

THE CREATIVE SOUL



a poet, a playwright, & Edgar Cayce

Vol. 1, No. 1



Robyn Marie Butt – the poet

In addition to being a Southwestern Ontario poet, Robyn has worked in drama, fiction, creative nonfiction and arts journalism, and is also a visual artist. In her parallel life Robyn is a professional psychic counsellor trained within the context of the Cayce Search for God Study Group tradition. For several years she wrote a column called “Diary of a Smalltown Psychic” for the Canadian Cayce magazine *The Open Road*. Robyn has taken a particular interest in Cayce’s stories of the Life of Christ, compiling various threads into PowerPoint talks with art slides which she gives publicly.



Mark Finnan – the playwright

In addition to being a playwright, Mark is an actor, author and former broadcast journalist. He is a life-long member of the Association for Research and Enlightenment, having been introduced to Edgar Cayce while studying creative psychology at the Centre for Living Research in Dublin, Ireland. He has written extensively on the content and philosophy in the Cayce material. Mark is also producer and artistic director of Sacred Arts Productions: enlightening the mind, nourishing the heart, uplifting the soul. Through the timeless art of theatre, of the spoken word, of sacred music and song, Sacred Arts travels back to an ever present place within every soul where our silent memory remains of the grandeur and glory of our Divinity.

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The Creative Soul

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THE READINGS *Say* BY EDGAR CAYCE

ON ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Is not music the universal language, both for those who would give praise and those who are sorry in their hearts and souls? Is it not a means, a manner of universal expression! Thus may the greater hope come. (2156-1)

Open thy mind to... poetry that may be put into song. Though it may be sad at times, this—too—may bring joy and hope to the hearts of many. Let thy love of life, then, be in keeping with... the poem of life—love, hope, joy, gladness. (3440-2)

The entity... [in a past-life] became a student of human nature, a student of emotions. Hence the abilities of the entity to meet upon familiar ground those of any station in life; the abilities as a writer, as an entertainer, the ability to tell a good story with a point or a moral, or with a question or with a lesson. (3420-1)

Music and art are indicated as a part of the entity's innate and manifested individuality... Thus the entity's abilities as an art critic, as a music critic, or its abilities to judge books, articles, plays, motion pictures... (3420-1)

(Q) In what direction do my abilities lie, and how should I... use them?

(A) In either... the song, the poetry, or even art itself; and the applying of these only in the encouraging of others." (1921-1)

In music and the arts, in acting, whether on stage, screen or radio, may the entity find the outlet for the greater experiences of itself and for creating an environ most helpful for others. (5164-1)

Music may be the means of arousing and awakening the best of hope, the best of desire, the best in the heart and soul of those who will and do listen. (2156-1)

He is inclined to be self-centered... Music, and the activities about same will make for the undoing of that self-consciousness and will give the outlet for the abilities of the entity, in not only playing good music but in creating better music in many conditions and activities. For the entity can compose if it will set its mind and make for answering of the urges of loneliness, of happiness, of emotions, of sadness, which [are] a part of the latent consciousness of the entity. (5253-1)

In... the Art Forces, may the greater expression of the... the emotions of self be given—in its ability to help or aid others to find themselves.

This may be the channel of service through which greater joy may be a part of the present experience. (1921-1)

Embrace Him, while ye may, in music, in art. Faint not because of oppositions, but do keep the music of the spheres, the light of the stars, the softness of the moonlight upon the water as upon the trees. For nature in its song, as the birds, as the bees make music to their Creator, contributed to man. (5256-1)

Have a purpose in thy writing, and ye will find it will have a place in the hearts of men. (3420-1)

Realize... [artistic talents] are gifts from what may be called... the divine, and as to how good a keeper ye have been of the talents lent thee depends upon the harmony which may be in thy experience and as to what may be the opportunities and possibilities in experiences to come. (5355-1)

Music and art are indicated as a part of the entity's innate and manifested individuality. Thus those things... that are intangible yet are the more real for their intangibility may be drawn upon by the entity in its visualizing, in its analyzing, in its helpful influences to others. (3420-1)

(Q) What type of music should be played while treating [my patients].

(A) That of the low but of a pastoral nature. (1804-1)

Be self-exertive in those things which are creative—music, in art, in literature, in the home, in the creating of that in the lives of those dependent upon thee for direction... (1752-1)

When the entity has sung Halleluiah, it was much harder to say 'dammit.'" (622-6)

An interest in all forms of entertainment and the abilities as a very good danseuse [ballerina] may be the experience of the entity. These should be used, not abused. (2905-3)

(Q) In meditation I often hear music and the words of a hymn present themselves.

