

Spirituality & Community

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The Seven Tablets of Creation The Ancient Babylonian Creation Myth

Sufism for Western Seekers
Dr. Stewart Bitkoff

thisHumanCondition
Daniel Speraw

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Who We Are

www.spiritualityandcommunity.com

Welcome! Seeking spiritual fulfillment? True happiness and mental wellness? Well, that's what we're all about. Spirituality & Community is a magazine, web site, and online community for those seeking answers to life's deepest questions. ***We are dedicated to promoting spirituality, true happiness, mental wellness, and appreciation for a diversity of spiritual beliefs.***

A New Age of Light

Our focus is spirituality, which we view as an inner search for happiness and fulfillment. We are concerned with what lies within the heart. ***We believe that within everyone lies a pure love that we call the Light or the Lord within. We believe that one must open one's heart to the Light to attain spiritual fulfillment and that only this brings true happiness and mental wellness.*** The Light is the essence of humanity. ***Ultimately, we find our way by casting our gaze inward.*** We will search this inner world over until we find our home:

***We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
T.S. Eliot, Little Gidding***

We believe that mankind is entering a new age, an Age of Light. We see a growing spiritual crisis in the world today. Our culture has brought us unprecedented material well being, but we seem further away than ever from true spiritual wholeness. We also perceive an increase in mental health issues in our society and believe this to be linked to spiritual detachment. Many wander endlessly in search of the material gratification that will bring them happiness. Many have lost faith in religions and traditions. Others sincerely believe in traditional religions but remain unfulfilled spiritually and unhappy. Unfortunately, too many are so close-minded they refuse to ask what is missing from their lives. Yet, many hunger for spiritual wholeness and are searching for answers. ***We believe that we are entering a new age of enlightenment in which genuine spiritual progress will be made and that spiritual development depends upon a genuine appreciation for a diversity of spiritual beliefs.*** An appreciation for diversity of belief provides us with a fresh view of the beliefs of others, allows us to take from each set of beliefs that which rings true, and enables us to synthesize a personal spirituality that makes sense for each of us. When we view the beliefs of others with our hearts, we see truth shine through. We look with the highest regard to traditional beliefs and religions for guidance, and we also look forward. ***We believe that the past is not the end but the beginning.***



What We Do

Spirituality & Community produces a magazine and encompasses an online community. Both aspects serve as the basis for bringing together those who share our aspirations and beliefs, to meet each other and exchange ideas. We provide many opportunities for exploring spirituality and communicating with others:

- Spirituality & Community magazine*
- Features on the site*
- Online chats* (as interest arises)

The magazine is based on a Reader's Digest® type model. It is comprised primarily of reader submitted material. It is the primary mechanism for a member to both explore spirituality and communicate his or her ideas to others. Features are also posted on the site. When interest is sufficiently high, we will hold chats online. *We sincerely hope that you will find truth within, and we wish you only the best on your own personal journey!*

The Seven Tablets of Creation

(excerpts)

Translated by L.W. King (1902)

The Ancient Babylonian Creation Myth

The ancient Babylonian creation myth, called the Enuma Elish, is one of the oldest known creation myths. The myth in the form represented here was found on seven clay tablets in the ruined library of Nineveh. The tablets are dated to roughly 650 BC; however, the myth roughly in this form is dated by the translator, the scholar L.W. King, to around 2000 BC. Other scholars date the myth to between 1100 and 1700 BC. The precursors to this form of the myth are undoubtedly many centuries older than this form. The creation myth is very interesting because it bears many similarities to other ancient Middle Eastern creation myths, including the ancient Egyptian and the story in Genesis of the Old Testament. The Babylonian myth tells of a struggle between Marduk, the chief god of Babylon, and Tiamat, the goddess of Chaos. The story begins with the waters of chaos. Apsu and Tiamat are the primeval god and goddess. The chaos goddess Tiamat is represented as a snake. Tiamat bears many other gods and goddesses. The children make a lot of noise, and Apsu wants to kill them. Apsu is killed. Tiamat wishes to kill her children, the gods and goddesses. Marduk offers to fight Tiamat if he is recognized as the supreme god, and the other gods and goddesses agree. Marduk defeats Tiamat, and tearing her body in half, he creates the sky and earth. Marduk later creates man from his own blood and bone. Man is created to worship and serve the gods.



The Stela of Hammurabi

Tablet I

1. When in the height heaven was not named,
2. And the earth beneath did not yet bear a name,
3. And the primeval Apsû, who begat them,
4. And chaos, Tiamat, the mother of them both,—
5. Their waters were mingled together,
6. And no field was formed, no marsh was to be seen;
7. When of the gods none had been called into being,
8. And none bore a name, and no destinies [were ordained];
9. Then were created the gods in the midst of [heaven],
10. Lahmu and Lahamu were called into being [...].
11. Ages increased, [...],
12. Then Anshar and Kishar were created, and over them [...].
13. Long were the days, then there came forth [...]
14. Anu, their son, [...]
15. Anshar and Anu [...]
16. And the god Anu [...]
17. Nudimmud, whom his fathers [his] begetters [...]
18. Abounding in all wisdom, [...]

