

THE
SEVEN SHADES
OF
DARKNESS
BY
NEWTON FORTUIN

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WEB: WWW.NEWFORT.CO.ZA

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Prologue

In every single waking moment we make simple choices that empower either a higher or lower reality for our lives. Much of the associated thinking taking place without our knowing.

This manuscript is about the many reasons we in those moments consciously or unconsciously choose to walk the lower path—the path that takes us into the proverbial *valley of the shadow of death*. It therefore explores the reasons why many live desperate, destructive and uninspired lives. This work covers seven of these shadows or dark sides which I referred to as *The Seven Shades of Darkness*.

The Devil

“For what is evil but good tortured by its own hunger and thirst?” –
[Kahlil Gibran]

The word desperation literally means being de-spirited (or dispirited—also meaning depressed or spiritually broken) and implies that one is “not coming from the spirit”—spirit being our life essence. It can also be described as the devil within us holding us back from who we potentially can become. It also is the same devil that created the greatest evil in human history, Hitler, brought to power in 1933 after the great depression had left the German people dispirited, allowing those with evil inclination among them to flourish.

This is as in any other evil circumstance where evildoers seek to vanquish whatever good there is in the world. But specifically, our own devil is the part of ourselves that prevents us from reaching our full human potential within our own very limited lifetime.

To be de-spirited can be equated with death. At least spiritually in that those who are desperate become depleted of their life essence. And ironically, *devil* is *lived* turned around. In a strange twist of semantics, the word can be implied to mean the opposite of living itself—that it is a force against life and the constructive living of it.

Jung described evil as the failure to meet the Shadow—and I would suppose, specifically to meet The Devil that masks our desperation within. By the shadow Jung implied the aspects of our personality we prefer to deny, or that we do not wish to think about. By it he also does not infer that the shadow itself is evil, but rather the failure or refusal to meet or acknowledge it.

As mentioned before, *evil* being *live* turned around. One therefore can make a similar deduction about its meaning. In

this regard an important distinction we must make is that the devil referenced in this section is not necessarily the one that is external to oneself—as a Hitler was. Except that by avoiding the destructive aspects of our natures, we can unconsciously become devilish – or evil – forces unto ourselves.

Notwithstanding how we have just defined it, desperation usually is associated with feelings of frustration resulting from our unsuccessful attempts at controlling the direction we want our life to take. And particularly when circumstance forces us to live from paycheque-to-paycheque in desperately having to make do with what little we may have to get by. And yet in this effort not to make the ends meet. This therefore does not afford one the luxury to go within—to in this way come from the spirit.

So while feeling sorry for our circumstance may be our right – and beyond that may even be very justifiable – it nonetheless does not allow an opportunity to align the forces of mind that will help create a better future realty for ourselves.

Nevertheless as a rule one's relative level of desperation has very little to do with whether one is materially wealthy or not. It instead is about how one perceives one's personal worth, irrespective of one's finances or possessions. For instance it is reported that America is the unhappiest nation on earth although they are materially the wealthiest. On the other hand one of the poorest, Nigeria, is said to have of the highest levels of relative happiness.

The above claim is according to World Health Organisation findings or the relative metrics which purportedly points to this. While this statistic is not given as a credible measure to prove any significant point, it nevertheless does strongly suggest that one's relative sense of personal worth has very little to do with one's monetary accumulation—or at least should not. In any

event, one's apparent happiness – or not – should indeed be considered a shallow measure. Nigeria perhaps aptly illustrating this point in that it also is rated one of the most corrupt nations on the planet.

From your perspective, what do you prefer: *happiness or being in integrity with oneself and those around you?*

Irrespective of what you may answer, an interesting revelation from the above is that Nigerians are the biggest confidence tricksters in the world, and that American's are by far their preferred target market—the Nigerians referring to them as moogoos (meaning big fools or suckers). Based on this example the irony of this dichotomy is incredibly poignant, it is that the wealthiest of all nations in fact appears to be more needy than one of the poorest.

This is not meant to be a barometer to judge the relative virtues of one society over another, except to conclude that there appears to be a definite causal link between acquisitiveness and happiness. However despite this apparent connection, the levels of desperation usually are higher amongst the 'perceived' poor in very materialistic societies. This therefore being more reflective of capitalist dynamics and how societal values are shaped because of it.

And notwithstanding the above there most definitely are a great many Americans who certainly are living incredibly fulfilled and apparently happy lives. Perhaps even more so than the average seemingly happy and content Nigerian.

Though I want to restate a very important point: *it is that in my opinion the apparent levels of happiness of any society or individual is a very shallow measure.*

Note though that I use apparently and appears quite often in this topic. This is because the appearance of happiness (or the resignation to be happy regardless of circumstance) often

becomes the only substitute for those who feel they have very little power to affect the outcome of their lives. Hence what appears to be happiness often merely is the surrender to fate or circumstance, thus to be happy regardless of the desperateness of one's circumstances. One can almost conclude that in such circumstances, the appearance of happiness – which indeed may very well be true happiness and not merely a façade – may in fact be a protective measure against the reality of one's predicament.

