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The Forgotten Spiritual Teachings of Jesus

I

Apart from the words about Jesus of Galilee that appear in the "New Testament", there is virtually no evidence for Jesus' existence. References to Jesus, to a movement in response to him, and to people who were his followers only begin to appear years (and even decades) after the time when (as it is "reported" in the "New Testament") Jesus is commonly presumed to have lived - yet, there is no historical evidence for Jesus' existence that is contemporary with the time Jesus purportedly lived.

The books of the "New Testament" were written after Jesus' lifetime, even decades afterward. A large part of the "New Testament" is comprised of the letters of Paul of Tarsus - and, again, there is no evidence that Paul ever actually knew Jesus, nor does Paul claim in his writings to have actually seen Jesus when Jesus was alive. There is speculation (on the basis of scholarship) that Paul must have persecuted Jesus and Jesus' followers before he himself became a follower of Jesus, yet there is no historical evidence for it.

The writings of Paul refer to an already institutionalized tradition about Jesus, a tradition that is the basis for all of Paul's preaching. Paul was a church-maker, an institutionalizer who founded local churches. The work of Paul was based on his own teachings about how to "interpret" the presumed (or tradition bound) person of Jesus, rather than on the teachings and activities of Jesus himself. The fact of Jesus' physical existence had much less significance for Paul than Jesus' after-death status as a kind of "Heavenly" being.

The largest part of the content of the "New Testament" communicates about Paul and his institution-making. The Gospels (and chapter one of the "Book of Acts") are the only books of the "New Testament" with content that is presumed to be about Jesus himself. Nonetheless-insofar as the report of the Gospels is biographical at all - the Gospels, in fact, comprise an institutionalized biography. The Gospels tell about a Jesus who was "interpreted" by people after his death, often through stories contrived about him to coincide with suggestive prophecies within the "Old Testament", or the holy book of the Jews - stories claiming to present evidence of a likeness between Jesus and various Jewish "Messianic" characterizations that appear in the prophetic writings of the "Old Testament". In any case, the "likenesses" reported in the Gospels cannot be taken seriously as "eyewitness" observations of a presumably historical Jesus - they could only have been spoken about through a process of fabrication (or imaginative religious inventiveness).

All the stories in the Gospels about Jesus' early life before he began to preach are myths. They are a kind of literary creation for the purpose of establishing an institution, for the purpose of engendering public belief, for the purpose of presenting the character proposed to be Jesus of Galilee in the context of the Jewish prophetic tradition and the then present-day culture of Judaism, and intended to coincide with the expectations of the Jews (and the Gentiles) of the time.

Relative to nearly all of the life-stories about Jesus, the writers of the Gospels could not have been making use of information of a factual nature in order to "record" historical fact. Where, how, and from whom would they have acquired such information? And, indeed, if there were any fact-based source for those stories, why do the Gospels so markedly contradict one another relative to the details? In fact, the presence of remarkable

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contradictions between the separate accounts in the Gospels is one of the outstanding indicators that make it obvious that the Gospels are a form of literature, rather than of historical reporting.

The Gospels are a literature of religious propaganda - a form of religious fiction, made to convince people to join a particular institutional religious movement. However, the Gospels are not merely full of lies. Rather, the Gospels are, taken together, an outstanding example of a traditional kind of religious literature that is found in virtually all religious traditions.

While the Gospels are full of mostly fabricated details about Jesus' lifetime, there is, also, no evidence that the writers have actually quoted (rather than invented) what Jesus said when he was alive. Why is it, then, that, after his death, suddenly everybody "knew and remembered" all these things about him? For example, a private scene between Jesus and Pilate is described, and a dialogue is reported. Who would have known of the content of that conversation? No one - apart from Jesus and Pilate - could have heard these words. Pilate would not have reported it to anyone especially not any of Jesus' followers. Jesus would not have had time to tell anyone about it - for he was immediately taken away and, supposedly, crucified. While Jesus was suspended on the cross, he would not (under the circumstances) have reported his conversation with Pilate to the people nearby, so they could write it down for history. Nothing of the kind occurred.

Whatever the motives might have been for making a Jesus myth, the Gospels are a kind of literary fabrication about a mythologize human being who either may have lived or, otherwise, who may never have actually lived. Perhaps the myth of Jesus sprang from a tradition that existed long before the (presumed) historical time of Jesus. All kinds of possibilities exist, because there is no historically reliable factuality to depend upon.

Clearly, the motive of those who made the books of the "New Testament", including the Gospels, was to make an institution, to communicate about an (essentially) mythologize and "interpreted" figure effectively, then, to make a myth of a human being who (on the basis of that myth alone) has, ever since, been commonly presumed to have been an actual historical figure. The Gospel stories are (at least largely) not about an historical, factual, and actual Jesus - the person as he would have acted and spoken while he was alive. Everything that people have speculated about, thought about, felt about, and "reported" and asserted about "Jesus" has occurred only after (and even long after) Jesus was no longer alive - and, therefore, all of it arose entirely within the writers' own sphere of thinking and desiring and intending.

There is nothing that could be said after the lifetime of such a person as Jesus that would be as relevant to his own teaching as all that he, himself, said when he was alive. Whatever Jesus cared to say that was of the nature of a teaching, or, otherwise, of a revelation about himself, he would have said during his lifetime. Whatever others have said afterward is really their own creation, for their own reasons.

The writers (or inventors and fabricators) of the "New Testament" wrote largely for the purposes of institutionalization, and, therefore, in order to achieve a "victory" for their particular faction, and to "concretize" the self-image (as well as the public image) of their institution, and to give their institution the characteristic of "authority", and to differentiate it from other views and institutions - and especially to differentiate it from the "rival" institution of Judaism, by referring to "Christianity" as the "true Israel" (thereby suggesting that the

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historical tradition of the Jews had been superseded). And this purpose of the "New Testament" has created terrible problems for the Jews (and even the entire world) ever since.

Many have proposed that the right approach to discovering the "facts" about Jesus is to examine the "New Testament" Gospels and, thus and thereby, to determine what about this person can be said to be based on "actual" and "historical" evidence, and, on that basis, to determine "who" this person was, what he "actually" said, and what he "actually" taught. Scholars have undertaken great efforts to identify the "actual" sayings and the "true" stories-and to eliminate the "dross". Much of this effort is useful scholarly work. On the other hand, what now remains, after such scholarship, is rather chaotic, and even mundane - and there is little or no suggestion in the dominant factions of professional scholarship that the Jesus-tradition originated in association with esoteric Spirituality.

The result of the (especially nineteenth and twentieth century) scholarly process is that some scholars now presume that Jesus of Galilee may never have existed - and those who assert that Jesus did exist (as a naturally living historical person) tend to reduce him to the status of a rather mundane figure, who was limited to merely day-to-day social concerns, and who communicated a socially positive disposition (and message) of "compassion-toward all", and who might even have had a political agenda of a kind, such that he may be viewed as a kind of social rebel within Judaism. However, the dominant trends of professional scholarship are not based on any presumption that this person Jesus was Spiritually Awakened, and that he taught an esoteric Spiritual "method". Indeed, there is virtually no participation in esoteric Spiritual life and practice within either the tradition or the scholarly field of "official" (or exoteric) Christianity that would enable (or even permit) the straightforward and detailed understanding of Jesus of Galilee as an ancient example of a "Spiritual Master" (or an esoteric "Guru") - a type of human manifestation that has appeared in all traditions, and everywhere in the world, since the days of the ancients.

