

THE CREATIVE SOUL



a poet, a playwright, & Edgar Cayce

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Robyn Marie Butt – the poet

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



Mark W. Finnan – the playwright

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



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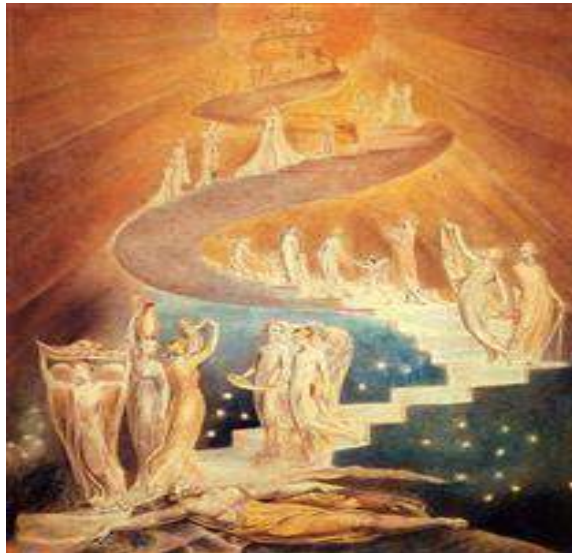


Edgar Cayce and the Transformative Power of the Imagination

Mark W. Finnan

The English poet and visionary William Blake¹ believed that the imagination was proof of the Divine, part of what he called ‘the body of God’. Like other mystical minded artists, he was acquainted with imagination’s ability to both engage with the transcendent, the sublime spiritual nature of life, and act as an agent in the creation of work that conveys the visionary experience. Similar to Edgar Cayce, Blake’s region of exploration was the soul of humankind, the regions of the mind which he charted in his prophetic books. He saw his task being

*To open the Eternal Worlds, to open the immortal eyes Of Man
inwards into the Worlds of Thought: into Eternity
Ever expanding in the Bosom of God, the Human Imagination*².



Jacob's Ladder, William Blake (Wiki Art)

My Catholic upbringing, during which I was actively involved in church ceremony and ritual as an altar boy, introduced me to the role imagination plays in the dissemination and assimilation of religious thought. Later studies of world religions provided many examples of how the imagination is used in conveying spiritual concepts and engaging devotees. In all world religions, art, music, song, architecture, poetry and dance contribute to the process of uplifting the mind and awakening the heart. As an actor and writer I rely on the imagination as part of the creative process in the act of bringing characters, ideas and stories to life on the page and the stage.

When I first encountered the Edgar Cayce material and came across repeated references to the role the mind plays in initiating positive personal change and

¹ “The Divine Image”, “The Lamb”, “Tiger”, “Jerusalem”...

² From “Jerusalem”.

attuning to the Divine within, it resonated. Likewise on encountering Cayce's use of the term "Creative Forces" as an alternative name for the beneficent, universal source of all life, for God. *For Mind is the builder and that entertained, that builded, that pattern set in same, is that to which the body, the mind and the soul attain by the constancy held before same.* (370-3)³

This is a core principle of the philosophy in the Edgar Cayce readings. As we study what the material has to tell us about the origin and threefold nature of the mind, and apply a spiritual ideal to our mental functioning, to our attitudes and what we dwell on mentally, we open the door to positive change, to soul development, and to the realization of our potential as spiritual beings.

In using our creative mental ability to envision what we want to become, a more caring, forgiving, joyful and patient person, it becomes easier to manifest that in our daily lives. *For though the entity little understands as yet, if there is the intense study of how the mind is indeed the builder, it will see that what is held in the act of mental vision, becomes reality in the material experience.*(906-3)



Original photo of Edgar Cayce, Edgar Cayce Foundation Archives

Cayce in trance emphasised that the supreme purpose for all of us here on earth is to become one with God by learning to love. Perhaps nowhere else in his thousands of psychic readings is this made more explicit than in his detailed answer to a question on how best to pray and meditate.⁴ After defining the difference between the two practices, first categorizing prayer as the conscious elevating of the mind in praise or petition to the divine, he elaborated on the meditation process, highlighting the significance of our imaginative nature.

*As has been given, there are DEFINITE conditions that arise from within the inner man when an individual enters into true or deep meditation. A physical condition happens, a physical activity takes place! Acting through what? **Through that man has chosen to call the imaginative or the impulsive, and the sources of impulse***

*are aroused by the shutting out of thought pertaining to activities or attributes of the carnal forces of man....**If there has been set the mark (mark meaning here the image that is raised by the individual in its imaginative and impulse force) such that it takes the form of the ideal the individual is holding as its standard to be raised to.....THEN the individual (or the image) bears the mark of the Lamb, or the Christ, or the Holy One, or the Son, or any of the names we may have given to that which ENABLES the individual to enter through it into the very presence of that which is the creative force from within self....*** (281-13)

³ When quoting a reading bold type indicates my own emphasis.

⁴ For reading and video material on meditation see www.edgarcayce.org.

The takeaway from the above emphasized excerpts is that in endeavouring to attune to the highest within ourselves, to the all-knowing all-benevolent source of our being, it helps if we consciously utilize the mind's imaginative ability to create or 'raise' an image, an awareness, that personifies our "ideal": the standard of thought, action and behaviour that we would set for ourselves. In Cayce's directives the Ideal embodies aspects of the universal Christ self, that part of us still connected to our original nature as spiritual beings. The same was exemplified and demonstrated in the life of the man Jesus of Nazareth. Such a practise takes us beyond having just an intellectual concept of the Divine Within to a place where we are creatively engaged in the attunement process.

