Prema and Sonia are two people in the human race created in the image of God. The end of the story shows that they are growing in this image of God, living genuinely in unity and solidarity with each other in the reign of God, the kin-dom of God. Though God is nowhere explicitly mentioned they live in the kin-dom, persons, children of God.

Humans created in the image of God enjoy a dignity and freedom expressed in the two creation stories of Genesis. Humans share the world with all of creation receiving from the world the necessities of physical, intellectual and affective growth in community, as it progresses. In this environment human personality develops and humans grow in relationships expressing themselves as the image of their Creator.[[7]](#footnote-7)

Being in the image of God implies that human existence is “relational.” Relationships define space, our Paradise. Mutually complementing relations give rise to a dynamic and creative space. The biblical notion of Paradise epitomizes an original state of interrelatedness and harmony in creation, a web of inter relationships as an “ideal space”, where all creatures are in harmonious relationship with one another and with the Creator. Loss of Paradise, loss of “space” leads to a “recreation” and “restoration” of the image of God in us in the person of Jesus the Christ.[[8]](#footnote-8)

This restoration is poetically expressed by Isaiah 11 especially verses 6-9. The wolf will live with the lamb,
    the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+11#fen-NIV-17891a)] together;
    and a little child will lead them.
**7**The cow will feed with the bear,
    their young will lie down together,
    and the lion will eat straw like the ox.
**8**The infant will play near the cobra’s den,
    and the young child will put its hand into the viper’s nest.
**9**They will neither harm nor destroy
    on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord
    as the waters cover the sea.

Predatory animals are not extirpated but have their habits and instincts changed, no longer preying on the tamed in domestic service of humans, as peace reigns. Being betrothed to God forever in righteousness and loving kindness (Hosea 2:19), we live and grow in peace, in the image of God, though we groan with creation (Rom 8:19ff) in the birthing pains of building harmonious relationships cocreating the reign of God[[9]](#footnote-9) and this is visible in the above story.

Image and reign of God are vibrant realities, realised in action, movement, growth and relation. Being evolutionary and growth oriented, these realities, inhere in all human life, as they do in that of Prema and Sonia, transcending structural definitions and limitations. They signify the experience of an inner tension between what they are, ideals, and what they are destined to be, realities. They entail two dispositions simultaneously—an aware restlessness of the actual conditions of life and a vision of the future that moves us as also Prema and Sonia towards ever greater realizations.

In the 21st century this vision comes largely from a breakdown of our socio-economic system and the discoveries of modern science, both leading to the personal surrender of dualistic thinking perceptible in Prema and Sonia, and to the next level of progress. Quantum Physics reveals not only intelligent design and an intelligent designer of evolution, but purpose and meaning in the evolution of an universe that is not static and inert, but a living system, a dynamic, complex, psycho-numinous web of inter-dependent relationships that could come only from what Berry, a geologian, calls cosmic moments of grace, and Thomas Fox an original blessing. Tukaram, a Hindu mystic says: “In the deep sea of bliss the waves are of bliss; in the body of bliss every member is of bliss”[[10]](#footnote-10) and the Isa Upanishad, "All this- whatever exists in this changing universe, is pervaded by God."

The discoveries of Quantum Physics and the crisis in modern society are a couple of factors that have led Eckhart Tolle to say that the awakening of consciousness is the next evolutionary step for [hu]mankind[[11]](#footnote-11) resulting in the vocational arousal of a conscious surrender of dualities, leading to human growth in the image of God, of life in the Reign of God injecting an antidote to fundamentalism. Today, it is this growth in conscious living, consciously expanding and deepening knowledge, that changes being and leads to daily actions that build the image of God in each one and the kin-dom in the universe. It is such actions that explain the origin and finality of all creativity as being meaningful human activity dignifying human life, as the relationship of Prema and Sonia reveal. These actions fulfill our search for meaning and permanence at deep levels because they deepen awareness of human identity which cannot happen in a world of fundamentalisms. Hence they build the kin-dom on earth. They are a response to the zeitgeist of our times and a kairological call to bring a spiritual vision of the earth to birth. In this vision development and progress are attained through human work valuing persons for what their work makes them rather than for what they amass. Eric Fromm says, “Man’s main task in life is to give birth to him[her]self,” to be born again and again in the Spirit (John 3:3) to be living from the inside out. This is the divine plan in which all humans participate, growing in the image of God, realising the Reign of God in their personal and social histories like Prema and Sonia, injecting an antidote to fundamentalisms of all kinds.