19. He was exceeding strong [...]
20. He had no rival [...]
21. (Thus) were established and [were ... the great gods (?)].
22. But T[iamat and Âpsû] were (still) in confusion [...],
23. They were troubled and [...]
24. In disorder(?) ... [...]
26. And Tiamat roared [...]
25. Apsû was not diminished in might [...]
27. She smote, and their deeds [...]
28. Their way was evil ... [...] ...
29. Then Apsû, the begetter of the great gods,
30. Cried unto Mummu, his minister, and said unto him:
31. "O Mummu, thou minister that rejoicest my spirit,
32. "Come, unto Tiamat let us [go]!"
33. So they went and before Tiamat they lay down,
34. They consulted on a plan with regard to the gods [their sons].
35. Apsû opened his mouth [and spake],
36. And unto Tiamat, the glistening one, he addressed [the word]:
37. "[...] their way [...],
38. "By day I cannot rest, by night [I cannot lie down (in peace)].
39. "But I will destroy their way, I will [...],
40. "Let there be lamentation, and let us lie down (again in peace)."
41. When Tiamat [heard] these words,
42. She raged and cried aloud [...].
43. [She ...] grievously [...],
44. She uttered a curse, and unto [Apsû she spake]:
45. "What then shall we [do]?"
46. "Let their way be made difficult, and let us [lie down (again) in peace]."
47. Mummu answered, and gave counsel unto Apsû,
48. [...] and hostile (to the gods) was the counsel Mu[mumu gave]:
49. "Come, their way is strong, but thou shalt destroy [it];
50. "Then by day shalt thou have rest, by night shalt thou lie down (in peace)."
51. Apsû [hearkened unto] him and his countenance grew bright,
52. [Since] he (i.e. Mummu) planned evil against the gods his sons.
- ...
60. Then Ea, who knoweth all that [is], went up and he beheld their muttering.
- ...
93. "[...] thy [...] he hath conquered and
94. " [...] he [weepeth] and sitteth in tribulation(?).
95. "[...] of fear,
96. "[...] we shall not lie down (in peace).
97. "[...] Apsû is laid waste(?),
98. "[...] and Mummu, who were taken captive, in [...]
99. "[...] thou didst, ...
100. "[...] let us lie down (in peace).
101. "[...] ... they will smite (?) [...].
102. " [...] let us lie down (in peace).
103. "[...] thou shalt take vengeance for them,

104. "[...]unto the tempest shalt thou [...]!"
105. [And Tiamat hearkened unto] the word of the bright god, (and said):
106. "[...] shalt thou entrust! let us wage [war]!"
- ...
109. [They banded themselves together and] at the side of Tiamat [they] advanced;
110. [They were furious, they devised mischief without resting] night and [day].
111. [They prepared for battle], fuming and raging;
112. [They joined their forces] and made war.
113. [Ummu-Hubu]r, who formed all things,
114. [Made in addition] weapons invincible, she spawned monster-serpents,
115. [Sharp of] tooth, and merciless of fang;
116. [With poison instead of] blood she filled [their] bodies.
117. Fierce [monster-vipers] she clothed with terror,
118. [With splendour] she decked them, [she made them] of lofty stature.
119. [Whoever beheld] them, terror overcame him,
120. Their bodies reared up and none could withstand [their attack].
121. [She set] up vipers, and dragons, and the (monster) [Laḥamu],
122. [And hurricanes], and raging hounds, and scorpion-men,
123. And mighty [tempests], and fish-men, and[rams];
124. [They bore] cruel weapons, without fear of [the fight].
125. Her commands [were mighty], [none] could resist them;
126. After this fashion, huge of stature, [she made] eleven (monsters).
127. Among the gods who were her sons, inasmuch as he had given [her support],
128. She exalted Kingu; in their midst [she raised] him [to power].
129. To march before the forces, to lead [the host],
130. To give the battle-signal, to advance to the attack,
131. To direct the battle, to control the fight,
132. Unto him she entrusted; in [costly raiment] she made him sit, (saying):
133. "I have uttered thy spell, in the assembly of the gods I have raised thee to power.
134. "The dominion over all the gods [have I entrusted unto him].
135. "Be thou exalted, thou my chosen spouse,
136. "May they magnify thy name over all [of them ... the Anunnaki]."
137. She gave him the Tablets of Destiny, on [his] breast she laid them, (saying):
138. "Thy command shall not be without avail, and[the word of thy mouth shall be established]."
139. Now Kingu, (thus) exalted, having received [the power of Anu],
140. [Decreed] the fate among the gods his sons, (saying):
141. "Let the opening of your mouth [quench] the Fire-god;
142. "Whoso is exalted in the battle, let him [display (his) might]!"