In a series of suggestions on best practices to use in preparation for meditation, he again advised engaging imaginatively with the process.*Then, either with the aid of low music or the incantation of that which carries self deeper – deeper – to the seeing, feeling, experiencing of that image in the creative forces of love, enter into the Holy of Holies. As self feels or experiences the raising of this, see it disseminated through the INNER eye (not the carnal eye) to that which will bring the greater understanding in meeting every condition in the experience of the body.* (281-13)



(serendipitycrystals.co.uk)

In answering a woman's question about how best to approach the throne of grace, beauty and light, so as to live a more spiritually influenced life, Cayce advised her as follows: - *In making literal application of that which is known in the mental, the body consciousness, as pertaining to the fruits of the spirit. And this is done step by step in the daily experience of the body-mind, the mental body, and there is then the assurance that those that do such are compassed about with those protecting influences of His forces in the spiritual, the mental and the material world.* (422-1)

The role of the imagination was highlighted again in the answer the sleeping Cayce gave to his son Hugh Lynn, who posed a question about how best to prepare and present the material to a wider public. After first stressing the importance of presenting the readings in the context in which they were given, he added that this

should be consistent *whether [the readings are] in relation to physical health, relationships, or the approach to the Most High, or whether [in relation to] that which awakens the imagination of the mind itself to the storehouses of the knowledge of the inner mind.* (254-55)

This is the promise given to all who earnestly and consistently seek to raise their consciousness by attuning to the divine within. It is a core component of the legacy left to us by Edgar Cayce. Over ninety years ago in a reading for the founders of the Association of National Investigators (forerunner of today's A.R.E.) on the mainstay of

the work to be undertaken for the benefit of humankind, he said their work should enable individuals from all walks of life to experience *...the simplicity of the ability to apply that as may be obtained from their own subconscious self, cosmic forces and universal consciousness (or call it by whatever name the individual may choose). THIS is the great truth that MUST be apparent to the layman, the individual, the scientist, the mathematician, the historian, the individual seeking information through these sources....(254-46)*

The simplicity of this method was made evident to me many years ago while participating in a spiritual development course at the Centre for Living Research in Ireland. Part of the course, which was based on directives and principles in the Cayce readings, involved learning how to consciously use the imagination to see an image of the self possessing and expressing 'fruits of the spirit', aspects of the Christ self, and identifying with that image.⁵ While it took patience and persistence in order to master this process, it certainly brought home to me, to a life changing degree, the potential implied in Cayce's often repeated adage that the mind is the bridge between the material and the spiritual worlds, and that through the conscious use of our imaginative powers applied to that end, we can fulfill our life's purpose and become once again co-creators with God.



⁵ If interested in learning about this process contact me at mfinnan@nexicom.net or (705) 745 7188. For reading and video material on meditation see www.edgarcayce.org



Gospel Hour

Split the atom
 split a hair
 mine the old truths mirrored there if you
 can; a perfect tale
 stands beside you wan
 and pale.

What's forgotten can't return.
 Shoulder the cloak inspect
 shame's burn reconvene the joy
 of saints
 and lower your pallet of complaints.

Focus a beam on what's below: see the
 Source-light
 bend His bow, cock an arrow into place
 fix on dust
 and broken lace, loose
 what's made from love
 and bone – both gift and
 blessing and gift alone.

Lift your feet to
 juster ways
 hum thanksgivings all
 your days:
 truer stories won't be told nor
 more erased
 death's aching cold.





The Weaver and the Robe

Robyn Marie Butt



(Carrie, lovelyetc.com)



(Flemish, 16th century, detail, rm-michaels.com)

Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. They said therefore among themselves, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,” that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: “They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.” Therefore the soldiers did these things.

John 19:23-24, KJV

Last issue we discussed ordinary people who encountered Jesus during the dramas of Holy Week and Easter. Included were women present at the Crucifixion who formed the inner core of a dedicated group, Essene¹ women followers of Jesus referred to by Cayce’s Source as “the Holy Women”. Some highly educated in the Essene school at Mount Carmel, most were therefore women of Jesus’ own culture who followed, assisted, and worked beside him, also caring for everyone’s daily needs. Some had known Jesus and even his mother Mary since childhood.²

Among these holy women at the cross we found the older Martha, an aunt of Peter’s wife. She stood *as one of those upon the right hand of Mary the Mother of Jesus* (3175-3). It was Martha who had woven the extraordinary robe for which the Roman crucifixion guards notoriously threw dice, reluctant to cut it up. These guards surely added indignity to pain for Martha in those awful hours. But why were the soldiers so focused on the robe staying whole, and what is its history?

In 1942 Congregationalist minister & writer Lloyd C. Douglas published his bestselling historical novel *The Robe*, which imagines the effect of Christ’s garment on the Roman soldier and on others who touched it after the Crucifixion. The novel was a

¹ According to Cayce the Essenes were a sect within Judaism who for centuries had prepared to bring forth the Messiah. Espousal of their practices and interests was by choice and open to all; Essenes were private in their devotions both because they were banned by the ruling religious elite and because they prized broad education while nurturing an intimate inner relationship with the Divine. They were strongly community-minded and among those around Jesus, often related by blood. See ARE circulating file “The Essenes”.

² E.g. see file in note above or other readings on “Josie”, Mary’s childhood friend & fellow student at Mt. Carmel who became nanny and general caregiver or servant, as well as lifelong companion, to the Holy Family.

bestseller and remains popular with English-speaking readers to this day.³ As a child I read *The Robe* and was transfixed. But there's no proof Douglas had ever heard of Cayce. Douglas was a storyteller; alongside the four Gospels Edgar Cayce offers the closest we may get to documentary.