Though, as evidence of a causal link between happiness and the means at one's disposal, in another study into happiness done in South Africa – a country with the highest disparity between rich and poor – an interesting finding emerged. It is that the supposed relative rate of happiness (as per the metrics used by the researches) progressively increased from those who had absolutely no means, to those earning just more than a thousand dollars a month. After that a stabilisation was observed with no perceptible increase related to increased income.

My suspicion though is that this stabilisation figure must be significantly higher in the United States where acquisitiveness is the primary driver of perceived self worth. Despite the relative contentment with the state of one's current finances, what must be the case in a society where one's sense of worth is reflected by one's possessions is that those with much means in all likelihood would not be happy with the state of their lives if they are to have any less in the foreseeable future. That is even though they currently may have much more than they would need to sustain themselves extravagantly for their entire lifetime.

The dependency on capital for acquisition of goods and services as espoused by the capitalist ethic therefore appearing

to be the primary factor driving the resultant higher levels of dissatisfaction amongst citizens living in such societies.

However, *do we then blame capitalism for this societal affliction?*

To a large extent, yes.

It is because modern technological capitalism – particularly as practiced in the United States – thrives on our sense of brokenness for it to then be exploited to achieve its economic ends. Therefore our sense of dissatisfaction with oneself provides an excellent opportunity for some or other commercial fix that may *temporarily* relieve its symptoms—for it to again be fixed very soon after, perhaps in this way providing an ongoing opportunity for financial gain.

Though more often than not will leave the victim of circumstance as broken as before, if not perceptibly worse off in having taken the supposed remedy. This large-scale promotion of our dissatisfaction has been worsened with the advent of modern media, particularly television, with the wholesale marketing of “the numerous reasons why we ought to be dissatisfied with ourselves”, and how it can be *cured* by the respective advertised product.

The above is so principally because *the “American Dream” itself has become skewed.*

The dream specifically being the ‘attainment’ of happiness; the ‘pursuit’ of happiness being a right enshrined in the American constitution considered to be on par with the right to life itself. But the modern day interpretation is that it implies that happiness is a commodity that somehow is for sale, the consequence of this interpretation being that the attainment of personal accumulation for personal accumulation sake is the all important end goal. This in itself being a unfortunate bottomless pit which can never be fulfilled.

What the dream ought to have been is the attainment of power. But not self serving egoistic power, but rather the power to impact the greater world one interacts in positively to so be a positive contributor to humanity. That's even if such power to influence only extends as far as one's immediate surroundings; for example by merely having a positive influence over one's children. However this critical power which will have a ripple affect on the future course of humanity in one way or another, is one a great many nowadays are increasingly abdicating for the attainment of worldly pleasure.

Despite the above concerns I nevertheless am of the opinion that capitalism is merely a man-made mechanism that only is as good – or bad – as the society that utilises it. After all it was founded on the assumption that humankind is essentially good and that we tend to engage our livelihoods for the betterment of all society and that humans are not primarily motivated by greed. Thus notwithstanding its floors, society would not have developed as it had without commercialism over the ages, while modern capitalism certainly has created incredibly many avenues for individual expression.

Though unfortunately in having set us free from the chains of feudalism, inadvertently also creating an opportunity for our own mental enslavement as well. This simply is because the landscape of our lives has as a result become far more complicated. And that in today's world much higher levels of personal responsibility are required to successfully navigate its tumultuous terrain with.

While one can endlessly debate this issue, in my view capitalism's primary weakness – but in it also its primary strength – is that it is subject to the unpredictability of human nature. Therefore one of the reasons that the devil has become so prevalent in it is that we are for the first time in human

history, coming to terms with our unique and individual power to affect the greater world around us.

Humankind therefore is coming of age, and it can be compared to an adolescent struggling to assert himself in an unknown world that he is yet to fully master, but is forced to experience on his own, often by learning from bitter mistakes.

Similarly humanity has to a significant extent forsaken the fear mongering gods of their childhood, replacing them with a new god of personal empowerment. So indeed we are coming of age. But also increasingly replacing the god of our parents with the god of mammon and its insatiable shiny allure; believing that this is to have true power.

Though money and all that it can acquire is in-and-of-its-own not the all-consuming devil. Rather that the devil emanating from it only flourishes when we never seem to have enough of it.

That is *irrespective of how much we may already have.*

The Victim

“There are always risks in freedom. The only risk in bondage is that of breaking free.” – [Gita Bellin]

While the above focused on how a lack of material means can lead to a sense of desperation, it is far more important to grasp that a sense of lack of any kind has a similar effect.

So for instance if one lacked a satisfactory father figure in one’s formative years, one likely will desperately seek a partner to somehow compensate for the emptiness of not having had such an important role model. For a woman the devil then would come in the form of an attraction to an unsatisfactory man who likely will treat her as badly as her father did—if not far worse.

Irrespective of what one’s state of despair may be, one of the greatest paradoxes is that the same circumstances very often results in the noblest of human achievements. Thus as much as our state of despair may be responsible for decay, it can also be the nurturing ground of human greatness as well.

What then distinguishes the spiritually vanquished from the spiritually victorious *appears to be incumbent on an inner ability to make a simple choice to empower goodness over the potential for evil.*

But because our devil’s primary influence over our life is to ward off the Truth of our true inner human potential, it is the supreme master of disguise, and for this reason it is not readily apparent that there even may be a choice at all.