Tablet II

1. Tiamat made weighty her handiwork,
2. [Evil] she wrought against the gods her children.
3. [To avenge] Apsû, Tiamat planned evil,
4. But how she had collected her [forces, the god ...] unto Ea divulged.
5. Ea [hearkened to] this thing, and
6. He was [grievous]ly afflicted and he sat in sorrow.
7. [The days] went by, and his anger was appeased,
8. And to [the place of] Anshar his father he took[his way].
9. [He went] and standing before Anshar, the father who begat him,
10. [All that] Tiamat had plotted he repeated unto him,
11. [Saying, "Ti]amat our mother hath conceived a hatred for us,
12. "With all her force she rageth, full of wrath.
13. "All the gods have turned to her,
14. "[With] those, whom ye created, they go at her side.
15. "They are banded together and at the side of Tiamat they advance;
16. "They are furious, they devise mischief without resting night and day.
17. "They prepare for battle, fuming and raging;
18. "They have joined their forces and are making war.
19. "Ummu-Hubur, who formed all things,
20. "Hath made in addition weapons invincible, she hath spawned monster-serpents,
21. "Sharp of tooth, and merciless of fang.
22. "With poison instead of blood she hath filled their bodies.
23. "Fierce monster-vipers she hath clothed with terror,
24. "With splendour she hath decked them, she hath made them of lofty stature.
25. "Whoever beholdeth them is overcome by terror,"
- ...
32. "After this fashion, huge of stature, hath she made eleven (monsters).
33. "Among the gods who are her sons, inasmuch as he hath given her support,
34. She hath exalted Kingu; in their midst she hath raised him to power.
35. "To march before the forces, to lead the host,
36. "To give the battle-signal, to advance to the attack,
37. "[To direct] the battle, to control the fight,
- ...
45. "[Now Kingu, (thus) exalted], having received the power of Anu,
46. "Decreed the fate [for the gods, her sons], (saying):
47. "'Let [the opening of your mouth] quench the Fire-god;
48. "'[Whoso is exalted in the battle], let him display (his) might!'"
49. [When Anshar heard how Tiamat] was mightily in revolt,
50. [...], he bit his lips,
51. [...], his mind was not at peace,
52. His [...], he made a bitter lamentation:
- ...
56. "[But Tiamat hath exalted Kin]gu, and where is one who can oppose her?"
57. [...] deliberation
- ...
- (72) [Anshar unto] his son addressed [the word]:
- (73) "[...] ... my mighty hero,

(74) "[Whose] strength [is great] and whose onslaught cannot be withstood,
(75) "[Go] and stand before Tiamat,
(76) "[That] her spirit [may be appeased], that her heart may be merciful.
(77) "[But if] she will not hearken unto thy word,
(78) "Our [word] shalt thou speak unto her, that she may be pacified."
(79) [He heard the] word of his father Anshar
(80) And [he directed] his path to her, towards her he took the way.
(81) Anu [drew nigh], he beheld the muttering of Tiamat,
(82) [But he could not withstand her], and he turned back.

...

Tablet III

1. Anshar opened his mouth, and
2. [Unto Gaga], his [minister], spake the word:
3. "[O Gaga, thou minis]ter that rejoicest my spirit,
4. "[Unto Lahmu and Lah]amu will I send thee.
5. "[...] thou canst attain,
6. "[...] thou shalt cause to be brought before thee.
7. [... let] the gods, all of them,
8. "[Make ready for a feast], at a banquet let them sit,
9. "[Let them eat bread], let them mix wine,
10. "[That for Marduk], their avenger, they may decree the fate.
...
53. "I sent Anu, but he could not withstand her;
54. "Nudimmud was afraid and turned back.
55. "But Marduk hath set out, the director of the gods, your son;
56. "To set out against Tiamat his heart hath prompted (him).
57. "He opened his mouth and spake unto me, (saying):
58. "'If I, your avenger,
59. "'Conquer Tiamat and give you life,
60. "'Appoint an assembly, make my fate preeminent and proclaim it.
61. "'In Upshukkinaku seat yourselves joyfully together;
62. "'With my word in place of you will I decree fate.
63. "'May whatsoever I do remain unaltered,
64. "'May the word of my lips never be changed nor made of no avail.'
65. "Hasten, therefore, and swiftly decree for him the fate which you bestow,
66. "That he may go and fight your strong enemy!"
...
125. Lahmu and Lahamu heard and cried aloud,
126. All of the Igigi wailed bitterly, (saying):
127. "What has been altered so that they should ... [...]
128. "We do not understand the d[eed] of Tiamat!"
129. Then did they collect and go,
130. The great gods, all of them, who decree [fate].
131. They entered in before Anshar, they filled [...];
132. They kissed one another, in the assembly [...].
133. They made ready for the feast, at the banquet [they sat];
134. They ate bread, they mixed [sesame-wine].

135. The sweet drink, the mead, confused their [...],
136. They were drunk with drinking, their bodies were filled.
137. They were wholly at ease, their spirit was exalted;
138. Then for Marduk, their avenger, did they decree the fate.

Tablet IV

1. They prepared for him a lordly chamber,
- 2 . Before his fathers as prince he took his place.
3. "Thou art chiefest among the great gods,
4. "Thy fate is unequalled, thy word is Anu!
5. "O Marduk, thou art chiefest among the great gods,
6. "Thy fate is unequalled, thy word is Anu!
7. "Henceforth not without avail shall be thy command,
8. "In thy power shall it be to exalt and to abase.
9. "Established shall be the word of thy mouth, irresistible shall be thy command;
10. "None among the gods shall transgress thy boundary.
11. "Abundance, the desire of the shrines of the gods,
12. "Shall be established in thy sanctuary, even though they lack (offerings).
13. "O Marduk, thou art our avenger!
14. "We give thee sovereignty over the whole world.
15. "Sit thou down in night, be exalted in thy command.
16. "Thy weapon shall never lose its power, it shall crush thy foe.
17. "O lord, spare the life of him that putteth his trust in thee,
18. "But as for the god who began the rebellion, pour out his life."
19. Then set they in their midst a garment,
20. And unto Marduk their first-born they spake:
21. "May thy fate, O lord, be supreme among the gods,
22. "To destroy and to create; speak thou the word, and (thy command) shall be fulfilled.
23. "Command now and let the garment vanish;
24. "And speak the word again and let the garment reappear!"
25. Then he spake with his mouth, and the garment vanished;
26. Again he commanded it, and the garment reappeared.
27. When the gods, his fathers, beheld (the fulfilment of) his word,
28. They rejoiced, and they did homage (unto him, saying), " Marduk is king! "
29. They bestowed upon him the sceptre, and the throne, and the ring,
30. They give him an invincible weapon, which overwhelmeth the foe.
31. "Go, and cut off the life of Tiamat,
32. "And let the wind carry her blood into secret places."
33. After the gods his fathers had decreed for the lord his fate,
34. They caused him to set out on a path of prosperity and success.
- 35 . He made ready the bow, he chose his weapon,
36. He slung a spear upon him and fastened it . . .
37. He raised the club, in his right hand he grasped (it),
38. The bow and the quiver he hung at his side.
39. He set the lightning in front of him,
40. With burning flame he filled his body.
41. He made a net to enclose the inward parts of Tiamat,
42. The four winds he stationed so that nothing of her might escape;

