

From the Fear of God — to God Is Love

by Guardian in Chief Richard A. London

Given in the Blue Star Memorial Temple

April 14, 2024

Seventy-two years ago I was born into the Old Testament. Forty-one years ago I married into the New Testament. And then thirty-one years ago I wandered into the Temple Teachings.

While it was ultimately the Noon Healing Service that drew me in, it was “Creeds Disappear, Hearts Remain” that nurtured my wonderment about the evolution of Love, Light, and Life. And then, there was the Blue Star Memorial Temple itself. While the nature of its sacred geometry initially went unnoticed by me, that was not the case with the 12 large picture frames adorning the Temple walls; 11 portraits and one with only words. I had never seen let alone heard of anyone pictured, with the exception of a youthful Jesus of Nazareth, whom I did not recognize during my first encounter.

It wasn't long before I was availing myself of the weekly opportunities for group study, fellowship, and prayer. Nearly every Friday evening brought with it the next lesson from the Temple Teachings. With some 574 lessons amongst the three volumes of Temple Teachings, it would take more than ten years before I realized that I was doing it all over again, only I wasn't exactly starting from the very beginning. While the Teachings hadn't changed, I was not the same.

Each round of study offered possibilities for deeper understanding about my place in the evolution of Matter, Force, and Consciousness. I have found two passages from the Temple Teachings helpful in reconciling the various stages of my spiritual life.

The first is from “My Father's House is a House of Prayer,” in Vol. 1:

“As I have told you before, the New Testament holds in its pages all the knowledge of the universe. All the diffuse philosophical literature of the ages that preceded the Christian era was preparatory. The New

Testament synthesizes all, but it has been so misunderstood and misinterpreted that we deemed it best to go back to the older philosophies, that they might explain the New Testament. It is only through the old philosophies that it can be understood, for it contains copies of the most occult manuscripts in the world; and the treasures of the hidden chambers of the East, of which I have spoken to you before, are, as I have said of the western philosophies, but explanations of all that you find between the pages of Matthew and Revelations. You cannot study that book too much. It will open to your understanding, with the explanations you have already had, as nothing else can."

The second is from "Faith in Christ a Spiritual Guidepost," in Volume 2:

"If there were not another scrap of writing in the world, if humankind had no other exterior guide to right conduct in the whole universe than just that Sermon on the Mount, it would be sufficient to carry humanity from the depths of ignorance and vice to the heights of divinity, if each of you would abide by the rules therein voiced."

No matter my sources for Universal Truth or how scholarly I may become in my understanding of those sources, I will always be held accountable for "loving the Lord thy God with all my heart and mind, and my neighbor as myself."

With that as an introduction, the following was first given by me in the Blue Star Memorial Temple 25 years ago.

There are many factors that determine the path one takes on this great journey from fear to Love.

From Buddhism to the Koran, many paths can be discovered. All of them can be helpful, for there is much truth between their words. Once you're on this journey, there is no turning back. It can be very lonely and difficult before the dawn of understanding begins to break

through. This is especially true for those who find themselves questioning the origin of existence taught during their rearing.

They all seem to lead us to the essence of the Golden Rule. There are those of us who know this without a lot of study, while others of us are experiencing the painful process of the clashing of our creeds.

Transmuting this knowledge into Wisdom requires experience, courage, and devotion. It takes compassionate endurance to open the door to the Light of our Hearts.

Even now, as my moments of disillusionment continue to wax less and wane more, were it not for my near drowning during a despair-satiated time of my life, the Triple Key might still be unfathomable to me for contemplation.

Utilizing my ever-evolving understanding of the evolution of Matter, Force, and Consciousness remains one of my most valued tools for Keying my Heart into the Laws of Life and my Oneness with Mother Nature. Discovering the lens of Theosophy and the wisdom of the Haudenosaunee has added strength to my faith in a power greater than myself. The Temple Teachings have been instrumental in the ongoing process of reconciling my Jewish heritage and Christian traditions with a Theosophical way of life.

Most of my Jewish family and friends have never opened the New Testament. I have Christian friends and family who think Buddhism is for heathens, and know others who find both Judaism and Christianity too chauvinistic for their taste, and still others who feel they are spiritual without a belief in God.

From the Old Testament through the New Testament to the Temple Teachings, I find that the evolutionary process of spiritual awareness runs through all three. Here, I will take a brief moment to note that the discerning student of life can find commonalities with the spiritual insights coming from the East in both Testaments and Teachings. Yet it

is what the East adds to the spiritual insights of the West that more overtly distinguishes the Temple Teachings from the Old and New Testaments.