In 1943 a woman born in the US in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania and later designated by the reading ID number 3175 reached out to Cayce for a life reading. She had recently lost her husband. He'd been ill and though they'd followed his own health reading closely, both were at peace knowing he might have accessed Cayce too late for anything but a mitigation of symptoms. They were right.

In her letters to Cayce, 3175 confesses needing guidance and feeling lost despite being sure her late husband is in a better place. She shows herself a person of deep spirituality not just in word but in action, expressing respect, humility and gratitude in her request for Cayce's attention.⁴ Having visited Virginia Beach originally in person she explains she was very affected by her personal contact with Cayce and spontaneously offers to send prayerful attention to him during his reading periods so that he might read with greater clarity and less cost in effort. This last offer is striking. She seemed to understand naturally – yet also to hope, rather than assume – that in this way she might be of service to Cayce's work and to the greater good⁵. Together her letters sketch a telling spiritual portrait of someone who's about to learn that in a previous incarnation she created for Jesus the robe he wore regularly up to his execution.⁶

In that life reading, after outlining some later and quite significant lives Cayce turned further back. *Before that the entity was in the Holy Land during those days when the Master walked in the earth, and among those peoples when there was the choosing of the disciples. The entity was acquainted with the Master, being a sister of Peter's wife's mother: thus the entity was acquainted with the first of the outward miracles of healing in that experience, and has looked for and may find in its own hands the abilities to heal others in His name.... There...the entity made for much color⁷, and it was this entity that prepared the robe of one piece for the Master. The name then was Martha.[3175-1]*

After her first reading the woman reported that it had opened a window to a deeper reality she had lost and made her feel complete, especially to learn she'd known Jesus. But she had more questions about Martha's life and luckily for us she asked them.

In follow-up reading 3175-3⁸, Cayce explained that context was important first. Martha's mother Sophia, said the Source, had come into contact with the young Essene leader and scholar Judith: Judith was one of Jesus's main teachers, also overseeing since infancy his protection, travels, and educational arc. She headed a group of Essenes who experienced clear access to the Divine through visions, dreams, signs or symbols, and voices...as did Sophia's daughter Martha. (To Martha, said Cayce's Source, visions and voices "were as play".)

One could pause over the Source's insistent description of this connection between Sophia and Judith in a reading about Martha. At first blush it might seem gossipy

³ The Robe was adapted to film in 1953 starring Richard Burton.

⁴ See ARE readings archive under "Background" for overview of 3175, including the text of 3175's letters.

⁵ Though she remains unknown and mostly unacknowledged, 3175 subsequently became a distance "assistant" to Cayce, sending energy to him by meditation and prayer during the time he would be reading. Sometimes Cayce reached out once awake to thank her for facilitating his work - which he had been aware of and positively affected by while in trance.

⁶ This is a point often lost in art or dramatizations. Jesus was stripped & scourged, mocked by being draped with a Roman robe & the crown of thorns; but clearly his own clothes were restored to him and he wore them to the cross. Did seeing him again in the robe Martha had woven for him bring the women some comfort?

⁷ The original reading texts contain American spellings.

⁸ The references for my discussion of Martha's life are found in EC Reading 3175-3.

extras. In fact Cayce's Source was frequently at pains to demonstrate how a chain of human connection has unanticipated but far-reaching effects. Listeners were led to see deeper Divine trajectories at play, how they work, and therefore how one might learn to respect them. Through meeting Judith, Sophia was moved both to nurture her daughter's visionary self and to follow the progress of the Christ and of John the Baptizer closely. Her mother's sensitivities and interests had the effect in turn of steeping spiritually and creatively gifted Martha in awareness of both men's presence on earth, to the extent that from a young age Martha spent time in her imagination designing robes for the two men which she felt would properly reflect their spiritual status.

(T)he coming of John, and the birth of Jesus, the dispensation of Jesus and John in Egypt, all had an impression or imprint upon the mind of the entity Martha, who builded in her own mind how the king and how the announcer of the king should be dressed. – This describes decades of Martha's interest in their lives.

Great changes came to Martha once older. She was sought in marriage by none other than Nicodemus, a Pharisee and member of the Jerusalem Sanhedrin, the highest mainstream Jewish ruling council or court. This made him a powerful leader privy to the hierarchy of the temple, influential in the contemporary Jewish world.⁹ At this time in Jewish culture, though less so among the Essenes, women were legal chattels. They had minimal rights and were dependent on males for safety and stability. Advantageous marriage was key to their personal security and progress, and was arranged. Yet coming from two Jewish sects currently in conflict, how could this marriage work? But Nicodemus was respected as a man of sincere faith in his own way, as many Essenes seem to have been despite the ban, and as time passed Martha and Nicodemus were to prove a significant match that bridged their two worlds.

From the outset of their marriage, though Nicodemus never fully became an Essene himself, through his personality and connections he kept abreast of how things were developing with the Essene families of Jesus and John. Eventually he would know the progress of their adult ministries as well, which meant that through her husband, Martha could follow her favourites along. Then Nicodemus and Martha got word of Jesus's first healing miracle – it had been performed on Martha's sister.

The Cayce readings routinely explain that experiencing or witnessing the life of the Christ has a ripple effect on the witnesses which persists into subsequent incarnations. This is especially true of those who witnessed miracles. Though not physically present at the healing of her sister, it not only left 3175 with the gift of healing hands but changed Martha and Nicodemus, affecting their spiritual orientation to their assigned roles in serving the current high priest, who in fact was Caiaphas, enemy of Jesus and his teachings. It began for both of them a deeper opening to the messages of the Christ.

