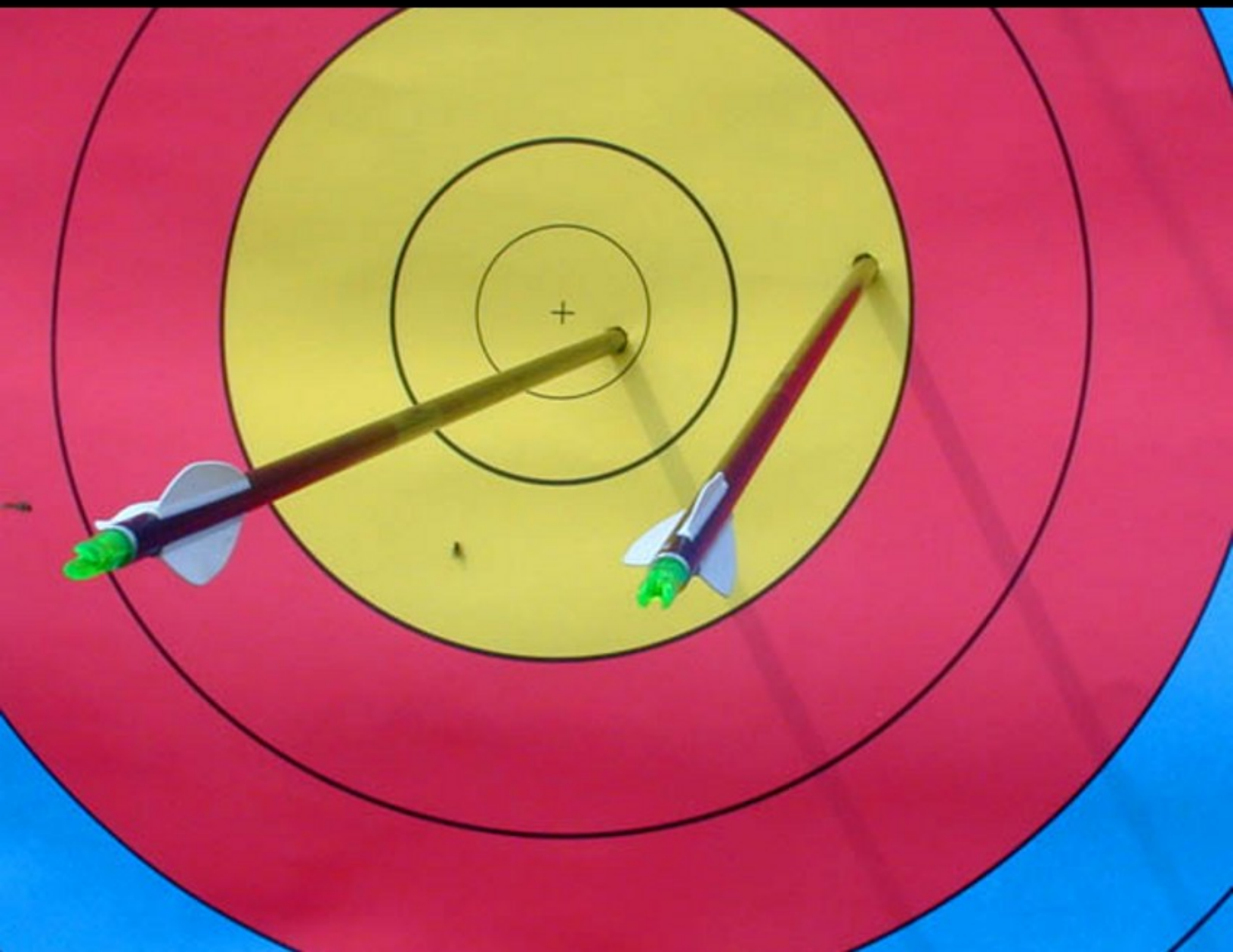
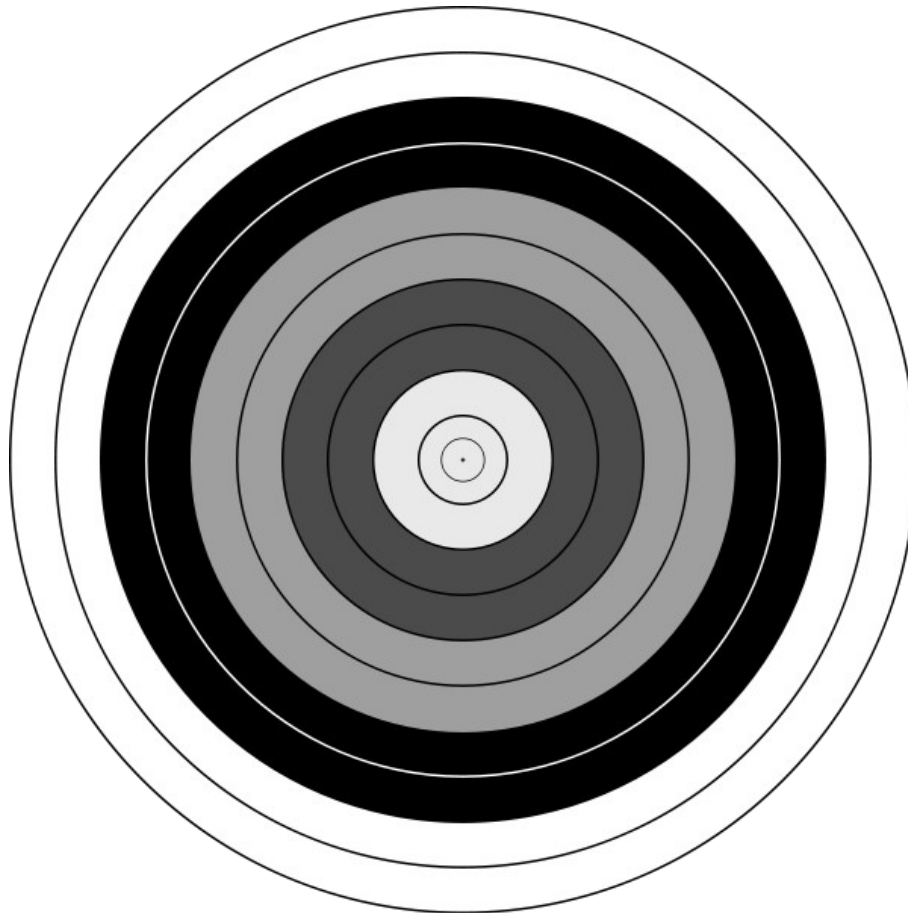


CHRISTOPHER STEWART

ON THE MEANING
OF SIN



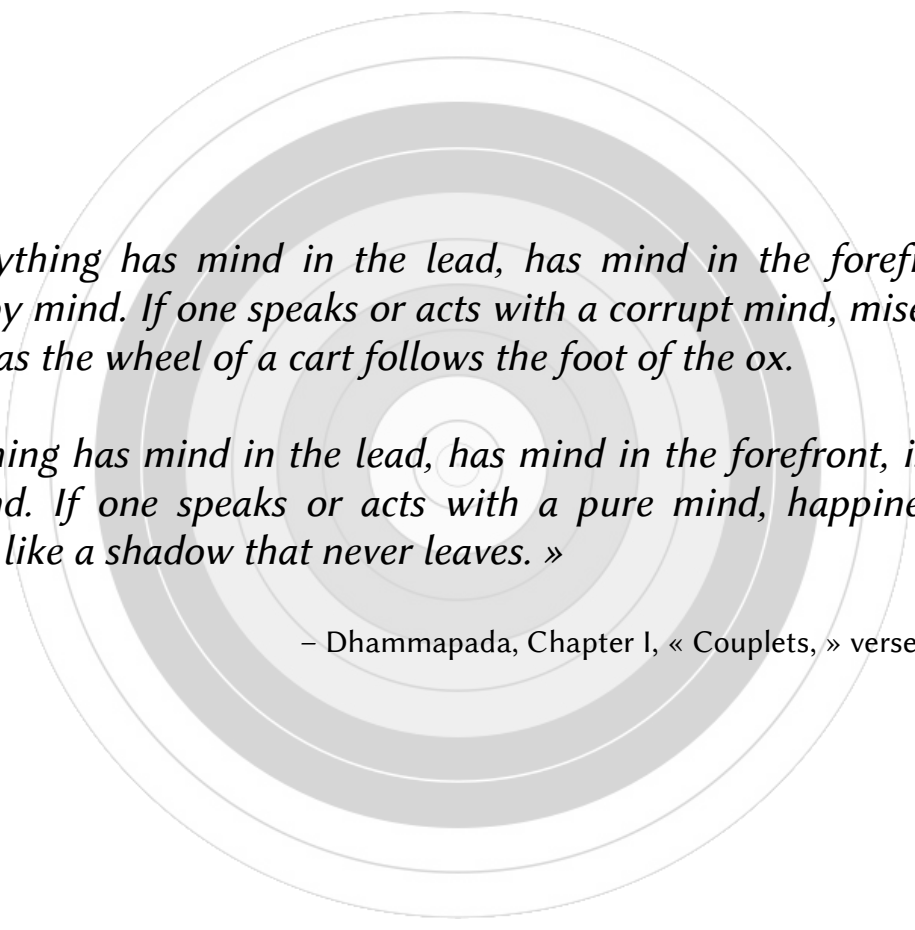
ON THE MEANING OF SIN



AN ESSAY BY

CHRISTOPHER STEWART

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« Everything has mind in the lead, has mind in the forefront, is made by mind. If one speaks or acts with a corrupt mind, misery will follow as the wheel of a cart follows the foot of the ox.

Everything has mind in the lead, has mind in the forefront, is made by mind. If one speaks or acts with a pure mind, happiness will follow, like a shadow that never leaves. »

– Dhammapada, Chapter I, « Couplets, » verses 1 and 2.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	1
2. A Bit of Personal History	3
3. Sin, You Say ?	6
4. Mind-Killers	14
5. Sin in Buddhist Culture	19
6. Sin in Christian Culture	22
7. Bullseye	25
8. Footprints	34
9. Summary	39
10. Verses	43
11. Links	47
12. Credits	48
13. Disclaimer	50
14. License	51

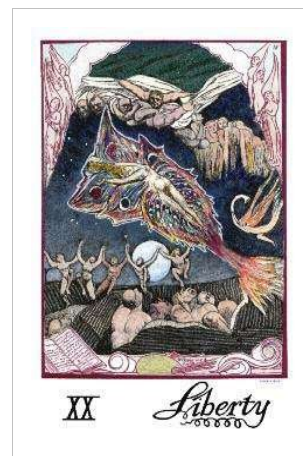
1. Introduction

»→ Liberation

In the week preceding my decision to tackle this essay, upon interpreting one of the daily tarot readings using which I confirm my direction and evaluate my progress, I discovered the extended description of the *Liberty* card from the *William Blake Tarot of the Creative Imagination*, including the following excerpt :

« For Blake, Judgment, or human liberation, occurs whenever error is eliminated, and this can happen at any time, individually or societally. »

[source : [Facade](#)]



In many tarot decks, the equivalent of the *Liberty* card is the *Judgment* card, typically depicting trumpet-blowing angels waking up the dead from out of their graves. The imagery in Blake's version is very similar, but it prominently features a butterfly rising up to embrace the entire universe, after having completed its metamorphosis.

While the mystic ideal of unification with the divine represented in the artwork has its appeal, the question remains nonetheless pragmatic in its essence, as far as I am concerned anyhow. In short, the enigmatic part of the endeavour consists in identifying error. Once this is done, ridding oneself of it gets, if not necessarily easy, at least achievable. And thus, finally tasting the sweet nectar of liberation gradually becomes less of a farfetched aspiration, and more of a distinct possibility, until it eventually turns into an unavoidable fate.