I believe that by trying to understand and put into practice the ever-evolving essence of these three offerings for our potential enlightenment, I endeavor to keep the faith and to hold my heart open to the potential of Universal Kinship as a nurturing aspect in my life.

Coming from the *fear of God* through the *love from God* to realizing that *God is Love* is a process that requires aspiration, open-mindedness, and respect.

With your indulgence, I would like to read parts of these three spiritual offerings for our spiritual enlightenment: the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, and the Ten Rules of Discipleship.

The Book of Exodus came to us some 3500 years ago. This passage is from the Holy Scriptures according to the Masoretic Text, published in 1917 by the Jewish Publication Society of America, which was presented to me by Valley Beth Israel in honor of my Bar Mitzvah nearly 60 years ago.

So Moses went down unto the people, and told them.

And God spoke all these words, saying: I am the LORD thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.

Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any manner of likeness, of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down unto them, nor serve them; for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children

unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto the thousandth generation of them that love Me and keep My commandments.

Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain.

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is a sabbath unto the LORD thy God, in it thou shalt not do any manner of work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day; wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Thou shalt not murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

This next passage, the Sermon on the Mount, was first expressed some 2000 years ago. This version is from *The Book*, which was published in 1976 by Tyndale House in Wheaton, Illinois, and given to me some 31 years ago by a neighbor of remarkable faith. I quote from the Book of Matthew:

One day as the crowds were gathering, he went up the hillside with his disciples and sat down and taught them there.

“Humble men are very fortunate!” he told them, “for the Kingdom

of Heaven is given to them. Those who mourn are fortunate! for they shall be comforted. The meek and lowly are fortunate! for the whole wide world belongs to them.

Happy are those who long to be just and good, for they shall be completely satisfied. Happy are the kind and merciful, for they shall be shown mercy. Happy are those whose hearts are pure, for they shall see God. Happy are those who strive for peace — they shall be called the sons of God. Happy are those who are persecuted because they are good, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

When you are reviled and persecuted and lied about because you are my followers — wonderful! Be happy about it! Be very glad! for a tremendous reward awaits you up in heaven. And remember, the ancient prophets were persecuted too.

You are the world's seasoning, to make it tolerable. If you lose your flavor, what will happen to the world? And you yourselves will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless. You are the world's light — a city on a hill, glowing in the night for all to see. Don't hide your light! Let it shine for all; let your good deeds glow for all to see, so that they will praise your heavenly Father.

Don't misunderstand why I have come — it isn't to cancel the laws of Moses and the warnings of the prophets. No, I came to fulfill them, and to make them all come true. With all the earnestness I have I say: Every law in the Book will continue until its purpose is achieved. And so if anyone breaks the least commandment, and teaches others to, he shall be the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But those who teach God's laws and obey them shall be great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

But I warn you — unless your goodness is greater than that of the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders, you can't get into the Kingdom of Heaven at all!

Under the laws of Moses the rule was, 'If you murder, you must die.' But I have added to that rule, and tell you that if you are only angry, even in your own home, you are in danger of judgment! If you call your friend an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse him, you are in danger of the fires of hell.

So if you are standing before the altar in the Temple, offering a sacrifice to God, and suddenly remember that a friend has something against you, leave your sacrifice there beside the altar and go and apologize and be reconciled to him, and then come and offer your sacrifice to God. Come to terms quickly with your enemy before it is too late and he drags you into court and you are thrown into a debtor's cell, for you will stay there until you have paid the last penny.

The laws of Moses said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say: Anyone who even looks at a woman with lust in his eye has already committed adultery with her in his heart. So if your eye — even if it is your best eye! — causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. Better for part of you to be destroyed than for all of you to be cast into hell. And if your hand — even your right hand — causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. Better that, than find yourself in hell.

The law of Moses says, 'If anyone wants to be rid of his wife, he can divorce her merely by giving her a letter of dismissal.' But I say that a man who divorces his wife, except for fornication, causes her to commit adultery if she marries again. And he who marries her commits adultery.

Again, the law of Moses says, 'You shall not break your vows to God, but must fulfill them all.' But I say: Don't make any vows! And even to say, 'By heavens!' is a sacred vow to God, for the heavens are God's throne. And if you say 'By the earth!' it is a sacred vow, for the earth is his footstool. And don't swear 'By Jerusalem!' for

Jerusalem is the capital of the great King. Don't even swear 'By my head!' for you can't turn one hair white or black. Say just a simple 'Yes, I will' or 'No, I won't.' Your word is enough. To strengthen your promise with a vow shows that something is wrong.