There is, to now, no full professional scholarly presentation of Jesus, and the "New Testament" Gospels, on an entirely (and authentically) Spiritual basis-stated with full awareness and experiential understanding of what is thus being suggested. Instead, "modern" scholars, in general, tend (because of their own ignorance relative to Spiritual matters) to reduce everything to the gross (physical) dimension of conditional existence. Therefore, any evidence of a subtle or Spiritual or mystical or esoteric nature is, rather automatically, presumed to be myth, or a manifestation of the mind of popular magic. In other words, what is Spiritual tends to be dismissed in favor of either what is simply biological (or biographical, in the sense of the life-person) or, otherwise, what is merely political, social, and "objectively" cultural.

Who is the Jesus that has emerged from the efforts of "modern" scholarship? He is a kind of social religious figure, who was itinerant, and somewhat revolutionary in his views. There is nothing uniquely and outstandingly important to religion (or to humankind in general) about such a person. There have been (and are) endless numbers of such "good" people. In fact, Jesus (as a presumedly actual historical figure) was an authentic true Spiritual Master-and not merely a social-morality teacher. However, Jesus is only one of many such (fourth-to-fifth stage) Spiritual Masters and, therefore, he is not unique. Indeed, the real importance of Jesus is not in his uniqueness, but in his authenticity-as a Spiritual Master. It is only the institutional mythologize of Jesus (as a kind of iconic idol, made of words) that has made Jesus seem unique, and demanded that he be

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uniquely "believed about"-and, as a result, the significance of Jesus as an authenticator of traditional fourth-to-fifth stage Spirituality has been lost and forgotten.

II

As a book based on legend and myth, the "New Testament" is not different from traditional storybooks found elsewhere in the religious traditions - for instance, the stories in Hinduism about Krishna and Rama. There exists, among many people of the world, a popular tradition of naive belief that characters such as Krishna, and Rama, and Jesus are (simply as described in the storybooks) historical persons even somehow presently existing in realms of a concrete but subtle kind. However, there are growing numbers of other kinds of people, who do not require personal belief in the historical reality of mythological characters, and who accept religious storybooks as traditional literatures that convey certain kinds of human truths (and only some suggestion of ultimate Truth).

The religious figures in all the world's ancient traditional stories are largely mythological persons, and the stories may or may not have anything to do with historical persons who ever existed. Whatever any individual may think about such religious figures now, long after the time when those religious figures could possibly have lived, is strictly that individual's own mode of thinking or believing.

The mythological stories about figures such as Krishna and Rama were often, it seems (based on the profound depth of presentation of the traditional literatures about Krishna and Rama), made by people of some significant level and degree of Spiritual development - and, from their view, they were communicating about Spiritual Truth (Itself), by making popular stories that could be instructive to ordinary (or at least less Spiritually developed.) people. The "New Testament", however, has virtually no content that suggests it (or any part of it) was written by persons of great Spiritual development-but, rather, the "New Testament" bears the characteristics of "authorship" that suggest it is the product of ordinary popular storytelling (or Spiritually undeveloped religious fantasizing) combined with the overriding voices of institutional managers, who control and modify and build upon the popular tradition, in order to "concretize" a propagandistic institutional intention.

The only religious and Spiritual "genius" that has any voice in the "New Testament" is the person of Jesus. And, because of this solitary evidence, it would seem appropriate to presume there actually was a Spiritual Master Jesus of Galilee - whose life and teachings (although much covered up and distorted by the institutional and otherwise naive popular mentality that made the "New Testament" Gospels) are, nonetheless, at the root of the "official" myth of Jesus of Galilee.

Completely apart from all the institutionalized Jesus-making, and all of the institution-based speculation, and all the post Jesus' lifetime imaginings and propaganda, a (very likely, historical) person, named "Jesus of Galilee", is presented via a traditional genre of religious "fiction" - and that Jesus is (by means of literary devices) associated with certain kinds of characteristics, and portrayed to be demonstrating and otherwise 'speaking in a manner that conveys an ancient, already-existing, tradition of moral, devotional, and Spiritual representation.

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Ultimately, it makes no difference if Jesus is a myth or not just as, ultimately, it makes no difference whether Krishna, or Rama, or Osiris, or Zeus existed or not. What is of significance is the Truth and, otherwise, any kind of human truths - pointed to by the "concretized" myths.

The "New Testament" conveys the suggestion of a Spiritual message (or some kind of underlying "secret" of a Spiritual kind) that is in the domain of the fourth stage of life and the fifth stage of life - and not at all beyond the fifth stage of life-as well as, of course, communications of religious (or devotional) and moral instruction in the domain of the first three stages of life.

There is, in the "New Testament", a mythological representation (or God-"idea") of the Divine Nature, and a rather covertly communicated message about "Communion" with the Spiritual Divine, and, coincidentally, there are communications of "Wisdom" about human existence and right life. Therefore, the "New Testament" is very much like many other traditional texts that communicate in the context of the fourth stage of life," and which also include material relative to at least some aspects of the fifth stage of life.

In this regard, the "New Testament" is very much like the literature about Rama, in the Hindu tradition. Unlike the "New Testament" communications about Jesus, some traditional texts speak of Rama in the manner of what could be called sixth stage (or Transcendentalist) teachings about Realization of That Which Is without (or Perfectly Prior to) form. However, like the "New Testament" communications about Jesus, most of the Rama literature is in the domain of the first four stages of life, with some levels of suggestiveness about Spiritual matters that may be understood to extend into the fifth stage of life.

In the case of the Bbagavad Gita (which is the principal text of the Krishna tradition), there are elements of communication that point toward an Ultimate Realization That Is of a formless Transcendental (and sixth stage) Nature-but, fundamentally, the Bhagavad Gita is a moral, devotional, and mystical text, in which the mythological figure of Krishna is presented as the means for conveying the full range of ideas associated with the synthesis of first-stage-through-sixth-stage Hinduism (as a progressive, or developmental practice) that the Bhagavad Gita is principally intended to provide. Thus, Krishna is fashioned (by literary means) as the principal figure around which to speak the general tradition of Realization (or Spirituality) and right human life that is otherwise represented by the totality of the traditions of Hinduism. Similarly, the "New Testament" Gospel tradition about Jesus fashions Jesus (by literary means) as the principal figure around which to convey a summary of all the moral, and devotional, and (cryptically represented) Spiritual Wisdom-ideas otherwise associated with the ancient totality that included exoteric Judaism and all of the (both exoteric and esoteric) traditions of the ancient world of Greece, Rome, Egypt, the Middle East, and, to some extent, of India.