Phrased in more prosaic terms, the above simply means that as long as what provokes undesirable occurrences is unknown, those unwanted hindrances are bound to happen again. And once one begins to eliminate those causes, the process grows increasingly self-refining, as mistakes and their effects become more and more evident, up to the point when it is quite clear that only such and such a deed could have brought on such and such an outcome.

Like Blake, I believe that liberation can be attained at any time, by anyone. I trust that heaven and hell are coextensive, and that both realms can thus be experienced in one and the same location, and in fact regardless of the location, as a function of one's state of mind.

»→ Motivation

In publishing this essay, I don't aim to convert nor to convince, but I attempt to share knowledge I have acquired along my journey. I readily acknowledge that realities are defined subjectively, and as such that our respective worlds are essentially unique, and thus that the contents suggested therein might not accommodate everyone, nor apply to all. Nevertheless, I hope the document will be of aid to some of those who will consider it.

I obviously assume that most living beings, if not all, would prefer to enjoy an existence wherein they can revel in the activities of their choosing, free of the pains that come with the disagreeable setbacks that life sometimes proposes. Responding to the requirements of one's path is demanding enough as it is without having to address additional annoyances that get in the way of personal development.

Growing up is hard work already, who wants otherwise friendly and dependable people who incomprehensibly start to behave in an antagonistic or detrimental manner? Who likes devices that stop operating without warning just when they're most needed? Who strives for public expositions of their limitations? Who relishes doorways that disappear before one can make it pass their threshold, especially after having toiled forever and a day to witness them materialize from out of the clear blue sky?

Still, what if all those insufferable deterrents and myriad other similar irritations were actually the results of one's own faults, and as such as many clues inviting one to reform and to regain the itinerary they have selected for themselves?

It is with attention to those concerns that I feel impelled to prepare the present text, confident that my perspective on the question will benefit at least some of the readers.

»→ Mission

In the following sections, I will undertake to provide a concise yet rigorous explanation of my reflections on this matter of liberation from error. Also, in order to supply references to help the interested seeker recognize possible causes of mistakes in their own processes, I will offer a succinct overview of what is conventionally regarded as wrongdoing in Buddhist and Christian culture, along with alternative tracks of inquiry discovered empirically.

But first, please allow me to reveal parts of my trajectory so as to clarify the standpoint from which my observations have been carried out.

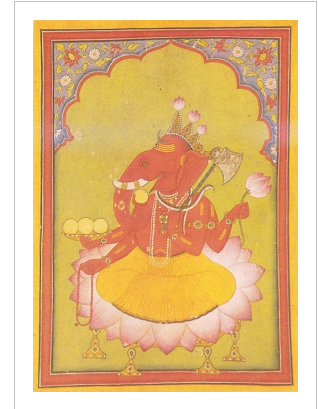


2. A Bit of Personal History

»→ Figurines of the Virgin Mary

Religion wasn't a central theme in the house where I grew up. Not that it was entirely absent, but if my parents were fervent Catholics, they concealed it well, and they certainly didn't impose it on me.

I can vaguely remember there were crucifixes in some of the rooms, figurines of the Virgin Mary and other saintly characters on shelves, and framed images and paintings that either depicted holy scenes, or at least evoked the sacred. And there was also this peculiar Jesus Christ Wanted Dead or Alive poster that struck me as compelling in a subversive kind of way at the time.



On festive occasions, when all the children were present, or when we had guests, my father gave thanks at the beginning of the meals, and we all made the sign of the cross at the end of the prayer. But otherwise, I don't recollect us praying, except before going to bed. We used to recite the same verse I was surprised to hear again upon discovering Metallica's *Enter Sandman* :

*« Now I lay me down to sleep,
Pray the Lord my soul to keep,
If I die before I wake,
Pray the Lord my soul to take. »*

We had catechism class throughout elementary school. Attending church on Sundays was a compulsory observance, and I wasn't particularly fond of it, deeming the ceremonies tedious and protracted. I would often try to come up with reasons for not going, although I think I complied anyhow, usually if not always.

And basically, that was it. I don't recall being preached to nor lectured at home, or not in relation to those questions at any rate. Perhaps it was different for my siblings, but I was pretty much left to my own devices regarding spiritual matters.

I have clear memories of one specific week when I was sick and missed school. I must have been seven or eight years old. There was a copy of the New Testament on the desk in my bedroom, and I eventually grabbed it and read large parts of it, out of boredom at first,

and then with curiosity. In retrospect, I'm quite sure the experience influenced me given my young age, yet it manifestly didn't turn me into a devout faithful.

A few years later, a priest visited our school. At some point during his speech, he asked us to write down one of the things we would like God to assist us with, or something along those lines. My request was that he would help us develop our individual aptitudes, so that we could become better persons. But when the clergyman delivered it out loud in front of the whole group, he said he didn't understand my suggestion. As it seemed simple enough to me already, I didn't bother to explain. Probably, that contributed to my general impression that religion was not for me at the time.

»→ **For Weddings and Funerals**

After elementary school was over, attending mass wasn't required anymore. Catechism class was still mandatory up until the equivalent of grade eleven or so. Possibly was it before that, but I can't remember precisely.

My family stopped going to church altogether, except for Midnight Mass at Christmas, and occasions such as weddings and funerals. I never inquired about the official justification, but I came to the conclusion that my parents had been going mainly to accompany my sister and I, and now that it was optional insofar as our academic curriculum was concerned, their principal motivation was gone.

From then on, my world remained nearly completely devoid of spiritual preoccupations and activities for many years. They would only resurface much later.

»→ **Beer is the Mind-Killer**

When I was studying electrical engineering at Université Laval, I subscribed to the view that religion was the refuge of uneducated people who lived in the past, apparently unaware of the recent discoveries of science. In my opinion, their beliefs were crutches to which those folks held on dearly for lack of a more sophisticated way of dealing with reality.

Interestingly enough, in hindsight I recognize that this corresponds to the period when I was at my most dissolute. I was in my twenties, and I used to drink excessive amounts of beer and pull quantity of other dishonourable deeds that I would now qualify as missing the mark by more than a fair margin. I'm certain I kept on paying a price for those mistakes, long after I committed them, primarily in terms of harbouring a delinquent, paranoid stance on life. Yet, evidently, I didn't know better at the time.

While I don't recall considering myself an atheist, I was convinced that there could be no such thing as a God and that religions were thus all intrinsically flawed. I obviously had doubts though. My then reason-based approach, as laudable as some might have claimed it to be, just wasn't equipped to properly address the most fundamental problems of existence.

»→ **Remover of Obstacles**

Thanks to a girl friend who one evening wore a t-shirt she had brought back from Sri Lanka, and which featured a depiction of *Ganesh*, the elephant-headed deity widely revered as the *Remover of Obstacles*, and the *Lord of Beginnings*, I eventually chanced upon Buddhist philosophy. It immediately attracted me because of its numerous similarities with reflections about my own inner workings that I had been entertaining ever since attending a graduate class on *neural networks*.

Following that fateful finding in the mid-nineties, I decided to study Buddhism and to adopt some of its practices. I acquired a version of the *Dhammapada*, an initiatory collection of aphorisms attributed to the Buddha. This primer provided many pointers on the culture, and references to other documents that I also read later on. I experimented with meditation and reciting mantras, and they became part of my daily routine. I even transferred a few of those especially insightful scriptures to electronic format during the introductory years.

In parallel, I explored other avenues, including computer programming, music and the arts in general, and psychology and physics, through which I learned about the endeavours of pioneers such as Carl Jung and David Bohm. It is while perusing the writings of the latter that I ultimately stumbled upon the seed of what developed into the unorthodox perspective on the matter of error, and some of its related notions, that I share via this essay.

»→ **Through Different Eyes**

While I was manifestly exposed to Christian influence in the course of my childhood, my observations on the issue of liberation thus principally come from a non-Christian point of view.

In the following section, I first state the traditional explanations of sin and hell as they have been presented to me, and I contrast the core concepts with alternative interpretations. Using these new meanings, I then propose a different take on the question, one that better describes how things appear to me when seen from where my hybrid trajectory in the worlds of arts, science, and Oriental philosophy has led me.



3. Sin, You Say ?

»→ Traditional Views

I can't recollect how early in my childhood the concept of sin was first presented to my mind. I would hazard to say that I spent most of my preadult existence believing, or in fact perhaps a more accurate word would be considering, the idea that sins were some peculiarly bad actions through which one would be condemned to hell. My understanding was that sinners would thus suffer eternal damnation in the underworld once their life would be over. Or at least, such would be their fate, assuming the whole thing wasn't a mere invention of overimaginative religious.



For the purpose of this essay, that's essentially what I would refer to as the traditional Catholic or Christian explanation of the question. In that framework, during the course of their passage on Earth, human beings commit both good and not so good deeds, of which some of the latter are sins. Then, when their time is up, they are judged based on their choices, and those who have sinned are permanently consigned to the nether regions.

Similar notions occur in some of the Buddhist scriptures I have read. For instance, in the *Bardo Thodol*, better known as the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, there are descriptions of the *Six Realms of Existence*, including the hell realm that comprises several specific hells. Also, in the *Dhammapada*, there are mentions of evil-doers being reborn in hell as an upshot of their wrongdoing. One fundamental difference with the Christian inferno is that in that particular Eastern cosmology, the denizens are not prisoners of those terrible locations forever, but they can be reincarnated in higher domains once their negative karma is exhausted.

In my opinion, those orthodox ways of approaching the matter don't do much to help individuals improve their experiences. Or in any case, they don't work for everyone. Rather, they raise all sorts of interrogations regarding the actuality of the underworld, and of heaven by the same token, and they hinge on faith, or fear, depending on how one sees the issue. If someone isn't readily convinced that there is an afterlife, those manners of comprehending error seems pointless to me. Why not sin if one is only confronted to the consequences in an hypothetical future that cannot be evidenced and must be taken on trust ? In that context, it is all the more tempting to transgress the rules and to rationalize that there won't be such a place as the netherworld, if there's an hereafter altogether to begin with.

Moreover, those conventional depictions are not just ineffective for the skeptics, they are also potentially misleading for all of us, insofar as they fail to properly describe, or even to simply address, how the present functions. Or at any rate, they don't correspond to what happens in my reality.

Then again, perhaps there are variant interpretations of those ideas of sin, of hell, and of rebirth, which could better serve us.

»→ **Sin : Hamartia and Metanoia**

In David Bohm's *Unfolding Meaning*, in one of the dialogues, the following definition of sin and some of the associated terms are evoked :

« Missing the point. Yes, hamartia which meant missing the point, missing the mark. Now that got translated as sin. And repentance was metanoia, meaning a transformation of the mind, and got translated as pain, right? Penitence, repentance. The point is that repentance is merely to understand that you missed the mark, you see? (laughter) Therefore evil is missing the mark, basically. It is confusion, right? Its ultimate source is the kind of confusion I described about thought. »

[source : [Unfolding Meaning](#)]

In my view, the above paragraph hints at several interesting insights.

First, it suggests that the original meaning of sin might have evolved from a pragmatic perspective instead of dogmatic one. In other words, presumably, what constitutes error has not been revealed mysteriously by deity to prophet, and transmitted to laypersons, but has rather been learned through an empirical procedure. Possibly, seekers attempting to attain specific objectives discovered that some of their actions weren't conducive to their goals, but caused hindrances that prevented their progress. Maybe, the occurrences compelled them to reassess the question, and to develop a vocabulary to designate those deeds which were wide of the mark, and to document their experiences of getting back on track.

Furthermore, I find this particular way of phrasing the notions introduces relativity in an otherwise rigid model. Whereas, in the traditional Catholic explanation for instance, sins are well delineated, in this alternative reading, they can conceivably be quest-dependent, or quester-dependent. That is to say, while there are probably behaviours that are intrinsically bad for all living beings, regardless of context, most likely as a result of the physiology they have in common, at the same time, it is imaginable that what is off-target for one individual

might not be so for all. And it is also entirely admissible that what represents a mistake for someone in one situation, might not be a fault at all for them in another scenario. Then, the idea of an external figure of authority proclaiming what is right and what is not makes very little sense. Only oneself is in position to establish those facts beyond doubt from their own observations.

