Who will save your soul? In search of a humane God

By Michael Brock

Serving Two Masters

O-Dec20.gxp_Layout 1 12/19/17 4:59 PM Page 2

"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other..."

At the end of last summer I went to a celebration of the Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah, with a friend of mine. My background is Irish Catholic, but everyone was cordial and welcomed me to the celebration. While watching the Tiger game I got into a brief discussion of religion with one of the guests and I told him I didn't believe in human

He laughed and said, "Maybe you'll become Jewish."

I said, "There are worse things to be, but I have too much faith in God to believe in religion."

He laughed again, but that is really how I feel. As much as I am convinced there is a God, I see why others don't believe. Most non-believers' arguments don't have as much to do with God as they do with religious trappings: All religions ask you to believe things that you know are scientifically impossible. They tell you in subtle or not so subtle ways that you are better than other people, and that those who believe otherwise are wrong or misguided, or perhaps fundamentally evil.

Religion is based in culture and most people believe what they believe because that is their culture; it's what they were born into. Hence, historically, while religion has tried to teach its adherents to behave morally toward those of its own persuasion, it has been the rationale for mistreating those who don't believe as we do, or who worship differently. These differences have even served as a justification for genocide, especially in the 20th century.

Ethnocentrism, the belief in the superiority of one's culture and beliefs, probably predates civilization. The need to band together against the elements, wild animals and hostile tribes, and for the individuals to sacrifice their own immediate needs for the needs of the group requires the belief that those needs are somehow superior one's own needs and that it is right and just to make sacrifices for the good of the group. One rationale for making that sacrifice is patriotism, and religion has often been married to patriotism, as evidenced by the phrase, "God and country." The notion that God sanctions the killing of those who have a different language or culture, even though they may share the same God and fundamental beliefs, has persisted throughout history, and is as prevalent today as it ever was.

Nor is this a belief and attitude that is confined to wartime. A few years back I read an authorized biography of the Beatles in which they confirmed that they had stopped touring because of multiple death threats made from America's "Bible Belt" after John Lennon's comments that the Beatles were more popular than Jesus. In fact, as William F. Buckley pointed out at the time, local gods have always been more popular than the Universal God, so it was probably the case that the Beatles were more popular than Jesus, and no one should be surprised by that. But the reason for the death threats against the Beatles was the threat some Christians felt to themselves and their world view by someone as transient as a pop star saying in essence that he was more important than the person they believe is a human incarnation of God. Moreover, any truth to the statement aside, and regardless of the tenor of the times, for one to be audacious enough to quite different, and in many ways

claim that the message of "sex, drugs and rock and roll" in a benign anarchy was more important than Jesus' Message of universal, altruistic love, non-violent mercy and forgiveness, and selfcontrol, seemed to many unforgivable, and deserving the ultimate punishment of violent retaliation.

Despite the seeming contradiction of that position, the reaction resonates for the same reasons that others have reacted violently to perceived or real insults to religious leaders. Such attacks or insults represent a threat to the underlying presumptions of an entire culture or people about the meaning of life and one's existence on the planet. For all the hard evidence we have about the makeup of the atmosphere of Jupiter, or what happens when you split a uranium atom, or power aircraft by controlled burning of carbon fuels, nobody really knows why we exist, what the ultimate meaning of life is, or what happens when we die. The best we have are someone's opinions. It is the unknowability of absolute truth and the importance of the questions religious leaders answer that give those opinions such great weight. We need to feel that we matter, whether individually, or as extension of our culture—we need certainty about the uncertain.

Isn't this ultimately why we are willing to argue in favor of something we know can't be true? To believe that the world was created in six days? That a human can be divine? That God will listen to the pleading of humans and subvert the laws of physics to alter the course of human history? And isn't this why we offer these alleged "miracles" as proof of what might be true, but for which there is no irrefutable proof: that there is a Master of the Universe and that this Master is aware of and cares about my race and myself as an individual, small as I am in the vast, unexplained and unknowable expanse of space?

However, by explaining God and the Universe in a way that favors myself and my group, I have also succeeded in placing others in a less favorable position, not only in my eyes, but in the He answers the guest, "You asked eyes of the Ultimate Authority. have committed perhaps the most common and the most grievous of all human sins, I have given God my attributes and my preferences, and rationalized my dehumanizing of other humans, and indeed all other life forms because of my perception that I am God's favorite and that others are less favored. Therefore, they are less worthy of what I have or want, perhaps even less worthy of existence than me or those like me.

In the studies of what traits distinguish a murderer, researchers consistently find that murders have the ability to objectify others, and see them as less than human. For whatever inherent or cultural reasons, some humans have an easier time dehumanizing others than most of us. The great irony is that this person, when given the rationale of religious superiority, is capable of atrocities they would not think of without it. And while religion may make most of us more moral and less self-centered than we would be without it, this particular personality now has a free pass to indulge whatever antisocial impulses they may have because it is what God expects—even demands—of him.

A relationship with God, particularly the relationship talked about by mystics—those who believe in a direct person relationship with and experience of the infinite, like Jesus, Gandhi, Buber and Hafiz—is something that is

diametrically opposed to this ethnocentric and political view of God, and something much more universal. For them, what one believes, or whether one strictly follows the "rules," is not as important as a growing experience of, and relationship with a God that cannot be manipulated or used for one's own purposes. He/She/It must be approached in humble prayer and/or meditation; and will then leads us through subtle pressure down a strange and unforeseeable path to serve Its will through surrender of our will and ego to a Higher Purpose.

The mystic is characterized by disinterest in immutable absolutes of behavior, hard and fast rules, however good, are perceived as guidelines that may define the boundaries of a relationship, but can never address all aspects of the subtle course of life or interaction with others. There is an understanding that one who feels they own the truth is perhaps the one who is furthest from a relationship with God; that the universe is in constant motion and no hard and fast rules can apply to all situations.

Love is the common theme that runs through all mystical writings; love of God first of all, then by extension love for our fellow humans and, ultimately, all of God's creation. Moreover, love is not a feeling, love is service and sacrifice of pride, ego and selfish-"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you," Jesus is quoted in Matthew², and, "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.3" Gandhi saw the psychological advantage in doing this. By treating his enemies, the representatives of the occupying British Empire, with respect and dignity he ultimately shamed them into leaving India to work out its own issues without resorting to violent rebellion. There were exceptions to be sure, but it was a comparatively peaceful transition to self-rule.

Persian Sufi poet Hafiz has a poem in which a he is asked in a hypothetical conversation about the truth of his guest's visions, and whether they are from God. me if I thought your visions were they make you become more human, more kind to every creature and plant that you know."5

Love and kindness are the recurrent themes of the mystics of all faiths and all ages. It is their passion and their obsession, and goes far beyond concerns about the rules or the minimum requirements. The question they ask is, "How can I give more?" "How can I be a better servant?" "How can I surrender more of myself, and in so doing, merge with God, who is both the source and recipient of all love?" It was this question Francis of Assisi addressed when he wrote: "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love; for it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; it is in dying that we are born again to eternal life."

And, as Hafiz states the same concept somewhat differently: "Admit something: Everyone you see, you say to them, 'Love me'...Why not become the one who lives with a full moon in each eye that is always saying, with that sweet moon language, what every other eye in this world is

(See BROCK, page 3)



Allegorical economics: Storytelling with mathematical allegories (part two)

ISLES OF ATLANTIS -- REFLECTION

By JOHN F. SASE, PH.D. GERARD J. SENICK, GENERAL EDITOR JULIE GALE SASE, COPYEDITOR

"Wise men talk because they have something to say, fools because they have to say something. Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.'

—Plato, ancient Greek philosopher

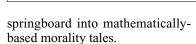
Last month, we began to explore Allegorical Economics by delving into the source of all economic understanding—ourselves as human storytellers. Economists and Attorneys tell stories in both the classroom and the courtroom. Attorneys need to condense client backgrounds and their respective cases in order to evoke understanding and empathy from jurors. This month, we address the issue of using numbers in the stories that we tell in the courtroom and the classroom.

Having taught more than 10,000 students of Economics and Business, I (Dr. Sase) have learned to keep math-laden examples as simple as possible without losing the meaning and intent of the underlying economic story. I accomplish this by using "easy" numbers. For example, instead of using a number such as \$357.84, I have found that the rounded value of \$360 appears more comprehensible for students, especially when the story contains numbers and calculations throughout the tale. I find that limiting the math (whenever appropriate) to elementary addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division tends to provide both understanding and a universal appeal. However, the simplicity in the calculations, as well as the numbers themselves, are not enough. The interrelation of the values provides the necessary ingredient for following the mathematical progression in a story.

Plato understood this concept of simplicity and clarity well. He developed allegories by using the mathematics that his predecessor Pythagoras brought to Greece. As a young man, Pythagoras traveled from his home on the Aegean island of Samos to Giza, Egypt, where he devoted two decades of his life to being an initiate at the Temple School at Giza. Following the Babylonian invasion of Egypt and the burning of the school, Pythagoras, fellow initiates, and teachers were captured and taken to Babylon. During their years of captivity, they assimilated knowledge from Babylonia as well as from more ancient civilizations. Finally, Pythagoras returned home to the Isle of Samos at the age of 56. He devoted the remainder of his life to teaching in the Mediterranean region and to apply his knowledge of mathematics to the fields of Art, Music, and the Sciences. One still can observe the influence of his mathematical methods throughout these fields, where we find a basis in the sums, products, and dividends of the powers of "2" and "3." Before we begin our tutorial example, we will consider the methods of Pythagoras in greater detail.

Within the century after the death of Pythagoras, the mathematical relationships that he introduced found their way into the allegories composed by Plato, especially those concerning the cities of Atlantis, Athens, and Magnesia. These stories continue to resonate with economists, musicians, and others in modern

Contrary to popular belief, the elaborate descriptions of the structure of and behavior in Atlantis were created by Plato as an allegorical tale rather than a factual one. He appears to use the Atlantean story in order to present a cosmology based upon the interrelationship of numbers. Plato's other allegories about the ancient Greek cities of Athens and Magnesia support this current view. The real cities of his time bore little resemblance to those in his stories, which use the locales and basic details of these cities as a



Four centuries later, John the Theologian constructed a similar allegory while living on the Aegean Isle of Patmos, which is twenty-one miles from Pythagoras's birthplace of Samos. This writing of John has emerged as the text known throughout Christianity as the Book of Revelations. In his writing that has with colorful apocalyptic images embedded, the text contains many of the same numerical constructs and relationships used by Plato, based upon the work of Pythagoras.