(A) Then sing it! [The hymn] will help someone. (949-12)

If you learn music, you'll learn most all there is to learn—unless it's something bad. (3053-3) ①



Triumphal Entry

You were surrounded by women
most of your life. Check out
the Christmas iconography:
there, always,
when shepherds angels
Joseph's gone, the young and beautiful
girl. For flight to Egypt
elders asked Josie, your mother's dearest
Carmel friend. She told them Yes
stayed on with your family, nurse
and governess, made it
to your resurrection. Through all
stood Judith: teacher, guide, advisor
interpreter.

No wonder then
threading your ministry
and persecutions, women you stuck up for
rescued, healed. And around your later
and sadder cross, swathed women
wept or waited, resolute
among enemy men. One friend alone
stood with them. John. Too young and loving
to know better or fear, here his presence
became iconic, Son to Mother
a new son passed. Yet only because
she too was there, brought to town
for the Great Denouement
by flurried foot telegraph
of your most-loyal crew.

They were your point, the warm cleft
of caring: a set of messages
since lost, Caretaking's
triumphal status. Still we act up
in the streets with our children
tearing down branches
fanning the fronds
so trees can bow
yearning for your head. Only we know
the how and why of it
only we know

what the women want
who shouted you into Jerusalem –
want
the singing stones
never to sing alone.

RMB





Easter and the Ordinary People

Robyn Marie Butt



Years ago I compiled the pieces of Cayce's story of Easter and the stories in the four Gospels into a single narrative¹ for a PowerPoint talk called *The Miracles of Easter According to Edgar Cayce*. Seen through the accorded Gospels and deeply enriched by Cayce's Source with its 360-degree rotating lens, this resulting Passion of Christ before, during, and after Easter becomes a massive experience, stuffed with incident and radiant with multiple ordinary human characters – “nobodies” whom history has left out.

These Ordinary People make up crowds. They act according to their cultures. They have official or family roles. They have flaws. Yet they're ordinary people who prove sensitive, moved and changed by the presence of Jesus even if initially it's only on glimpsing him at a distance. They're folks like us, whose intrinsic value Cayce's Source affirms even as their life trajectories intersect with that of the Christ on his way to Calvary and beyond. So readings sketched these figures in economic yet touching detail: for seekers who had once *been* those people, everyday folk bumping up against the Christ.

Cayce mentioned to one woman her incarnation as Dienna, a Parthian who had come to Jerusalem for the festival of Passover and happened to witness the Triumphal Entry. *Hearing and seeing the influences which aroused the people to such an extent that they cried, 'Hosanna in the Highest!', aroused in her that which is innate. Now, when there is singing in unison by many people, this raises her vibrations to a worshipfulness which little else can do.* [1456] Imagine hearing choral music today – and having it trigger, in your deepest self, your personal soul memory of Christ's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem!

Cayce read for a woman who in her present life was a writer. In a previous incarnation Cayce's Source ascribed to her another poignant face in the Triumphal Entry crowd. It was that of Sarapha, a certain Bethlehem innkeeper's daughter and also – a writer. Thirty-three

¹ Cayce's Source specifically refers seekers to the Gospels for additional details of the Passion and Easter stories. Though I'm aware modern scholarship challenges accuracy and authorship of the Gospels, Cayce also remarks on the dangers of rational intellectualizing for its own sake. I decided instead to experiment with the Source's encouragement about the essential accuracy of Gospel accounts.

years earlier Sarapha as an excited young girl got to be first to hold Mary's newborn.² Sarapha *was among that mighty throng that cried 'Hosanna in the Highest... the King cometh!' And there she met those disappointments when that mighty force, that glorious creature, that mighty man among men, was not proclaimed king. And He seemed to exert so little of that necessary material application of a glorious power and might.* [1152]

With the ordinary people, we find, there still remained the expectation that their Messiah teacher and miracle worker, who could outwit any learned detractor, who could heal the sick and raise the dead, would naturally now create for them an earthly kingdom. Cayce's ordinary people offer us a sort of comfort, really: for everything that happened to the Christ during that week, there were observing hearts who misconstrued, who half-understood, who hoped in a different direction, who became sore and puzzled; who only later grasped their Messiah's mission. They lived trajectories we're all familiar with.

But readings convey the ordinary humanity of many Gospel scenes and Gospel characters, too. One reading full of ordinary detail is the Source's reverent description of the Last Supper. Atypically Cayce gave this story without warning and as if randomly, on an occasion when he failed to come round from trance as instructed. Instead after a pause Cayce began describing the appearance and incidents of the Upper Room as if he were suddenly present, viewing the Last Supper in contracted time.