The law of Moses says, 'If a man gouges out another's eye, he must pay with his own eye. If a tooth gets knocked out, knock out the tooth of the one who did it.' But I say: Don't resist violence! If you are slapped on one cheek, turn the other too. If you are ordered to court, and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat too. If the military demand that you carry their gear for a mile, carry it two. Give to those who ask, and don't turn away from those who want to borrow.

There is a saying, 'Love your friends and hate your enemies.' But I say: Love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way you will be acting as true sons of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust too. If you love only those who love you, what good is that? Even scoundrels do that much. If you are friendly only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even the heathen do that. But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Take care! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired, for then you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. When you give a gift to a beggar, don't shout about it as the hypocrites do — blowing trumpets in the synagogues and streets to call attention to their acts of charity! I tell you in all earnestness, they have received all the reward they will ever get. But when you do a kindness to someone, do it secretly — don't tell your left hand what your right hand is doing. And your Father who knows all secrets will reward you.

And now about prayer. When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who pretend piety by praying publicly on street corners and in the

synagogues where everyone can see them. Truly, that is all the reward they will ever get. But when you pray, go away by yourself, all alone, and shut the door behind you and pray to your Father secretly, and your Father, who knows your secrets, will reward you.

Don't recite the same prayer over and over as the heathen do, who think prayers are answered only by repeating them again and again. Remember, your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!

Pray along these lines: 'Our Father in heaven, we honor your holy name. We ask that your kingdom will come now. May your will be done here on earth, just as it is in heaven. Give us our food again today, as usual, and forgive us our sins, just as we have forgiven those who have sinned against us. Don't bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One. Amen.'

Your heavenly Father will forgive you if you forgive those who sin against you; but if you refuse to forgive them, he will not forgive you.

And now about fasting. When you fast, declining your food for a spiritual purpose, don't do it publicly, as the hypocrites do, who try to look wan and disheveled so people will feel sorry for them. Truly, that is the only reward they will ever get. But when you fast, put on festive clothing, so that no one will suspect you are hungry, except your Father who knows every secret. And he will reward you.

Don't store up treasures here on earth where they can erode away or may be stolen. Store them in heaven where they will never lose their value, and are safe from thieves. If your profits are in heaven your heart will be there too.

If your eye is pure, there will be Sunshine in your soul. But if your eye is clouded with evil thoughts and desires, you are in deep

spiritual darkness. And oh, how deep that darkness can be!

You cannot serve two masters: God and money. For you will hate one and love the other, or else the other way around.

So my counsel is: Don't worry about things — food, drink, and clothes. For you already have life and a body — and they are far more important than what to eat and wear. Look at the birds! They don't worry about what to eat — they don't need to sow or reap or store up food — for your heavenly Father feeds them. And you are far more valuable to him than they are. Will all your worries add a single moment to your life?

And why worry about your clothes? Look at the field lilies! They don't worry about theirs. Yet King Solomon in all his glory was not clothed as beautifully as they. And if God cares so wonderfully for flowers that are here today and gone tomorrow, won't he more surely care for you, O men of little faith?

So don't worry at all about having enough food and clothing. Why be like the heathen? For they take pride in all these things and are deeply concerned about them. But your heavenly Father already knows perfectly well that you need them, and he will give them to you if you give him first place in your life and live as he wants you to.

So don't be anxious about tomorrow. God will take care of your tomorrow too. Live one day at a time.

Don't criticize, and then you won't be criticized. For others will treat you as you treat them. And why worry about a speck in the eye of a brother when you have a board in your own? Should you say, 'Friend, let me help you get that speck out of your eye,' when you can't even see because of the board in your own? Hypocrite! First get rid of the board. Then you can see to help your brother.

Don't give holy things to depraved men. Don't give pearls to swine! They will trample the pearls and turn and attack you.

Ask, and you will be given what you ask for. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and the door will be opened. For everyone who asks, receives. Anyone who seeks, finds. If only you will knock, the door will open. If a child asks his father for a loaf of bread, will he be given a stone instead? If he asks for fish, will he be given a poisonous snake? Of course not! And if you hardhearted, sinful men know how to give good gifts to your children, won't your Father in heaven even more certainly give good gifts to those who ask him for them?

Do for others what you want them to do for you. This is the teaching of the laws of Moses in a nutshell.

Heaven can be entered only through the narrow gate! The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide enough for all the multitudes who choose its easy way. But the Gateway to Life is small, and the road is narrow, and only a few ever find it.