In addition, the passage intimates what I refer to as the redirection mechanism, which is basically the principle that hamartia triggers metanoia. Or, if you will, missing the mark creates the circumstances that will prompt the wrongdoer to repent, to understand that the mark was missed, and perhaps how exactly it was missed. It enables one to transform their mind accordingly so as to avoid repeating that same sin in the future. It is the assurance that when error is committed, the cosmos will respond with the information required to recognize the mistake, and then to eliminate it. Similarly, it is the guarantee that as long as there is no transgression, there will be no reason for penitence. One's aim won't necessarily be achieved immediately, but there won't be impediments nor deterrents to suffer. The road will remain clear, although there might still be distance left to cover.

And last but not least, the terminology implies that there is a mark. Stated differently, it entails that there is something as having chosen the perfect path, and heading towards the perfect destination. In turn, this opens up the prospect of employing this course-correction automatism to navigate to a definite outcome. Actually, advancing in such a manner towards one predetermined fate is potentially all we do during our existence. Or it could be that we are allowed to rely on the indications of a benevolent universe to accomplish the purposes we have selected of freewill.

»→ **Hell : Setbacks and Deterrents**

In the conventional Christian view, Inferno is described as a fiery place full of demons who torment the poor souls sentenced to dwell therein. For their part, the Buddhist Narakas seem more varied, and include both cold and hot hells. They each feature a specific means of torture, such as the screaming hell, the piercing hell, and the crushing hell, and the duration of the lives of the evil-doers in each of them is precisely stipulated.

But manifestly, or inasmuch as I can extrapolate from my own adventures in any case, those nether regions are most probably symbolic depictions of painful occurrences.

Possibly, a more general description of hell would be an experience of being where one doesn't want to be, doing what they don't want to do, or undergoing what they don't want to go through, all the while feeling aversion for what they consider to be adverse conditions.

In contrast, a more day-to-day explanation of heaven would be an experience of doing a desirable activity in an agreeable context, in an appreciative mood.

Then, on the basis of these two representations, it is evident that both heaven and hell can indeed be visited not just at the end of one's life, but during one's earthly passage also. And obviously, one doesn't even need to move for that to happen.

Moreover, the process of liberation, or of ridding oneself of error, can now be outlined as recurrent downfalls from heaven into hell, followed by as many ascents as one finds their way back up to the higher domain.

While in paradise, when a mistake is made, the individual is confronted to nuisances. In a more chronologically plausible sequence, or it is for me anyhow, deterrents or setbacks are first encountered in the temporary inferno of annoyances, prompting one to acknowledge they are not in day-to-day heaven anymore, and that a fault has been committed earlier.

So, in those descents from the state where all is fine and enjoyable progress is steady, there lie the opportunities to recognize that there have been transgressions, and perhaps to understand the nature of the associated wrongdoing at the same time.

Having to face a deterrent, that is to say, questioning what was previously trusted in the light of contradictory feedback from the cosmos, might indicate that a minor error was made.

Having to suffer a setback, and thus a repetition of some sort while what has been lost is recreated, might point to a major mistake. Or maybe is it the result of an accumulation of lesser sins of which the impacts were unwittingly or systematically ignored.

As far as I am concerned, some of those disheartening incidents have no local effects, but rather have repercussions in the world at large. For instance, as a consequence of a fault, I might become aware that someone who defends the same values as I will be embroiled in a scandal, or that a revered inspiring figure has died.

Arguably, a setback can be thought of as a deterrent accompanied by a manifestation in the immediate physical sphere of the seeker. Or, phrased alternatively, a deterrent can be seen as a setback with only a psychological component, wherein doubt momentarily assails the mental structure cultivated up until then.

All the same, in those occurrences reside the assurance that something one has done has caused day-to-day heaven to vanish, and temporary hell to take its place. In other words,

as an upshot of missing the mark, an occasion for repentance has been conjured up. While disappointment might appear to be the appropriate reaction, the wiser attitude consists in taking heed and resuming forward motion.

This articulates the cornerstone of the redirection principle wherein the experience that entails from transgression inherently harbours the course-correcting incentive. Without this mechanism, wrongdoing would remain unidentified and thus potentially replicated, which would ultimately translate in never reaching the intended destination, always advancing in a slightly off-target manner instead.

A possibly useful way of viewing the phenomenon would be to regard paradise as the basic condition, and infernos as merely transitory sideroads that one mistakenly takes, with the guarantee that the detour will provide the lesson needed to avoid committing the error again.

The observation also applies to faulty thought processes. In some circles, this is known as alignment. According to this terminology, one is in alignment when their actions, feelings, and thoughts are in harmony with respect to one another. That is to say, if what one thinks in relation to a particular matter doesn't mirror how they feel about it, then this is hamartia. This missing the mark gives rise to a disagreeable impression of dissonance. The unpleasant upsurge happens for the simple purpose of inciting the thinker to reconsider their thoughts. So here too, hamartia provokes metanoia, the change of mind that will allow the individual to rematch their ruminations to their feelings, as this is the one of the two factors on which they have a certain degree of control. In this fashion, as soon as the divergence is resolved, the associated influence is silenced. The thinker is back on track, and gloom and doom are nowhere in sight.

This constation implies that what one feels should be trusted over what one thinks, suggesting that truth is continuously reflected in one's feelings. In contrast, whereas thought has evidently also access to truth at times, in my opinion it is generally too mercurial to be relied upon systematically.

To sum up, in this perspective, every instance of setback and deterrence is the response of the cosmos to missing the mark in some way or another. If painful, they nonetheless carry information on how to accurately hit the bullseye at the next opportunity. And conversely, as long as there are no transgressions, there is no penitence to undergo. The adage, see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil, is verified. While one refrains from evil, they suffer no evils. In the absence of sin, there is no retribution, but only steady improvement. If there is no hamartia, there is no metanoia either, and thus no compulsion to adjust one's mind.

And what is liberation, if not this uninterrupted experience of progressing towards one chosen goals and keeping from wrongdoing and its consequences ? Or alternatively stated, what is liberation if not the day-to-day heaven ?

»→ **Rebirth : Here in this Now Afterlife**

In the conventional Catholic explanation, or at least the one which has been imparted to me, the aftermaths of sin are met at the end of one's life. As mentioned earlier, to me this is inexact and thus ineffective let alone potentially misleading. The repercussions of error are indeed encountered in the present existence, or at any rate, they are in mine.

In the Buddhist framework, the timing of the arising of infernal occurrences is function of the exhaustion of karma. In other words, when the karma sustaining the realm one finds themselves in is used up, they are reborn in a different domain, whose nature is determined by the merit one has accumulated on their journey. While being arguably less clear-cut than the Christian view, it has the virtue of actually describing my own universe more precisely.

Then again, if afterlife and rebirth are taken metaphorically, maybe those depictions are not that far apart.

In popular culture, and in science fiction stories in particular, the idea of a hero being either magically or technologically rematerialized in another location and at another epoch to accomplish some world-saving mission is familiar. Movies such as *12 Monkeys* and more recently *Source Code* constitute eloquent examples.

The everyday equivalent to those circumstances would be sleep, or rather, waking up. Generally, unless one has mischievous, or perhaps mean friends, one wakes up in the same place where they laid down. Or I should say, the place they remember having laid down in, as when waking up from slumber, everything that has happened up to that point is a mere mental event. Preoccupations, the impression of continuity, one's own sense of identity, all such considerations are objects of mind. Even observing that something hasn't moved in the surroundings since the last time one was aware is an intellection, impossible to confirm with absolute certainty. Attempting to validate that one has a past through whatever element of the environment is likewise bound to fail because the process is evidently dependent on what can be recollected. Thus, ultimately, there are presumably no empirical distinctions between awakening and being magically or technologically rematerialized elsewhere and elsewhere, except probably for the impression of continuity. Coming to one's senses after anaesthesia would also be a comparable situation.

A similar reflection can be carried out in relation to how we advance from moment to

moment. Despite my efforts to remain vigilant and attentive, temporary lapses still disrupt my activities on occasion, typically while in multitasking mode. Then I wonder, what was I doing again ? Or, how did I end up here ? Or, why did I want to go to that web page ? To me, this is akin to waking up from sleep, to the extent that there is sudden consciousness of the setting after a gap in the continuity, and the concerns of the immediate past become rapidly fleeting memories.

What I'm trying to emphasize is that the experience of rebirth, figuratively speaking, is common. Thus, in that perspective, the proposition that the consequences of wrongdoing are encountered in one's upcoming existence simply signifies that they don't necessarily occur at once, and that there might be a delay before they come about. In other words, afterlife can refer to the next day, the next hour, or the next second, and not just to a vague intimation of the time following physical death.

As to why the repercussions are not always faced right away, I suggest that this might be due to accumulation. For instance, for a person who has committed a string of misdeeds, it is conceivable that some of the retributions patiently wait for their turn, while others are currently being dealt with. Stated differently, the individual might have unwittingly created a series of hereafters, or redirections, that they must undergo sequentially to regain access to paradise. In addition, if karma is taken into account, we can imagine how someone who has earned an abundant treasury of merit might be immune to adverse effects for as long as their good works sustain their heavenly domain, and in this fashion witness the ripening of their faults only much later.

»→ **Alternative View**

So now, through the lenses of those alternative readings, a new picture emerges.

Sin doesn't mean disobedience to a dogmatic code of conduct established by reputed infallible authorities, but instead encompasses the decisions that don't lead to the intended objectives, and that are potentially prompted by confusion regarding the nature of things.

Disagreeable annoyances are in fact the mechanical responses of a benevolent cosmos endeavouring to help one recognize they have missed the mark in some manner or another earlier on, and thus course-correcting them back to their desired path.

Hell is not a permanent destination, but merely a transitory, albeit unpleasant passage thanks to which one can learn their lessons, and as such constitutes the road to recovery.

Rebirth in the netherworld as the result of one's mistakes equates to being offered the

information needed in order to understand how transgression has been perpetrated, and to gather incentives to avoid repeating that same error in the future.

Heaven is the enjoyment of tranquil progress towards one's goals.

While remote from what has been imparted to me as a child, the above interpretation has the virtue of actually corresponding to how things unfold in my reality. And I suspect it matches the gist of the traditional religious explanations, if we consider them to be symbolic rather than literal descriptions. Presumably more importantly, it is verifiable empirically by anyone.

»→ **The Wheel of the Cart Follows the Foot of the Ox**

In the preceding section, I have outlined the what, the where, and the when of sin, in an attempt to better delineate its signification. Based on these unorthodox representations of the core concepts, I have then articulated an unconventional perspective on the whole, one which hopefully provides a more pragmatic and thus more useful approach to the question.

Next, I will propose a look at the role of mind, and at the consequences of wrongdoing on that function.



4. Mind-Killers

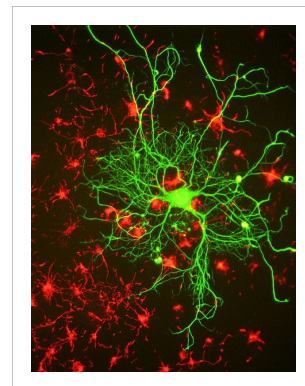
»→ Mind in the Lead

The opening aphorisms of the *Dhammapada* quoted in the epigraph, and included again below, eloquently explain the role of the mind :

« Everything has mind in the lead, has mind in the forefront, is made by mind. If one speaks or acts with a corrupt mind, misery will follow as the wheel of a cart follows the foot of the ox.