The Lord's Supper... here with the Master – see what they had for supper – boiled fish, rice with leeks, wine, and loaf. One of the pitchers in which it was served was broken – the handle was broken, as was the lip.... The whole robe of the Master was not white, but pearl grey – all combined into one The Master's hair is [al]most red... heavy piercing eyes that are steel- grey. Merry – even in the hour of trial. Joking – even in the moment of betrayal. The sack is empty, Judas departs...The last is given of the wine and loaf, with which He gives the emblems that should be so dear to every follower of Him. Lays aside His robe, which is all of one piece – girds the towel about his waist, which is dressed with linen that is blue and white. Rolls back the folds, kneels first before John, James, then to Peter – who refuses. Then the dissertation as to 'He that would be the greatest would be servant of all'.... They sing the 91st Psalm - 'He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him I trust.' He is the musician as well, for he uses the harp.

They leave for the garden.[from 5749-1]

Embracing and driving the whole arc of the Easter story of course is the radiant character of Jesus Himself. Jesus ignites Cayce's collected narrative, lovingly described as during the Last Supper above – right down to his appearance and, repeatedly, that characteristic light- hearted humour. He was not ordinary, yet he was human like us. Woven together, Cayce's Jesus readings and the Gospels portray not only a humour-filled but a compelling, brilliant, and wholly loving man, a gifted spiritual teacher and miracle healer with constant power to astound. He could reduce complexities incisively into simple tools for living. His committed

² This would be after the midwife had "held onto" the baby to deliver him, and while Mary was still being attended to (delivery of afterbirth, etc). Sarapha would have been the first person able to *cuddle* the baby, and the Source celebrates little Sarapha's ecstatic excitement that night.[1152-3]

focus held fast on our right relationship with God and each other. He was warm in the face of stoniness and fiercely eloquent against hypocrisy. But anyone so extraordinary was also extremely unpopular with religious and political leaders. Where to ordinary people Jesus carried the status of a rock star, he was harassed, accused, and ultimately killed by lifelong enemies in the corridors of power. Such persecution too is sadly rather ordinary – even if in our present world its flavour differs from place to place.

The trials came after betrayals by Jesus's most intimate male followers. Cayce reminds us that his first betraying follower of course, the disciple & Zealot Judas Iscariot, simply wanted to kickstart Jesus into leading the Divinely appointed insurgency – the one by which Jesus would proclaim himself worldly king and their Jewish nation would magically overthrow occupying Rome [2067-7]. The other betraying friends were the rest of the disciples, both in the Garden when they fell asleep, leaving Jesus so sorrowful and lonely; and after the arrest. The important exception after the arrest was John. *Oval face, dark hair, smooth face – only one with the short hair* [5749-1], John was raised in a well-off cosmopolitan family and his personal appearance favoured the urban Roman style. Perhaps this gave John an unintentional “pass” for sticking safely to the proceedings while the others scattered and ran. But poor Peter – *Peter, the rough and ready – always that of very short beard, rough, and not altogether clean* [5479-1], with his strong Galilean accent and unmistakable fisherman's looks! Though he followed at a distance, Peter was identified, leading to his desperate denial.

The disciples too were ordinary people. Their betrayals grew out of sheer terror they'd be persecuted next. It was a realistic terror. Their Messiah had been forcefully arrested and would now be paraded through five separate back-and-forth monkey trials, scourged, mocked, and suddenly sentenced to death by public torture. A vicious calculated attack, Jesus' grassroots popularity meant the arrest and trials could only be successfully orchestrated by a bizarre whirlwind of desperate action throughout a single night and early morning: under cover of darkness and sleep, wielding manipulative interpretations of law. Cayce's Source observed bluntly: *...for those in authority were sons of Belial.* [537]

During it all the outer rings of “nobodies” remained. Cayce read for one woman a touching story of her previous incarnation as Amorela, *associated with those that kept guard at the temple.* Amorela was so upset at Jesus' plight during his trial before Pilate that, in a manner very common of Jesus the healer, Jesus picked up on her distress resonance and spoke to her. *There... at the trial before Pilate, in the throng, [she] saw the face of the Master. She heard those words, saw that tenderness with which He felt and experienced His aloneness when deserted by those who had been close to Him. [She] was spoken to by the Master when He gave, 'Be not afraid – for me nor for thyself. All is WELL with thee.'*[2620]

The Source made clear that those who did not abandon Jesus after his arrest were almost all women, especially his lifelong following of a core Essene group whom the Source called with great respect “the Holy Women”. As much as possible they were nearby: through the extended trial – along the death procession to Golgotha – at the Crucifixion – at the hasty Burial – gone to the tomb to anoint the body properly – first to find with dismay the stone rolled back – first to learn from the angel and tell of the Resurrection. And still they were women in extraordinary circumstances doing ordinary women's tasks: caretaking as they could; ensuring cultural traditions; loving; accompanying; and within it all, witnessing.