43. The South wind and the North wind and the East wind and the West wind
44. He brought near to the net, the gift of his father Anu.
45. He created the evil wind, and the tempest, and the hurricane,
46. And the fourfold wind, and the sevenfold wind, and the whirlwind, and the wind which had no equal;
47. He sent forth the winds which he had created, the seven of them;
48. To disturb the inward parts of Tiamat, they followed after him.
49. Then the lord raised the thunderbolt, his mighty weapon,
50. He mounted the chariot, the storm unequalled for terror,
51. He harnessed and yoked unto it four horses,
52. Destructive, ferocious, overwhelming, and swift of pace;
53. [...] were their teeth, they were flecked with foam;
54. They were skilled in [...], they had been trained to trample underfoot.
55. [...], mighty in battle,
56. Left and [right ...
57. His garment was [...], he was clothed with terror,
58. With overpowering brightness his head was crowned.
59. Then he set out, he took his way,
60. And towards the [rag]ing Tiamat he set his face.
61. On his lips he held [...],
62. ... [...] he grasped in his hand.
63. Then they beheld him, the gods beheld him,
64. The gods his fathers beheld him, the gods beheld him.
65. And the lord drew nigh, he gazed upon the inward parts of Tiamat,
66. He perceived the muttering of Kingu, her spouse.
67. As (Marduk) gazed, (Kingu) was troubled in his gait,
68. His will was destroyed and his motions ceased.
69. And the gods, his helpers, who marched by his side,
70. Beheld their leader's [...], and their sight was troubled.
71. But Tiamat [...], she turned not her neck,
72. With lips that failed not she uttered rebellious words:
73. "[...] thy coming as lord of the gods,
74. "From their places have they gathered, in thy place are they!"
75. Then the lord [raised] the thunderbolt, his mighty weapon,
76. [And against] Tiamat, who was raging, thus he sent (the word):
77. "[Thou] art become great, thou hast exalted thyself on high,
78. "And thy [heart hath prompted] thee to call to battle.
79. "[...] their fathers [...],
80. "[...] their [...] thou hatest [...].
81. "[Thou hast exalted King]u to be [thy] spouse,
82. "[Thou hast . . .] him, that, even as Anu, he should issue decrees.
83. "[...] thou hast followed after evil,
84. "And [against] the .gods my fathers thou hast contrived thy wicked plan.
85. "Let then thy host be equipped, let thy weapons be girded on!
86. "Stand! I and thou, let us join battle!"
87. When Tiamat heard these words,
88. She was like one possessed, she lost her reason.
89. Tiamat uttered wild, piercing cries,
90. She trembled and shook to her very foundations.

91. She recited an incantation, she pronounced her spell,
92. And the gods of the battle cried out for their weapons.
93. Then advanced Tiamat and Marduk, the counsellor of the gods;
94. To the fight they came on, to the battle they drew nigh.
95. The lord spread out his net and caught her,
96. And the evil wind that was behind (him) he let loose in her face.
97. As Tiamat opened her mouth to its full extent,
98. He drove in the evil wind, while as yet she had not shut her lips.
99. The terrible winds filled her belly,
100. And her courage was taken from her, and her mouth she opened wide.
101. He seized the spear and burst her belly,
102. He severed her inward parts, he pierced (her) heart.
103. He overcame her and cut off her life;
104. He cast down her body and stood upon it.
105. When he had slain Tiamat, the leader,
106. Her might was broken, her host was scattered.
107. And the gods her helpers, who marched by her side,
108. Trembled, and were afraid, and turned back.
109. They took to flight to save their lives;
110. But they were surrounded, so that they could not escape.
111. He took them captive, he broke their weapons;
112. In the net they were caught and in the snare they sat down.
113. The [...] ... of the world they filled with cries of grief.
114. They received punishment from him, they were held in bondage.
115. And on the eleven creatures which she had filled with the power of striking terror,
116. Upon the troop of devils, who marched at her [...],
117. He brought affliction, their strength [he ...];
118. Them and their opposition he trampled under his feet.
119. Moreover, Kingu, who had been exalted over them,
120. He conquered, and with the god Dug-ga he counted him.
121. He took from him the Tablets of Destiny that were not rightly his,
122. He sealed them with a seal and in his own breast he laid them.
123. Now after the hero Marduk had conquered and cast down his enemies,
124. And had made the arrogant foe even like ...,
125. And had fully established Anshar's triumph over the enemy,
126. And had attained the purpose of Nudimmud,
127. Over the captive gods he strengthened his durance,
128. And unto Tiamat, whom he had conquered, he returned.
129. And the lord stood upon Tiamat's hinder parts,
130. And with his merciless club he smashed her skull.
131. He cut through the channels of her blood,
132. And he made the North wind bear it away into secret places.
133. His fathers beheld, and they rejoiced and were glad;
134. Presents and gifts they brought unto him.
135. Then the lord rested, gazing upon her dead body,
136. While he divided the flesh of the ..., and devised a cunning plan.
137. He split her up like a flat fish into two halves;
138. One half of her he established as a covering for heaven.