This is because the Devil’s primary disguise is that of the Victim. And strangely, one of the primary ways the Victim manifests itself, is as the Oppressor. This is because the Oppressor primarily oppresses out of its feelings of

powerlessness and inadequacy, in this way also being a Victim of sorts.

On the other hand the Victim often uses their victim-hood to have power over their chosen oppressor. Or in the very least uses it as an excuse for inaction. And through this diabolical dance, both will remain oblivious to how they may be perpetuating their respective darkness within.

Though it is imperative we distinguish the role of the victim from legitimate feelings of victimization such as having been raped or brutally violated in some form or another—this includes any form of emotional victimization as well. In such circumstances those who were subjected to the brutality of others or were the victim of circumstance were very much a victim and will bear the scars of that action—perhaps for the rest of their life.

However to reassert this point: *victim-hood as described in this section is a role we unconsciously – or even consciously – choose to play, irrespective of whether we may actually have been violated.*

But usually it becomes a convenient excuse for powerlessness, merely to maintain the status quo irrespective of how unwholesome it may be.

As mentioned before a synonym for being dispirited is being depressed. It should be noted that depression is not necessarily bad depending on the legitimate circumstances that may have brought it on. Though depression may very well be the most important indicator of how we may be out of integrity with our self at any point in time, and that some inner correction must take place.

Many however ward off this knowledge to in this way avoid legitimate depression. They do so either by developing an orientation that seeks to avoid the pain required for growth to greater levels of adulthood by becoming oblivious to the reality

of their lives; or by taking some or other substance – such as alcohol, overeating, drugs, or prescription medication – to make life more bearable, so never to have to make the change the condition requires.

The issue therefore is not about depression per se, but rather our tendency to wallow in it or to purposefully avoid the reality that brought it about. In this way to choose to remain the poor victim of one's supposed unfortunate circumstance, instead of finding the inner strength to rise above whatever the obstacle may be that is holding one back from growing to our fullest potential.

The Enforcer

“You laugh at me because I'm different, and I laugh at you because you're all the same.” – [Unknown]

The lady cited before in the section on *Forces of Consciousness* (earlier chapter in *Paradox Lost and Found*) who says she will not cheat on her partner because she is scared of the karmic consequences of her actions, inadvertently created a barrier to her inner Truth because she lives in fear of the wrath of *The Enforcer*.

This is because our conscience can only truly serve us when our sense of right is derived from an absence of the fear of the possible consequences—that we simply do the right things because they are the right things to do.

In fact the primary reason most people in today's age live destructive or uninspired lives, is as a direct result of accepting the dogma associated with their religious beliefs.

For instance one of the leading causes of social deviancy and even criminality is due to rebellion against religious institutionalisation. This is because religious beliefs in one way or another is essentially propagated by instilling fear, and that one consequently will be judged for one's actions now and in the hereafter. Usually organised belief orientations foster conformity in that it requires we be like those around us, or else face being ostracised and condemned from our communities if we behave differently.

As a result many feel they cannot conform to the strict standards set for receiving such heavenly redemption as spelled out in their religious code. Consequently they feel that they are already burning in hells excruciating furnaces and therefore may just as well reap destruction on the world as they have already been judged and are doomed irrespective of their actions.

The underlying religious belief in hell and of being at the mercy of god's fury is also cited as a strong motivating factor by apparently *normal* mothers from *normal* households convicted of killing their young children. And they more often than not use as their defence: *that they did it out of fear for their children's immortal soul.*

In the past this was seen as sufficient grounds for declaring the perpetrator legally insane, but this view is increasingly being challenged in the United States where such acts have a high prevalence compared to other western nations and where the phenomenon appears to be strongly associated with fundamentalist Christianity.

Specifically one of the motivations are: that certain mothers felt powerless to protect their children against God's potential future wrath in supposing that their children *may* one day turn sinful; instead to kill them now while they are still young and innocent, in this way ensuring their now still innocent souls a place in heaven; and that their own souls rather rot in hell instead because of the deed they had committed.

This is primarily motivated by their belief that they already would be going to hell irrespective and that they at least would be sparing the child this future torment.

This is incredibly sad, but also a very real occurrence indicating the very extreme lengths to which humans are motivated by the delusions associated with their religious indoctrination.

And as it is with paradox, so it is that those who are the most sensitive among us, or who possess the most potential to do good in the world because they may feel so deeply, also are those who fall astray by such efforts to protect their souls against evil. While those who succeed not to fall astray, are forced to fight a daily conscious battle not to be sucked in by

the fear-mongering monster lurking in the depths of their psyche that they feel powerless to vanquish.¹

¹ Amongst others refer to *Religiosity Common Among Mothers Who Kill Children*, University of Connecticut Health Centre News.