There's a rebalancing in Cayce's frequent references to their little-regarded or even forgotten work.

Indeed during the proceedings the women's numbers grew. A reading honoured the woman Ulai, who had missed the Triumphal Entry but was present with those accompanying Jesus on the road to the cross. *The road... was a road of thorns... anything but happiness. Yet the kind words spoken, even on the way to Calvary, were indeed those which brought happiness...*[262-111]. [Ulai] *was among those who saw and heard and spoke with the Master on the way to Calvary* [993], after which, we're told, she journeyed quickly to tell Jesus's Mother what was happening in Jerusalem. Thus the Mother attended the Cross, an attendance itself redolent with astonishing levels of suffering and strength.

At the Cross we learn about another attendant woman named Thelda. Thelda was an older friend of Mary Magdalene and Martha (both also there). She'd once been hired as a mourner at the death of Lazarus; Thelda had seen Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead, and she had *learned well the lesson that she heard given to Martha and Mary by the Master: "These things [food preparation and housework] are not to be left undone; but [Mary], my daughter, has chosen the greater part [discipleship]."* [1986]

Below the Cross stood also Peter's wife's aunt, named Martha too. This Martha was married to Nicodemus (the Pharisee who as a member of the ruling religious council, came to Jesus secretly by night to learn from him). Martha was the "ordinary person" who designed and wove with outstanding skill the famous outer robe that Jesus wore. There is good reason why the Roman crucifixion guards shot dice for this robe rather than tear it into pieces. I'll talk about this robe in **The Creative Soul's** next issue. The older Martha, in fact, was an artist.

Cayce spoke of exchanges at the Cross, affirming the Gospels' story of the scene amongst Jesus, his mother Mary, and young John. With infinite regard and tenderness, from the Cross Jesus told John regarding his mother: *Be to her a son in my stead.* [1158]. How moving, that he took care of ordinary family love. And indeed, the Source tells us, though at first the Mother stayed with Ulai, after the Resurrection and meetings in the Upper Room Ulai helped Mary move to the household of John, where she lived from then on [295].

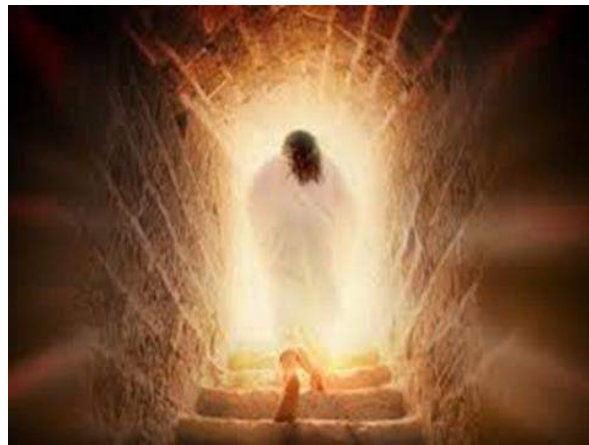
Cayce told another woman about her life as the remarkable woman Veronicani. Later to become known as St. Veronica, Veronicani was the mother of the first Christian martyr, Stephen. After the trials' horrifying outcome, in preparation for that hasty burial it was Veronicani who cleaned Jesus's face after his death. A poignant and painful act of love.

When the trial arose, and when there was the preparation for the burial of the body, the entity Veronicani bathed the face of the Master. And thence arose much of that which has come as an ability in the healing and in the ministry of the soul force to those with or for whom the entity may pray or seek to aid in an hour of turmoil. What more could be asked for, from the material, than to have bathed the face even of a dead Lord! [489-1] And still Veronicani's experiences magnified. *Yet with the resurrection morning, how much greater was it to be among those to whom it was given, "Go tell my disciples that I go before them into Galilee. There shall I meet them as promised." To be among those with the mother, with the cousins, with Mary Magdala, and those that had come to anoint again the body, and find the dead Lord a risen Christ! This was the experience of the entity during that particular sojourn. Hence oft do*

we find the entity and those of that particular group met in the chambers of the father of James and John, in Zebedee's rooms or hall where they met. [489-1] Cayce's Easter is repeatedly a story of reassurance and comforting: of little victories within ongoing suffering, as well as of the spiritual mastery that triumphs over suffering.