This is no small thing, given that Jesus either flouted, or taught much deeper meanings for, laws that had otherwise become ossified Temple dogma and represented the very rules this couple were expected to live by.

Being an Essene visionary and creative person however, Martha was already predisposed to Jesus and to independence of thought. In response to the profound effect of her sister's healing she at last began weaving for the Messiah the robe she'd so long envisioned.

Thus the robe was made especially for the Master.

A bit later Jesus raised from death the son of a woman in the town of Nain. Being a widow and otherwise alone in a man's world, this woman's son represented all her earthly stability, a fact Jesus would have understood and taken compassionately into account in restoring her son to life. This time the miracle recipients were relatives of

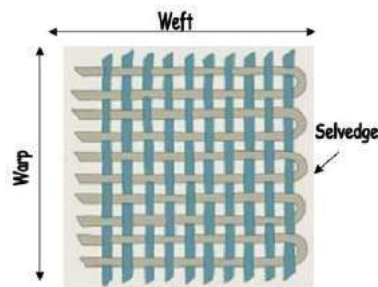
⁹ "Nicodemus and the Bible", gotquestions.org. Note that according to Cayce the same soul had been her late husband in the present life.

Nicodemus. In gratitude Nicodemus presented to Jesus the robe that Martha had finished weaving, and as a result of this gift Martha stood, as indicated by the accomplishments of the robe from Nicodemus, as one particularly honored even by the Master. The robe became as a part of the equipment the Master had.

The robe was a remarkable piece of textile artistry, a sort of over-robe. *The color of the robe was pearl-gray, as would be called now, with selvage woven around the neck, as well as that upon the edge, as over the shoulder and to the bottom portion of same.*

...(It was) woven in the one piece with the hole in the top through which the head was to be placed, and then over the body, so that with the cords it was bound about the waist.

Selvage is a border given to woven cloth in which the interweaved thread ends are not cut at the edge and left loose as fringe but woven tightly backwards again into the fabric. This creates a smooth finished line resistant to fraying. Martha wove selvage at every edge of the robe: around the head opening, along the garment's long edges that draped front to back over the shoulders, and on the piece's two lower hems.



(textileschool.com)

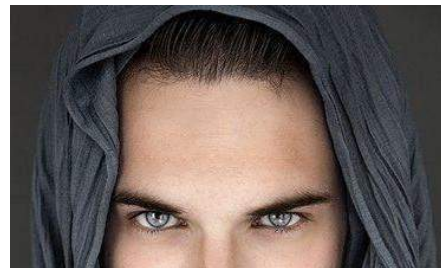
Her readings had noted 3175's gifts with colour, and because of that we might ponder something else here. A pearl-grey robe was chosen for a man whom other readings describe as having grey-blue eyes and hair that sounds as if it tended either towards auburn or to strawberry-blond. Together the following photos offer a sense of Jesus's appearance according to Cayce's Source:¹⁰



(fksjfhgl.top)



(LuxyHair)



(Gilles Chevalier, Brice Hardeling photography)

A sensitive and beautiful match of the colouring of a robe, then, to the colouring of its wearer. For Martha clothing design was not as we see fashion now, a thing in itself;

¹⁰ 5354-1, 5749-1. Use of this merely descriptive information to justify religious racism does not accord with any teaching of the Christ. A sympathetic revisionist view holds that European colonial influence surely remade Jesus's colouring in its own image, but that Jesus would have favoured "Mediterranean" looks - black hair, olive skin, brown eyes. A movement has followed to envision the Universal Christ in Jesus as portrayable in every possible human colour; these images are truly beautiful, liberating the Christ from exclusive racial presumption. I cite here the Source's simple affirmation of outward facts as it had seen and still saw them. Interestingly, the Source suggests that the Tribes of Israel are not strictly to be understood as "Mediterranean": elsewhere Cayce's historical physical descriptions reference light hair and light eyes among standard Jewish colourings. It seems this was particularly true for the tribe of Judah, Jesus' own lineage. [Elsewhere the Source notes that Jesus' cousin John "the Announcer" had fiery red hair.] In *Quest for the Lost Tribes* (2003) Israeli-Canadian documentarist Simcha Jacobovici used oral folk history to hunt for remnants of the diaspora of Judah. He traced them to an area of Pakistan where very unexpectedly he found people of long-established Jewish practice with hereditary light hair and light eyes.

ideal design must accord with the design of the person who would wear it.

Ironically given that officially Martha and Nicodemus served Caiaphas, her design for the robe referenced the official apparel of the ancient Hebrew High Priest. Those were garments first prescribed by God to Moses in vision (Exodus 28). So there's an entire clandestine life going on here: Martha is weaving her special robe for the Messiah while her husband is deeply involved with and they are serving, a high priest who resisted the Messiah at every turn and eventually ensured his execution.

Hebrew Scripture tells us that the original appearance of the High Priest's over-garments was colourful and elaborate. The over-robe was blue; small golden bells, and coloured woollen pomegranates of combined blue, red, and purple wool, hung alternating along its hem.



(Daniel Smith, redeemerofisrael.org)

The pomegranate represented the Promised Land and referred to Hebrew royalty. The tinkling bells would announce the High Priest's approach and his special intention to seek atonement, guidance, or judgement.

Over the blue robe he wore in addition a sort of breastplate into which had been affixed rows of gold settings that contained twelve different polished precious stones lettered with the twelve tribes of Israel. This jewelled breastplate was used for divination in sunlight.