**CC**

O Holy night love shines bright sin side lighted grace highlighted. Strength takes flight You are weak in delight In your might.

In fright by this and excited by it in confusion high we cite our plight to You believing You will set things right.

With no gold frankincense and myrrh like Levites we offer our mite to you RULER/KING OF THE UNIVERSE

ALLELUIA –FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH

9) SYNODALITY

Playing with children, Brings to mind Forgotten Marathi nursery rhymes —

*“Gadi ali, gadi ali* (the train comes) *jugg jugg jugg* (jugg,jugg, jugg)  *shiti kesi vazti* (how the whistle sounds) *kukk kukk kukk”.* (kukk, kukk, kukk).

The train of synodality comes, comes, comes, bringing gifts of life. powered by God created by us, carrying us onward.

Game playing , acclaiming in song ”Forward march ye brave Christian soldiers”. Train derailed, chauffeur God, sad. Yet, sings, whistles, harmony in tunes syn, syn, synodality.

Holy Spirit says, journey towards Me *jugg jugg jugg;* my whistle blowing syn, syn, synodality. In guidance, surrender your will *jug, jug, jug gadi.*

I am infinite, respecting you, loving you so very much. THOUGH rejecting me in stubborn weakness makes me sad. YET, I keep loving you infinitely.

Please do not derail me do not play games with Me; aligning with Me deeply united with Me in your *zug zug zug gadi y*ou will enjoy peace-- migrants refugees, women, all the dispossesed of the earth happy, all SHARING, CARING, no one in poverty. justice peace reigning BECAUSE I AM ABUNDANCE.

One compartment in *zug* *zug zug gaadi* is called Indian Synodality with internal migrants, refugees, and those mass poverty blinds binds

We acknowledge, ask pardon, hurting brothers/sisters, YOU We undermine economic rights, social rights-- livelihood, education, housing, medical care; in patriarchy rigid - poor gang raped every minute. We no longer believe in *vasudaiva kutumba kam*, (universal family) we are colonial, refusing to understand interconnections religion/culture/ duality.

Asking your pardon, grant liberation, as we contemplate Popat.

*Popat, popat boltosh ghod (*parot, parot you talk verysweetly) *Pun zala krod* (but you are very angry) *kha na zara peruchi phod--* (eat at least a slice of guava;) *bhau/bahin rannanth za-iil* (I will fly to the forest) *fale kha-iil* (eat fruit) *fhandivar bassoon zoke ghe-iil .* (swing from its branches)

Brother/sister I will fly to the forest of the non institutional church-- the gift of nature in love. I will eat its fruit, swing from its branches, whistling the song SYNODALITY-- participation, mission, communion, in pitches harmonious.

**6 WEEKS COURSE FEB 12TH--MARCH 23RD 2020** 11 apostles, 5 continents--- 4 Western women of religion, 3 Western men of religion, 1 woman of religion born in Lebanon, migrating to Australia as a child, 1 African priest in Australia for ten years, thoroughly inculturated in Western Christianity, 1 Thai priest I, an Indian lay woman, all between 65-77 years of age, FORMING our DEMOGRAPHIC, CULTURAL back ground, also REVEALING the constraints Tantur works under-- one being, 11 applied, 11 accepted.

6 WEEK COURSE- 6th day God created us in God's image to grow in God's image making Tantur a chapter in our historical-spiritual lives.

Never wanting a commercial tour of Jerusalem- too rushed, lacking depth of mind and spirit, Tantur, a good alternative.

Thus-- first time heard off, saw, stayed in a kibbutz, first time heard off and visited an archaelogical park, and archaelogical sites, Mass in Bethlehem and other sites where Jesus suffered, died, walked, talked, prayed, giving a deep feeling of God’s presence in life.