In the end Easter does reveal itself as the big story of spiritual mastery and mystery. Then Holy Week and Easter round out a plot arc of Grace. It's a plot that we can see best in hindsight – the Spirit of Christ Creator moving like a great frigate, with poetry & emblematic implacability, within and behind all human proceedings. Through both the huge and little shoals of ordinary greed, self-regard, foolishness, and need, this Spirit fixed on a course and aimed at far higher divine purposes: Jesus both as exemplar to humanity, modelling for us our highest available choices; and Jesus as Christ Emissary, the embodied actual redeemer of souls. Through a spiritual mastery on the cross Jesus willingly dedicated his suffering to burn off for us our souls' multi-incarnational groaning debt-load of bad karma, and so the Cross became locus of a sort of karmic allocation, *his* suffering as *our* payoff. By the Cross we have been relieved of unrepayable soul debt. Here we reach a core mystery of the Crucifixion, the beating heart of that enigmatic theology one often hears without further explanation: "He died for our sins."

He died not just for the sins of the powerful. He died for the sins of ordinary people too. It's why I love this picture of the Resurrection below. Notice that we, as viewers, stand behind the Christ, below him and *in* the tomb that he is leaving. It is our free choice to follow that radiant figure. It is *us* Christ is leading, out of our collective tomb, when he leaves his own.



*Works consulted include the Gospels of Christian Scripture Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; **Edgar Cayce's Story of Jesus**, Jeffrey Furst, Berkley Books, 1984. Image 1 honours the doctrine of Fair Use for film stills. As far as I could discover, the final image above exists in the Public Domain; though it was originally sold as a Stock Photo, inquiries have not turned up information on its creator. The Creative Soul would truly welcome any further information so full credit can be given to the original artist.*





The Cross, Symbol of Transcendence

Mark Finnan



Andrea Leopardi on Unsplash

The cross is a timeless sacred symbol of transcendence. It appears in various forms in ancient cultures, signifying the Self's descent from the spiritual world into materiality and its eventual ascension back to the source from which it came. G.A. Gaskell in his *Dictionary of the Sacred Language of All Scriptures and Myths* describes it as the “symbol of the manifested life of the Logos, the higher and lower natures, and the Divine Ray passing through the quaternary”.

In the case of the Latin cross the horizontal beam signifies the division between the higher and the lower natures. The perpendicular or upright beam is a symbol of the Divine Ray or Tree of Life which, as atomic vibration, passes from the Supreme directly downwards across all the planes. This, from the lower aspect, is a symbol of aspiration.

The human body when standing erect with outstretched arms forms a cross signifying consciousness ascending in and through physical experience. Origen, one of the early Church Fathers, taught that the true posture of prayer is to stand with outstretched arms and that the person standing in space with outstretched arms was, as with the ancients, the symbol of the Beneficent Deity.

One of the most well-known versions of the cross used in ancient times was the Egyptian Ankh, the symbol of Life. In that the handle is not a perfect circle – symbolic of the cosmic whole – it signifies that activities or energies pass from above to below and upwards again. According to the great Greek philosopher Pythagoras, when the soul descends from the

boundary where the Zodiac and the Galaxy meet, it passes from a spherical form which is the only divine one, into an elongated conical form caused by its downward tendency.

In Egyptian belief, life was a force that circulated throughout the world. Individual living things, including humans, were manifestations of this force and fundamentally tied to it.[18] Life came into existence at the creation of the world, and cyclical events like the rising and setting of the sun were thought of as re-enactments of the original events of creation that maintained and renewed life in the cosmos. Sustaining life was thus the central function of the deities who governed these natural cycles.

Therefore the ankh was frequently depicted being held in the gods' hands, representing their life-giving power. The Egyptians also believed that when they died, their individual lives could be renewed in the same manner as life in general. For this reason, the gods were often depicted in tombs giving ankh signs to humans, usually to the pharaoh. The pharaoh to some extent represented Egypt as a whole, so by giving the sign to him, the gods granted life to the entire nation.[20]

This form was later adapted and amended by Coptic Christians so that the conical shape became circular, signifying the completeness and harmony of the Christ life. It has been found on cloth dating back to early Christendom. The circle sometimes contained the Chi Roh, the interlocking of the first two letters from the Greek word for Jesus.



Ankh
(Creative Commons, public domain)



Coptic crosses
(Creative Commons, public domain)

A variation of the cross was used by the Assyrians as a symbol to represent their sky god Anu. A cross within a circle was and remains part of the sacred symbology of many North American Indigenous peoples. Variations have been found elsewhere in the world on archaeological sites dating back thousands of years. In a cave on Cuba's Island of Youth a curved cross was found carved into the rock wall. According to locals, it is the work of the mysterious 'sea people' of unknown origin.