The ancient tools of Pythagoras have been brought forward in western civilization through other writings of the past two millennia. In our following tutorial, we explore the application of these tools to develop a tale about the growth of financial assets through interest rates and inflation rates. Here, Economics interfaces with

Our simple example contains four essential elements: the locations, the players, the storyline, and the number palette. Some aspects of our story come from "old wisdom" that I learned from my grandfather along the shore of Tawas Bay as well as from other interesting childhood experiences. Other aspects emerge from varibegin our tutorial, let us identify these essentials in further detail.

The Locations For our tale, we borrow two locations from Zothique, a series of short stories by the American writer Clark Ashton published in Weird Tales magazine in the 1930s. In 1970, Ballantine Books published these stories in a paperback edition edited by Lin Carter. This work collects all sixteen tales of the Zothique cycle as well as a related poem by the author. Smith sets his stories on Zothique, the last continent on Earth, in a fardistant future. His locations include this continent along with the mysterious Isle of Na'at that exists in the sea beyond. These locales provide the necessary basis for the circular-story progression known as "The Hero's Journey." (We discussed this concept, which was made popular by American mythologist Joseph Campbell, in last month's column.) In this month's column, we use Smith's locales to describe a journey that takes a fishing boat and a crew of 24 on a challenging odyssey from the known land of Zothique to the unknown Isle of Na'at and back home again. I have used this article as an homage to Smith to create my tale. Some of the details herein also are taken from my song "Zothique" that I wrote between undergrad and grad school.

The Players The crew from Zothique is an egalitarian group with subgroups identified by the special tasks that they perform. For example, a traditional fishing boat that can hold a crew of 24 along with their prospective catch may include twelve interchangeable rowers as well as two crewpersons on the steering board at the stern. Also, some of the crew members ply their navigational skills at various moments of the voyage. For example, one guides the boat outward to the best fishing "grounds." Later, the one-at-thehead (the head being the large timber that extends upward at the bow from the stem that rises from the keel) stands and guides the vessel, crew, and catch safely back to shore.

In the land of Zothique, we encounter a group of six wise women who pass along a "special gift" of 360 Magifish to the crew through a chosen steward. These powerful, magical fish appear as the "McGuffin." Film director Alfred Hitchcock used this term to describe something of value that everyone wants to get. The Magifish McGuffin forms the basis for our economic calcula-

On the Isle of Na'at, the crew encounters groups of Na'atians attired in long dark robes. Some of the Na'atians share vast learning and knowledge; however, others have a darker side. They are necromancers who raise the corpses of sailors who have drowned after crashing upon the rocks. Restored to a semi-life, these zombies must do the bidding of the necromancers.

The Storyline

Our economic storyline focuses on the Magifish that propagate at a rate of 7% annually. As these ous writers whom I respect and fish age, their value diminishes at who have influenced me. As we a rate of 4% per annum. Our story spans 60 years in this exercise of nominal and real interest rates compounded "simply" each year. When the crew returns home from their odyssey, the steward will divide the cache of Magifish that had been left behind in the care of the aquarist, a professional caretaker of fish. The steward will make this distribution of Magifish through a pre-determined formu-

The Number Palette The core set of Pythagorean numbers used in many allegories of the past 2,500 years include the values of "2" taken to the zero through the ninth power and "3" taken to the zero through sixth powers. The ratios of the powers of "2" to the power of "3," along with their sums, differences, and products, form the basic building blocks for these economic stories. With a heightened intuition, the resulting values allow the audience to follow the progression of

simple interrelated numbers. In the following example, we use these values:

"4" ("2" squared);

times "3");

"6" ("2" times "3"); "7" ("2" squared plus "3");

"12" ("2" squared times "3"); "15 (the sum of "2" plus "3,"

"24" ("2" cubed times "3"); "25" (the sum of "2" plus "3"

times itself); "36" ("2" squared times "3"

squared); "45" (the sum of "2" plus "3," times "3" squared);

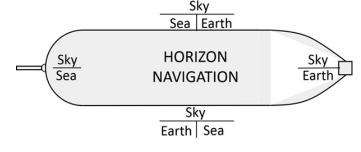
"60" ("2" times "3" times "2"

times the sum of "2" and "3"); "108" ("3" times "36");

"72" ("2" cubed times "3" squared); and "144" ("24" times "2"

squared). Also, "10" ("2 times the sum

of "2" and "3") to the first, second, and third powers are used as multipliers to take values to the



hundreds and thousands. A Fisher's Tale: Similarities to Any Fish, Living or Dead, Is Purely Coincidental

In this section, let us use the six wise women from Zothique as examples. These women own a 25% interest in a fishing boat, secured by 360 Magifish. Before leaving for an unknown place, these wise women transfer their school of Magifish to the crew of the boat with explicit instructions on how to care for them. The wise women place these valued fish in the care of the one-at-the-head, whom they have chosen to serve as the steward.

Magifish breed once per annum. However, most of these fish live longer than a human lifetime. On average, the fish propagate at a rate of 7% per year. The one-at-the-head contemplates the task at hand and asks, "If I spend my day babysitting a school of Magifish, what does that make me at the end of the day?" In response to this concern, the wise women find an aquarist and entrust the feeding and breeding of the fish to him or her. This decision frees the one-at-the-head and the rest of the crew to set out on their long odyssey.

The crew sets the sails of its

crimson craft in order to brave the dark waters that surround the mystical Isle of Na'at. The crewpersons feel the necessity to embark on this mission covertly and quickly because many in the land of Zothique misunderstood the crew due to their involvement in the matter of the Magifish. Some members of the crew were berated and even beaten for their thoughts about the matter, which they held as good. As the crew heads outward to sea, they find themselves engulfed by an inexplicable storm, which is swirling with weird energy and strange lights. The terror of this storm puts them at risk of running aground on what they believe is the mythical Na'at, a belief that comes from their spotting of the legendary natives dressed in long dark robes. The navigators of the fishing boat manage to bring the crew to safety on shore. However, other vessels have smashed upon the rocks. The dead bodies of their crews have washed ashore, and the necromancers turned into

Upon the Isle, our crewpersons remain alive outside of the bounds of space and time through the darkness of the long night. Upon this island retreat, they "inherit" good powers from the dawn of life through the source of all creation. The crewpersons develop higher levels of awareness and wisdom than they could have achieved in Zothique through delving further into the caverns of their subconscious. The crew proceeds to gather the intellectual and emotional means that will allow them to avoid the confusion that they expect to find among the various collective schemes in Zothique when, or if, they return home.

Space and time re-emerge as the morning breaks. The Na'atians signal the crew that the hour has come for them to return to the land of Zothique, laden with the knowledge that they begot on their journey outside of time and space. The power that envelops them speaks softly as their new life-purpose resounds within. As boat and crew return from Na'at, the navigators bring the vessel past the shoals and rocky cliffs that separate the sea from the earth along the sky/sea/earth horizon. The one-at-the-head focuses on the sky/earth horizon along the shore to guide the boat to solid ground. The crew members reenter Zothique but hear not a sound. Some people of Zothique gathered on shore gaze at the crewpersons in silence. Though the members of the crew feel the same as they did when they departed the day before, they soon discover that sixty years of "real" time have passed in their homeland.

This long passage of time and (See SASE, page 3)

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BROCK: Who will save your soul? In search of a humane God

(Continued from page 3) dying to hear?"

My daughter embraces a formal religion, but like all who wish to do so and stay sane, she is in a process of continual evaluation of what aspects she accepts as true to her understanding of God, and which ring false and are not to be given much weight. She tells me that without the existence of the religious structure there would be no source for the development of my (or presumably any mystic's) concept of God. She has a point. Monotheism did not come out of thin air, it was a concept that grew out of the mutual group consciousness of the Jews, Christians, Muslims and other monotheistic

But the emphasis for mystics has always been the similarities and what unites us all, and not the theological divide; a divide built of theories that cannot be proven, but only debated and fought over. What we can know of God can be experienced and demonstrated. inferred and given voice in art and music, but can never be fully grasped in linear thought or defined in theology. In the words of Lao Tzu, "There is a way that can be spoken, but it is not the Infinite Way." And though they may be intertwined and inseparable, God and religion will always represent for me an example of Jesus' admonition that one cannot serve two masters. Jesus said that one cannot serve both God and money, but it may be equally true that one cannot serve both God and religion; we will wind up committed to one and, in one way or another, forsaking the other.

> Are Science and God Incompatible?

Before the advent of modern science, religion was presumed to have all the answers to the meaning of life. It explained how the world came to be and how it functioned. Myths and legends of the many gods of the Greeks, Romans and Persians depicted a battle between good and evil acted out by anthropomorphic deities, who could be moral and immoral by turns, who interacted with humans, and sometimes bore children with them. Good didn't always win, and there was an uneasy and frequently changing equilibrium. Natural phenomena were explained by the whims. moods and favor or disfavor of the

Except that today most of the world believes in one God who rules over all, not a lot has changed. This God can still be seen as capricious, and as favoring one group over another. Much human conflict is still rooted in which group God favors, and humans still petition this God to bless their endeavors, from love to warfare. When their desires are satisfied they give thanks, and attribute their good fortune to God's favor. When they are disappointed they may vacillate between feeling unworthy, and blaming God for betrayal. It is a great human desire is to be certain

of some ultimate meaning, and it whether the universe was formed is still a major function of religion to provide that meaning.

Since the advent of modern science at the time of the renaissance, more and more natural phenomena have been explained as functions of scientific laws. Storms are the result of the heating and cooling of the earth's atmosphere, earthquakes are caused by shifts in huge tectonic plates, and the planets revolve around the sun because of gravity. It is generally accepted that the universe began with a big bang, and that our solar system is about 4.5 billion years old. Most scientists believe that humans evolved from lower forms of life, and these theories are generally accepted because more primitive forms of humans and their civilizations have been discovered by archeologists, and their ages determined by carbon dating.

Science has made possible an explosion in population and medicine and technologies that give more people longer life at a higher quality than has ever been possible in human history. Consequently, few people doubt the underlying principles of modern science, and even if we don't understand a lot of the concepts, we certainly see the proof in the pudding. Much of what was previously thought to be literally true about the creation of the earth and life as we know it in six days by an anthropomorphic God is now thought by most to be a mythopoeic explanation by human storytellers who lacked the scientific background to provide a more accurate account of historical events. They are widely viewed as fiction.

But if religious accounts of events are fictionalized, does that mean they do not contain any truth, or that what religions have to tell us about how to live have no merit? Has science replaced religion?

Some would argue it has, and that religious explanations for events are no longer necessary now that we have more accurate explanations for natural phenomena. But even though scientists as a group are more skeptical than the general population, roughly half of them believe in God or a Higher Power. It may not be the personal God of the Bible, it may be the impersonal God of Spinoza (the great clockmaker as it were) which was the God that Einstein famously referred to in his statement the "God does not play dice with men.'