Everything has mind in the lead, has mind in the forefront, is made by mind. If one speaks or acts with a pure mind, happiness will follow, like a shadow that never leaves. »

[source : [Dhammapada: The Sayings of Buddha](#)]



The couplet can be seen as yet another way of describing the principle of hamartia and metanoia. The first verse presents the mind which still entertains error, and asserts that its actions necessarily engender misery, or occasions for repentance if you will. The process of course-correction can thus take place, and as long as there is no abandonment, wrongdoing will eventually be eliminated, leading to the situation depicted in the second verse. The dyad ultimately proposes that the reward of the liberated person is an existence free of sorrows.

But more significantly, the sayings declare the all-importance of the mind. They state that everything is made by mind. Thus, mind is the creation tool using which the individual shapes their experiences.

»→ Of Sand Mouse and Fremen

In the excellent and wholeheartedly recommended novel *Dune*, there is mention of the *Litany Against Fear*, a fictional incantation some of the characters resort to when confronting perilous circumstances :

« I must not fear. Fear is the mind-killer. Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration. I will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me. And when it has gone past I will turn the inner eye

to see its path. Where the fear has gone there will be nothing. Only I will remain. »

[source : [Bene Gesserit entry in Wikipedia](#)]

One phrase stands out from the rest : fear is the mind-killer. While insightful in itself as an observation, the formulation also encapsulates the gist of the entire passage, that hints at the crucial notion which might be thought of as the less desirable, inevitable consequence of the axiom outlined in the previous paragraphs. Namely, if mind produces realities, then killing mind implies that the associated realities won't be brought about. Or if they do, they will only be incomplete variations of the originally minded possibility.

»→ **Sin is the Mind-Killer**

During those blessed periods of day-to-day heaven when I continuously hit the target, my cosmos emphatically sustains my ideals. Or, at any rate, it doesn't oppose them.

By cosmos I refer to the totality of whatever is not under my direct volitional control. This includes people and objects in my environments, tangible and virtual, and facets of my own body which operate through their own intelligence, such as the cardiovascular system for instance. I reckon this also comprises the aspects of my mind that sense, and that I can't change, although I can obviously block them with layers of intellectualization. I must stress that I take cosmos in its meaning of a universe seen as an ordered, harmonious whole.

On the other hand, at the moment of missing the mark, I ordinarily have doubts, yet I tend to rationalize them and justify my transgression based on how I feel at the time. Then, between hamartia and metanoia, I am usually at peace with my choice. When the metanoia takes place, I once more experience doubts, and I'm soon under the general impression that my cosmos feeds them for a while, before letting me off the hook. Again, some errors seem to have local effects exclusively, that is to say, insofar as I can tell, they have no repercussions beyond my own individual sphere. In contrast, some faults have apparently no unmediated impact on my proximate conditions, but affect me nonetheless because they involve matters or persons that are important to me. In the repenting, I undergo something of an exhaustive revision process whereby I examine the related decisions and events that have led me to the mistake. Ultimately, the painful circumstances subsides and I can resume progress.

From those considerations I propose that one of the aftermaths of sin is mind killing. In other words, wrongdoing conjures up situations that are likely to kill mind.

The positive upshot of this is that the metanoia will attempt to kill the part of the mind

that is corrupt. Stated differently, it will remove, or at the very least weaken, the underlying construct from which error has stemmed.

The less agreeable dimension of this mechanism, besides suffering the incertitudes, is that the occurrences contribute to discourage the seeker from pursuing their dream. For one, they typically cause delays and imply that additional efforts will have to be deployed before the goal can be reached. Often, they prevent the seizing of opportunities that vanish instead into oblivion. In the cases of major setbacks, they equate to segments of the road that must be walked anew, or alternatively, sections of the architecture that have to be rebuilt. At those junctures, it is tempting to succumb to the charm of the Cartesian mind if it intervenes and suggests that the entire endeavour isn't worthwhile. Moreover, repeated mind killing might convince the quester that the aim is unachievable, and so that their faith has been unwisely invested in a project they should never have tackled in the first place.

I find this is especially true when one is not aware of the factors in play. But even with knowledge of what's going on, I note that my inclination remains to begin by supposing that no misdeed has been committed, and thus to blame the course-correcting automatism that I temporarily deem unreliable and as such, questionable. Still, as I reevaluate the happening, my stance gets readjusted. I must emphasize that there is an incremental gain following each iteration, and that the revisions become, if not always less deep, at any rate less protracted and less dreadful. In parallel, faith in the framework, and in the cosmos by the same token, gradually grows stronger.

Equanimity is presumably the nearest thing to an assurance of conservation of one's creations that can be wielded in response to such incidents. Or at least, it's the best strategy I know of in dealing with experiences of this kind. Allowing oneself to be carried away by the flow of emotions, in contrast, tends to amplify the devastating consequences of the hamartia and thus to potentially transform minor annoyances into full-blown catastrophes.

Fear constitutes a good illustration of this principle. At its onset an erroneous thought process that brings forth unpleasant impressions by entertaining misaligned and misguided musings, it can actually have unfortunate repercussions if sustained at length. For instance, one might miss totally desirable occasions in trying to protect themselves from hypothetical menaces conceived in the continuity of a fearful reaction to otherwise inviting propositions. Yet, the original upsurge of dissonance could have been a sufficient clue that the distrustful attitude was wide of the mark.

And in the light of those observations, I point out in passing that there is something as compounding sin by misinterpreting the cosmic hints to the effect that divergent progress is already underway.

While painful, becoming suddenly conscious that part of the mind one is nurturing has been killed nonetheless contains helpful information. Such circumstances can be turned into chances of identifying previously unrecognized types of transgressions, possibly of the more subtle variety. This seems especially appropriate when there are no physical manifestations, but merely a mental component of regress triggering a sort of *déjà vu* and a realization that one's breadth of insight once reached a broader vista, for lack of better terminology. As far as I am concerned, faults related to alimentation often fall under this category.

»→ **Sometimes I Get It Wrong**

As indicated above, whenever I must undergo mind killing, my habitual reflex is to first deny all insinuations that I have made a mistake, to suspect the redirection mechanism, and to calumniate the cosmos, though that script is receding since I've come to understand that it is also sin. Then I indulge in some degree of despair for a time, albeit while attempting to resist by all means. I eventually accept that the episode has been caused solely as a result of my decisions, and I usually already know what I have done wrong. I fight against choosing to remain deterred for the rest of eternity as I wait for the revisionary wave to draw back. The natural resilience of the underlying structure ultimately kicks in, provoking a counter-wave during which I strengthen my resolve and convince myself that I won't make such a foolish error ever again. Finally, I resume advancing towards the objective. I reckon this corresponds to removing certain of the corrupt elements of the mind, and reprogramming it with a more beneficial strategy.

Ordinarily, I find that the sound aspects of the thus-killed mind, in which is reflected the sought-after experience, can be rekindled pretty soon. However, it appears to depend on the gravity of the bad deed. And I notice that upon their successful rehabilitation, there are frequently pleasant and faith-supporting concomitant occurrences either in my local sphere or in the world at large.

I should stress that this depiction is provided for illustration purposes, and not as the best template to be applied in practice. It can obviously be improved.

»→ **What on Earth is Wrong with Me ?**

The notion of wrongdoing is presumably universal. The views on the matter differ with cultures, ranging from terse statements of principles to more elaborate systems such as the six hundred and thirteen commandments in Judaism.

In the following sections, as a way of suggesting references using which the interested

reader might be able to recognize potential errors in their own endeavours, I will propose a quick outline of what is considered to be sin in the two traditions that are most familiar to me, beginning with Buddhism.



5. Sin in Buddhist Culture

»→ The Three

In Buddhist culture, there are three main mental poisons. In some nomenclatures they are referred to as anger, greed, and folly, while in others, the words ignorance, aversion, and attachment are employed.

Ignorance is considered to be the source of the other two. At its essence, it is identification to a self that exists independently of everything else. From this belief stems the dualistic view of I and not I. This discrimination gives rise to attachment and aversion, as phenomena are perceived as threatening or comforting, desirable or unpleasant.

Buddhist ethics are thus established on the underlying idea that there is no such thing as a self that is apart from everything else. On this ground, it is easy to realize how actions which are hurtful to others are in fact self-injurious, and hence fundamentally erroneous.

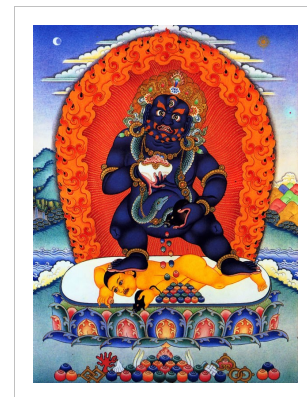
»→ The Five

The basic Buddhist code of ethics comprises five precepts that laypeople undertake to uphold. These behavioural guidelines consist in commitments to refrain from harming living beings, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and intoxication. They are traditionally formulated as training rules, as follows :

- *I undertake the training rule to abstain from taking life.*
- *I undertake the training rule to abstain from taking what is not given.*
- *I undertake the training rule to abstain from sexual misconduct.*
- *I undertake the training rule to abstain from false speech.*
- *I undertake the training rule to abstain from fermented drink that causes heedlessness.*

[source : [Five Precepts entry in Wikipedia](#)]

Some lineages have different lists which vary in number and phrasing. There are also more elaborate lists for novice monks and nuns, and for laypersons who wish to practice a more ascetic lifestyle.



»→ The Dust Cloud

For my own part, taking the five precepts has brought about a definite improvement in the quality of my experiences. Whereas, prior to that decision, disarray had more or less been a constant companion in some form or another, from that moment on many things gradually became much clearer, allowing me to make sense of circumstances that used to bewilder me, and to eventually escape them. That revealing education inspired me the analogy presented below. In this metaphor, the consequences of not keeping the precepts are likened to a cloud of dust surrounding an individual who cannot elude it, as their every attempt only sustains the hazy hindrance :

« Know, O foremost children of Buddhas, most deserving of beings, that it is like the condition of one who finds themselves in the middle of a dense cloud of dust, not being able to see past a few paces, trying to go this way or that way, but never leaving the dust cloud, or trying to keep walking in one direction until they escape the dust cloud, or trying to outrun the dust cloud, or trying to blow the dust cloud away with their breath, or trying to wave their hands in the hopes of clearing the dust away, or trying to wave a piece of cloth in the hopes of clearing the dust away, or trying to jump over the dust cloud, or trying to crawl under the dust cloud, or trying to dig a tunnel under the dust cloud, or trying to throw more dust at the cloud so as to scare it away.

So it is, O most faithful ones, with one who is not upholding the precepts, trying all sorts of things to gain clarity, oblivious to the fact that their own activity creates the conditions depriving them of clarity, just like the one who finds themselves in the middle of the dense cloud of dust doesn't realize that their many attempts at eluding it only raise more dust up in the air.

And so it is, O most venerable of beings, that upholding the precepts is like sitting still and waiting for the dust to settle naturally, so that clarity can emerge, and so that one can realize what had been sustaining the cloud all along. »

»→ Decoherence

From my own experiments, it appears that breaking the precepts is also hamartia. It seems important to stress that I can't distinguish whether the error is the result of breaking

the precepts themselves or rather of breaking my vow to uphold them. Nevertheless, for me, violating them gives rise to the conditions that lead to metanoia.

Via recent one-hundred-and-forty-character-long interactions with a remote friend, it has come to my attention that some practitioners consider that transgressions are function of amount. More accurately, the friend in question claimed that smoking euphorants merely once in a while wasn't against the precepts, and that in fact represented his saving grace as it afforded him temporary evasion from frequently hellish circumstances wherein he was the victim of recurrent beatings.

My own experiences of breaking the five precepts and other Buddhist rules of conduct, such as refraining from eating meat, indicate that it is instead a matter of intention and not of number. In this respect, it looks to me as if the act of transgressing corresponds to events known as decoherences in the many-worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics. Within the context of that framework, essentially, all the possible histories and futures of a process already exist, and it is through decoherence that only one of these combinations remains, to be inspected by the local observer. The act of transgressing thus equates to the selection of a particular continuum, and indeed translates to being metaphorically reborn therein. Insofar as I can remember, it was actually the case that even the first hint of a sip of fermented drink was enough to catapult me into a *hamartian* reality, which I propose as adjective to qualify a flawed spacetime wherein the requirements for metanoia hover about, ready to intervene.