139. He fixed a bolt, he stationed a watchman,
140. And bade them not to let her waters come forth.
141. He passed through the heavens, he surveyed the regions (thereof),
142. And over against the Deep he set the dwelling of Nudimmud.
143. And the lord measured the structure of the Deep,
144. And he founded E-shara, a mansion like unto it.
145. The mansion E-shara which he created as heaven,
146. He caused Anu, Bêl, and Ea in their districts to inhabit.

Tablet V

1. He.(i.e. Marduk) made the stations for the great gods;
 2. The stars, their images, as the stars of the Zodiac, he fixed.
 3. He ordained the year and into sections he divided it;
 4. For the twelve months he fixed three stars.
 5. After he had [...] the days of the year [...] images,
 6. He founded the station of Nibir to determine their bounds;
 7. That none might err or go astray,
 8. He set the station of Bêl and Ea along with him.
 9. He opened great gates on both sides,
 10. He made strong the bolt on the left and on the right.
 11. In the midst thereof he fixed the zenith;
 12. The Moon-god he caused to shine forth, the night he entrusted to him.
 13. He appointed him, a being of the night, to determine the days;
 14. Every month without ceasing with the crown he covered(?) him, (saying):
 15. "At the beginning of the month, when thou shinest upon the land,
 16. "Thou commandest the horns to determine six days,
 17. "And on the seventh day to [divide] the crown.
 18. "On the fourteenth day thou shalt stand opposite, the half [...].
 19. "When the Sun-god on the foundation of heaven [...] thee,
 20. "The [...] thou shalt cause to ..., and thou shalt make his [...].
 21. "[...] ... unto the path of the Sun-god shalt thou cause to draw nigh,
 22. "[And on the ... day] thou shalt stand opposite, and the Sun-god shall ... [...]
 23. "[...] to traverse her way.
 24. "[...] thou shalt cause to draw nigh, and thou shalt judge the right.
- ...

Tablet VI

1. When Marduk heard the word of the gods,
 2. His heart prompted him and he devised [a cunning plan].
 3. He opened his mouth and unto Ea [he spake],
 4. [That which] he had conceived in his heart he imparted [unto him]:
 5. "My blood will I take and bone will I [fashion],
 6. "I will make man, that man may ... [...].
 7. "I will create man who shall inhabit [the earth],"
 8. "That the service of the gods may be established, and that [their] shrines [may be built].
- ...

Tablet VII

1. O Asari, "Bestower of planting," "[Founder of sowing],"
2. "Creator of grain and plants," "who caused [the green herb to spring up]!"
3. O Asaru-alim, "who is revered in the house of counsel," "[who aboundeth in counsel],"
4. The gods paid homage, fear [took hold upon them]!
5. O Asaru-alim-nuna, "the mighty one," "the Light of [the father who begat him],"
6. Who directeth the decrees of Anu, Bel, [and Ea]!"
7. He was their patron, he ordained [their];
8. He, whose provision is abundance, goeth forth [...]!
9. Tutu [is] "He who created them anew;"
10. Should their wants be pure, then are they [satisfied];
11. Should he make an incantation, then are the gods [appeased];
12. Should they attack him in anger, he withstandeth [their onslaught]!
13. Let him therefore be exalted, and in the assembly of the gods [let him ...];
14. None among the gods can [rival him]!
15. Tutu is Zi-ukkina, "the Life of the host [of the gods],"
16. Who established for the gods the bright heavens.
17. He set them on their way, and ordained [their path (?)]
18. Never shall his [...] deeds be forgotten among men.
19. Tutu as Zi-azag thirdly they named, "the Bringer of Purification,"
20. "The God of the Favouring Breeze," "the Lord of Hearing and Mercy,"
21. "The Creator of Fulness and Abundance," "the Founder of Plenteousness,"
22. "Who increaseth all that is small."
23. "In sore distress we felt his favouring breeze,"
24. Let them say, let them pay reverence, let them bow in humility before him!
25. Tutu as Aga-azag may mankind fourthly magnify!
26. "The Lord of the Pure Incantation," "the Quickener of the Dead,"
27. "Who had mercy upon the captive gods,"
28. "Who removed the yoke from upon the gods his enemies,"
29. "For their forgiveness did he create mankind,"
30. "The Merciful One, with whom it is to bestow life!"
31. May his deeds endure, may they never be forgotten

...

Sufism for Western Seekers

(excerpt)

Dr. Stewart Bitkoff

Our Conversation Continues –

Are You Really Saying We Can Co-Create Our Reality?

If you have fear, you have no need to think of punishment. Fear itself is punishment enough. Similarly with hope. Intense hope leads easily to fear that the hope may not be realized. To feel that one possesses something may at any moment lead to fear of deprivation. Feeling that one possesses nothing is a producer of fear. If you fear, or desire, beyond a certain point, you have lost your way, perhaps completely.

Idries Shah

Good morning, I'm back.

Where have you been? We've been waiting.

I had to have some fun, visit with people. You know, that sort of thing. This metaphysical, philosophical material has to be lived in the here and now. Life is much more than fine words, fancy sentiments and sending good wishes out into the universe.

Aren't you in a fine mood this morning?