Why would people with a better explanation believe in God? Perhaps it is because Science can explain the "how" of things with a fair degree of certainty, and in so doing it may have replaced one of the functions of a Creator, but there is really no science to tell us "why." Even with the discovery of the Higgs-Boson particle, there has never been, and probably could never be any material evidence that would prove or disprove the existence of God.

How do we prove intent? as in

by intent vs. accident? When I look at the universe, or that part of it I can experience, I am amazed by two thoughts: that the world seems to be so amazingly well-organized down to the minutest detail, and that the world seems to be entirely random and unpredictable. Every discovery and explanation for events seems to invite many more questions and this process seems to go on eternally. Everything we know seems to emphasize how much we don't know, and suggests that what we

will never know is infinite.

Some scientists have suggested that there is a limit to infinity, but is that possible? Is there really any possible end to discovery? Sure, when the sun becomes a red giant and the world we live in ends, or if humans make an end to life on earth before that happens, there will be an end to human discovery. But did scientific law begin with humans? And will it end when we end? Surely not. Universal order has existed since the beginning of time and will continue as long as there is a physical universe. So while there are new discoveries every day and "the only constant is change," there is also, as the writer of Ecclesiastes said, "nothing new under the sun8."

Marcus Aurelius said of human existence that if you live to be 40 you've seen it all. So there is the eternal paradox of immutable law and continual permutations. Does anyone believe this will change? That there will be no more change? Quantum physics notwithstanding, will there be a change in the laws governing the physical universe? Will gravity cease to exist? Will there be no variations to endless repetitions of the natural universe, and will the universe cease to evolve?

But evolve toward what? What does it all mean? Science is incapable of providing those answers. And if religion is fiction, isn't it true that humans always have and always will resort to fiction as a way of explaining what cannot be explained in any other way? Why are stories so important to humans? Can anyone go through life without them? And who but a reductionist wants to hear only stories that are devoid of imagination and relate only facts? Are such people capable of scientific discovery?

To be controlled by dogma, whether religious or scientific, is to be rigid and joyless, the opposite of spiritual and opposed to the spirit of discovery that informs both scientific and artistic pursuits. The human who is fully alive and creative is able to extrapolate from what is what could be, and to recombine elements of fact or fiction into new truths that resonate in the human soul. It is not a zero sum game, fact or fiction, science or faith in greater force. Not all truth can be quantified in mathematical or scientific terms. Even if the truths that are important to an individual can be, how do they quantify the

wonder and precision, the sense of satisfaction that one gains through discovery? Why do they not delight (as some do!) in smashing the world to bits instead?

Indeed, scientists' discoveries have no innate morality; they can be used for good or for evil purposes. Most are used for both, and there is to be sure an ongoing struggle between the individual good and the good of all. And why does one care about whether a thing is good or evil? The words presume meaning—a meaning that nihilists don't acknowledge, or if they do, define in a way that no reasonable person would agree with. Scientists presume their discoveries will lead to a better world, but will it? What is a better world? Better for whom and in what way? Can values be quantified in such a way as to satisfy some kind of absolute standard? Even the nearly absolute standards of science? Especially the absolute standards of science!

Yet values are real and necessary. Those who say that science answers all of life's questions and that religion is not necessary take so much for granted that they would be shocked if they saw how much of life they actually take on faith. Not everyone assumes there is a reason to get up in the morning, or carry on with life. Does science provide that meaning? Science may be that meaning for the scientist, but does it provide a hard and fast reason for enduring what Thomas Wolfe called "the hard and purposeless suffering of life"10? Science can offer no ultimate meaning, and no solution for the existential crisis. As psychiatrist Victor Frankl concluded in his book about surviving the Holocaust, "Man's Search for Meaning," stripped of all outward trappings, one makes a decision that life has meaning. For him the meaning was the memory of having loved and having been loved.11

Freud defined mental health as the ability to love and work productively. It might be said that to work productively is to love, because love is service. Love is not merely a feeling, it is behavior. Therefore work—any kind of work done or product made as a service to others—is an act of love. We all recognize love, but can science quantify it? Love is essential to the existence of every human being and every society, and without it neither can survive. And Freud himself had no explanation for why any one person loves another; he said there was no explanation. Even if science can measure what part of the brain is activated when we love. can love, or any human experience, be reduced to its corresponding biochemistry?

Ultimately, science is a kind of truth, as law may be a kind of truth, or an approach to the truth, but it is not the whole truth. Making sense of mystery is an entirely different kind of truth, and one that may even be more necessary to the human soul/psyche than scientific truth. It existed long before science and has never ceased to be a human need. Anyone who has gone to a movie or a play, or listened to a pop song or a symphony has experienced some kind of distillation of their emotional reaction to the human experience, and has felt some degree of satisfaction when the story or music gave them some clarity that squared with their own experi-

So essential is this experience that Shakespeare was led to expound in "The Merchant of Venice:'

"The man that hath no music in himself.

"Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds, "Is fit for treasons, stratagems

and spoils: "The motions of his spirit are dull as night "And his affections dark as

Erebus: "Let no such man be trust-

ed...¹²" There is ultimately no conflict

between a spiritual way of life and a belief in scientific discovery, even though there may be conflict between literal interpretations of religious writings and what we know to be scientifically possible. Stephen Hawking's efforts notwithstanding, there is no way to prove or disprove the existence of God, but the belief that life has some intrinsic meaning and the ability to define what that meaning is for one's self is essential for all of us to go on living. Those who can no longer convince them-

I no longer see conflict between what the scientist defines as meaning and what I define as meaning, though I might call it God and they might call it scientific law. We are both searching for and perceiving order. We are like the mystics of all religions, who, though they are coming from very different points on the religious spectrum, are constantly having the same experience and discovering and rediscovering the same truths. What exists is what exists, and all of us at any given time can apprehend only a small slice of existence, and only though the particular lens with which we have been provided. Still, we are all viewing the same truth, filled with the same mystery, and hopefully finding enough meaning there to keep going and find existence worth the effort.

The Politics of Religion

In his book about the historical Jesus, titled, "Zealot, the Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth," Reza Aslan points out that the Christian world did not become united about the divinity of Jesus until the Council of Nicaea in 325. He correctly attributes this event to the conversion of Constantine, Emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, to Christianity. What he does not delve into were the reasons it was important to the emperor to have theological consistency among Christians. However, if Christianity was going to be the State religion, it seems apparent that disputes about theological issues needed to be resolved in the interests of political harmony.

Disagreements about theology were common at that time. Christianity was an offshoot of Judaism, a monotheistic faith, that not only rejected the idea of human divinity, but whose traditional adherents were outraged by (the apostle) Paul's teaching that gentile converts could eat pork and that circumcision was not essential. Paul was teaching in synagogues as well as churches, and many Jewish followers of Jesus were not pleased by what Paul said. Many thought that Jesus was the Messiah, but there is no teaching in the Old Testament to suggest that the Messiah was divine.

head of the church in Jerusalem, and Paul, which resulted in Paul being called back from the diaspora to perform a ritual cleansing at the Temple. Both James and Paul were ultimately killed by their enemies, but it was mostly Paul's writings that survived and ultimately determined the course of the new religion. For all the stories about miracles performed by Jesus, including rising from the dead and appearing before his disciples in the flesh, the Gospels are far from clear about Jesus' divinity. In fact, depending on the translation, there is either none or one passage in scripture where Jesus claimed his own divinity.

But what is most telling is the consistency of the words actually attributed to Jesus. There are multiple examples in the Gospels of Jesus stating that "It is the Father in me that does the works¹³," and, "The father is greater than I¹⁴," and even in the only prayer he taught, Jesus said to pray to God "Our Father15." According to Christian theology, Jesus is a coequal with God and the Holy Spirt in a Triune God, but if that is the case, how can God be greater than God? As Martin Buber Points out in his seminal work, "I and Thou," this clear contradiction. And what about the notion that one God could have not only three manifestations, but three clearly separate identities? Christian apologists tend to pass these contradictions off as mysteries, that cannot be explained, but have to be accepted on faith. But these tenants of faith were not accepted by either the Jews that came before, or the Muslims that came after, so how did they become central ten-

ants of an ostensibly monotheistic Part of the reason was undeniably Paul's hero worship of Jesus¹⁶, who was a truly remarkable human being. He spoke of a higher morality than anyone had taught before or since. And while it could be argued that Gandhi extended Jesus' concepts of loving your enemies and resisting injustice without turning to violence (as Jesus did when he attacked the money changers in the Temple), his fundamental

(See BROCK, page 4)

Calendar

December

21 The Wolverine Bar Association and the D. Augustus Straker Bar Association will host their Holiday Party on Thursday, Dec. 21, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Atheneum Hotel, Fishbones French Quarter Room, in Detroit. Proceeds from the event will benefit Matrix Human Services. Cost is \$20 for Wolverine and Straker members, \$15 for law students, and \$30 for non-members. Cash or checks will be accepted at the door. To register, email holidayparty2017@outlook.com.

January

16 The Oakland County Bar Association will present "Representing the Immigrant Client in Criminal Cases" on Tuesday, Jan. 16, from noon to 1 p.m. at the OCBA offices in Bloomfield Hills. OCBA members pre-registration cost is \$12; OCBA members at the door pay \$25. Nonmembers pre-registration cost is \$25 r \$40 at the door. To register or for additional information, visit www.ocba.org and click on

18 The Oakland County Bar Association will present "Tax Considerations in Mergers and Acquisitions" on Thursday, Jan. 18, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the OCBA offices, 1760 South Telegraph Road, Suite 100, in Bloom-

field Hills. This seminar will cover basic tax considerations for attorneys and CPAs engaged in mergers and acquisitions transactions of all types and sizes. Preregistration cost is \$40 for OCBA members; \$30 for OCBA new lawyers (P75866 and above), paralegals, and students; and \$60 for all non-members. Cost at the door is \$50 for OCBA members; \$40 for OCBA new lawyers (P75866 and above), paralegals and students; and \$75 for all nonmembers. To register or for additional information, visit www.ocba.org and click on "events."

19 The Michigan Association for Justice will present its Workers' Compensation/Social Security Seminar on Friday, Jan. 19, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Four Points by Sheraton-Novi, 27000 S. Karevich Dr. in Novi. Topics to be covered include: Workers' Compensation Residual Wage Earning Capacity Decisions; Legislative Update; Workers' Compensation and Social Security Disability State of the Law; Issues on Pain Management; How National Issues Impact Your Practice; Workers' Compensation Tips; Federal Social Security Disability Appeals; and Issues on Neurosurgery and Orthopedic Surgery. Registration and exhibit viewing begins at 8:30 a.m. Seminar costs range from \$95 to \$350. Register at www.michiganjustice.org.