With tour guides-- seemingly handpicked, well informed -- biblically, geographically, historically, culturally, prayerful, committed, passionate, walking the extra mile with us.

CLASSES-- not passionate about them. Companions unstimulating, unquestioning, except on explanations requiring clarity of understanding, neither resource persons nor class raising issues relating to purpose, meaning of life, with in topic of day; learning much from women and interfaith groups, consisting of lay people, absence of church hierarchy makes them more reflective and expressive of life; learning from reflection, meditation, leading to more insightful study; reading currently trilogy of Harari, his concept of inter subjectivity, clarifying talk on narrative, seeing Resurrection, Pentecost as inter subjective experiences, the Transcendent as Immanent, the Secular as sacred.

Concepts--sub jective, inter subjective, objective, reminding of Mindfulness Meditation teaching to be subjective ly objective .

No classes on culture, the garb of religion making interfaith dialogue intercultural dialogue. Interfaith dialogue-- primary focus of Tantur, in a mono cultural world, 11 apostles rooted in doing 6 week course; no reflective sessions on dialogue, sadly makes Tantur a blind extension of a mono cultural world, not counter cultural as Jesus was.

Reminded again-- spirituality arises from life expressed in cultural terms experienced also in mass -- all Priests from the group being from the West, Western Christianity dominant, the Thai priest, never saying, attending Mass, evening prayer. Evening prayer-- Taize style, I found beautiful, but not long enough to stay in inner silence.

Charles de Foucault, on whom we had a class, gave up all, even Mass, to live in the desert, writing a grammar and poetry for the Tuaregs, thereby wit nessing to a life of spirituality in the garb of culture not just spirituality isolated from culture, unlike what given in class. Integrating spirit- uality with culture easy in this class we living in Jerusalem, recently returned from Nazareth, the hidden life at Nazareth central in the spirituality of Charles de Foucault.

No classes on—brain, consciousness, Big History, et hics of modern technology, Bio Technology, AI, etc, never dealing with issues of identity, freedom democracy in a multicultural tech nological world; University next door, specialists, NGOs there. Our dialogue with religions poor, none with secular culture.

Though such instances picked up, never put dots together form a picture. One reason, atmosphere in Tantur very pure, another, perhaps I trust too spontaneously, deep- ly, giving the other the benef**it** of the doubt, the doubt taking time to lead to personal conviction, in turn leading to……… perhaps intersubjectivity??? Besides each dot on the spot unrecognizable in connection with other dots forming a pattern. . Infinitely difficult, infinitely important, understanding, accepting other cultures-- Some participants, unaware of its meaning greet me, a *namaste,* equating it with "Good morning," or "Good evening." BUT a *namaste* means "I greet God in you; I see God in you;" in Christian terms-- "You are a temple of the Holy Spirit.”

Reminded of other instances, the importance of culture, of faith arising from life-- the end of a long *Vipassana* retreat-- 30, 45 days-- people leaving meditation hall end of the retreat, tears in their eyes, greet each other with a *namaste,* unable to speak, in silence saying-- "You’ve been on the mountain top, communing with God. I see God in you."

Another instance, my very first *Vipassana*-- expected to bow before Teacher, the explanation being, "You are not bowing to the Teacher, but to Wisdom in the Teacher", YET good Catholic that I am I could not do it. It took me a long while to learn experientially not only through *Vipassana* God IS SUPER DUPER TALKER WISDOM -- PANENTHEISTIC, PERSONAL, IMMANENT, TRANSCENDENT, in our BODIES

**ADDENDUM**  BE NOT AFRAID I GO BEFORE YOU ALWAYS COME FOLLOW ME AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST IN COMMITMENT TO ALL especially IN-- WOMEN’S GROUPS, *VIPASSANA*, INTERFAITH- SPIRITUALITY. THANK YOU GOD.

 Written for my memory.

VIPASSANA 2016, IGATPURI, 45 DAYS, GROUP MEDITATION 6-7PM.