The Vortex

"Where fear is present, wisdom cannot be." – [Lactantius]

Imagine having a pup that at some point starts pulling down your washing. And because of this you decide to severely beat it as punishment. Due to the fear you are inflicting, what likely will happen is that it will develop an uncontrollable compulsion to remove washing whenever it sees it. And the more severely it is punished, the more likely it will pull down the washing. This will happen again, and again, and again, until such time that you are forced to give the poor dog away as it would then, because of its fear, have become a completely uncontrollable beast. And though you may yet be successful in controlling the behaviour, in doing so in all likelihood have irreparably diminished the stature of the unfortunate creature.

This is basic animal psychology, and I would suppose basic human psychology as well. To understand the greater dynamic behind our own compulsion to do wrong, one must realise what temptation is beyond its general religious context. The most important, if not the only appreciation, is that *temptation cannot exist without fear*, and specifically, the fear of the negative consequences of our actions.

So for instance the person that fears heights is in fact tempted to jump. And what prevents them from jumping then, is that they resist the temptation within pulling them to do so against their conscious will.

And equally if we become fearful of committing sin, unfortunately based on the aforementioned deeper dynamics of mind, we similarly will be more tempted into sin. This ironically is because the myth for those who so strongly fear sin have become so real that their greatest fear is that they will fail in this monumental endeavour, and therefore to one day be cast into the eternal furnaces of hell. Sadly then they are so desperately

praying for what they don't want, that in doing so get sucked into the hell on earth that they so dearly wanted to avoid.

This is also the primary reason that many of the victims of sexual violation feel such extreme guilt. They indeed feel as if they had sinned because of the negative religious connotation of the act of sexual intercourse as sin. And thus, since the sexual act had taken place – albeit against their will – are overwhelmed by how they may have been complicit in such an abominable act.

The realisation one must make is that these uncontrollable compulsions within one that seems to draw us to do things that are not in our best interest, using the language of the religious, is in fact the devil that results from our distorted thinking. This is particularly the case in how we formulate our fears. And therefore the devil does not exist, except for how we advocate for him within our psyche.

To appreciate the distinction between temptation and other forms of attraction one must distinguish temptation from tantalisation. According to the dictionary definition: *to be tempted is to be **attracted to do wrong***, whatever our definition of wrong may be. While *to be tantalised is to be **attracted to something** that is considered **good**, but usually perceived as being somewhat out of our immediate reach.*

Therefore based on the definition, temptation is a negative attraction that usually goes against what we may consider as good or beneficial and thus its association with fear of its consequences. By creating the mental delusion of sin and the consequences of heavenly judgement, those who have bought into it have inadvertently allowed a monster to enter into the subterranean depths of their consciousness. And now have to be constantly vigilant, or be doomed to eternal damnation.

This is a human nightmare no matter how one looks at it. For those who succeed to stay clear enough from this deadly Vortex must remain on guard for the remainder of their lives. They are forced to maintain a perpetual state of neurosis not to succumb to their sinful desires, or else face God's wrath. While those who fail are taken along a path of darkness and despair that only the most fortunate can ever return from.

And ironically those who believe they are pure and beyond sin – the self righteous amongst us – are not truly spiritually alive to begin with as they are too cowardly to live their authentic life. This is because they are too concerned about the faults of others, than living their own life. And their hell is senility as they have failed to nurture their timeless essence, so remaining a prisoner held captive by their own limited thinking.

The Strangler

“Faith is an oasis in the heart which will never be reached by the caravan of thinking.” – [Kahlil Gibran]

One of the primary disciplines to master in one’s lifetime is *the ability to manage one’s expectations.*

Doing so gives one the power to manage the greater dynamics of mind to aid us in achieving our wants and desires. This can be done by developing an attitude of mind that appreciates that the optimal eventually will inevitably happen, irrespective.

This of course is the age old religious concept of faith, but with a significant twist.

Simply put the twist is *that one develops a state of mind that enables the free flow of universal dynamics to align with our conscious intentions.*

The key is the realisation – as with our mind experiment discussed before (extract for *Understanding Existence*) – that the details of how it actually will occur are greatly obscured from our awareness. It nevertheless is already taken care of in the deeper layers of reality merely in having had a clear and focused vision of the future outcome.

This sentiment is conveyed in Hebrews 11 verse 1.

“Faith is the confident assurance that something we want is going to happen. It is the certainty that what we hope for is waiting for us, even though we cannot see it up ahead.”

As iterated many times in this work, the view here is opposed to the conventional religious one that places a god in a lofty position of power. And from there, adjudging the relative deservedness of our individual faith. And then from his position of omnipotence, listening to our individual wants and desires, upon which he then decides to grant us the end we may want—or not. And if he then does decide to bless us, will

orchestrate the desired intervention on our behalf.

But then he also becomes the one to blame for not bestowing his grace on his supposed deserved disciple.

Rather, the dynamics involved having to do with how we consciously facilitate getting what we want by our purposeful and directed thinking. In this regard our strong expectations of how the outcome *must* be, literally creating a stranglehold on the energy dynamics inherent in the Interpreter (Extract from *Paradox Lost and Found*) level of our mind responsible for the physical unfolding the events of our life.

The problem with the Christian view is that the outcome seems to be a cut and dried thing: that if you have faith the interpretation implies that you will somehow get what you want.

Perhaps the Buddhist understanding of faith provides a more realistic perspective. In *One Dharma*, an exploration into Western Buddhism, Joseph Goldstein describes Buddhist faith as follows.