SASE: Allegorical economics

(Continued from page 2) the knowledge that the Magifish breed once per year throughout their long life-expectancy suggests to the crew that a significant increase in the population of the Magifish could have occurred. The navigator serving as the steward of the Magifish recounts an earlier discussion about setting aside a portion of the expected gain in order to maintain the 25% share of the boat, both in the present and in the future. Their distribution plan requires the setting aside of shares from the total gain in order to ensure the replacement of the boat if necessary. The stew-There was a major dispute and reminds the crew that the between Jesus' brother James, the Magifish are known to propagate at an average rate of 7% per annum. This behavior suggests that, over the sixty years elapsed since the transfer of stewardship from the six wise women, the 360 Magifish will have increased to a total of 21,600 (360 times 60).

The six wise women transferred the fish with the goals of preserving the 25% ownership of the fishing boat and providing for significant repair of the boat if the hull was to rupture from striking the rocks, as it had done once before. The traditional method for handling such occurrences had been through self-funding with accumulated gains. Simple economic math will help us to determine the number of Magifish needed to maintain the original investment and to make at least one major repair.

As the Magifish age, their value diminishes. As a result of the devaluation, significantly more Magifish will be needed now to replace the 25% holding and to ensure against another cataclysmic event. This matter of depreciation reflects the economic principle of inflation, which averages about 4% per annum in Zothique (a factor of 10 for 60 years when compounded once per year). After 60 years, the number of Magifish needed will have increased from 360 to 7,200 (360 times 2 times 10, for which 2 represents the replacement of the 25% as well as for catastrophe insurance). This change means that the real gain is only 14,400 (21,600 minus 7,200). Therefore, we have 14,400

Magifish left to divide among the 24 members of the crew. Given the original 360, the share per crew member would have been 15 at the time of their departure to Na'at. However, the individual shares of the crew have increased to 600 (14,400 divided by 24) over a period of sixty years. The adjustment for inflation leaves a real gain of 450 (600 less 15 times 10) per crew member. (Please do not confuse this with the procedure of year-by-year discounting to present value. This exercise is a comparison of end values for which the annual gain gets rolled into the principle in each of the 60 years. One may think of the example of the price of a candy bar that

increases ten-fold while the cash in one's wallet increases by sixtyfold.) From this point of distribution, the 24 fishers will handle the tithing, taxes, and any further distribution on an individual basis. For the present time, the one-atthe-head continues to act in the capacity as the steward of the Magifish. This steward explains to the other 23 crew members that they are free to leave and to take their shares with then if they so desire. Alternately, they are invited to sign on for a subsequent adventure similar to the first. The steward concludes by saying, "What we need to do next is to retrieve the original signed documents from sixty years ago and retain some appropriate attorneys to assist us."

> No Fish Were Harmed in the Writing of This Story.

I have used my background and knowledge to create a tutorial allegory that explains how to incorporate mathematical figures and functions in an accessible manner. Attorneys also can use this format to address the mathematics in their respective areas of expertise. We hope that the math progression in our example has had sufficient simplicity and clarity for our audience to follow. The plot and scenery constitute the elements that one may interchange as appropriate for a specific case or lecture presentation. If you want to learn more about the Pythagorean math that we have used, let us refer you to a playlist that I (Dr. Sase) have put together on my YouTube workshop channel supported by my practice of Forensic Economics. Go to www.youtube.com and enter the following search term: Pythagoras Math Music and Light (432 v 440 Hz).

We wish all of our reading audience a healthy and happy holiday season and a successful and profitable New Year.

Dr. John F. Sase teaches Economics at Wayne State University and has practiced Forensic and Investigative Economics for twenty years. He earned a combined M.A. in Economics and an MBA at the University of Detroit, followed by a Ph.D. in Economics from Wayne State University. He is a graduate of the University of Detroit Jesuit High School (www.saseassociates.com).

Gerard J. Senick is a freelance writer, editor, and musician. He earned his degree in English at the University of Detroit and was a supervisory editor at Gale Research Company (now Cengage) for over twenty years. Currently, he edits books for publication (www.senick-editing.com).

Julie G. Sase is a copyeditor, parent coach, and empath. She earned her degree in English at Marygrove College and her graduate certificate in Parent Coaching from Seattle Pacific University. Ms. Sase coaches clients, writes articles, and copyedits (royaloakparentcoaching.com).

The New York Times

43 Herd unit

competitor

47 What like-pole

magnets do

Appleseed, e.g.

London police

officer's uniform?

46 Cardinal

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ACROSS 1 Man's name that means "king" 4 Taxpayers' IDs 8 Verbal digs

32 Like a doctor's stereotypically 36 Sign of spring 39 First X, say *Catalog from a 13 Palindromic farm London raincoat designer? 42 Spot in la mer

14 St. Patrick, for 15 Is a first-stringer 17 *Monthly charge apartment?

19 Garb 20 Targets 22 Follower of the first intermission 23 Mineral in bath 26 *French fries on

a London card 57 Home of the 28 Mushroom used in sukiyaki 30 Arrives on time

58 Perfectly 31 90° from ENE

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

L E I W O O D D E E R G O O D D E E D S I G N O N W M D S U S C E R O S B I O S I R O R C A DOUBLE

66 Place for a sword 67 Dagwood's bratty neighbor 68 Message on an offstage card 69 Lucy's sitcom pal

70 Beat people? 71 What curtains may signify DOWN 1 TKO caller

2 Harry Potter's Hedwig, e.g. 3 Roll-call call 4 Familiar voice since 2011

5 Rascal 6 "I beg to differ" 7 Weaselly sort 8 Characterbuilding youth org.

9 What follows a cry of 60 Add, per a recipe "Char-r-rge!" 62 *Conveyance in a 10 Mechanism in multilevel London wrench 11 Words found

in the answers to this puzzle's starred clues 12 Remove with a 18 Bulletin board

21 Conductors set 23 Final frame in 24 Lennox of

25 Atkins plan, e.g. SEEN HIDEF 27 Synthetic

a unidirectional

Edited by Will Shortz

No. 1115

portrayed in film

by Salma Hayek

55 Crush, in a way,

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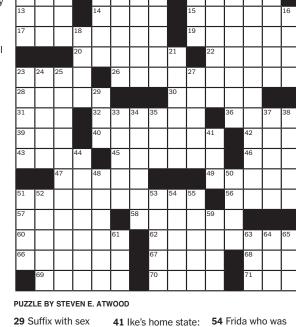
Original Six

63 What 61-Down

65 Sen. Cruz

teams play on

writing



29 Suffix with sex 41 lke's home state: Abbr. 33 Gets ready to ___ Harry, vocalist for the sav. with "up'

band Blondie 34 Cat once prized 48 Fool's gold 50 German 35 Airer of documentaries 37 Many a rapper's

51 First lady after 52 Words before double or take 38 George who played Norm on "Cheers" 53 Sine's reciprocal briefly

Online subscriptions: Today's puzzle and more than 7,000 past puzzles, nytimes.com/crosswords (\$39.95 a year) Read about and comment on each puzzle: nytimes.com/wordplay. selves that such meaning exists cease to exist.

BROCK: Who will save your soul? In search of a humane God

(Continued from page 3) teachings were those of Jesus. And though he ultimately decided to remain a Hindu, it was more likely for cultural reasons rather than spiritual.

Indeed, Gandhi hated many aspects of Hindu teachings, especially the caste system; and though he loved the Bhagavad Gita, he did not teach war as a spiritual undertaking—far from it. He believed that peace was the spiritual path. His take away from the Gita was that when one is certain of God's will in a situation, he needed to follow God's will without concern for the outcome.

He was not, however, arrogant enough to think he had a lock on the truth, and when he was convinced by Nehru that there would be a rebellion that no one would control among Hindus if Gandhi allowed Jinnah to form the first government of a free India, he capitulated. Ultimately, it was a Hindu who felt he had given away too much power to the Muslims that assassinated him, but not before he was heartbroken to see India divided along religious lines, spawning a conflict that has continued with varying degrees of intensity until this day. That Gandhi felt access to God was something that no person had control over was apparent in his respect for adherents of all religions and is well documented in his book of autobiographical writings called, "All Men Are Broth-

That disputes such as those noted above could be disruptive to political harmony was undoubtedly more apparent to people of earlier times and other places than it is to Americans of today, who have a secular government and who agree to disagree about religion. In most places in the world and for most of human history, religion and politics have been closely linked, and war over religious issues has been a constant up until today. So, when Constantine convened a counsel in 325 to standardize Christian worship, it was not entirely for his own personal religious reasons. He was riding the tide, as was Clovis when he unified France under the Christian banner around 500 CE.

Both leaders unquestionably saw one religion as beneficial to their political purposes. It seems not only possible, but extremely influence over the bishops in attendances at the Counsel of Nicaea regarding which tenants of the faith became the standard. It is also worth remembering that when Romans wanted to shore up their power, it was not uncommon to have themselves deified. Constantine did not attempt to do this, and it is not clear that he put pressure upon the bishops at Nicaea to find that Jesus was divine, but it did meet the needs of the Emperor that Jesus' divinity insured his authority could not therefore be questioned.

Religion continues to be political, both in the ends that it is put to by political leaders, and within established religions themselves. Prior to the separation of church and state in the west, which was a long back and forth process over centuries, religious and political leaders of empires and states frequently vied for power. During the Christian period, challengers to the Roman church's authority were often burned at the stake. Sometimes it was simple trickery and malice, as in the case of John Huss (or Jan Hus) in 1415, who petitioned the Church of Rome for many of the same reforms requested 100 years later by Martin Luther. Sometimes, as in the case of Joan of Arc in 1431, it was with the consent of political authorities—in her case the French Dauphin, to whom she had become something of an embarrassment, after initially being use-

Martin Luther, who, after failing to obtain reforms based on his famous "95 theses" in Rome, elected to break with the Catholic Church in 1520-21, and began the protestant movement. It is noteworthy that in his Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation (1520) he supported the new nationalism by advocating German control of German ecclesiastical matters and appealed to the German princes to help effect the reformation in Germany. He attacked the Pope's claim of authority over secular rulers and denied the Pope was the final interpreter of scripture, enunciating the doctrine of the "priesthood of all believers."