The Tau
(Wikipedia Commons)

The Tau cross is a very ancient symbol representing three major deities: the Sumerian Sun God Tammuz, the Roman God Mithras, and the Greek God Attis. This cross was named after the Greek letter it resembles. The shape of the letter 'tau' or 'T' was interpreted as representing a crucifix from antiquity. The Tau Cross is most commonly used in reference to the Franciscan Order and Saint Francis of Assisi, who adopted it as his personal coat of arms after hearing Pope Innocent III talk about the Tau symbol. The symbol represents resurrection, reincarnation, life, immortality, symbolic death, a gateway and general well-being. It is now used as a symbol of the Franciscan Order.



Early Celtic Cross
(Wikipedia Commons)



Later Celtic Cross
(Wikipedia Commons)

The Celtic cross is a symbol of both culture and faith. The true origins of the Celtic cross are unknown but there are many theories and legends. One legend says that the first Celtic cross was formed by St. Patrick while bringing Christianity to the Druids. The druids used to worship a large circular stone. St. Patrick, on seeing the significance of the stone, drew a large cross through the middle of it in order to bless it. From this act, the two cultures combined to form the Celtic cross. The cross represents Christianity and the circle is the Celtic representation of eternity.

While the use of the cross as a sacred symbol predates Christianity it was given renewed and heightened significance by the nature of Jesus' death and his subsequent resurrection. However it was not used as a Christian symbol until the middle or end of the second century A.D. While to many Christians the cross represents Christ's great passion, the sacrifice of God in creation, the Deity laying down His life for the sins of humankind, when understood as an archetypal symbol in the Christian context it represents the experience or process associated with the Christ life, the life imbued with love, self-sacrifice and service and the resulting oneness with God, made available to all of humanity. R.J. Campbell in *The Divine Mystery* states that the great open secret of Christianity is the cross. "In the cross is summed up, for all who care to learn, the whole meaning of the world's travail and agony. Yet in the cross too is the hope of our ultimate triumph in alliance with the will of God."

The Edgar Cayce readings reinforce the above. They refer to the cross not only as the symbol of the ultimate sacrifice made by Jesus in overcoming the material world and entering into his glory but also as representative of a necessary condition that we must also individually meet if we are to advance spiritually in our journey through life here on earth. For each of us that soul growth encounter is different in degree and description, depending on what we have to work on in a given lifetime. As each of us joyfully meet the challenges and overcome the obstacles, whatever they may be, to our spiritual development as men and women, as we avail ourselves of opportunities for soul growth, we 'take up' our cross and follow the pattern established by Jesus.

When giving a reading for the chapter entitled The Cross and the Crown in the series of lessons on personal spiritual development, the Cayce source had this to say about the cross. *In the study, in the thought, this is found to be experienced by all, that there was the necessity*

for man's understanding for the entering in of the Son of Man, and that the Cross becomes the emblem of Him who offered himself, of himself. For that cause, for that purpose, came He into the world, that He himself, in overcoming the world, might gain the Crown. So, each (of you) in their respective lives, their own experiences, find their cross in overcoming the world, in overcoming those things, those conditions, those experiences, that would not only enable (you) to meet the issues of life but to become heirs with Him of the Crown of glory." [262-36].

On the spiritual path we inevitably must encounter the cross. We do so when we are faced with those personal challenges and difficulties that come our way due to our own misguided thoughts and behaviour, that of others, and whatever negative karma we have carried over from previous lives. However, as we imbue our attitudes and actions with a spiritual ideal and give expression to it in our everyday lives by exercising patience, tolerance, forgiveness, generosity, understanding, etc. in relation to our own and others' faults or shortcomings, when we exercise self-restraint and selflessness, we are accepting of the cross. As the Cayce source emphasized, without the cross there can be no crown.

In and through the practice of daily prayer and meditation, as we raise our consciousness and attune ourselves to the divine within, we engage with the process of transcendence, which the cross symbolizes.

Not surprisingly Cayce himself chose the cross as the central component for the original emblem for the A.R.E. shortly after it was founded. Perhaps it would be more true to say it was chosen for him. At the end of a reading that he gave in July 1934 this information was given by the source: *The Cross as the emblem, with the dove and the olive branch, brings peace to those that seek rather to give to their fellows that which is helpful and hopeful in their experiences.....Glory ye in the promises of thy Lord, thy Master, thy brother, in those things that He would do in the earth through thy feeble efforts. For He will give thee strength and will bear thee up to meet the burdens of the day, the hour. Faint not. Be not overanxious, for His ways are thy ways if ye seek to let Him have his way with thee. The Cross grows brighter, and yet a cross for every one. Without the cross there is no crown. Without the bitter there is no sweet. Without love, ye are lost indeed.* [254-78].