“Faith, devotion and confidence are all translations of the Pali word *saddha*. All of these terms refer to that feeling that opens the mind and heart to what is beyond our usual ego concerns and desires; *saddha* opens us to what is greater than ourselves, to the possibility of freedom. Faith becomes both our initial inspiration to practice and explore and what sustains our continuing efforts.”

Essentially faith then is connected to our ability to let go of our ego concerns. This being the literal opposite mentality of the Strangler who obsesses over things that are not within his control.

For example consider the mindset of someone who has an unconditional expectation that the world must treat him fairly.

Though in having such a requirement he most likely will be disappointed on almost every turn as the expectation becomes a self fulfilling prophecy. This is because our expectation will most likely not be reciprocated as we would have wanted, because of this we will perceive unfairness at almost every turn. With this attitude we also will tend to lose sight of our own responsibility in achieving this desired end.

For us to turn this around we must make peace with the fact that we live in a world that at times can be incredibly unfair, mainly because we live in a time where everyone tends to look after their own self interest, very often at the expense of others. Though that it nevertheless is incumbent on us to be fair in all our dealings whether we are being dealt with fairly, or not.

In this way to affect a fair and equitable end wherever possible. Yet never to tolerate unjust actions and unfairness from others, and to stand up for this ideal wherever we can. This is to be a responsible citizen in touch with the realities of the world around one. Or as Gandhi so eloquently put it, *to be the change we want to see in the world*.

Why expectations strangle our appreciation of the now is that it literally is an uncompromising demand on a yet to be realised future which has a life irrespective of this inflexible requirement. When we expect a certain outcome we literally are demanding that we *must* get what we want, and that it *must* be done in a particular manner and in a specific timeframe. And when it is not somehow achieved exactly as required, end up unhappy and frustrated with the circumstances of our life.

In fact what one is saying when one has high expectations about a particular outcome is that “I will not be happy with my life until my required outcome is met exactly as I require”. Because of this deferring one’s state of well-being to some indefinite future time.

Because of the above dialogue our undue expectations as well as our obsessive dependencies on others create dynamics equivalent to that associated with fear as discussed in *The Strangler*. We therefore inadvertently create intentions working in opposition to the path we so desperately feel compelled to take. And while we may yet achieve the result we want despite such mental opposition, the outcome will not likely have been assisted by the deeper dynamics of our mind which orders our lives beyond our perceptive time and spatial limitations.

Consequently we end up expending considerable anxious mental energy as well as physical and financial resources to eventually force the outcome we may have wanted.

Then again who can deny that Howard Hughes accumulated his great personal fortune precisely because he was significantly obsessive compulsive, exceedingly perfectionistic and uncompromisingly expectant?

But at what personal cost?

The reality is that if we are to live a successful life, a large measure of obsessiveness is required. This after all is our passion: the energy we bring to whatever it is we do that it be done to the best of our ability. Obsessions being the wellspring of genius, though also of madness. The key though is that we not get uncontrollably consumed by our obsessions as when we do become compulsively so, in this way losing sight of all else but the objects we may desire.

Faith and its positive outworking is a strangely circular phenomenon. Having faith in a vacuum indeed is to be irresponsible, or Caviller, as will be discussed in the next section. Faith usually only works once you know that you have done all in your personal power to ensure a positive end, and the rest being up to God and the power She (who is in fact your deeper You) brings to bear to effect a positive end result. What

this calls for is that we in the course of our lives transcend what otherwise are very human afflictions, but which unfortunately also stifle the possibilities inherent in our future despite our often legitimate efforts.

The attitude required is perhaps best conveyed in the following words by Margo Jones.

“If you want something very badly, you can achieve it.

“It may take patience, very hard work, a real struggle, and a long time; but it can be done.

“That much faith is a prerequisite of any undertaking, artistic or otherwise.”

The important key to note is that the Strangler is an affliction of thought and by implication can be overcome merely by becoming aware of our limited mindsets. Such awareness will allow us to begin reformulating our thinking, and in doing so, to begin loosening the quantum field of possibilities in any moment.

Making such a change to years of ingrained thought patterns I know is easier said than done. Perhaps it is easier to change our attitude towards life than to change our individual thoughts. The key once again to making the change, is to realise that thinking is the detail of how we choose act towards the circumstances of our life; though it nevertheless can merely follow from making a conscious commitment to view the world and our relationship to it differently.

And the primary requirement is we develop patience. Put literally, the requirement is that we learn to work with time, knowing that at a deeper level the details of what we are striving for are already taken care of.

The sentiment of how we can develop an attitude of mind that counters the suffocating effect of the Strangler was eloquently expressed by Victor Frankl in his famous work,

Man's Search for Meaning, with the following.

“Don't aim at success—the more you aim at it and make it a target, the more you are going to miss it. For success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue, and it only does so as the unintended side-effect of one's personal dedication to a cause greater than oneself or as the by-product of one's surrender to a person (or persons) other than oneself.

“Happiness must happen, and the same holds for success: you have to let it happen by not caring about it. I want you to listen to what your conscience commands you to do and go on to carry it out to the best of your ability. Then you will live to see that in the long run – in the long run, I say! – success will follow you precisely because you had forgotten to think of it.”