Once Rome's authority had

been successfully challenged by Luther, Henry VIII of England was able to use the precedent in 1534 to successfully (after some back and forth) establish an independent Church of England, that changed little of Catholic theology, but which made the King (and subsequently the Queen) of England also the spiritual head of the church. The intent and effect was clearly to diminish the political power of Rome. The Pope fought back by excommunicating protestant Queen Elizabeth in 1570, clearly hoping to incite rebellion among the Catholics in the population, but this effort ultimately

The notion that religion is an affair between each human and his God is gaining increasing acceptance in the West. There is the rise of the New Age movement, and ecumenical movements that deny the existence of a central authority. Perhaps it is as George Bernard Shaw states in his introduction to the play, "St. Joan," that a true protestant is one who invents his or her own religion. In his exposition of this topic, however, what Shaw defines as "true Protestantism," is Joan's personal relationship and interaction with God. She talks to God, and God talks back; which might be more accurately defined as mysticism.

priesthood of all believers notwithstanding, Protestants look as much to their clergy for leadership and interpretation of spiritual texts as Catholics, and the same can be accurately said of any organized religion. Any theology is ultimately a political statement of corporately held beliefs and agreed upon rules for personal and social interaction. However successful a sect is in separating itself from its parent religion, it ultimately winds up establishing its own rules and ecclesiastical hierarchy, which like any rules devoid of spirit tend to stifle more than inspire, and to leave the individual participants to discover on their own who God is, and what is their ultimate relationship to the universe and their place in it.

> The Keys to the Kingdom Are Power

Every monotheistic religion begins by telling us that God is infinite, omniscient, omnipotent, proceeds to tell us that only their religious leaders understand who God is and how He/She/It works, and that only by following their instructions can anyone hope to achieve the glory of the afterlife. Those who believe otherwise are thrown into the fiery pit for all eternity (or doomed to return to earth as a lower form of life or in worse circumstances), and in this way all religious leaders take the ultimate power out of God's hands and place it in their own. They are able to define the Undefinable and to control Its actions at least in so far as they believe this is possible to be done by anyone. And while kings, presidents and dictators hold the lives of thousands (and today even the total population of the earth—over seven billion people) in their hands, religious leaders purport to hold eternity in theirs.

Despite the evolution of a separation of church and state in the West, there has been a movement back toward political control by religious leaders in some areas of the world. Examples of this can be seen in the division of India into Hindu and Muslim states, a government controlled by Shia clerics in Iran, the definition of Israel as a Jewish State, and the rise of ISIS (or ISIL) in the Middle East. Some of those who would like to have political activity dictated by religious leaders tend to go about it in a humane way and others less so, but the goal is ultimately to give ascendency to religious values and to relegate democratic principles of freedom and equal treatment under the law to a subordinate

Inevitably, a government in which religion has a say, or the ultimate say, in political matters imposes its values on a population which is not all in agreement with those values. And it may also be that the government has a right to impose certain values on a population that are in contradiction with the teaching of a particular faith. Some religions believe in allowing a man more than one wife, while others reject modern medicine. Even many mainstream Christian sects teach that

more fundamentalist teachers hold that a spiritually based solution for addiction treatment that is not focused on Jesus is ultimately a cult. (Paradoxically, one former Harvard professor of psychology maintains that AA is a Christian fundamentalist sect.)

Where the mix between religion and politics really becomes dicey is in the decision about what constitutes a human life and who, if anyone, has the authority to take human life. Humans may find themselves on one side of the religion/secular divide on one issue, but on the other side on another issue. Barack Obama, for example, is a practicing Christian who believes, "Though Shalt Not Kill," but who authorized drone strikes against America's enemies, and has come down on the side of a woman's right to terminate a pregnancy for any reason. Someone may be for abortion, but against the death penalty, or vice versa. Or one may espouse strong Christian values, but be in favor of a strong military, and military intervention in the affairs of other states when it suits his country's purposes. The Koran clearly states, "Don't kill yourselves (4:29)," but suicide bombing has become an accepted tool of warfare among Muslim extremists.

There is an admonition against Luther's statements about the killing those of your own kind in most religions, but not all hold the lives of those from other cultures in as high esteem. The Jewish Bible maintains that God told the Jews to kill all of the Canaanites¹⁸, and even their animals. As a practical matter, there are few "conscientious objectors" among adherents to any religion, though there are some who refuse to fight in wars and have paid a high price. Gandhi thought that even Hitler could have been defeated by nonviolent resistance, but there are not many who agree. However, it must be noted that Gandhi himself, (and also undoubtedly his family) suffered greatly because of his nonviolent resistance of the British occupation and India's involvement in WWII, including doing significant amounts of time in prison and under house arrest.

> When I was a child I recall that my mother, who had a lifelong interest in politics, liked to say that you can't legislate morality. But of course, all law is legislated tal purpose of government is to maintain order and relative safety of its citizens. I think what she was trying to say is that you can't legislate a moral society.

That is probably true, and most people in a free society would agree that positive incentives to behave in a legal/moral manner are better than negative reinforcement, but no matter how well a socioeconomic system of government provides for the needs of its citizens (or, some would say, because of it), there are always going to be some who disregard the needs of others to the extent that the government will have to impose laws and penalties on those who do so.

The reality is that some situations are rather murky regarding what people's inherent rights are and what should be done to protect them. If it were not so, there would not be a need for continuing legislation, and a system of appellate courts to make sure society got it right. Even with a system of appellate courts, societies don't always get it right. It could be argued that faith holds us to a higher standard of morality than law. Consider the following from the Tao Te Ching (38):

"...Failing Tao, man resorts to Virtue.

"Failing Virtue, man resorts to humanity.

to morality.

"Failing humanity, man resorts

"Failing morality, man resorts to ceremony. "Now, ceremony is the merest

husk of faith and loyalty; "It is the beginning of all confusion and disorder...

But there are certainly cases where the law offers more protec-

tion than religion. There is an inevitable tension between the two, but there are very few absolutes in life, and as individuals as well as societies, we are either evolving or devolving. The goal of the spiritual person is to be constantly in the process of evolving, and, hopefully, to evolve to the point where our desire and our goal is to have a close enough relationship with God that we would not be brought into conflict with either law or religion. If we counseling is unnecessary if one are evolving and growing, howev-

truly has faith in God, and some er, we will inevitably reach a point stein said that the idea of a per-reality. Said another way, to that when faced with an impossiwhere we see that some of the tenants of a particular faith serve more political than spiritual needs. The failure to see that the political or economic interests, of a particular faith may actually put us in conflict with God, suggests that we are not really growing in our own relationship with the

An example of this are the recent scandals regarding sexual abuse of children by Catholic priests. Surely they are not the only ones to ever abuse the high level of trust they enjoy from their followers, but their situation is unique in two ways: first, they are one of the few major denominations in world, and the only Christian clergy, who are forbidden to marry. The origins of this requirement were several, none of which were dictated by scripture, but from the beginning, Christians took a dim view of sex:

1. Jesus remarked that it was anyone who lusted after a woman had already committed adultery with her in his heart.19

2. St. Paul declare that it is better to remain celibate, but if one can't remain celibate, it is better to remain celibate than to burn in Hell.20

3. The concern of the Catholic hierarchy that if priests married, they would bequeath their land and possessions to their offspring and not the church. This concern was one of material gain that did not take into account either the normal sexual needs of the clergy or the potential impact of priests' repressed sexual needs on their congregations.2

Though quite inconsistent throughout its history, the Catholic Church did not consider it unreasonable to require most men and women (nuns) to commit to a life of celibacy, or worry about in what ways these people may have chosen to express their repressed sexual needs, though the seriousness of this problem was discussed.22 Nor did the church seem to take into consideration that it might draw persons into a religious life because they were having difficulty with sexual adjustment; and that their church members with less serious problems would seek and follow advice and counsel from priests who had neither the experience nor the stability sufficient to justi-

Undoubtedly, some persons with a religious calling were and are able to remain celibate, and some may even feel that it is preferable to the concerns sexual involvement brings with it, as the apostle Paul suggested was the case for him. However, he was also expecting Jesus to return in the near future, so the need to procreate—or indeed, any of the needs that one would have about providing for his own future, or for future generations—was not a serious concern for him.

Over time the established Church acquired enormous wealth and power, and the notion that sex was inherently sinful²³ and the economic and political interests of the church served to reinforce each other. The motive of preserving these economic and political interests conflicted sharply with Jesus teaching that, "For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?"24

God Working or Placebo?

If it is the case that all the stories of miracles and God's preference for one person, people, or form of worship are fictions made up to inspire the adherents of those particular religions, then is there any specific way that God can be said to work? There is some research that refutes the effectiveness of intercessory prayer; that is to say, that one person's prayer has the capacity to heal someone else, for example.

As for the broader philosophical question of whether God will intervene on the part of those who are more righteous than their enemies, Spinoza and Einstein said no, that as the designer and lawmaker of the universe, God is subject to the laws this Intelligence creates. And as to the question of whether God is loving, Spinoza said that God could inspire love, but could not love back,25 and Ein-

sonal God was naïve and childlike.26

If they mean by a personal God, one who listens to the pleas of men and interacts with them, altering the course of history according to His whims, then I would agree. Such a God would indeed be inconsistent with the laws of science. Spinoza must be right about this: if God is the designer of the universe and the maker of scientific law, It cannot violate those laws without inherently contradicting Itself, and scientific research does not support the belief that God does so. Moreover, belief in such a Deity is not only naïve, but dangerous in that it gives those who believe license to do whatever they want and say they are doing the will of God, who sanctions their behavior. Give a sociopath religious justification and they are immediately capable of not only criminal, but atrocious behavior.

But the idea of a God who "answers prayer" is dangerous not only for those who would use divine intervention as a justification to mistreat others, but also for those who would seek a genuine connection with a Supreme Being. If God must prove himself to mortals by doing their bidding, then the time must inevitably come when His choice will be other than what humans request, no matter how reasonable or just that request might seem to be. Inevitably, some human wishes requests must conflict with others.

Upon being denied a reasonable request, a human may, and often does, decide that they have been abandoned by God because his request has not been granted. The most common reason I hear for people not believing in God is that God didn't behave in the way the person thought a Supreme Being should. God was unjust, either to them personally, or to those they thought deserving of better treatment. Such a faith is truly naïve and childish.

But is it possible that God could be both infinitely personal and infinitely impersonal without violating his own principles? Said another way, is it possible that the same mechanism that makes God infinitely impersonal also makes Him/Her/It infinitely personal? In science there is something called the uncertainty a thing is changed by the very fact that it is being observed (or, more precisely, but the way in which it is being observed). Isn't it also true that the observer is changed by the simple fact that they are observing?