III

Who is this teacher, Jesus of Galilee? What is the evidence of his life-story? What did he do and say? Not what people said about him or for him after his lifetime-but what did he do and say? Not what is believable only from a scientific-materialistic perspective, or a humanistic perspective, or any such reductionist perspective-but what was Jesus himself actually like, as a representative of a tradition of ancient Wisdom associated with the first five. stages of life?

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From the "point of view" of historical fact, the story about Jesus' physical "Ascension" to "Heaven" after his death is impossible - and even absurd. Jesus is said to have gone up into the air, in order to reach "Heaven" - yet, everybody now knows what is up there, in the air. People everywhere know that the "air" above the Earth is a virtually limitless space, full of many other galaxies. In the present day, it must be clearly understood that Jesus did not have anywhere to go by going up into the sky physically.

In the ancient tradition, however, there was a cosmological view that would have "understood" (and accepted as fact) that Jesus could literally fly up into the air, and travel higher and higher, and, eventually, reach "Heaven". According to that view, the Deity was above the "firmament" - which was a crystal vault, from which hung the many stars. That Jesus "Ascended" up to and via the "firmament" was, indeed, believable, according to the popular cosmological view of that time. Yet, that cosmological view has absolutely no relevance anymore, when examined in the context of present-day scientific knowledge of the actually observed universe - and, therefore, the "Ascension-of Jesus" story must now be seen, clearly, to be a myth (or a literary invention, intended to play upon the belief-structure current at the time of the writing of the "New Testament"). Simply stated, the scientifically-demonstrated evidence of how the physical world is actually structured conclusively and irrevocably proves that the "Ascension" of Jesus of Galilee is (and was originally) an intentionally fabricated myth - and not (as it pretends to be) an "eyewitness" account of an actual historical event.

If, however, the "Ascension" story about Jesus is seen in the context of the total fourth-to-fifth stage tradition (and authentic experiences) of Spirituality, it remains both relevant and true, as a symbol for the interior psycho-physical phenomenon of Spiritual Ascent into a state of mystical absorption (and brain-concentration) in the Self-Apprehended and Intrinsically Self-Evident Current of Conscious Energy That Self-Exists at the root and center of every living body.

If the "Ascension" story about Jesus is examined as a kind of esoteric (or hermetic, and intentionally cryptic) mode of language that speaks (and, yet, hides) a "secret" teaching (rather than describing an historical and outwardly physical event), then it is self-evident that the "Ascension" story (along with most of the other "New Testament" stories about Jesus) is a form of strategically fabricated public communication, and that it intentionally speaks in a conventional and deliberately "concretized" manner about "secrets" that, it was felt, should not, in public, be directly and openly stated. After all, according to the "New Testament" Gospels, Jesus' own policy, when speaking to the general public, was to speak only in cryptic "parables". And the principal "parables" in the "New Testament" Gospels are the "stories" of the bodily "Resurrection" and physical "Ascension" of Jesus.

In the time when Jesus is supposed to have lived, an esoteric (and already ancient) tradition of Spiritual Baptism existed, and it can (based on literary evidence) be presumed to have also been associated with Jesus himself. That tradition can (based on literary evidence, and on the experiential knowledge of esoteric Spiritual processes) be presumed to have included a process of direct Spiritual Transmission (from Master to disciple), and, also, a verbal transmission of esoteric instruction about inwardly-concentrated Spiritual Ascent - or the mystical (or Yogic) Spiritual process that is, by necessity, psycho-physically internal, and that, through the development of inward and upward concentration (ultimately, in the brain core), expands, experientially, into a cosmic and supercosmic understanding. That Spiritual process of Ascent is not about going up into the

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physically existing sky. It is about going up into the "sky of mind". It is about internal, or entirely Spiritual, Ascent.

Despite the fact that this ancient understanding and its Spiritual traditions existed long before the (presumed) time of Jesus, that Spiritual understanding is not conveyed or admitted by "official" Christianity. The message of "official" Christianity is, fundamentally, restricted to the gross physical domain (or to gross idealism, or exclusivistic universal "incarnationism"), and, on that basis, to the institutionalized governing of the social and moral behavior of human beings, by appealing to the "official" stories about Jesus in order to reinforce the desirable behavior.

There is virtually nothing in "official" Christianity about the esoteric Spirituality that is often suggested by the "New Testament" Gospel stories about Jesus. However, by employing physically based metaphors in the after-lifetime accounting for the "Resurrection" and the "Ascension", the language of the "New Testament" Gospels fabricates a "concretization" of what was, otherwise, a Spiritual teaching. And that Spiritual teaching was not, even in its own time, exclusive to Jesus. Rather, the Spiritual teaching that is hidden and protected in the "New Testament" (by means of the strategic language of physical "concreteness") is, and always was, the characteristic ancient (and still current) Spiritual teaching associated (all over the world) with the esoteric Wisdom of what I describe as the fourth stage of life and the fifth stage of life.

Because Jesus is not now physically alive (or, otherwise, Spiritually active via a lineage of living Spirit-Baptizers), the only matters of significance relative to him are those that are associated with the contents of the teachings that are conveyed in the writings about him. However, for anyone actually practicing the Spiritual Way of life, the matter of greatest significance is the Spiritual Master from whom one receives Spirit-Baptism. Therefore, from the perspective of the actual practice of Spiritually-active living, what is greater than all the teachings of the traditions (both ancient and of the present day) is one's own Spiritual Master-the Spirit-Baptizer who serves the devotee's Spiritual development toward Spiritual Realization: from physical and moral transformation (or the development of self-discipline and virtue), and through devotional outreach (beyond egoic self), and always toward (or in) the Spiritual Condition That Is the Divine.

In the context of the fourth and fifth stages of life, the Spiritual Condition That Is the Divine is always conceived from the bodily perspective, and, thus and thereby, presumed to be absolutely Above,. Therefore, Ascent is the traditional (fourth and fifth stage) process that one must undergo, in order to go beyond the gross realm of conditional existence and enter into the realm of That Which Is Spirit, Above and Beyond the gross.

There is a perennial tradition of teaching about that practice of Spiritual Ascent - a tradition that has been steadily conveyed by Spiritual Masters (and by Means of their Spiritual Blessing-Force) since ancient times. That tradition began before there was writing, and that tradition is still current in the world, in the company of Yogis and Saints of fifth stage Spiritual Realization.

The tradition of Spiritual Ascent represented (and, to a significant degree, covered up) by the Gospel stories of the "New Testament" is strictly limited to the first five stages of life. And, in any case, the "New Testament" is rather silent about the "how" of Jesus' Spiritual Ascent. However, there is some simple suggestiveness about the "how" in the Gospels such as the story of Nicodemus's meeting with Jesus, wherein Jesus told Nicodemus

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that one must be "born again in the Spirit rather than the flesh". Clearly, this reference to "re-birth" means, "Realize the `point of view' and the Condition of Spirit, rather than that of gross bodily existence". This statement by the "New Testament" Jesus belongs entirely within the tradition of esoteric Spiritual understanding - as do other sayings that are attributed to him, such as, "If your eye is made single (or one-pointed., your entire body will be filled with light." I Indeed, the latter aphorism exactly summarizes the essential "how" of the practice that accords with all traditional fifth stage teachings.