The Cavalier

“What would you attempt to do if you knew you could not fail?” –
[Robert Schuller]

For some the above question should rather be: *What would you do if you knew you are definitely going to fail?*

Though for those who may have experienced the pain of their irresponsible actions after the fact, it would more than likely be too late as they experience the debilitating consequences of their actions.

This is to be cavalier, meaning to act without any due regard for the consequences. *The Cavalier* – derived from cavalryman, an elite horse-mounted soldier – can be viewed as bringing to bear more or less the opposite set of mental dynamics than the Enforcer, the Vortex and the Strangler.

These states of mind in a manner of speaking can be seen as afflictions of the head, while one can view the Cavalier as an affliction of the heart—specifically, an overly confident and self-assured heart.

Simply put, the mental orientation of the Cavalier is that associated with the gambler. In a sense the Caviller can be seen as having too much faith – in fact taking it for granted – that universal dynamics will somehow come to one’s aid; and that one in this regard is specially blessed, that fate will always somehow come to one’s rescue. Perhaps for good reason, as such individuals indeed may appear to be living a very charmed existence where the chips somehow always seem to be falling in their favour.

More colloquially, those who seem to be particularly blessed in this manner are referred to as being lucky. And we usually say that “they just seem to be born that way”. Bill Gates for instance claims that his phenomenal business success had been

as a consequence of exactly this—that he was just lucky. I want to agree with him, except to also add that he clearly then must have a natural temperament that brings him this luck. And specifically that the Strangler is not an overriding factor in his life. He nevertheless also does not appear to be influenced by the Cavalier either, this perhaps explaining his continued luck. I say this, for while he may say he was merely lucky, I seriously doubt whether he actually relies on this capacity to determine the business ends he may have wanted.

Another apparently lucky individual is the *Survivor* winner and *Amazing Race* runner up, Rob Mariano. Within the *Amazing Race* he describes his luck as follows: “I’m just lucky. It’s like I’ve been born with a horseshoe up my ass.”

Perhaps the remark being indicative of the reason for his good fortune as he does not appear perturbed by what others may think of him. In fact Rob can hardly be considered a poster boy for morality or for consideration of others. This as strange as it may sound from a conventional religious perspective, in itself suggesting that it may specifically be involved in assisting Rob’s good fortune. And in Rob’s case, specifically not conforming to the demands and dictates of others. Though admittedly there is a point where such an attitude can become socially counter-productive which can also begin to work against one’s continued success as well.

One of the other manifestations of the Cavalier is pure irresponsibility. For instance if one has the attitude that one simply does what one wants to do regardless, and that you will face the consequences later. Or that one does something without any planning and foresight, believing that God will see to the details, one once again is being cavalier.

The main problem with one having the view that one was born lucky (as opposed to merely feeling one’s good fortune

had been a matter of luck), and that life somehow treats one with a velvet glove, is that one may feel capable of tempting fate itself. An unfortunate example that reflects this is how famous Crocodile Hunter Steve Irwin died a very bizarre death. After countless times facing ferocious predators such as dangerous reptiles, lions, sharks and many others, he died on location while once again filming such intrepid encounters. Though, instead of meeting his end by the usual predators, he ironically was pierced in the heart by the tail-tip of a Manta Ray, an incredibly docile creature compared to all the rest.

Perhaps in the irony of the above tragedy lies a very important lesson. It is that, while one may have a sense that one is blessed, never to tempt one's fate if one can help it. Though to take risks where necessary, but never to take life altering risks merely for the sake of doing so. For to do so is to risk one's luck one day running dry.

Thus similarly, those who take risks without the necessary caution, also risk living destructive lives. While others who on the other hand may be over cautious, never to take any risks, end up living dull uninspired lives.

What the understanding of the Cavalier literally comes down to is this.

The call to live one's life fearlessly and courageously does not imply that one must as a consequence live dangerously.

Finally while the unfortunate death of Steve Irwin was used merely as an example and was not meant as a negative reflection on his inspirational life, it nevertheless does poignantly illustrate the problem with the associated mindset. In his case particularly with regard to risking danger. And despite the example I'm strongly of the opinion that Irwin should not have lived any differently. That after all was his choice, and he most certainly is one of the very fortunate to

have completely lived his bliss and likely would not have lived nearly as fulfilled a life otherwise.

He also does not appear to have been irresponsible in how he went about his work, although the fact that it became entertainment for others may have contributed to his early demise.

Though for the purposes of this work and the inherent lesson, we have to accept that he consciously took extreme risks every time he engaged the wild in the way he did. We therefore also must be sober minded about whether we want to engage life in this way, and be clear that with every risk we end up taking, irrespective of the amount of courage we may exhibit or the amount of faith we may have in ourselves, if we tempt fate once too often, it will be one time too many.

The Conjurer

“What consumes your mind, controls your life.” – [Creed]

The Conjuror can also be called *The Deceiver*. We empower The Conjuror by creating illusion in an attempt to hide from the reality of our lives. This deceit ultimately is the root cause of all evil as it is the nurturing ground of desperation, and ultimately, the playground of our devil who seeks to destroy the essence of our being.