Seated on a chair 10th ,12th day, *Anapana.* Struggling to chain a monkey mind to awareness of touch of breath below the entrance to the nostrils above the upper lip I am an empty container the size of my trunk no physical boundary.

I say to myself, “There is no heart here, no lungs, stomach, kidneys”. BUT I feel the chair on which I am seated solid.

In the empty container is bright light- it does not dazzle, it can be gazed upon; it has a dense inner core at its base, so dense as to be quite dark, darker than the fag end of dusk, not yet night, lightened by its light around.

The core rises, I wonder how high can it rise in a container. As it arises, I say to myself, “I fall, I fall” And gently, tenderly it descends.

I wonder how does it descend? I look around in- teriorly what made it descend? what made it arise?

Looking at the experience again, I see what I had seen-- it rose, descended by its own power. It lowered itself in response to my fear, gently, tenderly, personally responsive aware that I was aware. Seeing another I outside the container smaller yet observing all, quieter, more silent- observant than me. A perennial gift the empty container, filling with awareness, consciousness becoming the I outside me.

A non-sequential experience not first emptiness then light though having to express it sequentially it was all one -- life in eternity, eternity in life, *advaita, circuminsessio, perichoreisis*

Now, knowing the difference between, free flow and *bhang;* the meaning of ”ex perience the whole field of sensation”- the implicate order- God’s immanence, God personal yet transcendent. An inheritor-- Western Christianity, Eastern spirituality-- East and West meeting, in our humanity, in non dual, non monistic GOD.

Also, all through Vip during groupmeditation much unexpected coughing. Unexpected as *sankaras* lying low, in depths of unconscious dissolved, generally seemed to be surfacing.

Seated, on a chair near the wall, and recognized from the direction of sound, some one on my left, seated on the floor, the same row as me, near the aisle coughs.

Instantly I see, a thin tube rapidly moving towards the wall, not leave the source of origination, being the point at which I first saw it front of the cougher, though high- er than her mouth; e- lastic like stretching itself, rapidly rushing towards the wall; in front of my throat makes a 90 degree turn entering my throat irritating it. Coughing twice, my throat is clear.

Another day, the row behind me, closer to me than the aisle a cough, my throat is irritated, I cough, free myself of annoyance.

My reflection--Sci ence says all matter in waves, particles; both times I saw, neither wave nor parti cle; but swiftly racing into the wall in front of me tube makes a U turn how? why? was there consciousness in this? whose consciousness? the coughers? Is matter particle, wave,consciousness? Is this the meaning of “explore the whole field of sensation” Guruji talks in discourse? Immanence in Transcendence Transcendence in Immanence; no space, no emptiness only God.

Written for my memory

VIP 2017

Last week of 45 day retreat I drinkwater before group meditation 8am-9am. As I reach the water can I feel the earth under my foot turn, I have only a toehold to balance on; I lurch forward, , instinctively put my arms around the water cancan. an. Spontaneously looking behind me I see vast emptiness, vast, vast vast empty space, there is no *Tapovan;* frightening.

Turning around I see a square wooden plank float down from *Dhammagiri.* As it floats down I see consciousness in it looking for my attention, then happy it has been seen by me.

I tell the teacher about it; Reflectively she says, “This is why they say not to leave the premises after Noble Silence ends.” I am unable to say, “panentheism”; she believes only in pantheism. I know there is far more than what she sees and says but I LOVE HER.

Reflecting on it I feel It was my consciousness in the wooden plank telling me, I was migrating from duality to nonduality, and happy about it— IMMANENT GOD.

I feel it took the form of a wooden plank as I did *sewa* in *Dhammagiri.* One of my chores--open and shut morning and evening the big heavy door of the meditation hall, which on touching sent a strong electric shock throwing me back with its vibrations.

This teacher said, the place filled with Guruji’s vibrations— having done much meditation when he became inactive.