Further communications with my distant friend have tended to confirm my position, albeit non-equivocally, that his habit was effectively provoking the terrifying situation.

For those who at this juncture might wonder which substances are covered by the fifth precept, a variant phrasing refers to « *intoxicants that cloud the mind and cause carelessness*, » implying that its scope is not restricted to beverages, as the traditional formulation suggests, but includes any kind of substance that induces the aforementioned states. Moreover, some commentators have asserted that it also denotes being impassioned by an occurrence or an idea to the degree of being rendered reckless.

»→ The Seven

In the following section, I will offer a brief overview of sin in Christian culture, again as a means of providing examples to help the interested reader debug some of their scripts they suspect might be erroneous.

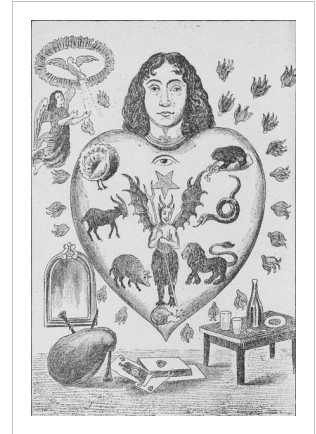


6. Sin in Christian Culture

»→ Death by Numbers

For the purpose of the present document, I will focus only on the Seven Deadly Sins, although the concept of sin in Christianity manifestly covers a broader scope. For example, I could also have elaborated on the Ten Commandments, the Original Sin, and the categories of mortal, venial, and eternal sins.

The deadly sins, or capital sins, are thus called because they are considered to engender other sins and vices. They are typically defined as follows :



- *Lust : excess in thoughts or desires of a sexual nature.*
- *Gluttony : excess in over-indulgence and over-consumption to the point of waste.*
- *Greed : excess in pursuit of wealth, status, and power.*
- *Sloth : failure to utilize one's talents and gifts.*
- *Wrath : uncontrolled feelings of hatred and anger.*
- *Envy : resentment at another's good fortune.*
- *Pride : excess in love of self at the expense of others – considered the most serious of the seven, and the source of the six others.*

[source : [Seven Deadly Sins entry in Wikipedia](#)]

»→ Looking Westwards

I find it interesting to note that, when stated as above, the seven capital sins all appear to be articulated around the relationship between self and others. The reflection applies even in the less obvious instances of gluttony and sloth, where the core idea is that one keeps for themselves what could be useful to the community.

From the perspective of one who is familiar with Oriental philosophy, this is evidently evocative of the fundamental poison of ignorance, the belief that the I exists independently of everything else.

In an epoch characterized by an upsurge in individualism, perhaps it is no wonder that our civilization is facing planetary crises, the solutions to which must reside primarily in an

improved understanding of our true nature. Possibly, we are collectively off-target by a wide margin.

»→ **Looking Backwards**

The list has manifestly evolved over time. Although it once was the opposite, in some classifications sloth now includes *acedia*, which is presented in various manners that suggest melancholy, apathy, discouragement, and dejection.

Similarly, envy was traditionally sorrow, or despair, and then sadness at another's good fortune.

In the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, one of the most important scriptures of the Buddhist canon, chapter twenty-six is dedicated to the *Ten Grounds*, that are basically stages on the way to enlightenment. The first is known as the ground of *Great Joy*, or of *Happiness*.

These observations further substantiate the notion that hitting the mark is ordinarily accompanied by joyous feelings. In contrast, sorry spirits, which are notorious for attracting disagreeable occurrences, are not only associated with error, but can be regarded as sins in themselves.

»→ **Looking Inwards**

My experiences of sloth mostly amount to oversleeping when approaching deadlines. In such occasions, it seems best to get in vertical posture as soon as my eyes open, lest the cosmos propose me an aggravating reminder that time is precious later on. In those cases, I also often receive very clear cues from my dreams, that are unusually disturbing and contain hints of events that I would rather remain oblivious to. I figure their purpose is to dissuade me of continuing the horizontal inactivity.

Gluttony for me mostly recalls instances of eating too much or too close to bedtime. As far as I can tell, this tends to engender mind killings without physical component, typically translating into temporary losing sight of the vision that otherwise drives my undertaking.

I find myself guilty of wrath more frequently than I would like to admit. For example, when the tools I consult as navigational aids, such as tarot readings and horoscopes, fail to warn me of upcoming challenges, I'm inclined to express my discontent towards my guardian angels and their superiors. In response, they generally notify me that I'm walking on thin ice. Then, I realize in retrospect that I could have interpreted the predictions differently. On the whole, my history in relation to anger confirms this quote attributed to the Buddha :

« Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one who gets burned. »

»→ **Looking Onwards**

In the context of the creative process, in terms of nurturing the mind, some of the more psychological capital transgressions appear distinctly counterproductive to me.

Envy strikes me as the obvious illustration. The jealous or covetous person focuses on perceived lack, on what they deem to be missing. It is similar to concentrating on distance instead of on destination. How could such a cultivation ever encourage arrivals ?

As always, turning one's attention back to the endeavour provides the most efficacious antidote, or at any rate it does for me.

»→ **Thank God It's Friday**

As an aside, and at the risk of offering myself as a target for lapidation, I suggest that the worldly career of Jesus Christ might have persisted longer had he upheld Buddhist ethics and refrained from drinking with his buddies at the Last Supper.

So, to the supplication reportedly voiced while on the cross :

« My God, my God, why have you forsaken me ? »

I submit a proper answer would have been :

« Because drinking wine is sin even on Good Friday, my Son. »

»→ **Sometimes I Get It Right**

Up to this point I have mostly considered the presumably less appreciated dimensions of the question of sin. My reflections on missing the mark, its meaning and its consequences, being now hopefully sufficiently clear, I will propose an examination of the matter of hitting the mark.

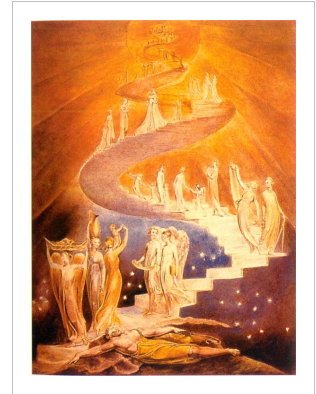


7. Bullseye

»→ The Error-Free Dynamic

As observed in the third section, the very notion of missing the mark implies that there is a mark to be missed. Or, positively stated, it means that there is a mark to be hit. So, what is hitting the mark, and what does it entail ?

From the alternative views of the day-to-day heaven and of the temporary hell of annoyances, we can deduce that hitting the mark corresponds to performing actions which must not only lead to steady and enjoyable progress towards a chosen goal, but also do so without provoking undesirable repercussions. Indeed, such an experience defines the error-free dynamic.



Thus, in a general sense, pursuing individual objectives without giving rise to adverse effects, present or future, internal or otherwise, is on target. Or perhaps more accurately, any activity that brings one closer to the error-free dynamic and doesn't cause further unsuitable consequences hits the mark. That is to say, when suddenly finding oneself in the underworld, climbing out of there is right on the bullseye too, inasmuch as wrongdoing is avoided while regaining one's ground.

Moreover, we know from the aphorisms regarding the function of mind that hitting the mark equates to nurturing an error-free mind, or at least a gradually less corrupt mind, that will in turn conjure up increasingly sorrowless hereafters, in an ever refining continuum.

»→ The Creative Process

From an artistic standpoint, in general terms, the creative process begins with a dream. A vision of some kind takes shape in the imagination of the artist who then sets out to build a support that will constitute the phenomenal form of the thus fancied entity in their reality. Their work now consists in maintaining their attention on the process as it unfolds. In such a manner, they can iteratively comprehend and discharge the sequence of intentions required to achieve the aim. By sustaining the endeavour in that fashion until consummation, what was originally a mere possibility becomes an actual medium that can be shared in order to convey the initial glimpse and the underlying message to others.

Similarly, in everyday, non-artistic situations, the person architects their own life by

focusing on particular outcomes, and then proceeding to accomplish whatever this inspires them to do.

No matter the nature of the quest, artistic or otherwise, related ideations accompany the creative process, hinting at potentialities that the fulfillment of the current undertaking might open up. Taking those cognitions as coming from the faculty via which one can intuit available futures, we can see how, as one advances through the succession of intentions and towards the awaited result, they cultivate the mind that will engender the universe that they will inhabit upon completion of the project. Thus, evidently, as one encounters decisions and changing circumstances in their environment along the way, preserving that mind becomes part of the duties.

In the course of a single day, one might run into numerous occasions for transgression, from misalignment by doubting the validity of the apprehended next step, to the debilitating questioning of the entire enterprise, to less subtle, more tangible misdeeds. Ultimately, it is in how the individual responds at each of those junctures that is established the mind that will produce their following existence. In such a context of constant creation, hitting the mark to avert mind killing is the necessity promising that efforts won't be vain and anticipated fruits will be tasted.

»→ **Predestined for Freewill**

The issue of the source of the initial visions and of the ensuing intentions that cannot be attributed to reasoning remains debatable. In my view there are basically two perspectives on the topic. Either those inceptions are just inventions and caprices having no exceptional signification beyond one's local sphere, or they are in fact prompted by some sort of higher intelligence that is in position to know the roles the associated materializations will play in the greater whole.

From the pragmatic standpoint of what must be done, whether we ascribe the dreams that drive our pursuits to the master plan of an all-knowing being or simply to our own will isn't much relevant. What is important in the end is not the explication of the provenance of the goals, but rather that they can be attained in an error-free manner. And if so, then doing so is right on target. In other words, the process is the same regardless of the hypothesized origin of the endeavour.

That being said, there appears to be leeway in that process. For one, even if the person is not at liberty to unilaterally conceptualize their objectives, but are merely limited to sense the inspirations of some external agent, maybe they can still choose which share of the work they feel ready to discharge. Thus, they could select their designs according to their abilities

and interests, weighing in incentives against the intentions that would have to be converted into actions. On the other hand, perhaps one is restricted only by their imagination, and can devise the purposes of their liking and realize them as they wish. In such a situation where there is room to manoeuvre, redirection could be thought of as an automatism either innate although supraconscious, or provided by a benevolent entity, kindly assisting and fostering the achievement of one's aims.

However, the observation that a flawed relationship between self and others lies at the heart of wrongdoing suggests that there is more to the matter than that. There is obviously a collective dimension to our undertakings. So, as long as reflections about the creative process are confined to personal spheres, it seems they will also stay inconclusive inasmuch as sin is concerned. If there's a definitive answer, it possibly resides in how our individual efforts fit together in the big picture. And if exploring this communal aspect doesn't settle the problem of predetermination versus freewill once and for all, at any rate it might yield insights into the nature of this mark that we have to hit.

»→ **Swarm Intelligence**

If there weren't a collective dimension to our individual enterprises, they would pretty much remain inconsequential. Alternatively phrased, despite what some accountants might be tempted to argue, the true worth of our accomplishments is found in how they improve the lives of others.

Still, from our personal perspectives, we are not equipped to evaluate this accurately. Who can actually see the big picture ? Can there be a model that predicts the details of how the world will respond to our contributions ? Indeed, the world itself is the sole laboratory we have where we can run those experiments.

My knowledge of ants is fragmentary, but to the best of my understanding, each ant is not outfitted, in terms of a nervous system in particular, to effectively plan for something as complex as the elaborate network of tunnels and chambers that constitutes the ant nest. Yet, manifestly, the structures exist. In my opinion, this intimates that if every ant in the colony trusts what's on its mind and pursues the associated intentions, assuming ants have those experiences, then the colony as a whole functions. Or probably they have their own version of transgression and of the course-correcting mechanism too. In any case, in some instances that translates into spectacular underground constructions.