It is undoubtedly the case that mature persons of all faiths who do believe in a personal God have always believed that it is more important to find out what God wants than to tell God what they want. The point of the Old Testament story of Abraham being told to sacrifice his son is not whether the request was absurd (as Bob Dylan suggests in Highway 61 Revisited²⁷), or whether Abraham was deluded and deranged, it was that Abraham was willing to go to any length to obey God's will. Likewise, the completely unreasonable suffering visited on Job so God could win a bet with the Devil. The point of the story is Job's response, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the

Sufi Poet Farid Ud-Din Attar put it this way: "The way grows longer every hour, and we / Each hour sink deeper in perplexity; / Do you know what travelers see? They see that they / Must go ever further on the way—"29 And Christian writer C.S. Lewis said, "I pray because I can't help myself. I pray because I'm helpless. I pray because the need flows out of me all the time—waking and sleeping. It doesn't change God—it changes me."

Jesus said to pray that God's will be done. But if God's will is going to be done anyway, is there any reason to pray for the inevitable? And are any changes to the person praying merely placebo effect; that is, because the prayer believes it will have the desired effect, it does? Perception alters reality, but is that the same as prayer and meditation?

As a mental health professional, it is my belief, probably shared by most is my line of work, that perception on the level of psychological insights has more power to impact behavior than a placebo because it changes our cognitive character makes the observation

believe that man can fly does not make flying a reality, but to understand that a bird's wing is curved in a manner as to provide lift may ultimately result in heavier than air flight by man, as indeed it has. Insight has a profound effect on both mental health and effective human interaction, but insights can only come when

the mind is open to them. Psychiatrist Abraham Low once observed that "Temper blocks insight," and also that "Temper produces tenseness and tenseness produces [neurotic] symptoms." In those two statements he is saying that our ability to perceive an appropriate response to a situation, as well as our sense of well-being and mental health are tied to the ability to attain a state of calm. Though not a religious man, he shared with religion the belief that our inner environment could be manipulated to enable a healthier and more effective response to external environment, hence resulting in a better quality of life.

Today, most mental health patients expect this to all be done by medication prescribed by their physician and dispensed by a pharmacy, but though medicine may tend toward the reductionist, the field of mental health requires more effort on the patient's part to achieve any true measure of success. This may be true of medicine also to some degree, but it seems to me truer of mental health/behavioral issues than say, a bacterial infection. For the most part, pneumonia can be cleared up without a lot of effort from the patient, except perhaps the necessity that they not walk around naked in the snow. All they really have to do is stay out of their own way if they expect to achieve recovery.

Mental health requires a great deal more effort on the part of the client, according to available research and in my experience. Medications can be helpful, but they are generally not sufficient, and if they are used as the sole treatment of a serious emotional disturbance, the patient is not likely to ever heal sufficiently to regain his former activities and

So, while there is no evidence that prayer changes external reality, if it produces a substantial change in the psyche of doing the praying, it is likely to have a much greater impact that the mere feeling of security that one gains from taking a sugar pill, because it also changes the behavior of the one praying; and by reducing temper (which Low defines as both fear and anger) it is also likely to improve insight, and therefore the effectiveness of any subsequent actions taken by the person. In the best case scenario prayer may provide a realistic optimism of the sort described by the proponents of "positive thinking" or "possibility thinking," and leading one to take meaningful action they would have dismissed as not worth their time or trouble in their former negative state.

When people make what appear to be a dramatic turnaround in their life, it is often based on their seeing a possibility of victory where they previously saw certain defeat. I am not a huge sports fan, but I recall seeing this phenomenon a couple of times in the sports arena, once when Dwayne Wade lifted the Miami Heat on his shoulders to come back from a 2-0 deficit and win the 2006 NBA Championship against Dallas Mavericks; and another time when the Pittsburgh Penguins turned the 2009 Stanley Cup Finals around beginning with a goal they scored shorthanded in game four, with Detroit on the power play (playing with a man advantage because of a penalty). They also came back from a 2-0 deficit to win a championship. And what about the 2004 Boston Red Sox coming back from an unprecedented 3-0 deficit to win the American League Championship, and subsequently baseball's "World Series"? This happens frequently enough in sports to cause Yogi Berra to have famously quipped, "It ain't over 'til it's over.'

In the novel, "The Life of Pi," by Yan Martel, the author spins a tall tale that is very entertaining, but also makes some serious points. At the beginning of the book the protagonist finds himself alone on a life raft with a Bengal Tiger after the ship he was sailing in sinks in the Pacific. The main

ble task, most people will immediately throw in the towel. A somewhat smaller group will make a half-hearted effort before throwing in the towel. But there is very small third group who will do whatever it takes to survive. He states that he realized right away he was in the last group, and the rest of the story is one of survival against the odds. The author begins the book by saving he will tell a story to make the reader believe in God. Perhaps it would have been more accurate to say that he was going to tell a story of the kind of mental/psychic power and resilience one may gain through a deep faith in God.

What does it mean ultimately to have faith in God? It means to be convinced of the innate meaning and purpose of the universe. If everything has innate meaning and purpose, then so do I, as an extension of the universe, have inherent meaning and a reason for existence. Even if I am never able to fully define or completely fulfil my life's purpose it is worth the search to get as close as I can to that meaning. If I believe in an essentially nihilistic universe I may still strive to imbue my life with meaning, but this effort presumes that if meaning is not inherent, it can be created.

What is truly unlikely is that I could believe there is no meaning, either inherent or of my own creation, but that I would still strive to live morally, to achieve something, to want to make a better life for myself, my children, or for future generations. The true nihilist is likely to be destructive to himself and others because it is the easiest way to go, and because there is no reason to want or seek to achieve anything more.

The seeming paradox is that one may be quite religious and nihilistic at the same time, but this points out a fundamental difference between religion as a set of beliefs about one's superiority and a relationship with the infinite that seeks to understand how one can work effectively within the system of universal moral laws rather than needing to be dominant at all costs. Einstein said that, "My religion consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble minds. That deeply emotional conviction of the presence of a superior reasoning power, which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God."30 The need to dominate is born of fear and is essentially antithetical to a faith that seeks understanding of or direction from a Higher Being.

We live in a time when the mass killing of strangers has become quite common in our country. These killings seem be driven by three major factors, the media attention they garner, the availability of guns to unstable people, and the lack of any real anchor or guiding principle that so many people suffer from. It is probably also an indication of how difficult it is to conceive of an external meaning in this time and place in history. For all the flag waving Americans do, there is no real evidence that we have a sense of community, or that people are motivated to live for anything besides themselves and whatever seems to make their lives tolerable at this point. For some, this is professional sports teams, their friends at the local tavern, the challenge of running marathons, or working their way up the corporate ladder. Most can find or create meaning for themselves, but those who cannot seem intent on having others notice them for any reason at all.

When John Lennon was murdered in 1980, the prosecutor said in his opening remarks that Mark David Chapman had killed Lennon to steal his fame. In articles covering the trial, Chapman posed for pictures reading a copy of "The Catcher in the Rye," which he cited as the inspiration for the killing. Chapman seemed to be basking in his ill-gotten fame, and the prosecutor's words appeared to be at least in part true. It often seems as if the only people valued in our society anymore are celebrities, and that those who are not celebrated for doing good feel compelled to turn their energy to destruction. Perhaps it has always been that way. If Hitler had been a successful painter, would he have reeked such destruction on the world?

In his very popular self-help (See BROCK, Back Page)

Back Page, Oakland County Legal News

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Judge

Start

11/13/2017

11/13/2017

11/27/2017

Langford Morris, D

Date

Michigan schools deal with more students skipping classes

DETROIT (AP) — Michigan education officials are looking for ways to address an increase in chronic absenteeism among students.

The number of students chronically absent rose to 15.6 percent in the 2016-2017 school year, up from 14.7 percent the year before, the Detroit News reported.

That means more than 233,500 students were absent for 10 percent of the academic year. Students can be absent for a number of reasons including lack of transportation, illness, anxiety, suspension from school and mental health issues, experts say.

The highest rates of chronic absenteeism last school year were among kindergarteners and high school seniors, with rates of about 20 percent, according to state data.

"We have a lot of kids missing a lot of school," said Carolyn Claerhout, a truancy expert at Oakland Schools, which serves local districts in Oakland County. "We get it — that this is what we need to have districts focus on."

Michigan's Every Student Succeeds Act was

approved last month and requires chronic absenteeism rates to be a factor in measuring school quali-

Absenteeism increases the chances that children will have reading issues in elementary school, fail classes in middle school and drop out of high school, according to education experts.

"The data is clear on the negative outcomes. If you aren't there, you aren't being successful," said Kyle Guerrant, deputy superintendent of finance and operations with the Michigan Department of Educa-

Detroit Public Schools Community District Superintendent Nikolai Vitti has moved attendance agents into schools to help locate absent students. Vitti's staff will meet with principals to see how they're improving attendance and share best practices.

The district will also launch a formal plan next school year to address chronic absenteeism by using more in-school suspensions in place of out-of-school suspensions, Vitti said.

Mortgages Recorded

Lisa Brown Clerk/Register of Deeds As recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds \$50,000 and above

Oct. 2-6, 2017

Latanya M Johnson 208 Raleigh Ave Auburn Hills 48326-3072 MICHI-**GAN MUTUAL \$177.000**

Curtiss Richardson 790 Island Lake Dr Oxford 48371-3725 MICHI-

GAN MUTUAL \$254,000 Mark James Heikkila 25178 Birchwoods Dr Novi 48374-2101 MICHI-

GAN MUTUAL \$347,000 Scott Stevens 9550 Garforth Dr White Lake 48386-3231 MICHIGAN SCHOOLS & GOVERNMENT CRED-

IT UNION \$266,000 Cary A Matthews-Pennane 13700 Hart St Oak Park 48237-1175 MICHI-**GAN SCHOOLS & GOVERNMENT** CREDIT UNION \$104,000

Laura Bulak 3197 Melvin Ave Rochester Hills 48307-4869 MICHI-GAN SCHOOLS & GOVERNMENT

CREDIT UNION \$10,000 Mark Szlaga 3081 Otter Dr Troy 48083-5725 MICHIGAN SCHOOLS & GOVERNMENT CREDIT UNION

\$39,000 Brittany Jury 627 E Windemere Ave Royal Oak 48073-5604 MICHI-GAN SCHOOLS & GOVERNMENT

CREDIT UNION \$188,000 Eric Cobb 965 Granger Rd Ortonville 48462-8633 MICHIGAN

SCHOOLS & GOVERNMENT CRED-IT UNION \$162,000 Randall J Groya Jr 1314 Woodsboro Dr Royal Oak 48067-1115 MICHI-