Gladys Davis, Cayce's secretary, made a note stating that those present interpreted the reading to be a message of encouragement to the staff of the then fledgling organization. Following this reading Edgar Cayce asked an artist friend to draw the A.R.E.'s original seal using the emblems mentioned in the above reading.



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The Master and Demetrius

– a story of the Christ –

a one person sacred drama for the Easter season

Mark Finnan



Introduction.

This is a story of the Christ as told through one man's life-changing encounter with the Master and his decision to follow him. While the play also explores the association of the reclusive Jewish sect, the Essenes, with the early years of Yeshua's life and his preparation for his public ministry, it is primarily about the transforming power of divine love and the life affirming and inspiring message of Easter. Performed with traditional music and chant of the Middle East, in it Mark portrays a wandering Greek actor named Demetrius, who saw, heard and followed Yeshua of Nazareth (later called Jesus by the Greeks) as he walked, taught and healed throughout the villages, towns and countryside of ancient Palestine. Set in a Roman prison dungeon, in 65 AD during the reign of the Emperor Nero, Demetrius agrees to tell the other Christian prisoners his story. In doing so, he takes his audience far beyond the prison walls as he describes his colourful past, his travels, his experience among the mysterious Essenes and his dramatic meeting with the Promised One, the long awaited Jewish Messiah. Through the experiences of Demetrius we see and hear what it was like to encounter and be healed by this extraordinary man Yeshua, who taught that God is Love, that we should love each other, and who forever changed the consciousness of humankind and the course of human history. The play evokes both that pivotal time and place, and one man's personal transformation. In doing so it offers clues for our search today to create

a more personal connection with God, to find healing and wholeness in a challenging ever-changing world where nonetheless the universal Christ is increasingly alive in the minds, hearts and actions of so many.

Act 2. Scene 2. (extract)

Earlier in this final scene of the play, Demetrius has told how, having heard of Jesus' death while living in Sidon, he and his wife travelled to Sarapha's Inn near Bethany, where some of the followers had gathered and where he was told about all that had taken place.

Demetrius: *(Returning to the bench. Sits)* Then another at the inn that evening spoke his piece, saying that with the Master's death all the bright hope that he had given rise to, began to fade away. The glorious fulfillment of the prophecy that he seemed to have embodied now lay dead and buried with him in the tomb. Disillusioned and despairing, fearing for their lives, some among the followers began disputing among themselves as to whether the Essenes had erred many years before, in claiming that the boy Jesus of Nazareth was the promised One. Some among the women even wondered if his mother might have been mistaken about the special circumstances of his birth. His life, so full of promise at the start, had come to such an ignominious and seemingly futile end. But with the news that he had risen from the dead, hope was rekindled once again and joyful expectancy took the place of all the doubt, the sorrow and the fear that they had known. While those whom he had chosen went again to Galilee to meet with him there as he instructed them, in Judea many waited eagerly for his return. In the hope that we might see him too we asked Sarapha if we could remain there at the inn helping out in any way we could with those who came and went from day to day and joining in the times of praise and prayer. *(Rising to down stage left)* Then one morning when I was out working in the yard a youth came running in to tell us that Jesus was back again in Bethany. On hearing this Sarapha left immediately to see him. However later that day she returned and *(crossing to centre stage)* took us both with her to the house where Jesus was, the home of his friend Lazarus whom he had also brought back to life again. No sooner had the garden come in view when the Master's seated figure could be seen beneath a spread almond tree. His mother, now at peace, sat with his sister Ruth and other women who had tended him. His brothers James and Jude, they stood a little ways apart talking earnestly to other men. Jesus looked up as we approached and smiled in recognition to Sarapha, who joined a circle gathered at his feet. Lydia and I, we remained at the garden's edge, unsure of our place in such a gathering, pleased just to see him once again. I could not take my eyes from off his face, because in spite of all that they had done to him, the death he had endured, he looked more radiantly alive than ever I had seen him in the past. Standing there with Lydia watching him as he talked so normally to others, thoughts of all he had accomplished raced through my mind and made me want to understand his teachings as I had never done before. Just then he rose and spoke aloud for all of us to hear saying that all was now accomplished according to the prophecies of old, that he had come to earth, lived and taught as he had done, died and risen from the tomb....that we might know again that love...and have again that life...which he said had brought us into being in eons past...and which was and is the everlasting part of every one of us.....His words reminded me *(crossing to down stage left)* of Jareal the Essene's story of ancient days and fallen spirits immersed in earthiness and of the promise given that if the people followed and lived by their God's laws, a king would come and....lead them to freedom Had