(Daniel Smith, redeemerofisrael.org)



Jan Lukyten, 1705 ((Rijksmuseum))

It's interesting that Martha's design made no reference to the breastplate. We can see this as reflecting her understanding that the Messiah does not need external devices of divination; through him, God's divining spirit becomes embodied.

In "Bible Inspiration: The Crucifixion Clothes", Dave Miller turns to Josephus, seminal Jewish historian and contemporary of Jesus, for the significance of the High Priestly garments:

In 1500 B.C., God imparted the Law of Moses to the Israelites as the covenant requirements that would guide the nation of Israel through its national existence. This law included provision for the High Priest, the first being Aaron, the brother of Moses, commissioned by God Himself (Exodus 28). On the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), he alone entered the Holy of Holies within the Tabernacle/Temple to make atonement for himself and all the people (Leviticus 16)... uniquely and critically, Jesus performs...parallel functions to the High Priest. ...Among the articles of clothing stipulated by God for the High Priest was the skilfully woven "tunic of fine linen thread" (Exodus 28:39). According to Josephus, this clothing item was seamless:

*Now this vesture was not composed of two pieces, nor was it sewed together upon the shoulders and the sides, but it was one long vestment so woven as to have an aperture for the neck; not an oblique one, but parted all along the breast and the back*¹¹.... John went out of his way to flag the point. ...the Roman soldiers gambled for the seamless tunic of the Messiah - a tunic that subtly signalled His redemptive role as the one to make atonement for the world in the very act of dying on the cross.¹² Well before the Gospel of John, Martha's clothing design referenced the Messiah's role as intercessor and atoner.

Yet Martha had pondered not only the robe's meaning, colour and shape, but its decoration. In a significant and very accomplished difference from the ancient high priest's apparel however, the robe's only embellishments were not sewn on afterwards or in any way originally separate, as with the ancient garments, but *woven into the very pattern of the fabric itself*.

Weaving images into fabric can be done by varying the thicknesses and colour of thread used, curving the thicker thread's lines to create simpler designs in a raised effect. Alternatively it can be done in a sophisticated process that involves slightly loosening and lifting or tightening and lowering, areas that then will delineate images in the cloth. The latter picture-weaving method came to be called jacquard, a method that textile scholars consider to have been invented in the second century CE by Chinese silk-weavers – a hundred years after Martha's lifetime and halfway around the globe. This method acquired the name "jacquard" only in 1875 after the French inventor of that name designed the first one-person loom for doing it. Previously such complex weaving had required two people:

*In order to weave an intricate silk pattern or picture, it is necessary to raise or lower each of the sometimes thousands of warp threads individually to form a shed through which to pass the shuttle.... This was done by a so-called draw-boy who sat on top of the loom. Every single row of weaving required different warp threads to be raised or lowered and consequently the production process was very slow and required meticulous attention.*¹³



Jacquard weaving (wearekingly.com)

Cayce's reading alas doesn't clarify which method of weaving Martha used, but if jacquard, textile history otherwise asserts that this type of weaving was not found in the world at this time. Nor could I find evidence of the simpler pattern-weaving style in Martha's culture; but it's basic enough that it may have existed. However either method would have represented a leap, and maybe a startling leap, from the cloth in everyday use.

Though not provable, it's inevitable given Martha's personality to wonder if the technical method for weaving could have been one she saw in visions. If she did use the jacquard method, was it demonstrated to her through heightened spiritual channels? This isn't as great a stretch as it may seem. All artists are subject to some

¹¹ Flavius Josephus , *The Works of Flavius Josephus: Antiquities of the Jews*, 3.7.4:203 , trans. Wm. Whiston (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker), 1974 reprint; as quoted in Miller

¹² Miller, "Bible Inspiration: The Crucifixion Clothes", apologeticspress.org.

¹³ "The Story of Jacquard Weaving", Cynthia Beisswenger, menguai-project.eu.

level of inner inspiration, and here we have one whom the Source has already compared favourably with the most visionary Essene leader of the time. Why would a visionary artist *not* experience her creativity more directly? If indeed this is how it went, Martha would then have had to train a girl to assist her with the difficult jacquard weaving....But on these points we can only make sensitive guesses.

In describing the robe's woven symbology itself, the Source frustrates again. Around some of the original ancient apparel's details such secrecy has persisted to this day that we have no clear picture of their appearance anyway; scriptural references are tantalisingly opaque, while both Martha and the Source seem to have *seen* both the historical High Priest's apparel (was Martha's knowledge through study or through vision?), and the robe of the Messiah, in clear detail. Not suffering from our own lack of knowledge, and assuming the soul of 3175 does not lack access to that knowledge either, the Source only glancingly names the robe's woven imagery:

The hem had no bells no pomegranates, but those which are woven in such a manner that into the selvage portion of the bottom was woven the Thummim and Urim. These were as the balance in which judgments were passed by the priest. But these were woven, not placed upon the top of same. Neither were there jewels set in same. (3175-3)

The reading's wording above may mean that Martha wove images of bells and pomegranates into the hem. I prefer this interpretation given the meaning these symbols would hold as applied to the long-awaited Messiah – and given the Source's habits of elision when speaking. But it may mean that she left them out altogether.

Also woven there, or woven instead, were the Urim and Thummim, referred to by scholars as "UT".