Thus, in the "New Testament" Gospels, there exists a thread of esoteric Spiritual instruction that is conveyed (and, yet, hidden) by means of aphorisms and stories - and, altogether, by means of rather homely popular representations of ancient moral and devotional teachings. The thread of esoteric Spiritual teaching in the "New Testament" Gospels exists completely apart from all the institutionalization-language, all the institutional "salvation" messages, and all the rest of the propaganda of an emerging institution looking for its place, its power, its dominance over all others, and its feeling of being culturally superior to all others.

IV

There is, in the "New Testament" Gospels, a core story-line about the person called "Jesus". That story sits beneath and within all the overlays of institutional propaganda and institutionally self serving "interpretation". In other words, there is a story (or a kind of biography, including a collection of basic teachings) that seems to represent a core-tradition upon which the institutional writers of the "New Testament" Gospels were building their inventions of new religion. At the core of the stories about Jesus is a core tradition that precedes (or is the basis for) all the Gospel writings of the "New Testament" (all of which were written even many years after the lifetime of Jesus).

The "New Testament" texts that I have included (and, altogether, selected, translated, and elaborated upon) in this book (in the section entitled "The Spiritual Gospel of Saint Jesus of Galilee") are the parts of the Gospels that can be said to be true to the core tradition relative to the moral, devotional, and (encrypted) Spiritual teachings of Jesus (and, otherwise, relative to the esoteric tradition of the ancients). The core story is the "New Testament" Gospel story about the life, doings, and teachings of one who is usually called "Jesus of Nazareth", but who, more properly, should be referred to as "Jesus of Galilee". The core story transcends (or stands irreducibly apart from) the institutionalizing (and the grossly and publicly oriented, rather than Spiritually oriented) process of "official" Christianity.

The "New Testament" (as it is commonly presented in myriad translations and renderings) mostly contains the institutionalizing and non-Spiritual tradition of "official" Christianity. Nonetheless, the "New Testament" stories convey a thread of teaching-truths from the ancient world on the subjects of moral, devotional and Spiritual matters.

No actual individual who lived in Jesus' lifetime can be said to have communicated Jesus' doings and sayings, as Porphyry did about Plotinus (whom he knew), or as Motovilov did about Saint Seraphim (whose direct and personal Spiritual Transmission he experienced).

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Baba Muktananda wrote first-person accounts about His Spiritual Teacher, Bhagavan Nityananda. Baba Muktananda knew Bhagavan Nityananda personally, and directly experienced His Spiritual Transmission, as well as His teaching. At the same time, however, it must be said that Baba Muktananda's writings about Bhagavan Nityananda convey not only facts about Bhagavan Nityananda but also many myths about Bhagavan Nityananda.

In the Indian tradition, it is common practice for people to tell (or even invent) stories about their own Masters that, characteristically, use (or repeat, and embellish, and revise) stories already commonly told, within the existing tradition, about "great persons" (or Saints, Yogis, and Spiritual figures within the Indian tradition altogether). Whatever that previous tradition already contained, people also "re-told" it about Bhagavan Nityananda. By doing so, they were, in accordance with the traditional understanding, acquiring "merit" - simply by repeating great things about their own Master. Such is the rule of "merit" in the traditional setting of India - and the same rule (or license) existed within the tradition in which the "New Testament" Gospels were made (or invented). Indeed, traditional stories about Spiritual Masters (including Jesus of Galilee) are rightly understood only when thus understood.

All "storytelling" is a poetic and fictionizing and propagandistic art. All "storytelling" is literature and theatre-not "news reporting" or any kind of effort to rigorously account for "facts". (Indeed, perhaps because this difference is self-evident to virtually everyone, even "news reporters" characteristically refer to their supposedly "factual" reports as "stories".)

Traditionally, whether through lore, or mythology, or imaginative storytelling, historical (or, otherwise, entirely fictional) personages are "artistically concretized" - for the purpose of establishing and propagandistically promoting the "authority" of exoteric religious (as well as all other cultural, social, and political) institutions. That process tends to produce accretions of a kind that are no longer what could be called "historical" in nature, except in so far as they represent the "history" of the institution itself.

For example, such a process can be seen exemplified in the earlier part of the twentieth century, in the institutionally-promoted stories about Shirdi Sai Baba'-the stories about whom very quickly reached into the domain of super-myth, on the basis of very little reliable history. Because Shirdi Sai Baba lived within the last one hundred years, some historical reality for the stories must be granted. Yet, his life is far enough back in time that (through the "concretizing" process of storytelling) the reports and legends about him have been transformed into pure myth.

Narasimha Swami, who lived in the company of Ramana Maharshi for a while, wrote a biography of the Maharshi - and, afterwards, Narasimha Swami went on to become an ardent devotee of the then no-longer-living Sai Baba of Shirdi. Narasimha Swami compiled much of the early myth-making literature about Shirdi Sai Baba on which people have expanded since. The literature about Shirdi Sai Baba is a useful example, therefore, of the process whereby myth-of-"God" stories develop within the popular context of traditional Deity-oriented devotionalism in India. A large portion of the stories about Shirdi Sai Baba are no longer about that historical person - although there does exist some underlying Historical and reliable biographical information,

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including a record) of some of his sayings, and so forth, that has provided an underlying substratum, upon which the myth-making has proceeded, given to this day.

Broadly public and merely popular religious institutions are, by nature and by necessity, businesses - and they must, like all businesses, function competitively in the "marketplace" of the common world. Therefore, in order to defend and define themselves, popular religious institutions (which must pander to the broadest kind of mass public) tend to develop literature and methods that are based upon a strategic alteration in the subject of their propaganda - an alteration that transforms the subject into a popularly sellable myth.

It must be understood that the "New Testament" Gospels convey, not "history", but a summary of ancient (and not at all exclusively, or, otherwise, originally, "Christian") teachings about moral, devotional, and (at least in a cryptic manner) Spiritual matters and that they do so in an anciently accepted literary form, by inventing a (thus) fictional story about a particular person and his teachings and doings. And, technically, such intentionally fictional propaganda - literature is, in general, made without merely telling "lies" about that particular person and his teachings and doings (even though the stories that are told are not, in actual or historical fact, true).

Apart from the institutional and speculative effects that appear in the language of the "New Testament" Gospels, Jesus himself is not represented therein as an institutional functionary (or religious "official"). Whether as the myth, the fictional legend, or the real historical Jesus, the central character of the "New Testament" Gospels is not (in the context of his storied lifetime) portrayed as an "institutional" figure. The "Jesus" of the "New Testament" Gospels always intentionally stands outside the Jewish "official" religion of his own time - just as he also inherently stands outside the Christian "official" religion of the present time. Jesus was (apparently) a Jew, by birth, and (thus) he lived within the context of Judaism during the Roman occupation of his country. In that sense, Jesus is .represented as an historical figure in the "New Testament" Gospels.