While the following may seem an innocuous example, it nevertheless is indicative of how we subtly can lose our sanity by allowing our thoughts to wonder down the slippery slope associated with our delusional fantasies.

I recently received a seemingly innocent email which was supposedly a spiritual personality test recommended by the Dalai Lama. While I doubt he indeed recommended it, it requested that one diligently follow a given set of instructions for the integrity of the results.

It required one answer four questions. Firstly that one makes a heartfelt wish. The second that one chooses one of four animals listed. Then to associate a name of an acquaintance with a listed colour. And finally, and is the crux of my vehement objection, that one forwards it to as many people as possible in order to increase the possibility that one’s wish be fulfilled. The power to affect the end result supposedly being incrementally increased for every person one sends the email to.

And if one does take this seriously, then one also must believe that life somehow in this way will conjure up whatever it is that one so desperately had wished for.

This is a common practice on the internet, and if you seriously engage in it, what you are inadvertently doing is creating an expectation associated with this imaginary transaction. And

therefore by involving the associated mental dynamics, you are subtly striking a deal with the devil lurking in the murky subterranean depths of your unconscious mind. Here once again, the devil is also not a literal devil with horns and a tail, but rather our shadow or dark side that is responsible for our literal hell on earth. And in this case is the part responsible for accumulating our mounting list of unfulfilled wants and desires.

In fact what we are transacting with this devil for is “if I send along this email as you requested, then I can get what I want quicker, and without having to make any effort to do so.” Or “if only I send as many emails as I possibly can, then my chances of...will by doing so come true.” However, this is a deal of no consequence, except that it is the path of sneakiness and self deceit which paves the way to one’s spiritual doom.

This is also the frame of reasoning associated with how we engage our underlying religious beliefs as well, in that the religious tend to use similar semantics. For instance the inner dialogue would be: “God, if only you do this for me, then I will be good...”; or “God, if I’m kind to old ladies, would you change my luck and give me the good fortune I am currently lacking...”.

And therefore coupled to the above, many hide their selfishness and hatred by doing good to those who supposedly are in need. So they may give handouts to the poor, but then neglect to give what is most needed to those who ought to be dearest to them. In this way hiding their own insatiable neediness, convinced that because of their supposed good deeds, are beyond any reproach. The issue here is not helping the destitute for that is indeed a good thing, but rather to ask yourself “What payoff do I think I’m getting in doing so?”

The conjuror is also responsible for our all-consuming consumer society in that we similarly say “if I only can have...

then I will be happy.”

But ironically, this is also the path *many* who professes to be spiritual also walk along. By their unconscious dialogue deluding themselves that they are on a higher rung than the rest of humanity. Though all along they may merely be finding a way to escape from the reality of their lives, or to deaden the pain of their circumstance which they are too scared to confront. Note though that I say many, *for it certainly is not all*. And to find a truly spiritual outlet that does deaden the pain of circumstance can be a very legitimate way to orientate one's life. Though true spirituality is about becoming more involved with life, and as a consequence oftentimes also requires taking the more painful path.

Notwithstanding this, many who claim to be spiritual use it as an excuse not to confront the reality of their circumstance. This is because a great many that convince themselves they are on such a path very often mentally marginalise themselves from others by claiming they are on a higher rung of being because of their practice.

Usually they would argue away any imperfections they may have by saying “...Oh no, that cannot be me! So and so is like that... not me. I meditate twice daily, and do yoga. Anyway, I'm definitely on much too high a level spiritually for it to be so for me...”

What invariably happens is that they believe they are on the path of truth in that they would be reading all the right literature or attending the right workshops. But instead of it being a light unto themselves, are on the lookout for the faults of others. And if they do on occasion see their own truth reflected back, are too horrified at the spectre thereof, that they immediately rationalise away the ghastliness they may have seen.

Thus in their denial are not truly on the spiritual path at all but

rather one that perpetuates their darkness further. All along oblivious to the fact that the only way we can have communion with God, is to have communion with Self. Then once we truly know who we are from inside, to extend that communion to others, who – because of the way we perceive them, either with compassion or with pernicious judgement – in reality are the reflections of our own spiritual light at any point in our life.

Let me state this categorically. The best place to hide from one's life is through institutionalised belief of any kind. This includes claiming one is on an individual spiritual path that may be apart from a structured religious grouping. I have also seen many spiritual gurus of late selling supposedly ancient formulas of how you can change your life in 24 magical hours. By doing so making unrealistic promises as they compete for the lucrative new-age spiritual market-share.

This increasing prevalence being symptomatic of our time where we want bottled and packaged solutions for everything, this now including spirituality and feelings of love and connectedness to all humanity as well. But it is the feeling that is being sought after, not true old-fashioned hard earned love and connectedness.

In this way many get caught up in one cult craze after another, or one new age remedy after another, in the supposed quest of finding themselves. Yet, because they have chosen delusion over reality, never to truly make substantive headway in this regard.