It's the Urim and Thummim that were considered so holy and powerful that information about them was kept secret.¹⁴ To this day both Jewish and Christian scholars wonder whether the term is plural or singular. Many suggest that the UT were divining sticks or flat stones carried within the breastplate, to be cast when judgements were sought. Each object would have designated a "guilty" or "innocent", "yes" or "no" answer to questions for which guidance was sought. In this aspect they reflect Christ as our ultimate "judge": that is, the Christ Spirit as inner instrument of our own ideal discernment, if we will listen and act according to it.

Scholar Cornelis Van Dam suggests however that the UT may have been singular, a stone that would glow to signify a change in its electrical charge, imbuing the high priest with subtler complex prophetic powers¹⁵ or enhancing those latent in him. Since the UT was kept "behind the breastplate", the High Priest's heart chakra would thus have been his physical point of activation. He would then become able to address in a much more sophisticated way than simple "yes" or "no", the question needing insight.

The Urim and Thummim's literal meanings were "lights" and "perfections", or "perfect light". This was also understood as "revelation and truth". So Martha's woven decoration described the Messiah in beautiful symbols as Perfect Light; Revelation and Truth

And yet, apropos to its wearer, the robe was anything but showy.

¹⁴ For my discussion of the UT & to witness the range of opinions see Bruce Watkin *Finding the Will of God* quoted in "How Did the Urim and Thummim Function?", bible.org; "Urim and Thummim", Emil G. Hirsch, W. Muss-Arnolt, Wilhelm Bacher, Ludwig Blau, jewishencyclopedia.com; "What was the Meaning of the Urim and Thummim in the Bible?", Hope Bolinger, christianity.com; "What were the Urim and Thummim?", Leibel Gniwisch, chabad.org; "Urim and Thummim", Cornelis Van Dam, bibleodyssey.org (note that here Van Dam does not offer his own ideas on the UT which I will reference in this discussion, instead describing varying opinions he seeks to tackle in his book).

¹⁵ Citation lost (software error). This version of Van Dam was summarized by a different online article writer.

Whatever the details of its creation and imagery, it was this garment's accomplishment as weaving that struck the four Roman soldiers at the cross. Guards at Roman crucifixions were awarded ownership of clothing from the condemned, but when it came to literally dividing the spoils, Martha's weaving stopped them cold.

Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. They said therefore among themselves, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be," that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: "They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots."¹⁶ Therefore the soldiers did these things.

Like Cayce, John's Gospel notes the robe's skilled single-piece weaving with selvedge at each rim, but as we've seen, 3175's reading adds details, as the Source often did to Biblical texts. So we know there were images woven into the hem that could only have struck the soldiers as outstanding and unusual. Martha's imagination and skill had ensured the robe's survival as a whole garment.

But was it Martha's imagination and skill, or was it Martha's soul in touch with Christ Consciousness, that ensured the robe's fate? A valid question for any artist who contemplates the Christ. In his account John pulls us on, just as the Source does, towards higher truth at play. Despite any human motivations or actions, John tells us, it was Divine Intention that such hardened men should see the robe as something worth gaming for rather than tearing. Divinely given also, John asserts, were the words of the original prophetic psalm attributed to King David and foreshadowing this scene.

The envisioning and the weaving of the robe seems to have accompanied and perhaps midwived spiritual progressions in both Martha and Nicodemus. As time went on each one lived with courage, honour and devotion. Torn between his public position and his spiritual hunger, Nicodemus eventually would go to Jesus secretly by night to learn from him (John 3:1-15). This provoked discussion at home, reading 3175-3 notes, which brought Nicodemus into relationship with Martha as partner rather than "chattel or servant". Later Nicodemus would plead with the Sanhedrin for a fairer treatment of Jesus (John 7:45-52), and later still, beside fellow sympathetic Sanhedrin member and secret believer Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus would protect the crucified body, donating much costly myrrh for its anointing. We can assume Martha encouraged her husband in all these actions.

Martha herself became revered as an influential leader among the followers of the Christ. With her access to the corridors of power she had already interceded for the holy women and won them the freedom to travel around Palestine at Jesus's side, an otherwise unheard-of privilege. Her two sons and daughter all went on to lives of service in the early Christian churches. After the Crucifixion Martha was among those awaiting the resurrected Christ's promised arrival in the upper room; she became a respected teacher of spiritual law to the young; and an advisor to some of the very active early Christian men. One of these men was Lucius, writer of the gospel of Luke – a soul who would subsequently incarnate as Edgar Cayce (294-192). So the

¹⁶ "...composed by David in the 10th century B.C., Psalm 22 is unquestionably a messianic psalm—literally packed with minute details that forecast the death of the Messiah. In verse 18, the psalmist quotes Him as making the simple statement: 'They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.' All four of the inspired New Testament evangelists of the first century A.D. allude to these incidental details that they report in connection with Jesus hanging on the cross (Matthew 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34; John 19:23-24). - Miller, "Bible Inspiration: The Crucifixion Clothes", apologeticspress.org.

esteemed former weaver's offer to assist Cayce in his readings was not so strange after all. She was simply supporting him as she had in the past.

Finally, *With the persecution [Martha] withdrew more and more because of [her] associations with those in authority, but [her] home became more and more a place of refuge and help for all of the young of the church. [Martha] lived to be an elderly person, something like seventy-nine years of age in the experience, and was not among those ever beaten or placed in jail....*

The gift of the robe, it seems, conferred gifts back.

Cayce's reading for 3175 forcefully recommended that she focus on her creativity while based in her ideals of faith. The readings often encourage listeners to ponder pastlife insights as guidance for the present life. But in Martha's weaving of the robe, its gifting to Jesus, and her subsequent life as graced by that connection, lie reflections of one possible path for any artist. In them lie also one possible avenue for critiquing any artwork.