Demetrius: he become human that we might become divine? (*moving to centre stage*) When late into the evening he walked back across the garden to the house the setting sun spread a canopy of gold across the sky and painted the far off hills a purple hue. It was as though nature was rejoicing too and responding in all its splendor because he walked upon the earth again. (*To down stage left*) Throughout the weeks that followed the inn there beyond Bethany became a meeting place of sorts for Essenes and those who came from far and wide having heard that he had risen and wanting all the more to know of him. But still we kept a watchful eye, ever wary that the Romans and others who had caused Jesus' death might want to silence others who now gathered in his name and planned to spread his teachings through the land. Eventually the word came round that all who could gather at a certain time upon the mount above the olive grove in the Kidron. (*To centre stage, then to downstage right*) On our way there I overheard Sarapha telling Lydia about the very first time I had come to her inn and what had happened there and it made me realize that a great deal had changed since then for me, and many others there in Palestine. Approaching the appointed place we saw Jesus arriving walking at the head of his disciples. (*To centrestage left*) Many more came out from the city and from all across Judea on that day so that in the end there must have been at least 500 men and women there. Some among the crowd were heard to say that they thought Jesus might be about to proclaim his kingdom on this earth and with the help of an army from on high scatter those who had opposed him in the past. Others thought no, he might just take us away with him to some special place where we could remain until either Roman power was no more or this sorry world did end. Instead (*to centre stage*) standing high upon the mount and stretching out his arms he called on all of us to follow the example he had set, in all we thought, said, did ...in our dealings one with another. He urged those he had nurtured to remain true to the cause for which they had been chosen, to take his teachings to those who had not heard them, even to other nations of the earth. Then after walking a little further up the mount he turned and with a loving smile he blessed us all....At first it seemed as though our eyes were being affected by the sun as a vaporous light seemed to envelop and cause him to....to disappear. But as our eyes settled we realized that he was indeed disappearing, fading from our view! (*Sacred music heard off*)



Demetrius: Some upon the mount fell to their knees in awe at such a sight. Most of us just stood there, staring up until Jesus just vanished in the air, no longer to be seen. Speechless we waited, wondering what, if anything, would happen next? *(To down stage right)* Then two beings, all of light appeared where the Master had just stood before. Addressing his disciples they said that we should cease our staring up into the air since Jesus had since ascended from this earthly realm to dwell elsewhere. Then as if to appease the feelings of confusion and loss we felt they promised that Jesus would one day return the self-same way that we had seen him go. Then they too disappeared! *(Across to centrestage left)* Leaving many unasked questions on our lips! How had he faded from our sight? Where had he gone?*(Crossing back to downstage right)* When would we know that his return was near...and where might he appear to us again?.....*(To the bench and sits)* That evening at the inn there was much discussion about what all this meant and what the future held. However, when ten days later in Jerusalem, a spirit from on high came upon those whom he had chosen, empowering them miraculously and causing many others to believe... it began to seem possible to me that the love and power that lived in Jesus might one day also come alive in all the rest of us... in men and women everywhere who believed and lived by his teachings.....that he had come among us as he did for this very purpose.....to help us know who and what we really are the destiny of you and you and you and me, though it take us many lives. For some time afterwards Lydia and I remained there at the inn, meeting with other Followers of the Way as we were then called, discussing his teachings, praying and meditating, sharing a festive meal together, helping each other in whatever way we could. However, when the persecutions spread throughout Judea I took Lydia then carrying our child to the safety of Antioch in Syria. And there our son Elysus was born. After Paul and Barnabas, whom some of you may have met, came to preach in Antioch our numbers grew and it was there we were first called Christiani, followers of the Christos, the title bestowed on Jesus because of his divine nature and godlike ways. Eventually I did go back to Greece with Lydia and Elysus by my side after Paul had preached in Athens and in Corinth. And meeting there with those who gathered in each other's houses to hear of Jesus, I told them all I knew of him and all that I had seen and heard in Palestine, just as I have told it to you now. *(Rises to downstage right)* Then coming back here to Rome in the hope of meeting Paul again I too, like you, was caught in Nero's vengeful net. *(Crossing to downstage left)* So here I am, back from where I so urgently set out as an actor many years ago to find a theatre and ended up playing a part upon life's larger stage *(Remembering the time Jesus had appeared and spoken to him)* Perhaps that was the part that Jesus had told me the Father wanted me to play?.... *(To downstage centre accompanied by uplifting sacred music)* Regardless of what faith awaits us here let us be grateful that some of those we love are safe and well. And let us remember what the Master taught and showed us, that there is no death, *(indicating his body)* save to this. *(Smiling)* So let us put aside our fears and focus on that love, that life, that light which was in him and which, because of him, we know is ours, today, tomorrow and forever more.

(Returns among the other prisoners reciting the Our Father in Greek as sacred chanting rises and fades. Exits)

The End



Galen C. Dalrymple