VIP POEMS

Your unconditional gift in plenum life fulfilled, we your people

(2)

Vip

no zipping

to the Infinite

(3)

God

a pain in the arse

(4) God incarnate bugging us in cyber war wrestling (5) God, not grumbling describing relationship (6) Ploughing stony self duality to non duality

(7) Life call incessant Unable to breathe (8) Axial Age One Word Burnished spirituality laminated. Cosmic Covenant dyed. Axial Age Two Truth discovering in women in nature in marginalized in Godly Human Life. (9) Life infinite spiritual transcendently immanent Immanently transcendent. (10) Life numinously physical physically numinous (11) Vip dualities transcending im/personal God. (12) Vip dangle in love from ladders hung in love (11) Wed in Vip[[12]](#footnote-12) now marital rape. (12) Vip Taliban Kalashnikov At my head (13) Vip Colliding, crashing smashing to smithereens sounds of thoughts. (14) Volcanic tsunamic Vip sculpting new interior forms; bewildered surrendered singing God’s song in strange forms. Vip tectonic shifts innumerable dancing God’s song. (15) Vipassana—mirroring thoughts, ruminative, soulful. (16) Voice of John Word proclaiming, *Vipassana*--tent of God Word appropriating. (17) Vip bucket Xtian well Xtian bucket Vip well One Spring. (18) Croton Bush leaves shades red yellow aflame unconsumed sacred ground *Dhammagiri* [[13]](#footnote-13) (19 Deluged *Tapovan[[14]](#footnote-14)* feather floats leaf trembles JEMS lie low [[15]](#footnote-15) polished in blustery *Vipassana*. Deluged *Tapovan* feather floats leaf trembles JEMS lie low polished in Triple Gem. [[16]](#footnote-16) (20) Circling pregnant *dhamma* wheel birthing the kingdom. (21) Hill, foot of *Dhammagiri*  in clouds of thick mist wrapped reviving Moses’ descent, tablet of ten Commandments our *sheila*.[[17]](#footnote-17) Hill, foot of *Dhammagiri*  in clouds of thick mist wrapped reviving Moses’ descent cresting 40 days on Mount Sinai face aglow God in him akin, forty five days Vip each with folded hands bowing to the other. (22) Vip widows coin two sides dancing in stillness God’s people in our hearts

IN COVID TIMES In COVID times work put aside,

as passionate about films,. though in guilt rewatching

*The Scarlet and The Black*

The film not remembering, one scene excepting –Peck at the white line standing, at window looking gun at him pointing defiantly in the binoculars grinning. .

Other acts of faith noting guilt dissolving, film with new eyes seeing reflections making.

Reflections---- impossible working, peo- ple saving, life risking, never reacting, always proactive being; impossible unless a relationship in God rooting, never the movie highlighting, the film never portraying to a people purity committing.

But in the movie possible **real** character truly imitating Monsignor Hugh Flaherty.

.Watching the film *Bravados*  leading role-- Gregory Peck killing three, sparing next WHY, WHY, WHY???? .

Peck, this man’s wife looking their child carrying back to the village riding straight to church going, at Mary looking, baby Jesus carrying, his own experience remembering not another widow-er/a parentless child wanting; the deed by his own hand committing, himself faulting, the priest telling never the four his wife raping/killing,

himself judge and jury acting three executing.

Art, in faith God express-ing; subjective relationships in God implicitly rooting;

as viewers the films reviewing, biology and materiality grounding, inter subjective growing, individuals and community maturing, subjective-objectivity developing, Incarnation implicitly living.

Thus in films , and in life and vice versa--- concepts— subjective, objective, ,

faith inter connected with culture

better understanding-- making faith always present always a gift, a present, leading to understanding in kenotic Love.

PATRIARCHS AND MATRIARCHS:--A GENEROUS GOD, GENEROUS WO/MEN.

Commentator: --- God created the universe expressing the origins of life.  **I**n the Middle East patriarchy arose as people first migrated there, affecting the whole world. Do tell us more about yourself, Ur, and your times.

Ab.

O Holy night love shines bright sin sidelighted grace highlighted. Strength takes flight You are weak in delight In your might.

In fright by this and excited by it in confusion high we cite our plight to You believing You will set things right.