As such the robe affirms an interesting intention for modern artists and art critics. It's one not necessarily propagated in art schooling nor celebrated by academic and commercial powers that be. But it's a path possible to follow: the ideal of artwork that not only feels necessary but that springs from one's deepest spiritual places, from the soul rather than the ego. Such art awakens those same places in its audience – regardless of religious persuasions, and even in their absence.

I was somewhat amazed to come upon the painting at the top of this article showing Christ's robe as grey. Throughout Christian art history Jesus' Passion robe is overwhelmingly red, meant to represent blood both as sacrifice and as royal lineage. Despite being steeped in that tradition our sixteenth century Flemish School painter above chose grey. Intuitively an artist may get it right without any apparent prior study or knowledge. So perhaps in seeming to bypass the artist's skill John is right, and where devotion is pure, Divine Intention is at work in creative inspiration. Individual intention, what the Source often called Will, operates in the artist's actions that cause the artwork to appear at all.

Cayce's Source might consider another point: an artwork's pastlife influences. In a past life, the painter of the Crucifixion scene above may have seen this robe. That past life may have deeply motivated his painting, his projected emotions in those squabbling soldiers (who as disciplined Roman professionals undoubtedly in real life did not squabble), his unconventional colouring of the cloth. Perhaps pastlife memory imbued the novel of Lloyd C. Douglas too.

We can't say for sure. Our own lives are works-in-progress. But if the woman known as 3175 and her readings tell us anything about previous incarnations, it's to see pastlife influences flowing steadily forward even into current times. No life is so hidden that it can't unveil spiritual insights for present benefit.





Vision at Patmos

a one man play

Playwright's note: This is an extract from the play written following my visit a few years ago to the Holy Island of Patmos where the Apostle John had his vision, known today as the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ. I then spent several days at the site of his reputed last refuge in the hills above ancient Ephesus on the west coast of Turkey.



Patmos. View from St. John's cave



Hillside above Ephesus, John's last refuge



At site of John's last refuge (MF)

It was first performed in 2021 in the grounds of St. John's Church in Peterborough, Ontario, Canada as part of the Open Spaces Theatre Festival.

Setting:

A clearing on a rocky hillside above the ancient city of Ephesus in Asia Minor (western Turkey) around 97 CE. There is a wooden bench and small table to one side of the clearing. A group of Followers of the Way, also known as Christians, has arrived from various cities in the region in the hope of meeting with the aged apostle John, who has recently been released by the Romans after years of forced exile on the small, rugged island of Patmos. While on Patmos John, in deep meditation, was given the remarkable vision known as the Apocalypses of Jesus Christ.

A musician with a flute or stringed instrument comes through the gathering, sits and begins to play. The gathering sits and listens. The music fades as the figure of the aged apostle appears from the opposite side. Of slight build, he walks with the aid of a staff and carries a scroll in his free hand. In spite of his advanced years and the hardships he has suffered, he is alert and energetic in his demeanour and delivery. However at times during his recollecting of past events and scenes from his vision he occasionally withdraws into himself as if reliving the experiences. He approaches the visitors, his arms open wide in a joyful greeting.

JOHN: Welcome! Welcome my beloveds, welcome to Ephesus and to my hillside refuge, such as it is. Welcome in the name of him who, by all that he did and said, fulfilled the prophecies, proved himself, and in so doing showed us the way to follow. That we too might know that life that was in him,
that life that is the light within each one of us born into this world.

Moving from side to side, addressing different individuals in the gathering:

Papius, one of the brethren here, who told me of your arrival, said you have come from among communities of the faithful in Asia Minor, those that I wrote to about my vision while exiled by the Romans on the island of

JOHN: Patmos. Oh how pleased I am that you are here, so that at last, at last, I can meet with you face to face.

Stepping closer, leaning out, confiding.

You see, I had wanted to come among you right after my release from exile on Patmos, following the death of the emperor Domitian, but the Roman authorities insisted I remain here in these hills above Ephesus. They want to keep an eye on me, make sure I do not cause trouble elsewhere. I suspect there are one or two Roman spies hidden in the bushes beyond, or even among you, waiting to hear if I say something that could be considered incitement to rebellion. *(laughing gently to himself)* Well they're welcome here too.

Crossing to one side and pausing to look out over the gathering.

Yes, I wanted to come among you to let you know that, as your brother in persecution these several years, I have been with you in the trials and tribulations you have endured. Yes, and I know with what patience and perseverance you have faced the hardships that have been yours from day to day. But be consoled my beloveds, for such patience is of the Christ, yes, of such is the kingdom of heaven. Speaking of your patience I am sorry to have kept you waiting, but when Papius told me of your arrival I was still finishing a letter, *(holding up the scroll for all to see)*



– and a long letter it is too, to the family of one recently departed, a most loving sister, who during her life here on earth was steadfast in the truth, as her family continues to be.

Looking and pointing off, in the direction he had come from.

And I might have come here sooner, but Prochorus, another of the brethren here, Prochorus *(holding up the scroll)* who does all of my writing for me these days, he is a very conscientious scribe. Oh yes, he takes his time being careful to get my every word down correctly, which of course I greatly appreciate.

He puts the scroll on the table then approaches his visitors, smiling.

So dedicated is he to the task that I think it would

MF

take the arrival here of a host of angels for him to hasten his hand! *(soberly)* Still, he never complains at all the writing he has to do on my account, even though I know he suffers from pains in his hands. *(demonstrating)* Yes I have seen him flinch and nurse them from time to time, but the man never complains.