GAN SCHOOLS & GOVERNMENT CREDIT UNION \$60,000 Benjamin Arron Marchese 431

Shrewsbury Dr Clarkston 48348-3671 MICHIGAN SCHOOLS & GOVERN-MENT CREDIT UNION \$120,000 Michael J Lopez 342 Woodward

Ave Rochester 48307-1166 MICHI-GAN SCHOOLS & GOVERNMENT CREDIT UNION \$20,000

Edward V Gruzwalski lii 2226 Cumberland Rd Rochester Hills 48307-3707 MICHIGAN SCHOOLS & GOV-

ERNMENT CREDIT UNION \$50.000 James Siler Jr 18890 Lincoln Dr Lathrup Village 48076-4444 MICHI-

GAN SCHOOLS & GOVERNMENT CREDIT UNION \$100,000 Heath Pagel 1502 Donald Ave Royal Oak 48073-2092 MICHIGAN

IT UNION \$25,000 Bonnie J Kepes 313 Crane Ave Roval Oak 48067-1717 MICHIGAN SCHOOLS & GOVERNMENT CRED-

SCHOOLS & GOVERNMENT CRED-

IT UNION \$44.000 Wavne T Jackson 21000 Turnberry Blvd Northville 48167-2197 MICHI-GAN SCHOOLS & GOVERNMENT

CREDIT UNION \$1 990 000 Rvan Stipp 132 Linden Ave Royal Oak 48073-3428 MICHIGAN

SCHOOLS & GOVERNMENT CRED-IT UNION \$200,000 Adam Lawing 1025 Elmsmere Dr

Northville 48167-1067 MICHIGAN STATE UNIV FEDERAL CU \$50.000 David L Jenkinson 6332 N Milford

Rd Highland 48356-1068 MICHIGAN STATE UNIV FEDERAL CU \$91,000 Gregory M Barnas 210 Mead Rd Rochester Hills 48306-2842 MICHI-GAN STATE UNIV FEDERAL CU

Jeffrey D Fox 16280 Reedmere Ave Beverly Hills 48025-5553 MICHI-GAN STATE UNIV FEDERAL CU

John G Sinko 2610 Norton Lawn Rochester Hills 48307-4434 MICHI-GAN STATE UNIV FEDERAL CU

\$187,000 Kristi A Stepp 5463 Maple Leaf Ct West Bloomfield 48322-3338 MICHI-

GAN STATE UNIV FEDERAL CU Michael D Dupont 7211 Danbrooke West Bloomfield 48322-2925 MICHI-

GAN STATE UNIV FEDERAL CU Michael G Nowakowski 1959

Edgemont Ct Rochester Hills 48306-4007 MICHIGAN STATE UNIV FED-

ERAL CU \$77,000 Nicholas K Gaydos 1370 W Gunn Rd Rochester 48306-1641 MICHIGAN

STATE UNIV FEDERAL CU \$50,000 Paul W Bakeman 27416 Goldengate Dr W Lathrup Village 48076-3468

MICHIGAN STATE UNIV FEDERAL Roderic R Dolega 32660 Colony

Hill Dr Franklin 48025-1016 MICHI-GAN STATE UNIV FEDERAL CU

Trenton Cummins 21330 Poinciana St Southfield 48033-3543 MICHIGAN STATE UNIV FEDERAL CU \$38,000

Dinah R Minor 20845 Winchester St Southfield 48076-3133 MICHIGAN STATE UNIV FEDERAL CU \$187 000

Kevin R Phelps 4855 Maggies Way Steven Percival 187 Glenburnie Dr Clarkston 48346-1975 MICHIGAN

STATE UNIV FEDERAL CU \$180,000 Kristopher S Brothers 2884 Central Blvd Milford 48380-2200 MID AMERI-

CA MTG INC \$137,000 Christine C Francis 37154 Berkleigh Ct Farmington Hills 48331-3787 MMS MORTGAGE SERV

\$276,000 Vanita L Davis 305 Payne Ave Pontiac 48341-1049 MMS MORTGAGE

SERV \$142.000 Mihaela Niculescu 3454 Witherbee Dr Troy 48084-2714 MMS MORT-

GAGE SERV \$356,000 Todd Glance 3515 Ridgeview Ct Bloomfield Hills 48302-1252 MORGAN STANLEY BANK \$766,000

David W Leeper 2600 Elizabeth Ln West Bloomfield 48324-2182 MORT-GAGE 1 INC \$361,000

Laura A Turner 3192 Donley Ave Rochester Hills 48309-4125 MORT-GAGE 1 INC \$140,000 Michael Narducci 4143 Eagles

Nest Dr Waterford 48329-1625 MORT-GAGE 1 INC \$242,000 Hayley M Ludwiczak 605 Hecht Dr

Madison Heights 48071-5301 MORT-GAGE 1 INC \$146,000 Katie Wolf 150 Charlevoix St Claw-

son 48017-2084 MORTGAGE 1 INC \$165,000 Eddy Daniels 1409 W Oakley Park

Rd Commerce Township 48390-1142 MORTGAGE 1 INC \$90,000 Rvan Bierl 5536 Saint Elizabeth Ct

Clarkston 48348-4835 MORTGAGE 1 INC \$500 000 Rene Marie Schenk 4810 Ormond Rd Davisburg 48350-3317 MORT-

GAGE 1 INC \$153,000 Jodi A Huber 848 Aspen Ct Rochester 48307-1000 MORTGAGE 1

INC \$295,000 Laura A Turner 3192 Donley Ave Rochester Hills 48309-4125 MORT-

GAGE 1 INC \$140,000 Melanie J Sausser-Burke 4750 Sunrise Ln White Lake 48383-1042 MORTGAGE CENTER \$164,000

Stephanie M Heidt 6644 Montclair Dr Troy 48085-1626 MORTGAGE CENTER \$118,000

Steven W Lucev 2207 Huff PI High land 48356-2146 MORTGAGE CEN-TER \$117,000

Jerome Hayes 7520 Red Oak Dr West Bloomfield 48324-2439 MORT-**GAGE CENTER \$237,000** Steven Spinell 1035 Cosgrove

Waterford 48328-1511 MORTGAGE RESEARCH CENTER \$152,000 Tawana Maria Langford 29095

Wellington Rd E Southfield 48034-4522 MOVEMENT MORTGAGE Joel Diffenderfer 9915 Crayview Dr

White Lake 48386-2710 MOVEMENT MORTGAGE \$130,000 Peter F Arbour 2269 Flanders Dr

Rochester Hills 48307-3713 NATION-AL BANKING ASN \$55,000 Kevin A Hayes 1716 Paramount St

Novi 48377-2087 NATIONS DIRECT MORTGAGE \$241,000 Lou Kalaj 3587 Minton Rd Lake Orion 48359-1550 NATIONS DIRECT

MORTGAGE \$132,000 Randall Joseph Miller 5001 Sherwell Dr Waterford 48327-3270 NATIONSTAR MORTGAGE \$110.000 Timothy L Negrilla 6226 Parkridge

Ct Clarkston 48348-4844 NATION-STAR MORTGAGE \$169,000 John C Mentzer 4772 Sherwell Dr Waterford 48327-3262 NATIONSTAR

MORTGAGE \$334.000 Todd P Groghan 8942 Wild Iris Ct

Davisburg 48350-1527 NAVY FEDER-AI CREDIT UNION \$352,000 David R Gustin 3301 Morrow Ln

Milford 48381-3358 NAVY FEDERAL CREDIT UNION \$25,000 Michael Diedrich 4185 Orchard

Way Bloomfield Hills 48301-1634 NEMO MULTIFAMILY CA \$236,000 David G Popa 244 Cove View Dr Waterford 48327-3783 NEW DAY

FINANCIAL \$217.000 Joseph Donald Kluck li 6828 Strawberry Ln Clarkston 48348-2884 NORTH AMERICAN SAVINGS BANK

\$438,000 Kenneth Jackson 35844 Smithfield Ct Farmington 48335-3140 NORTH AMERICAN SAVINGS BANK

Sharon Schlitt 3787 Locust Dr Oakland 48363-2841 NORTHPOINTE BANK \$618,000

Valerie Harrison 52565 Horseshoe Ln South Lyon 48178-8997 NORTH-POINTE BANK \$104,000

\$167,000

Charles Stickney 6214 Grace K Dr Waterford 48329-1324 OAKLAND **COUNTY CREDIT UNION \$15,000**

William M Crantas 4025 Taggett Lake Dr Highland 48357-2239 OAK-LAND COUNTY CREDIT UNION

Catherine Bemman 825 Little School Lot Lake R Holly 48442-8523 OAKLAND COUNTY CREDIT UNION

Scott Mason 424 E Columbia Ave Pontiac 48340-2860 OAK-LAND COUNTY CREDIT UNION

Clarkston 48346-1422 OAKLAND COUNTY CREDIT UNION \$70,000

Joyce Mcmurrian-Graham 23978 Scott Dr Farmington Hills 48336-3072 OCEANSIDE MORTGAGE CO

Dennis Bostick 5408 Barrington Dr Dakland 48306-4901 OLD NATIONAL

BANK \$1,600,000 Evelyn C Clendennin 30611 Whittier Ave Madison Heights 48071-2079 ONE REVERSE MTG \$230,000

Evelyn C Clendennin 30611 Whittier Ave Madison Heights 48071-2079 ONE REVERSE MTG \$230,000 Joe Rogers 2295 Richwood Rd

Auburn Hills 48326-2529 OXFORD BANK \$115,000 Charles C Adams 2750 Alorington Ct Commerce Township 48382-5209

UNION FINANCIAL \$244.000 Cody Liles 21 Lincoln St Oxford 48371-3623 PACIFIC UNION FINAN-

CIAL \$201.000 John C Jensen 22001 Abington Dr Farmington Hills 48335-4304 PARK-

SIDE CREDIT UNION \$64,000

Christopher S Baker 12425 Rattalee Lake Rd Davisburg 48350-1225 PENNYMAC LOAN SERVICES \$207.000

Octaveious Miles 5143 Watergate Rd West Bloomfield 48323-2464 PEN-NYMAC LOAN SERVICES \$277.000 Bryan B Bolling 8650 Buffalo Dr Commerce Two 48382-3408 PFNNY

MAC LOAN SERVICES \$200.000

Thomas W Keyser 3686 Hide Away Ln Highland 48357-3581 PENNYMAC I OAN SFRVICES \$203,000 Michael D Stephens 1348 Jeffwood

Dr Waterford 48327-2029 PENNYMAC LOAN SERVICES \$95,000 James Weaver 591 Seabrook Dr Rochester Hills 48307-2881 PEO-