With no gold frankincense and myrrh like Levites we offer our mite to you RULER/KING OF THE UNIVERSE

ALLELUIA -- FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH

IN THE EYES OF BIBLICAL:-- I left Ur with my father and possessions. Ur was a part of the Babylonian Empire of Hamurabi. My father was a busy trader; I learnt his trade. He traded in dyes in the huge markets of Ur. By age 75 he was determined to leave Ur; he saw no prospects there for himself and his children. Introspecting, God had different plans for me using my family to lead me along His chosen path. Itwas an instance of the sacred in the secular.

Commentator;-- What was it like leaving Ur for you?

Ab:-- Mother had died; I was very attached to her, so it was not hard to leave Ur. Perhaps this was a reason for my father leaving Ur. I did find it difficult in a way-- I had friends and knew life there. En route I would be with strangers; my father did not know where he would settle; just as well; I may have become attached to that town. The journey out of Ur was safe except for *idyah* -- a natural problem preventing rescue of Ayatollah’s American hostages. In Haran, my father died being 210. I felt lost, the next generation became my responsibility.

Commentator:--That you left Ur when mother died was an instance of the sacred in the secular, revealing the sacredness of life. To be first human, then Christian, then religious each stage nurturing the human in us is our first duty. Besides God does not discriminate---God spoke to you, called you long before there were Jews, whose great grandfather you are.

Ab.:-- God first spoke in Haran after father died promising his blessing, making me father of many generations. I would look into myself, see God, which I learnt from mother. The feeling of finding God in my heart grew after this first experience of meeting God in my heart and with my head. Looking back on the areas we passed in Ur, the whole Empire of Babylon was polytheistic. Mother was monotheistic influencing father. I did not ask for details; I wish I had pushed her harder. Today, you need a subjective-objectivity to see and hear God with heart and head, which is another way of saying that faith is faith plus reason. Faith is subjective and objective, to those seeing, hearing, with their hearts and heads, leaving Faith to God who alone knows the depths of our hearts and heads. Faith like much in life cannot be quantified by us.

Leaving Urs, I travelled 700 miles reaching Iraq’s borders, 700 to Syria, 800 to Egypt, and settled in Canaan. Today this is impossible to replicate, nationalisms being hefty.

In Bethel, I wondered how I would inherit the promises when I had no son, and my wife old. It was unthinkable that a female could be chosen by God to inherit God’s promises—an instance of the lack of belief in the sacred and secular. Of course, if a daughter inherited the promise, which was through her for the world, patriarchy would have the boot with two hoots. But this was the Early Bronze Age. These insights did not come to me all at once but grew slowly in consciousness as I had to see life with the eyes of my heart. I understand your feminist activists fighting the church but loving God in Jesus. In Mary, God wiped out patriarchy.

Commentator:--­ This is very interesting talking about faith being subjective-objective, God’s revelation to and through you, patriarchy in the early Bronze Age, and wiped out in Mary.

Ab.:-- I feel matriarchy existed before patriarchy, which developed into a matrilineal system. Matriarchy was important because women were important in the home. Her importancearose from her functions, not from the power they resulted in, a resulting key being non duality leadingto happiness. Functions were important not power. This reveals the skewed relationship between power and function which effect your entire life. Life at home was largely tribal unlike in nuclear families. This life is clouded in the mist of antiquity. To control women a matrilineal system developed, followed by patriarchy in varying degrees of severity.

Commentator:--Great Abraham. We also remember your heart being sore at you slaying Isaac.

Abraham:-- Believing under the influence of culture thatGod wanted me to slay Isaac, but listening to God in my heart told me the opposite, that Isaac would inherit the promises. I believed this with all my heart and soul. God talks to us through the circumstances of our lives, expressed culturally, never going against the laws of nature, directly intervening in life only in Mary,s pregnancy, never in the consequences of it--Mary-Joseph sorrowed when Jesus was lost in the temple, she died a thousand deaths during his passion and crucifixion, they made the journey to Bethlehem in an advanced state of pregnancy and the birth of their Son in a stable, Simeon’s prophecy came true. Thus faith is difficult to distinguish from culture. Only in looking into our hearts can we make this distinction in faith. Thus a subjective objectivity is very, very important.