Haven't had my second cup of coffee yet.

Well, OK. Why don't you get your second cup and see if that helps. Before ending yesterday, what were we going to discuss?

We were easing our way into travelers being co-creators with God, and what exactly all of that means. Here's a short vignette about searching for eyeglasses, that a fellow traveler experienced, which speaks to the point of creating one's own individual reality:

Emotionally Charged

A traveler had just returned from shopping, been home for about an hour, and was now getting ready to go out again, and was running late. Before leaving the house, frantically she raced up and down the stairs, searching in different rooms, for her missing eyeglasses; earlier she had taken them off and could not remember where she put them down. Retracing her steps by making several phone calls to the stores where she had just been, she realized they were in the house somewhere. Again, up and down the stairs, getting more anxious because she was running even later; now, trying to decide if she needed to go to the pharmacy and buy a substitute pair from the generic eyeglass rack, until she could get to the optician later in the week. Certainly, her efforts were slowed by not having glasses on to see; usually, in past searches, she was able to overcome this temporary handicap.

All the while, her father was busy fixing dinner, observing this scene wondering where her glasses might be. This is a typical scenario in any home: where have I misplaced the car keys, phone numbers, or eyeglasses, etc. Patiently he waited for the situation to 'mature.' Usually, in a few minutes the object is recovered and all is again right with the world. This time, no such luck; so, her father calmly joined the scavenger hunt. Everyone knows it's much easier to find something when are not emotionally charged and are actually wearing your own eyeglasses. In less than 2 minutes, her father found the missing item on a windowsill in the master bedroom. As he handed them over to his daughter, she asked where he found them; and remarked she had gone past the window several times, and did not notice them. Well, the day was saved and off she went, breathing a sigh of relief.

Nice story, but for our readers, what's the spiritual angle or lesson here?

Please give me a minute, will you? Talk about being impatient. For those few minutes, her reality was supercharged by emotion; got to be some place, will be late, and I cannot see that well and need my glasses to drive. The process of retrieving the lost object was heightened by emotionality, which in part clouded "spiritual sight" or the ability to see. We all lose things and have a similar reaction, but the part that was individual and controllable, for the most part, was the level of anxiety and how we react to the lost item. In a sense, her reality for those moments was super charged by a pattern of frequently losing things and repeating this search and find scenario. There was good reason for this, not being able to see, and needing glasses to drive the car; however, her reality, or the way she undertook the search, to a certain degree, was controllable and yet clouded by her growing anxiety.

You're doing great, why don't you rest a minute? Let me continue while you finish your coffee.

Thanks. I can use a moment to let the caffeine clear some of those pesky cobwebs from my head.

For the spiritual traveler, reality is perceived and experienced. Through guided experience, the traveler understands reality is an onion with multiple layers, and at its center, seemingly, the onion is without substance or form, yet, it is this 'invisible essence' that the traveler learns to seek in all things. This is the spiritual, inner core, which makes the onion an onion, and which the peeled away layers of our consciousness surround.

Each moment is here for a brief instant and then is gone. Within each moment there is opportunity. What are you going to do? Will you reach higher and embrace the highest part of self? When the teacher shines the Light upon the traveler's heart, the soul is alchemized from self-interest to a higher interest. In a caress of love, within the Light, the heart instantly realizes we are joined in Oneness. Within each moment, we have the opportunity to reach higher and join in kingship with the Light as co-creator. Inside everyone, there is an awareness of this potential.

In the spiritual school, the traveler is taught how to put on the glasses that will enable them to see the inner essence of things, and not get caught up, for the most part, in the frenzy of everyday living. In this way, both the Creator and creation may be perceived and known; it is precisely our emotions, certain ideas and thoughts, which keep us from seeing this inner connection.

Various forms of consciousness while necessary and important to daily life, often block the hidden level from stepping forward. When we are super-charged with emotion or strong ingrained belief, the higher consciousness will not operate. That is why the traveler talks about stilling emotion and pushing aside certain thoughts and ideas. These thoughts, while necessary in everyday life, for the most part, limit capacity in the spiritual realm.

Perceiving the spiritual is nothing more than a trained extension of consciousness, and understanding some of the conditions necessary for this level of consciousness to operate. It is already inside us, operating at a level that for the most part is not perceived and used in everyday life. Getting in touch with this aspect of our being is a fundamental step towards co-creating our own reality.

To continue with the analogy of the lost glasses, it is like the person who is running around searching, needing glasses to see so she can find them. What the spiritual school teaches is how to put the “glasses” on to really see what is in front of you.

Say, has the caffeine worked yet? Perhaps you can offer other examples of how this is done.

Sure. Basically, the traveler is taught and shown that spiritual capacity is already inside and is the very energy of our lives. In our case, we met several times a week, for 4 years in Sam’s office, during lunch or after work. Usually, there were 2-4 students present and we discussed a variety of work related topics, but quickly the lessons were directed toward spiritual learning. This was accomplished through standard teaching methods: question and answer; discussion of troubling events of the week, trying to understand the underlying mechanisms and our reactions to them; at different events, fellowship with other travelers outside the office; reading assignments of the classical and contemporary masters; and perception of individual spiritual states and our learning from our reaction. Because inner spiritual centers were being activated, spiritual states and experiences would occur anytime during the day or night. As a control, Sam requested that we report these and our reactions as they occurred.