In the "New Testament" Gospel stories, Jesus sets himself apart from Greco-Roman cultural ideas, and apart from the institutional culture of Judaism. Therefore, Jesus of Galilee can, himself, be seen to be simply a great teacher, associated with traditions, but standing apart from them, within the sphere of his own Spiritual understanding - not merely within the context of his thinking, but within the super-normal Condition of his Spiritual Realization and the experientially-based process of his Spiritual demonstration - The Spiritually-based Blessing-powers and visions and teachings of the "outsider" Jesus, as well as the apparent Spiritual Transmission from his Guru, John the Baptist, are among the basics of the core story of the Jesus of the "New Testament" Gospels.

Jesus himself (even as he is shown in the "New Testament" Gospels) stood outside institutionalization, yet (paradoxically) he became the most institutionalized and the most mythologized human being in history. Consequently, there are countless versions of "Jesus of Galilee" in everybody's thinking (and in everybody's talk). However (at least as the story goes), Jesus himself was, in his lifetime, a non-institutional figure who, in fact, differentiated himself from the larger public institution, and from the larger public world-including not only the Greco-Roman world, and the Hellenistic world, but also the temple world, or the "official" world of Judaism. Jesus simply and repetitively preached a moral, devotional, and (ultimately) Spiritual message, using

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the terms and modes of the daily language that was associated with the cultural environment in which he lived and into which he was (according to tradition) born.

The teaching reported in the "New Testament" Gospels is the expression of an independent Spiritual Master - as is generally the case with Spiritual Masters in all traditions. True Spiritual Masters may themselves become institutionalized within a cultural (or cultic) setting, and they may even live and speak within the context of some kind of institutional (or cultic) framework - yet, they truly and inherently stand apart from, and transcend, the institutional or cultic context. True Spiritual Masters (or authentic Spiritual Zealizers) always (inherently, actually, and truly) speak and function freely.

Jesus of Galilee (as the principal figure of the "New Testament" Gospels) should be understood to be a Spiritual Master of the fifth stage degree. He stood apart from institutions and the institutionalization of his function. He was a simple itinerant, a wanderer. He spoke very critically of many things, and was, essentially, simply blessing people - with his healing Blessing, his teaching Blessing, and (in the case of those who were sufficiently prepared) his Spiritual Blessing.

There is a tradition that suggests Jesus Transmitted his Spiritual 'lessing privately', to an "inner circle" of those of his followers who were most prepared to receive the (fifth stage) esoteric Instruction and the Spiritual Transmission that would enable them to participate in Divine Communion through the internally upturned psycho-physical process of Spiritual development and Spiritual Ascent. There is "Ascension" language in the Gospels (and in the early part of the Book of Acts) that should (rightly) be regarded to be "concretization" - metaphors for the "inner-circle" teaching and the Spiritually Baptizing work of Jesus. Reflected in the metaphors of the stories of Jesus of Galilee is the tradition of both exoteric (or outer, or public) teachings and esoteric (or inner, hidden, and, therefore, secret) teachings or teachings relative to the domain of the public beginner as well as teachings relative to the "inner-circle" domain of the mature devotee (or the esoteric domain of the directly Spiritual teachings and of the direct Spiritual Transmission-work).

Many scholars say that numerous stories in the "New Testament" Gospels are not part of the "original" tradition (or real biography") of Jesus - such as, for instance, the story of Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night, and to whom Jesus said, "You must be born again, in Spirit." Whether that visit actually happened does not make any difference. That story and others like it are a fundamental part of what is conveyed through the total body of stories about the lifetime of Jesus and his work and his doings and sayings. The Nicodemus story is an important communication, because it clearly indicates that the message of Jesus is a Spiritually-based message, and that Jesus was a Spiritual worker, a Spirit-Transmitter, whose teaching is about Spiritual transformation, a conversion of life, a fundamental purification of the life, such that the life can, thereafter, be turned (and Spiritually conveyed) to What is Above. Such turning does not occur by a physical act of going up into the sky, but by subtle (internal psycho-physical) Ascent, by means of the esoteric Spiritual process, into the inner space which is sometimes metaphorically called the "sky of mind".

Clearly, the esotericism of Spiritual Ascent is a fundamental substructure that underlies the "New Testament" tradition. The "official" Christian tradition that was built upon the substructure that is Spiritual esotericism strategically suppresses certain elements (specifically, those known as "gnostic"), and it, otherwise,

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"concretizes" (or converts into a physical event) even such things as the "Ascension" of Jesus (which, in fact, is a reference to Jesus' own life-practice of upward Spiritual absorption, and, also, a reference to his "inner-circle" teachings about that same process otherwise referred to via cryptic references to the "secrets of the Kingdom of God"). The newly emerging institutional (or "official" and public) Christian tradition did all of this in order to prevent the "Ascension" from being viewed as merely speculative and "mystical" and "gnostic"-and, thus, to prevent the story of Jesus' fictional "Ascension" from conveying a "too-Spiritual" (and, necessarily, esoteric, or non-public) teaching.

The entire purpose of the "official" tradition of Christianity is to bring masses of ordinary people into the sphere of the public (or exoteric) Christian institution, and (otherwise) to command them relative to their public, social, and intimate life-activity. Essentially, the message of the "official" tradition of Christianity is a social morality, teaching that is conveyed through lore, myth, legend, and poetically expansive religious language that is intended to command the lives of people, and entirely in order to enforce their "right behavior". Thus, from a Spiritual perspective, the institutionalizing effect of the "official" message in the entire "New Testament" is rather reductionist in its orientation.

Nevertheless, one can still discern the evidence that, at the origin of the "official" message of the "New Testament", is a fourth to fifth stage Spiritual Realizer (or, at least, a fourth-to-fifth stage esoteric Spiritual teaching or teaching-school). Whether historical or not, such is the kind of "Jesus" who, by means of storied doings and sayings, is at the heart of the "New Testament" Gospels.

V

An esoteric teaching of Spiritual Communion-or (to use the "New Testament" language) a teaching about the "secrets of the Kingdom of God" - is at the root of the Gospels of the Christian tradition. And that esoteric teaching comes directly from the even more ancient pre-Christian esoteric tradition about the "method" Succeeded It (or psycho-physical technique) of inner mystical (or Spiritual) Ascent. The esoteric root - teaching at the origin of the "New Testament" Gospels was about Spiritual Communion, and not about the physical "Ascension" of Jesus.

Through his esoteric Spiritual teaching-work, Jesus passed on a pre-Christian tradition of "method" (or of practice-"technique") and a process in which anyone else (if rightly prepared) could also participate. However, the original (and, apparently, actual) esoteric teaching-school of Jesus of Galilee was suppressed and lost in the process of the enforced exoteric institutionalization of Christianity. Towards the end of the fourth century of the Common Era (as a result of the earlier strategic initiatives of Constantine), Christianity became the "official" religion of the Roman State. At that point in time, Christianity - which had, from its first public beginnings, always been mostly of an exoteric nature, albeit with various "gnostic" and otherwise esoteric groups also claiming to be associated with Jesus and what they each claimed to be his "true" teachings became finally codified into an exclusively exoteric tradition. Nevertheless, there have (often in spite of "official" pressures against them) continued to be important fourth stage mystical figures and Spiritually - activated saintly figures within the institutionalized (and, especially, "Roman Catholic" and "Eastern Orthodox") modes of the Christian tradition.