To buy into the shallow promises of such purveyors of illusion, is to give away your intrinsic power. Instead one must realise that the only way you can become enlightened is to do it one reflective thought at a time, and then to remain vigilant of your demons for the remainder of your natural life. Fortunately though, your mastery in this regard will increase incrementally

with continued success. This is to embark on a journey towards wisdom—your judgement no longer being a factor of thought, but that you consult with your deepest sense of Truth. And once you have reached this point, will sustain you for the rest of your natural life—and I suspect, even beyond.

With regard to the many spiritual con-artists out there, there really should be a psychological condition coined called guru-complex, it being an off-shoot of extreme narcissism. For besides the fact that many are false prophets with false messages, exploiting the vulnerable beliefs of others, they may themselves truly believe what they are preaching. And though their packaging may contain grains of truth, their final motive being financial gain. Or as more often is the case, are primarily motivated by the mere fact that they have a following of some form or another.

As a rule of thumb: the best way to identify the devil, is that he most likely will present himself as an angel; or charge exorbitant fees for his magic cure that you supposedly cannot do without; or if you see self-promotional pictures with halo's around them; or heap themselves with self-accolades; you have spotted one...

My apologies for my cynicism, but I once again have to make a rational turnaround. To be cynical about these matters is the best place to start off with for one's sanity to prevail, so to guard against being sucked into an illusory world of no return. Though not to be cynical for the sake of being so, but to allow in the magic of Truth wherever it is so revealed. Nevertheless, the one truth my four decades on this planet has taught me is that very few people are truly in integrity in that almost everyone nowadays are out for gain of some form or other. And somehow those who project themselves most as our potential saviours are the very one's who most likely will let one down in this regard.

It is not that these so-called gurus are propagating falsehood. Most times what they preach generally are a version of the truth. But what they neglect to say is that the world is complex and that there are competing realities at play. And thus while one may have a strong intention to become rich, it unfortunately is not nearly enough. In fact having focused so strongly on it is likely to be the very intention that will make you poor. That is in real terms as the pursuit in itself may obscure your unique path to wealth. But more importantly, spiritually, as your mindset will be one that is needy of wealth and you may spend more money on these supposed miracle methods, than experiencing the abundance that is all around if only you opened your eyes and looked around you and perceived the miracle you are intrinsically part of.

And also if you are ill, seek conventional medical recourse together with other methods. So for instance if you have a cancerous growth, it is a far more practical proposition to have it cut away as soon as possible than to think it away. This is just as it is infinitely easier to bend a spoon with pliers than only with one's mind. In fact I know of only one man on this planet that seems to have a capacity to do so. This is just as there are only a handful of very strong-willed individuals that have cured their own diseases only with positive thought.

In fact, the vast majority that have only sought to cure themselves exclusively this way are no longer with us to report on their failing... And whosoever may be telling you that you should rather do it this way, and then also charge you significantly for their method, cannot be but a false prophet taking advantage of your time of need.

To put the issue of the power of our mind into its proper perspective. In Dr Tiller's experiment (*Understanding Existence*) it took three months for the intention of expert meditators to manifest a mild acid (that is notwithstanding that an electronic

device was used), while the same result is possible within only a few minutes with electrolysis. Thus we have far better results when we engage a practical plan of action, than merely dreaming or believing that life will on its own orchestrate the end we desire.

The above examples showing only but a handful of ways in which the Conjuror keeps us in darkness. Indeed there are infinitely many ways we empower illusion over reality. If we rely on fortune-tellers, psychics, mediums, shamans, witch doctors, priests, politicians, football players, movie stars, musicians, and others, to base our sense of reality and well-being on, we are similarly deluding ourselves.

While others may already be mentally spending their winnings from their future gambling revenue; or the millions they *will* win in a lottery; or the future millions of their yet to be accomplished business success.

Even hope can be a destroyer of the spirit. That is if it is ill informed or that one is optimistic without good cause or that one is in a perpetual state of hope that something or someone will save one from the literal hell one has created with one's perpetual destructive expectations of life. So deferring one's happiness in the hope that one day something will save one from one's misery.

In every single instance they are calling on the Conjuror to rescue them from their desperate reality.

Epilogue

After reading *The Conjuror* it may be construed that it is a call for outright cynicism. However it must be borne in mind that hope that is well grounded can grow and blossom to become a beautiful thing indeed.

But the reality nevertheless is that we must be mindful of all our potential demons, and most importantly, *The Conjuror*, for he makes promises he never keeps, simply deferring one's state of dissatisfaction with the here and now to a not so distant future. Then only for one's troubles to pile up even further for it to one day come tumbling down on us in a way in which it cannot be ignored.

Unfortunately this is the path most of humanity prefers to walk along in our time—to remain in darkness while deluding themselves that they are not. This is to choose hell on earth, for it is to choose to wander around in the shadow of the false light emanating from outside of oneself, as opposed to magnifying the life giving light burning from within.

The only true way to go about getting what we want and then to have a sense of satisfaction in achieving it *is to know exactly what it is we are seeking for; why we may be seeking it; and then having the patience and dedication to set out to do the work that is required for its successful achievement. But yet most importantly, to have an attitude that detaches from the fact. Accepting that you may not get it despite your best efforts, and that that is OK. Therefore as an unintended consequence, still be greatly surprised and joyed when it does so happen to pass.*

This is to have true power in the world. It also is to live in the light.