Another way this spiritual learning was accomplished was through Sam’s guidance as we meditated. After giving preliminary verbal instruction, on how to concentrate on the Holy Name, Sam showed us how to meditate and go deep within. Through transmission of spiritual grace, baraka, that passed through Sam we were assisted to concentrate and go deep within our self. It is this grace or universal energy that enables the teacher to do his job, and helps guide the student inward, past individual distraction. The universal energy gives us power, an “energy boost,” so to speak, that allows the traveler to practice on their own and connect with their spiritual center.

Sam called this fundamental spiritual energy the Light because it dissipates spiritual darkness and is a palpable, living, creative force that the teacher uses to set the fire of Divine love aglow in the traveler’s heart. This awareness, because it already exists within, albeit at a low level, can be enabled and activated from great distances, and, at other times, comes forward spontaneously exerting itself on the situation. As previously discussed, one of the most familiar of these states described in poetic literature is the oneness of creation experience; here the traveler is connected spiritually to all things and perceives their oneness in an ecstatic union of love, bliss, and spiritual energy. For those moments of spiritual awareness, there is no time or space only joy and

connection with the beloved. Words really cannot fully convey the power of this experience, and for many travelers it is strong enough to initiate their journey and place them on the path.

It seems we are going a little far a field here; let me pull this together by explaining more about the spiritual school and why it exists.

The point of the school and this type of learning is to help create spiritually completed people. Physically, the school may be located in an office, a bakery, a publishing house, a place of worship, a hospital or an international society to help disseminate cross cultural information. To the school, this is the outside form which has a viable worldly function and inside there is a spiritual mission. This training, experience, and guidance exist because the highest expression of life is to become a co-creator with the beloved. Spirituality must be in the everyday world; it is an enriching and enabling element. According to Sufi tradition, we are the King's representatives in this experience and in order to fulfill our function, must remember who we are; and in the process, regain certain forgotten spiritual capacities.

We are unique beings, and as such have both a singular and collective function. By using all of our capacities, physical, mental, emotional and spiritual, we strive toward human excellence and help make the world a better place. This is done through reaching for the highest possible expression of each moment. Inside all of us there is a 'divine spark' which tells us what the situation requires; this inner barometer or spiritual intuition when aligned with the higher destiny, knows which action will have the greatest benefit to all.

Now, let's return to the scenario of searching for our glasses. How might spiritual intuition or capacity have helped us? First of all it did; it was the energy behind the search. Fundamentally, we are spiritual beings having a human experience. What might have been useful for the traveler who was searching, was to remember an efficient search requires a balanced attitude; while anxiety is useful to get motivated and started, when anxiety reaches certain levels it can actually hinder outcomes.

Also, one can wonder, if prescience, or the ability to spiritually see things were used, wouldn't the whole searching scenario have been avoided? Yes, that would have been true; however, what the situation required was a calmer approach, not extraordinary capacity. You don't need a shot gun to kill a house fly, just a quiet approach, with rolled newspaper and a steady hand!

Here is another activity to help practice controlling your thoughts and daily consciousness.

Daily Activity: Practice Gratitude

When you are feeling down, sad, or depressed, practice gratitude. When you are at your lowest, often it helpful to take a personal inventory and number those things for which you are grateful. Thank yourself or thank the universe for placing these things, people, or events into your life. Do this over and over; in using this repetitive cycle of replacement thought which recounts the good in your life; for those short moments, you will change your consciousness and the energy being created. For example, O Lord, thank you for this sunny morning and good, hot cup of coffee! Repeat this 3 or 4 times. Say these words slowly and with meaning; for those moments your energy will change and gradually you will get used to controlling your consciousness. Often, I

find myself on a daily walk, thanking the Light for this joyful opportunity to move about in the sunshine. I repeat this over and over.

Remember, this more positive thought pattern has healthy and regenerative energy attached to it. And when you find yourself going back to your negative thoughts, don't get down on yourself; simply repeat more positive ones. Everyone has many things for which they can be grateful. Think about it.

Sam Story

Once there was a servant of God who was walking along a road and noticed a fruit seed lying in the dust. In the hope this seed would one day sprout into a fruit tree, he picked it up and tossed it into the grass beside the road.

In time, this seed matured into a large tree which gave rise to other trees. Over the years, a beautiful orchard lined the road. As travelers saw these trees, they stopped to rest and refresh themselves with the shade and fruit. Through the centuries, thousands benefited through this one act of kindness, performed by an anonymous traveler, long ago.

This forgotten act of kindness lifted the anonymous traveler into the circle of friends.

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Dr. Bitkoff is the author of the recently released, *Sufism for Western Seekers*.

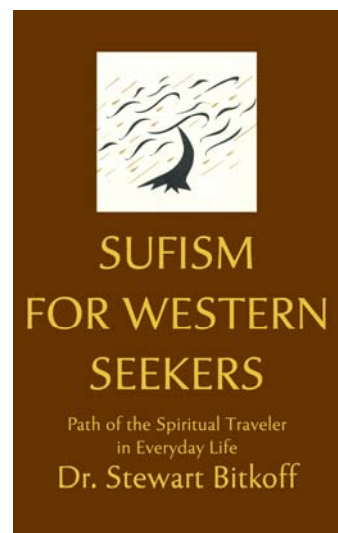
For many western spiritual seekers, Sufism is often misunderstood and viewed as an Islamic mystical tradition presented through various Sufi orders. Yet this ancient path of spiritual knowing is much broader and older, available through all religions and independent of Islam and these orders.

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Available Online, Amazon:

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To contact author go to: www.stewartbitkoff.com.



thisHumanCondition

Daniel Speraw

She Was Forty Minutes Late!