Culture has a colossal power over us. You must understand the role culture plays in interfaith marriages. It is easier for couples in an interfaith marriage, if both are of a secular culture, a high tec culture, easier to live together but harder on the children growing up with secular values which are not enough for life. I feel you have a long way to go existentially. Instead of banging your head on a wall, it would help to resolve issues arising from a secular culture, mindful of values in it discriminating its uses in humane ways, like Queen Elizabeth who believed in God and in respect for secular values and people.

Commentator:-­ We now turn to Jacob and Joseph for trends expressive of redemption.

Jacob:-- I was a liar and cheater yet I stood for Rebecca accepting what U. Laban said, it being cultural. I think God does not see evil in us; human consideration of evil being mainly cultural. Besides, I listened to God with my heart though my surroundings were unsupportive. God helped me on my way to Canaan and back, even wrestling with me, promising to keep Her/His pomises. I recognized God who is always faithful though faithless we be. God’s promises being expressed culturally, are generally considered spiritual not cultural. We do our part, often unknowingly, helping God to move the plot of ongoing redemption in daily life. I did not know that I was part of the plot in a significant way. This is where faith comes in making this redemption business tricky being expressed in culture and faith.

Faith known to us in our bodies in a growing consciousness, listening with head and heart, is part of the plot of redemption. I feel like grandfather Abraham, I met God with head and heart, holding nothing against anyone, not against U. Laban, not against Esau -- who was one of us when father died seeing us around him together. Grandfather Abraham fought for certain causes, believing in family, rescuing U. Lot, and most of all in God. Sinceyou are to move into the noogenetic age, you need to be largely concerned about current social issues and never to neglect talking to God. Grandfather Ab and U Lot lived in a simpler society than you.

Commentator:--What do you think this means for us in our day and time when nuclear families have/are broken/breaking up?

Jacob:-- U. Lot broke away from grandfather as the resources of the land could not support both. Grandfather was not greedy and gave U. Lot first priority, so they broke up peacefully. Grandfather rescued U. Lot from the kings of Choaladamer. With you too distances, break ups, must be peaceful both sides keeping in touch with each other to the extent possible, neither being righteously, aggressively, demanding of the other, because God cares for all God’s children. Our bodies tell us to be aware of our culture**,** our humanity too. We call God OUR FATHER. God comes first—before parents, siblings. Therefore Jesus said, “Where were the other 99?; only one returned to give God thanks and praise”. Lk.17, 17-18 Jesus also said, “Who does the will of my father, they are my mother, siblings.” Mt. 12, 48-50. Jesus was not Catholic, not Christian, but he did it. My grandfather too did this though he was from ancient Mesopotamia. I think I tried to be humane and this is what God wants, to the extent of making us self healing, being gifted with self reflectiveness. I introspected; every human is a cocreator; I took this seriously.

Commentator:-- Historians say history is transcendental. Our humanity is an eternal value, making history transcendental. Personal circumstances, history and culture change, but our humanity remains; it has utmost priority. We need to be reminded of this supporting each other. We now turn to Joseph. What does his life teach us?!!! --- Hi Joseph. We look forward to hearing about you.

Joseph:----My father cheated at the instigation of my mother Rachel, lying earlier when she stole the family gods showing the link between faith and culture. Covering up for cheating father lied, yet he was a good hearted man. He realized he had made U. Esau’s life miserable which tells us why we should not lie. We learn from the experiences of life and therefore faith increases. U. Esau, being humane was near father Jacob when he died.

Commentator:-- Though the Bible does show that faith and culture are linked, its primary purpose is to show that God is the origin of all life. ---Tell us more of your personal life.

Joseph:-- I was born in the 1600s BC, in the middle Bronze Age to Jacob and Rachel, in Paddam-Aram**.**  I was the apple of my father’s eye. I don’t know why, probably, because he loved mother abundantly. I missed U. Esau much. I received bits of info about him. I tried meeting him secretly, as father would be angry.