It appears that we have access to a similar form of swarm intelligence. Perhaps none of us can see the big picture, and perhaps none of us can entertain a thorough representation of it, or as far as I know the majority of us can't. Nonetheless, we can nurture a sense for it, and

we evidently possess an innate sense for knowing what is the right thing to do that readily encompasses the communal aspect. Conceivably, missing the mark is what happens when we act in disregard to what this sense tells us, for example to comply with perceived social pressures because we fear potential repercussions if we don't do what we think is expected of us, or again because we are victim of compulsion. And conversely, hitting the mark simply means adjusting our behaviour according to what this sense prompts us.

»→ **Adaptative Absolute Truth**

In trying to figure out how our respective efforts fit together in a coherent ensemble, the hypothesis of a higher intelligence curating some kind of global master plan provides a compelling unifying interpretation.

The fact that there seems to be leeway doesn't invalidate that eventuality, but instead suggests that the grand design is adaptable to a certain extent, and that the external agent is open to the prospect of allowing us to express our freewill, maybe to the measure in which our objectives are compatible with its own aims, and with the aims currently pursued by our peers.

In such a conjecture, that great scheme would be the reference at the basis of our sense of what is right. It would be the structure of information we apprehend inwardly, albeit not in rationalized terms, and against which we evaluate our options. And when we stray from that program, when we discount our sense of what is right, inadvertently or willingly, then the redirection automatism would kick in. This would justify how it is possible for us to have episodes of misalignment, and explain why some thoughts produce dissuading impressions, while others give rise to uplifting impressions, depending on how well they correlate with the grand design. This constant bearing that qualifies our thoughts would thus be our absolute truth.

Since this truth is always reflected in our feelings, and yet not consistently grasped by thoughts, then some of our thoughts would be the cause of error. Presumably, ultimately, all errors would be the result of relying on thoughts that stem from flawed models of what is as references to settle on an appropriate course of action, rather than sensing the way forward. In other words, to the degree that one harbours inaccurate representations of themselves, of their cosmos, and of the relationships between the two, they are liable to be incited to make mistakes by those very same faulty structures of information.

Moreover, in the context of the existence of such a master plan, in selecting a specific goal of freewill, perhaps the seeker also selects a specific path leading there, one that takes the condition of the great scheme into account. Thus, passages of what one experiences as

advancing of freewill following one's own inventiveness could indeed be periods wherein the higher intelligence is at work in the best of senses, inspiring intentions to the seeker so that they stay on a road that only the external agent is able to know in its entirety. Alternatively stated, as long as one systematically discharges what's on their mind in an error-free fashion, inspiration would be indistinguishable from invention. Conversely, at those junctures when the mark is missed, freewill would be starkly revealed while the seeker strives to regain the necessary path leading to their preferred destination.

The grand design would thus continually adjust itself to include our individual progress towards any goal chosen of freewill. Our absolute reference would encompass our personal goals themselves, consequent goals that can be attained once the primary goals are achieved, and the totality of the endeavours involved in the concretization of those goals.

»→ Self-Aware Information Architectures

The theory of materialism suggests that awareness is an emergent property of matter. In this conjecture, it is believed that, somehow, components which don't exhibit awareness themselves can be combined into entities endowed with such a faculty.

For my own part, if I have to make such a leap of faith, I would instead suppose that what are known as elementary particles are subjective happenings conjured up from a whole that is itself animate and aware, and therefore capable of manifesting derivatives evidencing the same abilities, when interacted with in certain manners. For me, it is easier to trust that something that is itself aware is at the origin of our awareness.

This seems especially true in the perspective of what is considered the main poison in Buddhism. That is to say, if we are not apart from everything else, and we have awareness, then it appears unavoidable that this whole of which we are the parts also has awareness in some form or another. Furthermore, given that we can develop our potential for awareness to comprehend self-awareness, that is, awareness of our awareness, it is conceivable that this larger organism has that same power.

Intelligence comes from the Latin *inter-legere* meaning to pick out between, or discern. In turn, to discern comes from the Latin *dis-cernere* meaning to separate apart. It is typically defined as, to see or hear differences, to identify, perceive, recognize, or understand. And so, awareness, which is the capacity to perceive, to feel, or to be conscious of events, objects or sensory patterns, implies this ability to discern, and thus implies intelligence.

In other words, this greater being that comprises us all would not only be aware, and probably self-aware, but it would be intelligent, pretty much like we are.

In order to offer one possible depiction of this whole, I would posit that the nature of all things could simply be their semantics, whose basic constituent would be information, in its general sense of abstract data. More precisely, any entity would essentially be the totality of the relationships between its constituents, along with their attributes, in abstract terms. Every single entity would therefore be characterized by its own architecture of information, and would in essence be an abstract construct. Larger organisms would then be aggregates of such structures, and the relations uniting those structures.

In this context, awareness would be the capacity to interpret those semantics, and to convert them into experiences. What we perceive as matter would merely be a representation of the visual and tangible aspects of these constructs, as delineated by their architecture and their attributes. The constructs themselves would not be visible or tangible in their nature, yet would nonetheless be cognizable. Similarly, what can be grasped via the mind would be representations of other aspects of these structures. Ultimately, the appearance of any entity would depend upon its particulars, including the senses through which it can be perceived.

Virtual reality is perhaps a pertinent analogy here. If we were actually living within a simulated environment, the underlying nature of all things would be the class declarations and instances of objects upon which the virtual world is established, and what we interact with would be renderings of those abstract specifications.

Just like internet browsers read files containing HTML tags and other information such as scripts, style sheets, and embeds, and render them as media-rich audiovisual contents, we too could be thought of as browsers. We would have the ability to interpret semantics and render them as consciousness, projecting them into a tridimensional spacetime continuum. However, in contrast to web browsers, we would have the power to create new architectures of our own initiative.

We could go further and describe how an entire universe in constant expansion could bootstrap itself into being from a single bit of information. Or study how this organization of abstract constructs allows for so-called paranormal occurrences like precognition, telepathy, and remote viewing, and enables interstellar travel within human scale time frames. Or we could address the issue of how, for sentient beings, there is nothing that isn't consciousness. But exploring the ramifications of this model exceeds the scope of the present text.

For the purpose of this essay, the relevant implication is that information, as the basic constituent of everything, would itself have to be aware, and thus intelligent. Accordingly, any architecture of information, by its very nature, would be aware and therefore potentially self-aware, just as we are essentially self-aware architectures of information.

If we combine the above conjectures with our hypothesis of the existence of a master plan, then the structure of information that composes this master plan could in itself be the higher intelligence that is directing us, and simultaneously be the collective construction that we are building together, and of which we are some of the parts.

In the case of our little friends the ants, the properly functioning colony might be seen as the great scheme, and also as the intelligent superorganism that is instructing the insects, which, with their nest, effectively comprise its organs.

The absolute reference guiding and course-correcting our individual progress could be this adaptative intelligent communal entity that is the body of which we and our creations are the cells.

»→ Déjà Vu

This proposition of an all-encompassing intelligent wholeness is reminiscent of other metaphors and explanations for reality.

For example, it has similarities with *Indra's net*, a famous Buddhist image that depicts a jewel-studded net wherein each and every multifaceted jewel is reflected in all the others, in such a way that everything in the net implies the existence of everything else.

It resembles Robert Pirsig's postulate of Quality that is undefinable, although it can be known by all through perceptual experience. Existing only in the present, it is the source of all things, including ideas and matter. It stimulates everything to evolve and incorporate ever greater levels of Quality.

It also reminds me of the Buddhist concept of the eighth consciousness, or storehouse consciousness, that is the basis of the seven prior consciousnesses, contains all experiential impressions, or seeds, and supplies the substance to all existences. In some interpretations, each sentient being has their own, while in others, there is mention of a single, universal, and eternal repository.

Finally, it recalls aspects of David Bohm's notion of the implicate order :

« In Bohm's conception of order, then, primacy is given to the undivided whole, and the implicate order inherent within the whole, rather than to parts of the whole, such as particles, quantum states, and continua. For Bohm, the whole encompasses all things, structures, abstractions and

processes, including processes that result in (relatively) stable structures as well as those that involve metamorphosis of structures or things. In this view, parts may be entities normally regarded as physical, such as atoms or subatomic particles, but they may also be abstract entities, such as quantum states. Whatever their nature and character, according to Bohm, these parts are considered in terms of the whole, and in such terms, they constitute relatively autonomous and independent "sub-totalities". The implication of the view is, therefore, that nothing is fundamentally separate or autonomous. »

[source : [Implicate and explicate order according to David Bohm entry in Wikipedia](#)]

»→ **Extrapolating the Galactic Overmind**

Just like the whole ant colony can be regarded as the intelligent being that guides the ants which are the cells that make up its body, then the ecosystem wherein the ant colony resides might also be an intelligent superorganism that directs the colony, and other living systems, that in turn would be its various organs.

Similarly, the human race might be seen as a particular organ, or a system, of a larger intelligent entity, that could for instance be our Earth.

And obviously, the Earth might also be a part of a larger intelligence, which could for example be the solar system, or the Milky Way Galaxy.

The series would evidently culminate with the entire universe itself. It would constitute the ultimate intelligence, conducting everything, and comprising everything.

»→ **Creating the Future**

To summarize, assuming the preceding speculations are representative of reality to a sufficient extent, then hitting the mark could be defined as nurturing one's mind, by means of both outer and inner activities, in such a manner that it contributes to the coming of an enhanced collective future, as delineated by a collaborative, adaptive, intelligent, self-aware master plan, that we can intuit, and of which our creations and us are actually components.

In the context of the many-worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics, an alternative way of stating the above would be that, among the infinite number of available futures, there exists something of a best possible collective future wherein everyone can achieve error-free fulfillment of their dreams. And not only would this hereafter exist, but more importantly, it

would be constantly beckoning us towards it. Therefore, if there is such a thing as a common destiny, this future would substantiate it.

»→ **Where Have You Been ?**

In the next section, I present diverse observations gathered over the course of my own journey, and elaborations related to the ideas that have been discussed thus far.

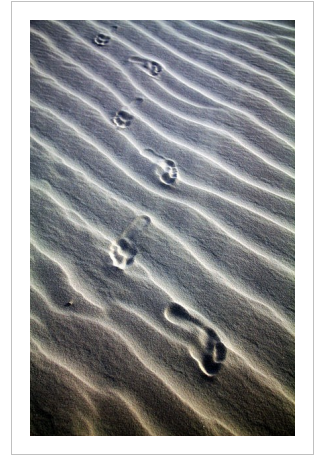


8. Footprints

»→ Agents of Change

It would seem that the higher intelligence is at liberty to use pretty much anything and anyone to convey its course-correcting messages, whether a temporarily faulty device, or a momentarily inexplicably abrasive companion.

In the case of people, I find this is reminiscent of how agents in the *Matrix* movies can borrow the embodiment of passersby to suddenly manifest themselves near a desired location. The virtual characters in the film do so more conspicuously though, and with significantly more devastating consequences.



I associate this state of affairs with the Buddhist notion of selflessness. From a pragmatic perspective, I take it to mean that the personality we impute to others, as well as to ourselves, are not necessarily indicative of the attributes of a deeper self. Rather, they are constructions based on what we have come to know about them, or us, through our experiences.

In the context of a redirection, I think it is important to acknowledge that messengers might not be ill-intended towards us at all, even less fundamentally so. Also, they possibly aren't aware of what is happening, just like we might not be aware when we are delivering such messages to them. Moreover, if the exchange becomes heated and they get embroiled in it, then it probably reveals that they have erred too, otherwise, they wouldn't have to suffer the ordeal. Therefore, they are potentially in a situation similar to the one we are in, and we potentially have information for them too.