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In summary, the root-tradition from which (or upon which, or in spite of which) "official" Christianity emerged was very much more than an exoteric and outer, or merely public, tradition. That esoteric foundation is suggested by the so-called "Secret Gospel", which is a fragment of what is presumed to have been a more esoteric version of the "Gospel of Mark", and which was written for the "inner circle" of those Christians who were initiated into the practice of Spiritual Communion with their Spiritual Master, Jesus of Galilee. Although the practice itself is not described there, the "Secret Gospel" does suggest there was an esoteric practice available for those who were prepared for it. It suggests that there was, on the one hand, the public message of Jesus' teaching, and, on the other hand, when people demonstrated the evidence of maturity, they were given the esoteric (or "inner-circle") practice-the "secret" Spiritual practice.

Presumably, then, there were modes of direct Spiritual Transmission known within the earliest (or pre-institutional) Christian tradition (or within the sect associated with Jesus during his, it may be presumed, physical lifetime) - as is, for example, suggested in the story of the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist. That story is a "concretized" rendering of a Transmission of Spiritual Energy. It is similar to the "Shaktipat" tradition, which still exists, and can also be seen, for example, in Motovilov's account of his experience of Spiritual Transmission from the "Orthodox" Christian Saint, Seraphim of Sarov (in the nineteenth century). Something of that very kind appears to be associated with the esoteric "inner circle" that should be presumed to have existed in intimate association with the (presumedly, historical) Jesus.

The esoteric Spiritual teaching-school of Jesus of Galilee is the pre-institutional original tradition of the New Testament" Gospels. Apart from the institutionalization of the "official" Christian message of "salvation" by means of devotion to the "Resurrection-and-Ascension" Jesus, there is also (and senior to that mythological Jesus) a suggested historical Jesus who was a Spiritual teacher, and who did the "inner-circle" work of Spiritual Transmission, and who communicated not only a public (or exoteric and socially-based) teaching but also an esoteric (or Spiritual, and cosmically-oriented, and psycho-physically based) "inner-circle" teaching.

A suggestion of just such Spiritual matters appears in the story of the visit by Nicodemus in the night. The very fact that the story emphasizes that Nicodemus visited Jesus at night suggests an occasion of Spiritual initiation. Suggestively, it was an overnight event of purification and preparation, and of receiving Spiritual instruction having to do with focusing upwardly (on brain-mediated visions of inner light and the "Star within"), with the eventual user-physical sighting of the Morning Star (in the twilight, just before it would disappear in the daylight Sun) being the outer symbolic reference to the inner light and the inner star of mystical or fourth-to-fifth stage, and, thus, brain-mediated) esotericism. During the night, the ceremonially-bathed initiate would be prepared, by means of a vigil of instruction and Blessing, for the interior Spiritual Baptismal-vision given by Jesus.

Perhaps, in his instruction to the initiate, Jesus would have identified himself with the Morning Star. Hence, such aphoristic sayings as, "I am the bright Morning Star," and, "If your eye is made single (or one-pointed), your entire body will be filled with light." Also, the "Second Letter of Peter" states: "You should pay attention to [the teachings], as to a light that illuminates your path-until the dawn, when the Morning Star rises in your sky of mind."18 And, in the "Book of Revelation", the "Spirit" is given to say: "I will give the Morning Star[to every one who persists in the practice that accords with my teachings, and who perseveres, and overcomes all

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obstacles]." And, additionally, Jesus would likely have uttered other esoteric promises, even such as the "Spirit" is given to say in the "Book of Revelation": "To those who persevere and overcome, I will give an inner and secret 'manna' [or Spiritual nourishment], and a white stone [or tabula rasa, or pristine state] within them, with a new and secret name on it, which only those who receive it within themselves will be able to identify and understand."

As is quite common elsewhere in the fifth stage traditions of religious and Spiritual schools outside of Christianity, the initiate would concentrate, inwardly and upwardly, at the midpoint between the brows, and, thus and thereby, focus attention at the brain core - or, in terms of the physical anatomy of the human body, at (and upwardly from) the point of the hypothalamus and the ventricles of the midbrain. The initiate would be instructed that he or she will see the interior equivalent of the Morning Star at that place - either immediately or, otherwise, if and when the practice has been done diligently and over time. Once such instructions had been given by Jesus to a new initiate, there would be a laying on of hands (to directly and physically Transmit the Spiritual Blessing, by Jesus), and, then (especially if there is a significant sensitivity to the Spiritual Energy of the Transmitted Spiritual Blessing), there would be various kinds of potential mystical (or brain-mediated) experiences. Such was the principal "secret" indicated in the "New Testament" Gospels with reference to the "secrets" of the "Kingdom of God".

Although this esoteric Spiritual process has been virtually eliminated from the "official" Christian tradition (and, thus and thereby, forgotten - and, in general, denied to all Christian practitioners), it is (nonetheless, and essentially) the same process that can be found, to this day, in the (especially, fifth stage) Yogic traditions of India - and elsewhere, all over the world.

The process referred to in the "parables" of the "New Testament" Gospels is not, in fact, about the blood-"Sacrifice", bodily "Resurrection", and literal, physical "Ascension" of Jesus who, in that case, like a ceremonial temple-offering of an animal, or incense, or a ritual prayer, would "disappear" into the sky, and arrive in "Heaven Above", to rule on the "right-hand side" of the "Father".

At some point, Judaism began to communicate itself in exclusively monotheistic language, and a doctrinal and sacramental approach developed that was oriented strictly to the "male" Deity. Thus, the "female" aspect (and representation) of the Divine was systematically eliminated, and what had (originally, in the earliest centuries of the Hebrew tribal religion) been worshipped as a "Unity". (or a "Primal Union") of male and female became an exclusively male "God". In "official" Christianity, the exclusively "male" tendency (indicated in the reference to "God" as the "Father") appears to be a cultural preference carried over from "official" Judaism. The esoteric language of Jesus (himself) is not oriented toward a paternalistic Deity "outside" the human person, and, thus, "in" the world, but, rather, the esoteric language of Jesus (himself) is oriented toward the Divine As Spirit (or Spirit-Breath) - Which, in fact, traditionally, is often associated with feminine terms of reference (such as "Shakti"), and Which is, in any case, a reference to the Divine as a Reality "inside" the human psycho-physical Form, and, thus, Prior to the world, rather than "in", or of, the world. Indeed, the ancient word for "spirit" (in the common Greek 'Language of Jesus' day) is "pneuma", which means "breath-energy". Therefore, in true (or esoteric) Spiritual practice (as taught by Jesus), the individual breathes (and, Ultimately, is Absorbed

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In) the Divine Spirit (Pneuma, or Mana)-and, if there is correct Spirit) breathing (or psycho-physical Absorption In the Divine Spirit Power), Spiritual practice is inherently effective.