IF I WERE IN A LONG, SILENT STRUGGLE WITH MY DAUGHTER

I had already been waiting for ten minutes and was feeling impatient. The movie would be starting soon, and I really wanted to see it.

My daughter and I seemed to be doing a lot of this to each other; it was like a fight without the fighting, and it had been going on since... she was a cheerleader in middle school? She had been so proud of herself, so happy that her team was competing in the county finals. I was running late, as usual; July's traffic at the beach was congested, and of course there was no place to park. By the time I arrived, my daughter's team had already performed. Had it started then, or was there an earlier time when I had disappointed her?

Look now, she was twenty minutes late, and the movie had begun. Impatiently, I began to pace. If we missed the show, I was just too busy to come back. I would just have to miss it.

As I walked the curb, I found myself remembering other incidents in our struggle: the times that she had called and I had taken a day or two to get back to her; her Christmas present for me that she had bought in a convenience store; the birthday present I gave her a day late; the plans we made to go out for my birthday, which she had cancelled at the last minute; and so it had gone, back and forth.

I was not intentionally getting back at her, but...? How had the love between us gotten so tangled?

She was now thirty-five minutes late, and I muttered, "Okay that is it!" and was startled to realize what I would say when she finally arrived: "Where have you been? We have missed the movie!" It would not be the words as much as my what-is-wrong-with-you tone of voice that would cut her.

Finally, I saw her a block and a half away. I stopped pacing. Still muttering, I said, "She parked in the public garage! Surely there was something closer on the street!"

As she approached, I noticed that her shoulders were beginning to hunch and that she was lowering her chin. She was bracing for my outburst!

When she was a few steps away, I took a breath and pushed out a smile.

"Hey Sweetheart," I said, "it is really good to see you."

She stopped with a look of surprise.

As I began to release our usual short hug, she held on. When we finally parted, I asked, "How about a walk on the beach?"

The Mask That Hides Me

Note: The word personality is derived from *persona*, the masks worn by actors in ancient Greek dramas.

I had a sick, nervous feeling in my stomach. After a month, we were finally sitting down at the kitchen table.

She blurted, "I feel lonely."

I quickly said, "Me too."

"No," she countered, "I mean, you do so much pretending that I rarely know what is going on with you."

I opened my mouth to ask, "What do you mean," but stopped myself just in time and could think of nothing else to say.

She nodded, as if in confirmation, and added, "Sometimes, when we do start to get close, you suddenly change the subject and pretend that we are not."

Hesitantly, I agreed.

She continued, "Even now, with our relationship at its worst, you have been pretending that we are fine, and I am just so sick of it!"

I erupted, "But everybody pretends; like my mother pretends eating has nothing to do with her obesity; like your oldest brother works way too hard at pretending he is young! And our neighbor, Fred, he pretends to know everything, when most of the time, he knows nothing."

I lost momentum with those last words, ending weakly.

She shook her head and said, "I'm not talking about them. I'm talking about you!"

What could I say? My worst nightmare was playing itself out, and I felt powerless to stop it.

When she realized I was not responding, she shook her head wearily and said, "Maybe you just cannot help it."

She pulled a piece of paper from her pocket and pushed it over, saying, "I heard this on TV."

I looked down to her feathery handwriting: *We are so accustomed to disguise ourselves for others, that, in the end, we become disguised to ourselves.*

My head stayed down. She remained silent.

I fought to gather my muddled thoughts, aware of her growing impatience. My eyes began to tear, as I realized that I had all but lost her.

Taking in a ragged breath, I let it go and admitted, "I love you."

I kept my eyes down, pulled in another breath and said, "It is true. I am upset; no, I am very, very upset that I might lose you."

I glanced up to gauge her reaction. Her face was impassive.

Dropping my eyes again, I added, "You are right about me pretending. The last time we were together, I was angry. Very angry; but it is hard for me to let that out. Not just with you. With anyone."

I glanced up again and immediately looked down, wildly groping for more to say.

Finally, I added, "I think I know what you mean about pretending: sometimes I am cheerful, when inside, I am not, at all. And. When I missed that promotion, I pretended that I was not disappointed, but I was, a lot!"

Head still down, I slowly shook it, knowing that I had at last run out of words. The silence dragged, louder than a death knell.

She whispered, "Sometimes, I say *yes*, when I want to say *no*."

I looked up, surprised, and then tentatively joined her: "I am often confident, even brash, when I am feeling just the opposite."

She immediately said, "Sometimes when I make a mistake, I pretend that I meant to do it."

I found myself smiling; and she was too!

Thoughtfully, she said, "Maybe the reason that you pretend is to protect yourself; and, well, maybe I do too."

After a moment, she added, "I guess the question is, 'Can we stop pretending with each other?'"

My breath stopped. She had said, *we*: "Can **we** stop pretending..."

All I had wanted was a chance, and although I probably looked like an idiot, I could not stop grinning.

Note: the quote used above (*We are so accustomed to disguise ourselves for others, that, in the end, we become disguised to ourselves*) was written 400 years ago by the French author Francois de la Rochefoucauld.

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Daniel began writing in the 1980's, with a nationally syndicated newspaper column; but through-out his Life, he has searched through religion, meditation and psychology, all aimed at releasing the past and connecting more deeply with those in his life. He is now using this knowledge to write [This Human Condition](#), sixty-four short pieces on positive change. **You can send him a message on Facebook: search Daniel Speraw.**