Signalling his intention, he moves to the side of the clearing, faces off and calls out.

JOHN: Prochorus! Since we are done writing for today, do rub some of the healing oil that was given to me on your hands. I know they pain you. The woman from the village below who brought it for my knees, she spoke highly of it. So rub it in well my brother there will be more writing to do tomorrow.
Oh yes.

He stands looking off, cupping his ear waiting for a reply. None comes.

Hopefully he heard me, if he has not already fallen asleep in his grove below, having been up since before first light, which is our custom here.

He is about to sit on the bench but hesitates on hearing someone in the gathering address him. He comes forward, cupping his ear again.

What's that? You'll have to speak louder my friend. Am I not tired too? Well, now that you mention it, I suppose I should be, yes. Ah but your arrival here, your arrival here has brought new life into these aging limbs. (*setting aside his staff*) Why I feel so enlivened by your presence I believe I could stand here and talk to you until...

He looks up to find the sun, which is in the sky behind him.

...until the sun sets. (*looking again at the sun*) Well, perhaps not quite that long, but as long as my aged limbs allow.... (*looking at the bench, pointing to it, then approaching it.*)...especially if I make good use of this bench here.

He sits down slowly, nursing one of his knees.

Ah, that's better. Yes, without Prochorus I would not be able to answer all the questions, queries and concerns in the many letters that are sent to me here. (*addressing his audience*) Since my release from exile on Patmos I have been preoccupied with little else. Some want to hear more about the Master; the things he said, the wonders he performed, what it was like to be with him as he walked, taught and healed throughout the villages, towns and countryside of Judea.... Samaria...and Galilee...

He withdraws into himself, remembering, during which the musician quietly plays a haunting melody. His reverie over, he refocuses on his visitors.

If that is why some of you have come here, oh rest assured I am always willing to talk about such matters, such times, though it would be impossible for me to give a full account of all the things the master did and said while he was in this world. Other letters sent to me here express —

Interrupted by another question from his visitors, he cups his ear again.

You'll have to speak up too.

(*responding to the question*) How did I first know...when did I... that he was the Promised One, the Messiah? I was just a youth at the time. There had been the prophecies. Oh yes, many prophecies, and some of the Essenes, the holy ones who lived in remote places and studied the prophecies, they let it be known to some that he was already among us. So as you can

JOHN: imagine there was great expectancy in certain places.

Walking slowly from side to side, stopping occasionally as he remembers. The musician plays softly as John recalls the event.



Open Spaces Theatre Festival,
Peterborough (MF)

But the first time I saw him, that was by the banks of the River Jordan where the baptizer, him we called John the Baptist, was preaching. Thinking he might be the one, my friend Andrew and I, oh and many others, went to hear what he had to say. One day he pointed to a man, a stranger, walking by on the river bank and within our hearing said 'Behold, the Lamb of God.' Well, believing I knew what he meant we ran after this Lamb of God. When he saw us, (*sitting on the bench*) he sat us down and spoke to us. Oh like a learned rabbi he was. And, on hearing him speak, I immediately felt that I had known him before, in some other place, some other time. Right away I wanted to learn all I could from him, become a disciple if he

would let me. And when he asked me to I did not hesitate and, in spite of my father's fierce objections at the time I followed him, with my older brother James and the others.

Collecting his thoughts.

I was just a youth at the time. There had been the prophecies. Oh yes, many prophecies, and some of the Essenes, the holy ones who lived in remote places and studied the prophecies, they let it be known to some that he was already among us. So as you can imagine there was great expectancy in certain places.

Walking slowly from side to side, stopping occasionally as he remembers. The musician plays softly as John recalls the event.

During the days and weeks that followed, listening to all that he said, seeing all that he did, I became convinced of who he was, and I grew to love him for all that he was.

His reverie ended he directly addresses his visitors, his voice solemn.

Other letters sent to me here express concerns about matters I was only too well aware of prior to my imprisonment and exile; the despair and disillusion that had set in among some of the followers because the Master had not returned by the time they had expected him to. False teachings being spread by those claiming to be his disciples, but were not. The corrupting and degrading practices that others had returned to and the loss of many due to the years of persecution. Knowing these things while in exile on Patmos, I prayed fervently that the Holy Spirit would protect and strengthen all here who sought to abide in the truth, to dwell in the love that he taught us. Later, while isolated in a cave on the island and my life in danger, I fasted and prayed, seeking God's guidance, asking that if possible I might yet live and continue to be of help to those in need.

JOHN: *Rising, enlivened by the thought of what he is about to share.*

As a result God granted me a great vision, the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ, in which He revealed things which must come to pass, that must be accomplished by us, if we would have true fellowship with him.



The Alpha and Omega in John's vision (pinterest.com)

Playwright's note: John then goes on to describe his vision, the appearance of 'one like the Son of Man' who called himself the 'Alpha and Omega' and instructed him to write down everything he saw; the drama played out through sublime and horrific imagery and events, culminating in a 'New Heaven and a New Earth', a thousand years of peace and the creation of God's kingdom on earth. In the process John also shares his understanding of the vision as symbolically describing the mental, physical and spiritual experiences we encounter in our journey back to Oneness with God. ¹



¹ If interested in having a performance of **Vision at Patmos**, which runs for about an hour and can be performed in any workable space, you can contact me directly at mfinnan@nexicom.net.



Stay close to music, close to those things of the art and artist temperament. For these bespeak those things of the spirit. For, as music is of those activities that span the differences, so is art an expression that reminds one of those things that may attune the mind often to the realms easily forgotten.

(3253-2 in Contemporary Cayce Language)