Also, in "official" Christianity, the cultural (and merely exoteric)) reference for defining the Divine as "Creator" (or "Cause") of the and the Christian Social Exotericism That Succeeded It world is another carryover from "official" Judaism. Again, the esoteric language of Jesus indicates a different (and esoteric, rather than exoteric) idea of "God". The "God"-idea of Jesus is the idea of the Divine As Spirit (or Spirit-Breath) "inside" (and, thus, Prior to both the world and the human psycho-physical form. That is to say, As Spirit the Divine Is the Prior Reality, and, As 'Such, not "Creator" (or "Cause")-but, rather, the Divine Spirit Is Source and Refuge. The Divine As Spirit, Prior to the body-mind and the world, Is (Itself) the "Goal" of humankind, whereas the "God"-idea of the Divine as "Creator" tacitly subordinates the Divine to its "creations" - and, thus, allows human beings to embrace the illusion that conditions in and of the world and conditions in and of the body-mind (or egoic self) itself are the "Goal" of religion and of life.

The practice (and tradition) of astrology was very important in the ancient world. Thus, much of the "New Testament" was written on the basis of a framework of various kinds of astrological conceptions (and of astrological metaphors for esoteric conceptions). Take, for example, the legendary story placed in the "New Testament" Gospels about the "wise men" from the East, who followed a Star. Likewise, references to the Sun often appear in the "New Testament" Gospels, suggesting that the Sun in the sky is (metaphorically speaking) "God the Father". Therefore, also metaphorically speaking, the "Star" (in "New Testament" language) is Jesus, the "Son" of the "Sun" - a "risen" Star (or Morning Star) that is subordinate to the "Sun" (because every star disappears in the full sunlight of day), and that is also "born" of the "Sun" (because all stars first appear in the night sky, after the Sun sets). Jesus also (metaphorically speaking) represented himself as a kind of "Sun-god"-or, that is to say, the "Star" that is "one with the Father" is the "Sun" (or is, in its essence, non-different from the essence of the "Sun").

The astrologically-based esoteric metaphor of the "Star within" appears as a kind of cosmological reference in the ancient traditions, in such aphorisms as "as above, so below" (meaning, what is outside is also inside). Likewise, where there is the process of Spiritual Ascent by means of the Blessings of a Spiritual Transmission-Master (and, thus, in the Yogic manner associated with Shaktipat), the inward and upward focus between the eyes is spontaneously stimulated and awakened, and internal phenomena appear that have, in their occurrence, some likeness to what can be called "happenings in the sky". Therefore, in the esoteric traditions, the "inward plane" is sometimes referred to as the "sky of mind", or the "interior sky", and as having some likeness to the cosmological "sky" - and a kind of cosmological journey (via interior Sun, and Moon, and hierarchies of sub-stars, and planes, or worlds, of experience, leading, at last, to the central Star, That Shines with the Light That is also all-Pervading) is suggested (and, in many cases, explicitly indicated) in the language of virtually all esoteric traditions associated with the fifth stage of life.

In the traditions based upon the culture of the ancients, there is a continuity within the domain of the fourth and the fifth stage traditions - that provides the basis for a single universal cultural structure. That cultural structure includes both exoteric and esoteric teachings and practices. The exoteric teachings are for the general public and the beginners-the yet "unconverted" and the newly "converted". The esoteric teachings are,

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necessarily, for practice (and not merely for thinking, and arguing, and rudimentary adaptation) - and, therefore, the esoteric teachings are exclusively for those who have already proven themselves in the domain of the exoteric culture.

On the basis of the principle of "the exoteric precedes and leads to the esoteric", the procedure followed by Jesus and his "inner-circle" devotees was to, first, bring responsive new "converts" into the exoteric domain (of beginner-instructions), and, then; at the appropriate time, the "tested and proven" individuals were invited into the "inner circle", where they received the esoteric teachings and the Spiritual initiation. On this basis, the preinstitutional school of Jesus of Galilee was built around a teacher (who was Jesus himself), and his school had both an exoteric and an esoteric dimension to its activities.

So, who were the people who were actually party to the "inner-circle" esoteric teaching and the Spiritual Transmission of Jesus? There are indications in the "New Testament" Gospels that Joseph of Arimathea was an initiate, and Nicodemus, too, who is said to have come with Joseph of Arimathea to collect the body of Jesus from the cross. Presumably, the twelve "disciples" were "inner-circle" initiates-but (according to the "New Testament" Gospels) they seem not to have known that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had taken the body of Jesus for "secret." burial.

The burial tradition of the time of Jesus involved placing the body in a closed tomb (often, with other bodies, of recently deceased persons) and left there for about a year-by which time only the bones remained. Then the bones were placed in a special vessel (called an "ossuary"), which might contain the bones of several other people (usually, from the same family). It is not indicated (in the "New Testament" Gospels) that Jesus was left alone in a tomb long enough for his bones to be collected. It is, however, commonly said (in the "Resurrection"-stories contained in the "New Testament" Gospels) that the body of Jesus "disappeared".

Perhaps the body of Jesus was secretly buried to protect it from mistreatment by strangers or that He was not really dead in the first place but only "drugged" (given in the wine as he hung on the cross) or passed into what is called a "Yogic Swoon" in which the body shuts down but does not die(true spirit-energy cannot die) . It may very well be that only Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus knew of Jesus' burial places imply because Jesus' disciples (and the rest of his following) were absent (having returned to Galilee immediately after Jesus' death). Hence, the exoteric tradition, which became the dominant tradition of "official" Christianity, emphasized the mysterious bodily disappearance of Jesus - or, simply, his physical absence after death, and which absence soon became "concretized" by bodily "Resurrection" and "Ascension" myths.

The bodily "Ascension" of Jesus is the principal belief of "official" exoteric Christianity. The disappearance of the dead Jesus is reported (in the "absent-from-the-tomb" stories in the "New Testament" Gospels) but the fact of the "Ascended" Jesus is not otherwise experienced, except in the form of ghostly apparitions, mystical visions, and psychic visitations. The "after-death" physical "appearances" of Jesus are, clearly, examples of "concretization" work (or intentional myth-making). However, immediately after the death of Jesus, there may very well have been dreams and visions and other kinds of psychic experience on the part of some of Jesus' followers. Such "visions of the deceased" are common even in the present day. Over time, however, these "visitations" became "concretized", and, thus and thereby, were made into exoteric (or physically-based)

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"official" doctrines, describing the postmortem Jesus as showing his "Resurrected physical body" to his disciples, and, then, "Ascending" bodily into the sky, from the top of a hill (and disappearing-like the Sun-behind a cloud).