Commentator:-- You must have felt hurt being sold to a caravan.

Joseph:-- I did not feel too hurt, I felt father loved me, besides being foolish, dancing in my coat of many colours, reveling in the jealousy of my brothers. Having sold me, coming to Egypt for food, family unknowing that I was in charge of the granaries, second only to Pharoah, I felt I was God’s instrument. God used my family to fulfill God’s plan, leading me into deeper interiority, causing me to listen with head-heart.

Commentator:--let us examine thislistening with head and heart in the lives of Biblical matriarchs-- Tamar and Ruth.

Tamar:-- I risked going against culture; women were seen without minds. My family, my father-in-law, was very conventional but I defied culture, an instance of the sacred and secular, God intervened in life through me and I am counted an ancestor of your Jesus. Jesus favoured the down cast, so did levirate law, providing for our social and economic security, having priority in God’s sight. My twins Perez, the ancestor of King David, meant ‘break-through’ and Zerah meant East, brightness. He was considered my first born and inheritor. Yet, God treated Perez as my first born showing that God’s choices are primary--gender, genealogy, caste, class, religion, migrants, victims of sexual abuse etc are secondary. The inclusion of women in the genealogy of Jesus revealed the role of their men in their lives.

Commentator:-- In our highly secularized culture we need to recapture the values of family, sex and love. And so we turn to Ruth.

Ruth:-- I do not like when you sing about me at your wedding masses, and leave it at that, not being counter cultural in life, giving the feeling that you are pious and ritualistic. The story about Boaz and me is a love story, revealing God,s involvement in our daily lives. It is also the infinite love story of God for all people. When I requested Boaz to spread the corner of his garment over me (Ruth 3:9) it had cultural meanings, high lighting my desire to be a faithful part of God’s people. This is what I received from Naomi and the reason for sticking to her. The word for “corner” in Hebrew means “wings.” I asked Boaz: to protect me like a bird protects her young, to be my redeemer like God. This is *hesed,* an instance of the secular in the sacred. I acted on Naomi’s instructions, an instance of the secular in the sacred. I did not know much of Jewish culture. This showed my ma-in-laws concern for me which I reciprocated. Concern for others is human and humane. My back ground was non patriarchal whereas in Indian patriarchy the mother in law is a problem, the result of culture and our blind acceptance of it.

Commentator:--I admire you Ruth sticking to your ma-in-law when the situation was hopeless, cutting you off from family and society which though patriarchal provided minimal protection and provision; and gleaning in a low status job, when you could return home to your culture. Today immigrants miss their culture more than their families, though families embody social values too. Besides, it was highly non egoistical of you to ask Boaz to protect you. It reflects very beautifully on Jewish history and culture. You are a great inspiration to us.

Ruth:--I was rewarded for this, an instance of the sacred in the secular, with a wonderful family life though forty and Boaz 80---- it was so unexpected. Besides, I became assimilated unexpectedly into the people of God, the great, great grandmother of David and Jesus, physical proof of being assimilated into the people of God. GOD IS NEVER, NEVER OUTDONE IN GENEROSITY and God Is VERY, VERY PHYSICAL IN Gods EXPRESSIONS!!! because there can be no doubt about the physical. This is the primary way in which we can understand God. God meets us the whole way through.

1. Vipassana [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Name of Vipassana centre, Hill of *Dhamma* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Part of Dhammagiri only for long retreats *van* =garden,*tap=m*editation [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. JEMS my initials [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Wisdom, Path, Community [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. rock of morality [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Sebastian Elavathingal, CMI, “From the Image of God to the kingdom of God. The Church as a Creative Space” *Asian* H*orizons* Vol 6 No4 Dec 2012 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. A. J. Appasamy, *Temple Bells,Readings from Hindu Religious Literature* (Calcutta: YMCA Publishing House, year unavailable), 62. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. <http://www.social-consciousness.com/2013/01/the-evolution-of-consciousness.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Vipassana [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Name of Vipassana centre, giri=hill Hill of Dhamma [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
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