Staying mindful of the mechanics of repentance in interpersonal relations makes it far easier to avoid harming others, and in this fashion compounding sin. Surely, blaming them because they are the ones who have to wield the pointed stick is being oblivious to the fact that we have deserved the unpleasant event in the first place.

»→ Playing for the Wrong Team

The question of the existence of evil as a force attempting to thwart our efforts remains unaddressed.

For my own part, my observations suggest that there is no such entity, and that every instance of hindrance I have faced in recent years can be explained by the course-correction automatism. I readily recognize that the latter doesn't preclude the former however. Also, I should stress that I evidently haven't examined my entire life through the lens defined in this essay.

It seems likely that the role of those individuals and organizations that we perceive as evil is essentially to serve as beacons. In other words, their presence incites us to be vigilant, and deter us from self-indulgence. And obviously, at times, they are involved in the processes by which we get reoriented towards our chosen destinations.

Working actively against those outwards manifestations of evil might not be the way to dispel them. Instead, conceivably, in endeavouring to rid ourselves of error, the structures we associate with evil should gradually become useless and obsolete, and therefore impelled to reform. Furthermore, by helping others to improve themselves, evil should not only recede from our local sphere, but it should eventually leave our whole reality altogether.

« Give evil nothing to oppose and it will disappear by itself. »

[source : [Tao Te Ching, Chapter 60](#)]

»→ **And You And I**

Sayings such as *do unto others as you would have them do unto you*, *love thy neighbour like thyself*, and *whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me*, all appear particularly relevant in light of the primary mental poison of identification to an independent self. Likewise, when the Dalai Lama repeats that his religion is simply kindness and compassion, the declarations speak of more than just his greatness of heart.

I believe it is worth emphasizing that the appropriateness of such statements lies not only in their nobility, but equally, and maybe mostly, in how they delineate conduct leading to sorrowless, repentance-free experiences.

»→ **The Karmic Web**

The internet could very well be an ideal vehicle for karmic restoration. Whenever one is running low on good karma to sustain their world, if there is an imbalance between give and take for example, then social networks, self-publishing tools, and similar resources provide the means to rectify the disequilibrium.

In my opinion, this is a strong incentive for keeping the web free for everyone, and it is potentially also one of the reasons why it has come in existence in the first place.

»→ **1-800-Fulfill**

Among the many determining experiences which have supported my faith in a higher intelligence are instances of unmistakable, albeit nonverbal, two-way communication with my universe, for lack of a more precise designation.

I should stress for the benefit of the skeptics that I don't claim any of these events to be reproducible nor verifiable. Therefore, relating them here wouldn't alleviate their doubts. Nonetheless, they have contributed to silence my own skepticism.

In view of those occurrences, beliefs such as the law of attraction, cosmic ordering, and perhaps less controversially, the power of prayer, seem all the more plausible to me, although I have long deemed them the farfetched fantasies of fluffy folks.

But hopefully more to the point, in my limited exposition to the practices mentioned above, I don't remember seeing warnings regarding how error might cause them to fail. Thus, I suggest that reconsidering the matter, with attention to the effects of wrongdoing on the processes, could profit the ones who have yet to be successful in their attempts.

»→ **Binary Logic**

In the recent years, I have often had the impression that there is a movement against established religions. If not necessarily widespread, it yet appears to affect specific layers of society.

While I readily understand the criticisms, and actually share some of them to a certain extent, I feel I must emphasize that religious traditions, at least some of them, nevertheless preserve valuable knowledge hinting at insights that the seeker might not be able to discover via any other source.

Personally, in this wanting to systematically expel those institutions from one's world, I perceive a genuine danger of throwing out the baby with the holy water.

In general terms, while science is apt at proposing models of what is, in my experience, religion is unrivalled at revealing how what is can be navigated. In my opinion, descriptive science is manifestly helpful, yet whenever it becomes predictive or prescriptive, it runs the risk of committing the same blunders for which religion is typically blamed.

»→ Foolproof

The question of whether or not the redirection mechanism is infallible is an interesting one that sheds additional light on the situation.

Individuals who aren't aware of what is going on might rationalize the cosmic cues as chronic bad luck, or simply as inevitable incidents that are bound to happen once in a while and to which philosophical resignation is the best reaction. Still, in turn, this stoical attitude might lead to an increase in the intensity of the indications. If the more innocuous prompts remain unnoticed, then maybe the higher intelligence resorts to less ignorable methods. This could explain bodily discomforts and diseases for example.

It looks to me as if a similar principle applies on a larger scale. Many of the efforts of science and technology, in the medical field in particular, are aimed at eliminating the albeit unpleasant messages of a benevolent universe. Conceivably, in trying to make some of those disagreeable occurrences vanish, we merely displace the problem, and the course-correcting agent finds other ways to get its communications across.

In such instances, perhaps what we successfully elude is then reflected in the state of the superorganism of which we are constituents. Thus, as touched on earlier, when it exhibits symptoms of illness, like the crises we are collectively facing at this time, possibly what that means is that some of its cells are oblivious to the fact that some of their deeds impact the whole negatively. And if so, it is our common responsibility to remedy the circumstances.

From a totally different perspective, it is tempting to think that the automatism can be used against itself in order to escape it. Presumably, one could choose as their goal to access a reality wherein redirection is no longer in operation, and by sustaining the creative process in an error-free fashion, attain their objective. Thus, they would be at liberty to do whatever they wish, without ever having to meet the consequences of their acts. However, supposing they are still part of the superorganism, they could harm the whole, and themselves by the same occasion, and never have a chance to become conscious of the causality.

Alternatively, one might decide to sever themselves from the superorganism, but then this would raise other interrogations. If the whole usually provides for them, how would they support themselves? Can a cell survive without a host?

Furthermore, there would be the matter of determining which is the more fundamental between mind and its physiology. That is to say, if everything is actually made by mind, can mind change its core functions of creator of all things, or is there a layer that it inherently

cannot modify ? In my opinion, there is potentially such an essential physiology that cannot be reprogrammed, and it therefore ensues that, to protect this physiology, certain behaviours will always be sins.

Insofar as I am concerned, the existence of a foolproof, uncircumventable mechanism guarantees a form of justice. If we are all subjected to its laws to an equal degree, it follows that no amount of money, nor any inherited condition, nor any accomplishment, can absolve anyone from having to play by its rules, at any time.

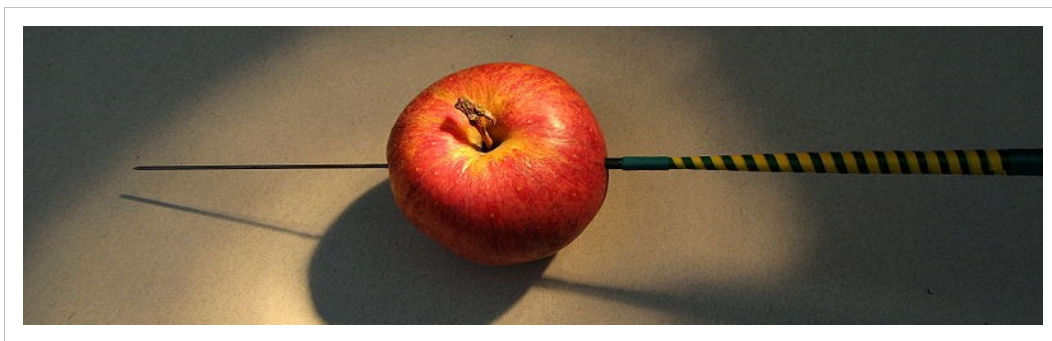
»→ **Enlightenarium**

In a variant of the self-aware master plan theory, there would be one main criterion for individual undertakings to be acceptable from the standpoint of the higher intelligence. This requisite would be that the endeavours leading to the completion of the projects must ensure that seekers will improve themselves. In other words, pursuits through which they couldn't gain additional understanding of themselves and of their world wouldn't be satisfactory.

In this conjecture, the universe could be an elaborate instrument thanks to which we would eventually reach perfection, by achieving the succession of aims that accord with our preferences. The purpose of this enlightenarium would be to supply a metaphor that would facilitate the task of ridding ourselves of error. Thus, in this respect, the grand design would be reminiscent of Pirsig's Quality as a positive force for self-betterment.

»→ **At the Risk of Repeating Myself**

In the next section, I will summarize the core ideas that I hope to convey via this essay.



9. Summary

»→ We Have Heaven

Any individual can attain liberation, or elimination of error, at any time, and so can society as a whole.

The conventional explanations of sin and hell are potentially ineffective and misleading, inasmuch as the extent to which they depict the present, rather than an hypothetical afterlife, isn't clear. By reinterpreting those orthodox ways of approaching the matter, one can use them to improve themselves, here and now.

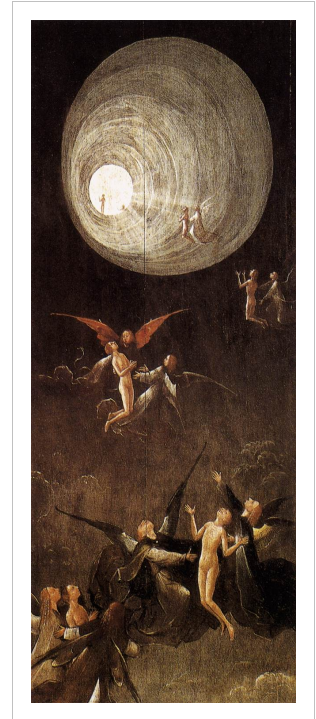
The original vocabulary for sin, that is, hamartia, or missing the mark, and repentance, or metanoia, meaning transformation of mind, suggest that error can be identified empirically.

This vocabulary hints at the redirection mechanism, which is basically the principle that hamartia triggers metanoia. That is to say, missing the mark creates the circumstances that will prompt the wrongdoer to repent, to understand that the mark was missed, and possibly how exactly it was missed. This automatism enables one to change their mind, and thus to avoid repeating mistakes.

Sin isn't disobedience to a dogmatic code of conduct established by reputed infallible authorities, but instead encompasses actions that divert one from their intended objectives. This applies to tangible deeds as well as to thought processes.

Disagreeable experiences are the responses of a benevolent cosmos attempting to help one recognize they have missed the mark in some manner or another earlier on. They provide information allowing one to eventually rid themselves of error, and serve as course-correcting indications reorienting one towards their desired outcomes. Rebirth in inferno as the result of transgression therefore translates into being offered the instruments needed in order to shed light on wrongdoing, and the opportunity to gather incentives against committing the same faults in the future.

Hell is not a permanent destination, but merely a transitory, albeit unpleasant passage thanks to which one can learn their lessons, and as such constitutes the road to recovery.



In the absence of sin, there is no repentance, but only steady advancement. There is no metanoia as long as there is no hamartia. If the mark isn't missed, there is no reminder that there is a target to aim for. One who doesn't stray from the path isn't redirected.

Heaven is the enjoyment of tranquil progress towards one's goals.

Liberation can thus be outlined as a series of downfalls from heaven into hell, followed by as many ascents back up to the higher domain, culminating in elimination of error.

»→ **Mind Drive**

Mind is the creation tool using which individuals shape their existences.

Sin conjures up situations that are likely to kill mind. The positive upshot of this is that the ensuing metanoia will possibly remove, or at the very least weaken, the corrupt parts of the mind, that is, the underlying structures that are responsible for error. On the downside, this potentially equates to instances of loss, setback, deterrence, or discouragement, which can provoke abandonment.

While I hit the mark, the cosmos supports my visions. When I miss the mark, it feeds my doubts.

»→ **Love Will Find A Way**

At the heart of error lies a misunderstanding of our true nature. This misapprehension in turn engenders incorrect representations of our relationships to others. It is those faulty constructs which incite us to make mistakes.

There is no such thing as a self that is apart from everything else.

Therefore, brotherly love, kindness, and compassion are not simply noble values, but they point to behaviours that are conducive to sorrowless, repentance-free experiences. They are the way to happiness and success.