Beware of false teachers who come disguised as harmless sheep, but are wolves and will tear you apart. You can detect them by the way they act, just as you can identify a tree by its fruit. You need never confuse grapevines with thorn bushes or figs with thistles. Different kinds of fruit trees can quickly be identified by examining their fruit. A variety that produces delicious fruit never produces an inedible kind. And a tree producing an inedible kind can't produce what is good. So the trees having the inedible fruit are chopped down and thrown on the fire. Yes, the way to identify a tree or a person is by the kind of fruit produced.

Not all who sound religious are really godly people. They may refer to me as 'Lord,' but still won't get to heaven. For the decisive question is whether they obey my Father in heaven. At the Judgment many will tell me, 'Lord, Lord, we told others about you

and used your name to cast out demons and to do many other great miracles.’ But I will reply, ‘You have never been mine. Go away, for your deeds are evil.’

All who listen to my instructions and follow them are wise, like a man who builds his house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents, and the floods rise and the storm winds beat against his house, it won’t collapse, for it is built on rock.

But those who hear my instructions and ignore them are foolish, like a man who builds his house on sand. For when the rains and floods come, and storm winds beat against his house, it will fall with a mighty crash. The crowds were amazed at Jesus’ sermons, for he taught as one who had great authority, and not as their Jewish leaders.



This final passage is from Volume 1 of the Temple Teachings. We know these words as the Ten Rules of Discipleship.

GOD IS LOVE, AND LOVE IS THE FUNDAMENTAL SOURCE OF BEING. THEREFORE, IF THOU SIN AGAINST LOVE, THAT SIN IS AGAINST GOD.

1. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind, and thy neighbor as thyself. This is the highest law.
2. Thou shalt obey the laws of Life. The Higher Law will hold thee accountable for the breaking of every lesser law.
3. Thou shalt not sin against thine own body nor against the body of thy neighbor by concupiscence; for the Lord thy God will demand an accounting of thee for all of the Creative Fire enthroned within thee.

4. Thou shalt not needlessly take the life of any thing or creature.
5. Thou shalt not speak falsely, unnecessarily or critically against thy neighbor and so put in action the converse force of creative sound and word; for the Higher Law will reverse the action of the force thus directed and bring back upon thee, with intensified strength, the results of the broken Law.
6. Thou shalt bear constantly in mind the unity of the human race, and treat every member of the Great White Lodge as though he were of blood kin; for unity is the law of discipleship and if thou sin against this law, thou shall be greatly hindered in thy progress toward the goal of thy desires.
7. Morning and evening thou shalt lift the eyes of thy soul toward the Throne of thy God with strong aspiration, gratitude, and devotion; for according to thy desires — thy demands upon the Center of all Being, desires expressed in purity, thanksgiving and unselfishness, shall the supply be vouchsafed thee.
8. Thou shalt give of thine abundance to all the poor, but of thy poverty, the price of thine own pleasures and that which would minister to thine own desires shalt thou give to the Great Mother and to the Guardian of the Shrine, through which the Great Mother Love of the universe radiates for thine own eternal good.
9. Thou shalt not despise nor ill-treat any thing or creature. Matter, Force and Consciousness are but different degrees of the one eternal, all-pervading principle of Love — which is God; and he who despises and reviles his body because it does not radiate the light of his soul despises God as certainly as does the man who despises and reviles the soul and spirit of God.

10. When the Law of Love — of Karma — has brought thee out of the morass of spiritual darkness to the beginning of the path which leads to spiritual illumination, woe be unto thee if thou obstruct that path for thyself or others, by refusing to obey the Master to whose feet that law has brought thee.

Only by implicit obedience to the commands of the Master-Teacher shalt thou be able to lift one foot after another while treading that path of discipleship.

Commune long and earnestly with the God within thyself ere thou darest to make demand to tread that path, for once thou hast entered it, thou canst no more return to thy former state of irresponsibility than thou canst re-enter thy mother's womb.

Behold the Path before thee; a clean life, pure aspiration and unselfish service. Art thou prepared to tread that Path?

In closing, my Ten Commandments–Sermon on the Mount–Ten Rules of Discipleship journey has helped me evolve *from* my fear of God *through* the love from God *to* my belief that God is Love.

How I have come to understand the presence, let alone the existence of God, has been influenced by my upbringing, my experiences, and the choices I have made. How I treat those who do not share my beliefs will always be the truest test of my Faith in God.

May fear-based self-centeredness be outshined by the Reality of Divineness that can be uniquely emanating from each of our Loving Hearts, so that one day the illusion of separateness may be driven into the blackness of the Great Abyss.

May the Light of the Great Unifier strengthen our pledges to the Oneness of All Life, as we endeavor to raise the pulse of the Cosmic

Heart in the days to come. AMEN.

— *Guardian in Chief Richard A. London*
April 14, 2024