At any rate, whatever may actually have happened to Jesus' dead body, the information is now lost. In the year seventy of the Common Era, Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans-and, perhaps in and as a result of that event, all evidence (and possible knowledge) of where the body had been placed (or, otherwise, where and how the bones were kept) was also destroyed. Perhaps, the people who actually possessed the bones of Jesus, or, otherwise, knew of their whereabouts, were killed in the event of the destruction of Jerusalem - or, perhaps, those people simply went elsewhere (with or without the bones of Jesus).

VI

This text is intended to offer a straightforward evaluation, summation, and understanding of Jesus of Galilee, who is readily recognizable as a "type" of human individual that is otherwise found, throughout human history, in traditions all over the world. Thus, according to "type", Jesus of Galilee is clearly recognizable as an authentic Yogi-Saint (or Spiritual Master) of the ancient world. Jesus is a Realizer of a degree that is evident throughout the ancient world, and in the world even to this day. This is the "real" Jesus. The otherwise "officially" proposed Christian Jesus is the literary product of institutionalization, based upon the "concretization" of a religious fiction (or myth)-the myth of the celestial Jesus, associated with an exoteric message of universal salvation that was intended not only for Jews but for the total world of non Jews as well.

Originally, the "New Testament" writings appealed to the tradition of the Jews, or the people of Israel, as the source of its "new authority" - in order to support the argument that Jesus was prophesied in the tradition of Israel, through its prophets and through various interpretations of the "Old Testament". That argument, however, need not be taken seriously, apart from generally confirming that Jesus of Galilee was, by birth, a Jew.

Jesus of Galilee did not communicate a Jewish teaching. Although Jesus was born within the culture of Judaism, he was not a teacher of Judaism as such. Jesus was an itinerant Spiritual teacher and he had unique associations with Jewish "outsiders", especially John the Baptist. Essentially, Jesus of Galilee was a man who was "outside" the temple and "outside" the culture of Judaism.

The "New Testament" is, at its core, an independent tradition. Christianity separated itself from Judaism, and became something else. Unfortunately, in making that separation, the Jewish converts to Christianity maintained a claim to the holy books of Judaism, and they even claimed to be the new "true Israel" - and, thus, established a principle of cultural superiority that, eventually, gave rise to all the horrors of anti-Semitism that Jewish people have been made to suffer for centuries. Such is (among other efforts made on the basis of the absurd presumption of cultural superiority) a negative result of the institutionalization of exoteric Christianity. Added to the absurd presumption of cultural superiority was (eventually) all of the inherently self-deluding and self corrupting association with political and social power, when Christianity became established as an "official" State-religion, with the power of Rome as its base. In contrast to all of that egoity of superiority and power stands the rather humble and simply human figure of Jesus of Galilee - the socially and politically powerless Jesus, and his compassion for those who have no power, and his "criticism" of worldly political and religious

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power, and his constant Blessing of all and everyone (completely without reference to any search for worldly power), and his teaching about Divine Communion (as a constant life-experience of heart, and mind, and body, and, ultimately, of Spiritual Breathing), and his teaching about authentic human freedom (without any tradition-bound or political requirements). Jesus was not a warrior, and his teaching was not about the search for worldly power at all-but only the search for Union with the Spiritual Divine (both in this life and Above this world).

Jesus of Galilee was talking (and teaching) about the process of Realizing freedom by means of Divine Communion. For Jesus, freedom was about liberation from bondage to the suffering and the humiliating mortality of this world. Jesus was not talking about making an institution that would become the "official" religion of the world-nor was he talking about a "God" that should become the "official" Deity of the world. Jesus had none of the characteristics of a merely exoteric religious (and, necessarily, also political) figure.

Because Jesus himself established a school of practitioners of his teaching, an authentic esoterically-based institution could very well have extended from Jesus (and continued beyond his physical lifetime) - but no such institution survived him. Nevertheless, that institution (had any, as such, survived) would have been an institution that was simply associated with moral (or personal "rightlife") practices, and devotional (or "God"-Communing) practices, and esoteric Spiritual practices-not political, not revolutionary, and neither Jewish nor anti Jewish.

The people whom Jesus of Galilee was addressing - who were, in their disposition, the same kind of person he was-presumed that suffering was the natural (and not merely political) state of human beings. Human beings, in that view, are all humble, mortal, suffering, often ill, and deprived-regardless of their worldly status (whether high or low in the human social and political hierarchy). Jesus was not a social revolutionary, or a social "activist". Jesus was, simply, by nature, sympathetic and compassionate.

Jesus of Galilee felt a profound disposition of compassion for people in their ordinary, natural, human condition-not just as subordinates of the Roman State, or as members of an "official" religious institution that was, itself, essentially a kind of political (or, otherwise, social-activist) entity. Jesus stepped out of the spheres of both the power of State and the power of "official" religion-and, basically, he taught everyone else to do the same.

Jesus of Galilee extended his Blessing-Regard to all- as shown through the reported incidents of his healing work. By this means, Jesus taught people to understand that "true religion" is not merely a set of prescriptions for "right behavior". Rather, "true religion" is Communion with the Divine by means of moral (or "right-life") disciplines, and by means of devotional (or "right-heart") disciplines, and, above all, by means of Spiritual (or TruthWorshipping) disciplines. According to Jesus, "true religion" is the life-practice of turning to the Spiritual Divine "with all your heart, with all your mind, and with all your strength".

Such was the teaching of Jesus of Galilee. Such was his state of Realization. Jesus of Galilee was a Realizer (or Spiritual Master), who taught a moral, devotional, and Spiritual "method" (or practice-"technique") of Divine Communion. That "method" included the Transmission of Spiritual Blessing from Master to devotee, within a school that accepted only rightly prepared people into its "inner circle" (or esoteric domain).

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It seems that the continuity of the original esoteric school of Jesus of Galilee was broken up at some point. That school did not survive-or, perhaps, it became (even immediately after Jesus' death) so entirely secret that it was never publicly heard from again. In any case, there is no evidence of a Spiritually active esoteric order of devotees of Jesus that has existed continuously from his physical time of life.

There are, of course, teachers, teachings, traditions, and schools that, even now, perpetuate paths that are virtually identical to the esotericism of Jesus of Galilee. The esoteric tradition of Jesus of Galilee is, therefore, still alive. It is, however, not wearing a "Christian" face. All esoteric Spiritual traditions are, essentially, the same-because the teachings conveyed within all such esoteric traditions are based upon the root-structure (or psycho-physical anatomy) "that is common to all human beings. Thus, all Spiritual esotericism is about direct psycho-physical Communion with the Divine Spiritual Reality Itself, completely apart from myths, and mere ideas, and all the institutionalized "concretions" of "official" exoteric religious language.

Even all that is true and Truth is "alive and well"-regardless of the "official" concepts of the times. And all that is true and Truth will continue, so long as there is continuity in the depth of human existence, and the discovery of it, generation by generation-and so long as it is not lost in the illusions of superficial-mindedness, and mere egoity, and the reductionism that confines all and everything to the materialistically-"objectified" (or naively "concretized") view and to the exoteric earlier-stage-of-life myths about Reality and life.