»→ **Grand Designs**

Avoiding error corresponds to cultivating a gradually less corrupt mind that gives rise to increasingly satisfying hereafters, in an ever refining continuum.

We architect our lives by focusing on specific outcomes, and proceeding to accomplish

whatever this inspires us to do. In this perspective, the redirection mechanism can be seen as an automatism benevolently assisting and fostering the achievement of our objectives. We also have access to a form of swarm intelligence that is at the basis of our sense of what is right, and that provides us with an inner compass.

This suggests the existence of a self-aware intelligent structure of information that is guiding our individual progress, and course-correcting us, while we create it together. This adaptive reference that we are building collectively would be the superorganism of which we, and our realizations, are the cells.

Similarly, this superorganism could be a living system of a larger intelligence, such as our galaxy. The entire universe would thus constitute the ultimate intelligence, conducting everything, and comprising everything.

Therefore, in hitting the mark, one would nurture their mind so that it can contribute to the coming of an enhanced common future, as defined by this collaborative, adaptive, intelligent, self-aware master plan, that we can intuit, and of which our creations and us are components.

»→ **And Justice For All**

There is justice to the extent that we are all subjected to the laws of redirection to an equal degree, and that this mechanism is foolproof and uncircumventable. Assuming this is so, then no amount of money, nor any inherited condition, nor any attainment, can absolve anyone from having to play by its rules, at any time.

»→ **Run Through The Light**

By supplying a metaphor facilitating the elimination of error, the cosmos is possibly an elaborate instrument using which we can eventually reach perfection.

»→ **We Have Heaven (Reprise)**

In my view, notwithstanding the opinion of a certain famous physicist, Heaven with a capital H truly exists. Inevitably, in the infinity of available futures, there is something of an ideal collective hereafter wherein our dreams are fulfilled, and its distinctive feature is that it is constantly beckoning us towards it.

If it cannot conceive of Heaven, then the reason-based approach, as laudable as some might claim it to be, just isn't equipped to properly address the most fundamental problems

of existence. In contrast, this is where the prevalence of the imagination-based approach is starkly revealed.

Whenever we are rematerialized, whether magically or technologically, elsewhere and elsewhere, there is reassurance in the notion that all we have to do is keep on advancing, and as long as we do our best, we will receive what we need to get where we are going. And if the course-corrections might sometimes appear cruel, there is nevertheless great beauty in how we are being cared for.

« It is better to follow your own life purpose poorly, than to do another's perfectly. You are safe from harm when you follow your own unique path. »

[source : [Bhagavad Gita](#), Chapter 3, verse 35]

« Advance, and never halt, for advancing is perfection. Advance and do not fear the thorns in the path, for they draw only corrupt blood. »

[source : *A Visit From Wisdom* by [Kahlil Gibran](#)]

This concludes the formal part of this essay. In the remaining pages you will find verses inspired by the mechanics of sin, links, credits, a disclaimer, and the license under which this document is released.



10. Verses

»→ Understanding Juggernaut

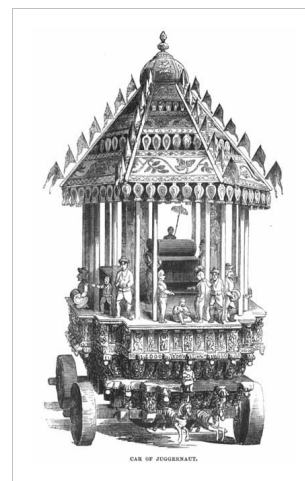
I have also explored the considerations motivating this essay in a 17-minute suite in six movements entitled *Juggernaut*.

The composition has originally been inspired by a dreadful string of incidents involving a rented house shared by six young and not-so-young adults, unannounced extensive renovations, and miscommunications of all sorts.

Orchestrated for a progressive rock ensemble, the piece is currently only available in demo format.

Procession and *Steamroller* respectively constitute the third and fourth chapters of the opus. The two sections are instrumental, and the first two poems presented in the following pages have been penned to complement the music.

The third poem, *Understanding*, was written while completing *On the Meaning of Sin*, and recapitulates the matters discussed herein.



»→ **Procession**

*where does this thing come from
it was not here before
obstacles make me glum
does this maze have a door*

*why doesn't this work out
it should be straightforward
leaving me in much doubt
how this have i incurred*

*what is this sensation
how come i feel so low
deflation impression
what is causing this woe*

*why are you mean to me
what have i done to you
why all this cruelty
and challenging undue*

*why is this happening
don't i deserve better
you claim to be loving
free me from this fetter*

*here an irritation
more annoyances there
push and prod vexation
is more than i can bear*

*distraught and deep in thought
drowning in resentment
confused and overwrought
and deaf to the moment*

*a lifeful of pointers
unfolds before my eyes
useful indicators
intended as allies*



*blinded by the blinkers
i do not recognize
lost in all that occurs
i avoid and despise*

*discounting as bothers
what's meant to make me wise
i deem as imposters
those wanting me to rise*

*inexorable force
standing tall on my course
inspiring my remorse
pointing me to the source*

*the calf on the altar
i respond in anger
unaware the mirror
heralds a steamroller*

»→ Steamroller

*how have i slipped this time
how have i missed the mark
no reason nor a rhyme
i am left in the dark*

*how did i end up here
when all was flowing well
what have i failed to hear
why did you not foretell*

*you've pushed me didn't you
you've tripped me i recall
you've crushed me i hate you
and by anger i fall*

*forgetful of the threat
now i cry like a loon
and my fault i regret
moonchild on a full moon*

*i may have crossed some lines
that i must have misread
oblivious to the signs
i ended up misled*

*too caught up in the run
too hungry for the fruits
in striving for the sun
i neglected the roots*



*though the lesson is hard
there's comfort in process
and so i raise my guard
and resume my progress*

*i can't go wrong for long
that you course-correct me
i am blessed by your song
musical sympathy*

*whenever i do need
proof of divinity
this caring i do heed
restores my clarity*

»→ Understanding

*and here i go again
a man on a mission
to achieve by mere pen
identification
of all errors and then
their elimination
so all can hear the wren
sing of liberation*

*in hindsight i recall
throughout my history
icons and figurines
of the virgin mary
gradually fading
out of reality
and how my bad habits
down to sleep had laid me*

*remove those obstacles
o eastern deity
the knight of pentacles
i vow to embody
persistent truth seeker
devoted to study
the implicate order
and synchronicity*

*up the tree of knowledge
hybrid trajectory
immeasurable mileage
towards my destiny
occasional slippage
reckless apostasy
reformatory passage
humbling recovery*

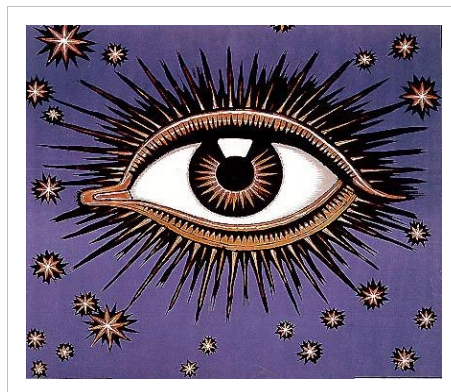
*punished by my anger
selfish hamartia
cruel doppelganger
acts in absentia
inveterate scorner
chronic paranoia
in the naughty corner
constant metanoia*

*then the meaning of sin
prompted the deduction
hinted the principle
revealed course-correction
traditional wisdom
incomplete depiction
the alternative you
asserts redirection*

*setback or deterrent
helpful mechanism
experience abhorrent
same automatism
progress in merriment
transcends dogmatism
your own experiment
doesn't need an ism*

*error is the killer
suppressing the corrupt
thanks to this redeemer
sin will no more irrupt
don't let consequences
inspiration disrupt
resume your advancement
while evil goes bankrupt*

*of the deadly seven
the root is obvious
whether proud or lustful
glutton avaricious
indolent or wrathful
or merely envious
the all-important self
disregards the gracious*



*everything comes from mind
for it is in the lead
none can escape the bind
that follows every deed
leave the poisons behind
ire folly and greed
know the ones who are kind
in happiness succeed*

*to elude the dust cloud
simply uphold the five
intoxications shroud
decoherences prive
resist the disallowed
towards your goal do strive
stay true to what you've vowed
and you will find you thrive*

*predestined for freewill
construct your adventure
swarms intuit the truth
living architecture
galactic overmind
superconscious structure
error-free dynamic
creating the future*



11. Links

- [*William Blake Tarot of the Creative Imagination*](#) entry in Tarotpedia
- [*Ganesha*](#) entry in Wikipedia
- [*Neural Network*](#) entry in Wikipedia
- [*Dhammapada*](#) entry in Wikipedia
- [*Treasury of Truth: Illustrated Dhammapada*](#)
- [*Carl Jung*](#) entry in Wikipedia
- [*David Bohm*](#) entry in Wikipedia

- [*Bardo Thodol*](#) entry in Wikipedia
- [*The Six Domains*](#) entry in Wikipedia
- [*Naraka*](#) entry in Wikipedia
- [*12 Monkeys*](#) entry in Wikipedia
- [*Source Code*](#) entry in Wikipedia

- [*Dune*](#) entry in Wikipedia

- [*Three Poisons*](#) entry in Wikipedia
- [*Many-worlds Interpretation*](#) entry in Wikipedia

- [*Introducing the Avatamsaka Sutra - Ten Grounds*](#)

- [*Indra's Net*](#) entry in Wikipedia
- [*Pirsig's Metaphysics of Quality*](#) entry in Wikipedia
- [*Eight Consciousnesses*](#) entry in Wikipedia
- [*Ants Subterranean Structures Revealed*](#)



12. Credits

»→ Epigraph

excerpted from [*Dhammapada : The Sayings of Buddha*](#), translated by [Thomas Cleary](#)

»→ Images

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- title page : [*An unofficial 80cm FITA archery target*](#) by Alberto Barbati
- archery pictogram : [*Archery pictogramme*](#) by [Pendethan](#)
- sections :
 - [*Liberty card*](#) by [Mary K. Greer](#)
 - [*Ganesha getting ready to throw his lotus*](#) by [Buddhipriya](#)
 - [*Hell*](#) by Hans Memling
 - [*Fallen Angels in Hell*](#) by [John Martin](#)
 - [*Cortical neuron stained with antibody*](#) by GerryShaw
 - [*Mandala of Amitayus*](#)
 - [*Tibetan Buddhism Black God of Fortune*](#)
 - [*Tableau de mission de François-Marie Balanant*](#) by [Moreau.henri](#)
 - [*Jacob's Ladder*](#) by [William Blake](#)
 - [*Dante and Beatrice gaze upon the highest Heaven, The Empyrean*](#) by [Gustave Doré](#)
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 - [*Danger des flèches*](#) by Tong-Jen
 - [*Paradise: Ascent of the Blessed*](#) by [Hieronymus Bosch](#)
 - [*Vishvarupa: The Cosmic Form of Krishna*](#)
- verses :
 - [*The Car of Juggernaut*](#) by [Tagishsimon](#)
 - [*Ratha Yatra Festival in Puri, India*](#) by [James Fergusson](#)
 - [*Wilesco D36 steamroller*](#) by [Morn](#)
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- [*Open Office*](#)
- [*Freemind*](#)
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»→ **Fonts**

- [Linux Biolinum](#)
- **[Aharoni](#)**
- [Candara](#)
- [Corbel](#)
- [Segoe UI Symbol](#)



13. Disclaimer

»→ Use At Your Own Risk

As stated earlier, the contents suggested therein might not accommodate everyone, nor apply to all.

In publishing this essay, I don't aim to convert nor to convince, but I attempt to share knowledge I have acquired on my journey, in the hopes that it will be of aid to some of those who will consider it.

Should you find some of the propositions included in this document unsuitable for you, then by all means disregard them as you see fit. And if I am allowed to express one request, it would be that you don't make a template of information which doesn't feel right to you.

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