PLES BANK \$356,000 Mark B Conley 2007 E Lincoln Ave Royal Oak 48067-4025 PLANET HOME LENDING \$189,000

Catherine J Goodell 3536 Gregory Rd Orion 48359-2013 PNC BANK Fadi Eliya 48795 Veneto Dr

Northville 48167-9385 PNC BANK \$150,000 Jacolyn M Land 3570 John R Rd

Rochester Hills 48307-5440 PNC Jay F Simancek 24851 Apple Crest

Dr Novi 48375-2605 PNC BANK Kim Pianko Tr 1811 Willowicke Dr Wixom 48393-1184 PNC BANK

Kristen Rowell 4629 S Quarry Crk White Lake 48383-1872 PNC BANK Lisa Hawkins 3004 Pheasant Run

East Dr Wixom 48393-4548 PNC Lisa Butts 4770 Melanie Ln Oxford

48371-5640 PNC BANK \$25,000 Michael J Sova 696 Kingsley Dr Wixom 48393-4514 PNC BANK

Morris G Shapiro 6488 Crabapple Troy 48098-1936 PNC BANK \$50,000 Steven Rousseau 2611 Hunters Blf Bloomfield Hills 48304-1824 PNC BANK \$75.000

Young Baik Kim 5569 Whitfield Dr Troy 48098-5105 PNC BANK \$100,000 Elizabeth A Beattie 3874 W Commerce Rd Milford 48380-3110 PNC

BANK \$160,000 Michael Hernandez 1560 Columbia Rd Berkley 48072-1914 PNC BANK \$33.000

Richard S Rubin 31251 Applewood Ln Farmington Hills 48331-1217 PNC BANK \$100,000

Bennet J Bracey 336 Glendale Ct Rochester 48307-1106 PNC MORT-GAGE \$162.000 Christopher J Hadding 4584 Lan-

caster Dr Clarkston 48348-3656 PNC MORTGAGE \$287.000 David Copenhaver 185 W Hopkins Ave Pontiac 48340-1823 PNC MORT-

GAGE \$69,000 Donna Pierce 64 S Washington St Lake Orion 48362-3357 PNC MORT-GAGE \$166,000

Tajudeen Usmam Mustapha 27100 Harvard Rd Southfield 48076-5654 PNC MORTGAGE \$145,000 Thorsten Ritter Tr 5179 Low Meadow Rd Clarkston 48348-3841 PNC

MORTGAGE \$1,000,000 Keefe M Gardner 28802 Herndonwood Dr Farmington Hills 48334-5237 PNC MORTGAGE \$356,000

Michael A Rinkus 2560 Homewood Dr Troy 48098-2302 PNC MORT-GAGE \$335,000

Mark R Fralick 563 Cranbourne St Commerce Twp 48382-3021 PNC MORTGAGE \$256,000

Rebecca R Emerson 24101 Seneca St Oak Park 48237-3728 PNC MORTGAGE \$128,000 Ashley D Reygaert 2337 Malena Ln Oxford 48371-4357 PNC MORT-

GAGE \$185,000 Mitesh Natvarla Patel 19 Sugar Pine Rd Rochester Hills 48309-2231 PNC MORTGAGE \$268,000

11/2/2017 Alexander, J 2016 152767 CB Steven Cohen Directed Verdict 3.5 Breach of Contract Shaba Investment V. Jeffrey Thomas 11/13/2017 2016 261073 FC Sarah Greene Guilty Criminal Sexual 11/2/2017 Grant, N 2017 263498 FC Robert Vanwer Armed Robbery People V. Richard Grav Michael J. McCarthy 11/9/2017 Grant, N 2016 155448 NF Carl Jackson III Auto Negligeno No Cause 3 MI. Spine & Pain V. State Frederick Livingsto 11/9/2017 2016 155683 NI William Hatchett Auto Negligence No Cause Cinnamon Rice Mutual Auto Ins* 11/30/2017 Grant, N 2017 263812 FH Jason DeSantis Cts. 1-3 Not Guilty; CCW

Personal Injury

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Conduct

Murde

Negligence

Criminal Sexual

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JURY TRIALS AND UTILIZATION FOR NOVEMBER 2017

Type of Case

Criminal

Disposition

Plaintiff/

Verdict for

Verdict for

Guilty as Charged

Guilty of 2nd degree

In Progress

Not Guilty

\$350,000.00

\$3,500.00

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Amount Jury Days Finished

11/16/2017 Matthews, C 2017 262380 FC David Hutson People V. Crystal Martin-Paulette Loftir 11/20/2017 McMillen, P 2016 153478 CZ Kenneth Burch Sr. Specks V. Redberry Resto 11/27/2017 McMillen, P 2017 263161 FC Erica Smith 11/6/2017 O'Brien, DP 2017 262339 FH Christian Arndt

People V. Kirk Chapman

People V. Angela Suleiman

2016 260686 FH

2014 252234 FH

2015 150234 NO

2017 263204 FH

People V. Christopher

Case Number

Case Name

Attorneys

Jeffrey Hartkop

Christopher George

Michael McCarthy

James Amberg

Christian Arndt

Warren Harris

Darcey Jacobs

11/27/2017

*Cases tried together

O'Brien, D P

BROCK: In search of a humane God

(Continued from page 4)

book, "The Road Less Traveled," Scott Peck begins by telling us that, "Life is difficult." And so it is. Not the least of that difficulty is the realization that we can never have total certainty about anything; about why we're here, where we're going, how our lives will end or what comes after. We are a long time coming into this world and we'll be gone a long time, and, as Job observed, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shad-

ow, and continueth not."31 Henry David Thoreau said, "Most men lead lives of quiet desperation and go to the grave with the song still in them."32 Perhaps it has always been thus, but some are able to quiet that desperation and turn their time to good use. How do we find the strength to discover or create meaning and not succumb to despair? How do we learn to live rather than just exist? To find joy amidst all the

uncertainty and disappointment? Faith is one way of doing that, but to be workable faith cannot be built upon illusion; it must square with reality or we are simply turning our back on the real world, and most of us are unwilling and unable to do that. So, we must ultimately work out our own relationship with the forces beyond our control and understanding, seek to find the flow and the frequency that plays our music, and learn the dance that expresses our unique place and time in the endless universe. How well we do that will ultimately be determined by the love we create and the creative energy it releases.

Gospel of Matthew 6:24, NIV ² Gospel of Matthew 5:44, NIV

³ Gospel of Luke 6:31, NIV ⁴ The internal strife that would ultimately split India into three separate countries was, of course, another matter, and one that would cause the Mahatma a great deal of suffering. But the English ultimately left as a result of Gandhi's successful policy of non-violent resistance.

translation by Daniel Ladinsky ⁶ Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu, I Einstein...used variants of this quote...For example, in a 1943 conversation with William Hermanns recorded in Hermanns'

with the world." (p. 58) thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall

new thing under the sun." thousand years.'

¹⁰ You Can't Go Home Again, Thomas Wolfe (P. 371), Google

Frankl, Viktor E. (p. 37), "A thought transfixed me: for the first time in my life I saw the truth as it is set into song by so many poets, proclaimed as the final wisdom by so many thinkers. The truth—that love is the ultimate and the highest goal to which man can aspire. Then I grasped the meaning of the greatest secret that human poetry and human thought and belief have to impart: The salvation of

man is through love and in love." 12 The Merchant of Venice, William Shakespeare; Act 5,

¹³ Gospel of John, 14:10 KJV, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he

doeth the works. ¹⁴ Gospel of John 14:28, "You the Father is greater than I."

¹⁵ Gospel of Matthew 6:9-13

⁵Becoming Human, in The Gift,

"...Christ, who is God over all."

⁸ Ecclesiastes 1:9, KJV, "The be done: and there is no

⁹ The Emperor's Handbook, Marcus Aurelius (AKA, Meditations of the Emperor) "...accordingly to have contemplated human life for forty years is the same as to have contemplated it for ten

11 Man's Search for Meaning,

heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for

¹⁶ Depending on which translation you read, Romans 9:5 is the first instance of anyone referring to Jesus as "God," as in,

¹⁷ McGrath, Patrick (1967). Papists and Puritans under Elizabeth I. Poole, England: Blandford book Einstein and the Poet, Ein-Press (P. 69),"Regnans in Excelsis stein said: "As I have said so ('reigning on high') was a papal many times. God doesn't play dice bull issued on 25 February 1570

> be a heretic and releasing all her subjects from any allegiance to her, even when they had 'sworn oaths to her', and excommunicating any that obeyed her orders." ¹⁸ 1 Samuel ESV 15:2–3, "Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'I have noted what Amalek did to Israel din opposing them on the way when they came up out of Egypt.

beth, the pretended Queen of Eng-

land and the servant of crime', to

have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkev.' ¹⁹ Gospel of Matthew 5:28 ²⁰ I Corinthians 7:8-9, "I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they

abide even as I. But if they cannot

Now go and strike Amalek and

devote to destruction all that they

contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn." ²¹ A Brief History of Celibacy in the Catholic Church, "580 AD-Pope Pelagius II: his policy was not to bother married priests as long as they did not hand over church property to wives or chil-

²² A Brief History of Celibacy in the Catholic Church, 836 A.D. The Council of Aix-la-Chapelle openly admitted that abortions and infanticide took place in convents and monasteries to cover up activities of uncelibate clerics. St. Ulrich, a holy bishop, argued from scripture and common sense that the only way to purify the church from the worst excesses of celibacy was to permit priests to marry."

²³ A Brief History of Celibacy in the Catholic Church, "590-604 A.D. Pope Gregory the Great said that all sexual desire is sinful in ²⁴ Gospel of Matthew 6:25-26,

²⁵ Ethics (Part 5), Baruch Spinoza, "Prop. XIX. He, who loves God, cannot endeavor that God

should love him in return.' ²⁶ "It seems to me that the idea of a personal God is an [anthropomorphic] concept which I cannot take seriously. I also cannot imagine some will or goal [i.e., by Pope Pius V declaring 'Elizaintervention] outside the human sphere"...a 1947 letter Einstein wrote to Murray W. Gross, included in Einstein and Religion

> "God said to Abraham, kill me a son / Abe said man you must be puttin' me on / God said no / Abe said what? / God said, you can do what you want Abe butthe next time you see me comin' vou'd better run... ²⁸ Job 1:21, KJV

²⁹ The Conference of the Birds, P. 12, translation by Afkham Darbandi and Dick Davis

³⁰ Albert Einstein, The Quotable Einstein, Princeton University Press ³¹ Job 14, 1-2 KJV

Disobedience and Other Essays

32 Henry David Thoreau, Civil

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