

FOOD **4** THOUGHT

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

What's Your View?



If you are old enough to read and understand this article, without a doubt you have left behind many of the toys and habits of your childhood. But what about your concept of God? Has your understanding increased along with your mental and physical growth?

Many mature men and women affirm their denial of God's existence. These are people who from their youth not only received teaching on the importance of believing in God, but at one time they also believed it as something logical, good and necessary.

They performed their good deeds and sometimes profoundly sensed the reality of their faith. So, what happened?

The concepts about God that they had as young boys and girls aren't useful or relevant to their complicated lives as adults. It's not that the concepts were necessarily wrong, but they don't apply to the situations of adult life.

A husband faced with the hopeless and premature death of his wife said, "If there is a God, He would not have permitted this to happen."

Because of the emotional pain in the loss of a loved one, many make a similar statement and blame God. In spite of all the knowledge and education a person may have, they have the reasoning of a child in spiritual matters.

A salesman believes that bad sales in his business is some sort of punishment for a sin he has committed. In his mind, he has advanced no further than the idea that God is like a human father who watches over him, always ready to accuse and punish him for his disobedience. For him, God is a power that keeps him from doing what he wants, constantly depriving him of happiness.

To a majority of people, God is a magical power that appears when someone calls on Him. He will come to save them from their worries and stress, but He must not meddle in the matters of everyday life.

When they realize God doesn't work this way they abandon their belief in Him. These concepts are seen continually in literature and in what some call contemporary philosophy. The childlike concepts of God must be replaced with something more mature, a personal relationship with Him.

Some are discovering that the God of the Bible is not anything like a mere, fictional genie. On the contrary, He is the Truth. Any sincere search takes us to Him. If you desire, you can find Him right now. Through Jesus Christ, God has provided a way to find Him. Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.*" (John 14:6) □

Why some are going to hell



In the second letter that the apostle Paul wrote to a church in the city of Thessalonica, in chapter 2 verses 10-12, he talks about those who will go to hell because they do not want to accept and love truth in order to receive salvation.

Satan will use all kinds of false arguments to deceive people. For those who reject God's offer, He will allow the lies to continue deceiving them to the end that they will be condemned because they have not desired to believe the truth.

Let's look at some facts:

1. Satan is the person behind this situation.

His work, contrary to what is generally believed, is not mainly to seduce people to act rebelliously or cruelly, but to keep them from knowing God. He does this by way of multiple lies, similar to an evil person who might put misleading signs on a road-way to cause others to lose their way.

2. People do not want to accept the truth.

They become lost, not because of the number of their sins, or because of their ignorance, or because they can't believe, but because of their rejection of a reality that is very clear.

They are like those who do not want to believe in the law of gravity and ignore the end of a precipice until they trip and fall. They prefer darkness rather than light.

3. They themselves are deceived. While they are playing with the truth, in time they lose the

proper meaning of truth. They then are easily deceived by other people. Their final conclusion is that they cannot know the truth and as a result what is wrong appears right and what is bad appears good.

4. They prefer evil. The words of Paul tell us that unrepentant people are totally blind and do the wrong things. They can still be referred to as what some call "decent people". Yet, they find pleasure in wrongdoing and are like the one who is sick and continues doing the things that he knows will harm his health.

A quote from the Bible says that God allows them to live this way. God does not intervene because He knows that the only thing that will awaken a person to reality is seeing the result of living a life of error.

When a driver suddenly finds himself on a narrow and unfamiliar road he needs to be aware and understand that perhaps he lost his way or someone changed the signs to lead him to a wrong destination.

The good thing about our situation, yours and mine, is that while we have life there is an opportunity for us to grasp the truth and accept it. God, on His part, has done everything necessary.

In his first letter to Timothy, the apostle Paul wrote to him saying: *He (God) desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*" (1 Timothy 2:4) □

DON'T PUNISH YOURSELF!

The name Sadhu Sundar Singh was well known in India and in many other parts of the world. After years of receiving the highest and best instruction on Hinduism and a desperate search for the salvation of his soul, Singh had an encounter with Christ that transformed him and filled him with joy.

Sadhu Sundar suffered much persecution for his faith, first within his own family and later at the hands of fanatic people wherever he went.

One day on one of his trips he saw a large group of people seated around a Sadhu Hindu who was speaking to them at the edge of the Ganges River., From a distance looked as if he was giving the people a blessing. Still, when Sadhu Sundar got closer he noticed that the bones and muscles of the Sadhu's arm were paralyzed and that it was impossible to move it or bring it down.

When the long discourse had ended, Sadhu Sundar asked the Sadhu what happened to his hand that had become dry and paralyzed. The man responded proudly as if he had defeated an enemy in a battle:

"This hand has robbed and has hurt many people; but a day came when I was so horrified that

the fundamentals of my life were shaken. I then decided to either cut off my hand or punish it, making it useless. I kept my arm on top of my head without moving it until it was dry and dead. I take pride in this."

Sadhu Sundar replied: "I admire your courage and your good intentions, but I am so sorry that you have lost one of the gifts given to you by God. Instead of destroying your hand, you should have used it to bless and help others. In this way you could return with good all the bad you had done before with your hand. Real courage and victory consists not in destroying your hand, but in using it to help others."

Before leaving, Sadhu Sundar tried to explain that it is the heart which inspires your actions. The mutilation of the body or any type of self-inflicted suffering does not resolve the true problem. When a person remains unchanged in their thinking and they continue to lack a personal relationship with God, there will be no real change in their life.

In contrast, when Christ enters a life, He brings peace and a totally new way of living.

(This story was taken from the book "With Christ and without Christ", written by Sadhu Sundar Singh.) □

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Guilty!

But, before whom?

It is always surprising to find that our feeling (sense) of guilt is not usually triggered by God, but by other people.

The existing regulations of censorship, the existence of social prestige and the importance of acquiring possessions heavily influence our decision in what we think we need to be in the eyes of others in order to gain their approval and to live comfortably in this world.

Then when we fall short, our conscience accuses us, not due to our fear of divine justice, but because others might become aware of our true personality and might reject us. In other words, our biggest fear is, "What will they say?"

In contrast, when we sense a true uneasiness concerning the will of God, the remorse brings us to an inner change.

If the feeling of guilt does not disappear when we confess our sins to God, it might be that the origin of our guilt lies in the fear of the judgment of others. The only solution is to present ourselves to God, being primarily responsible and accountable to Him, and not worry about what others might say. It is before Him that we are guilty.

For this reason the apostle John very clearly said in one of his letters, "*If we confess our sins, He (God) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" (1 John 1:9) □

