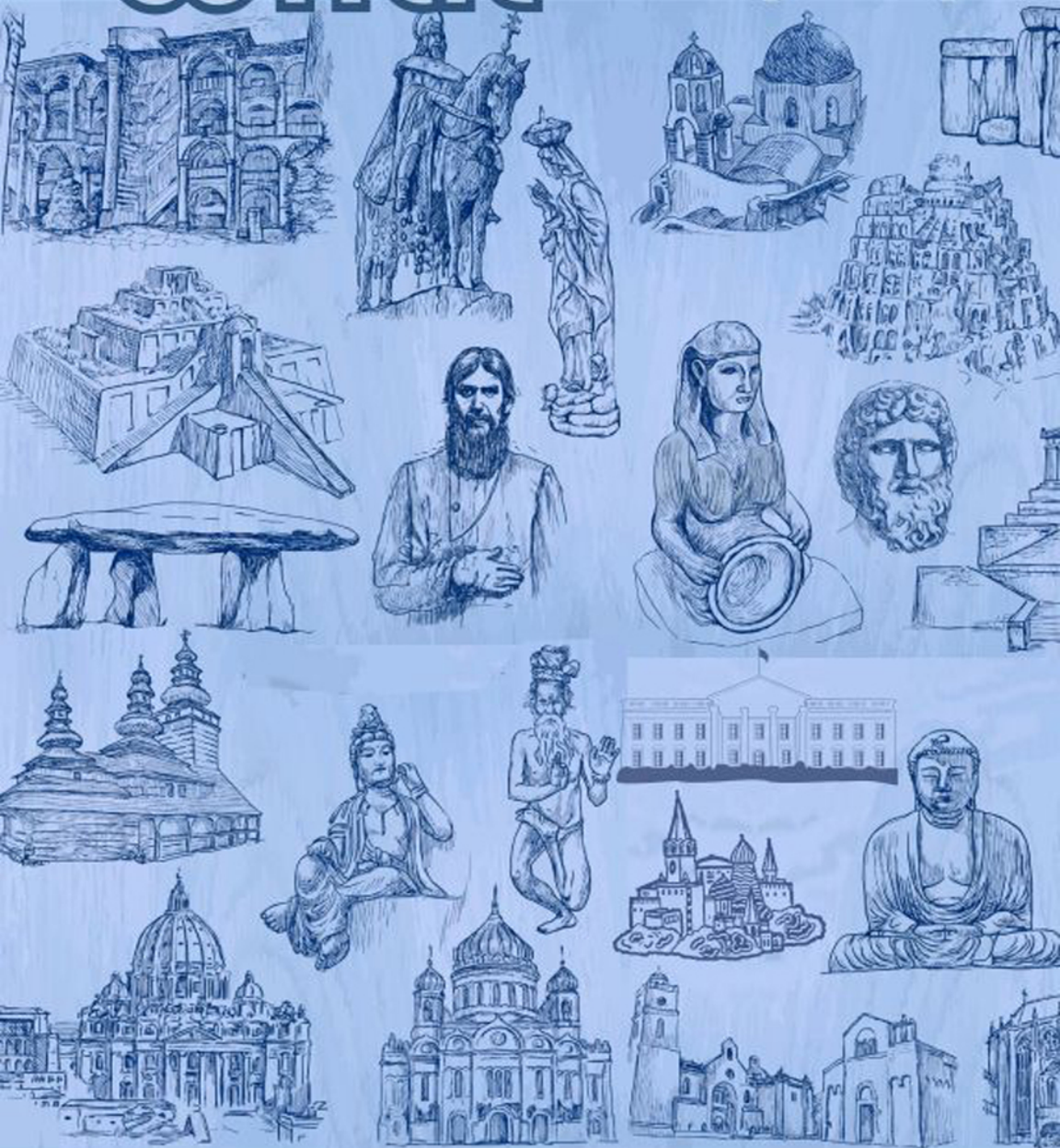


# It's Between What They Say



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## Introduction

This book, titled *Between What They Say*, is essentially an essay with a strenuous attempt to bridge the gap between religious and secular thought. The author admits that his own beliefs stem from a religious upbringing, but due to his openness, he has extensively debated with many different religious persons, atheists, and agnostics throughout his adult years. Thus, he tries to show the differences in thought between ideologies while presenting a simplistic perspective on how the mystic language behind religious thought has a scientific and rational basis.

This book addresses the ethical positions of governments and political systems and movements. The author doesn't claim to have presented the wisdom for the world, but he lays the potential for such wisdom within the repository of human families and their access to the unlimited nature that lies within each of them. He will first talk about terminology and the basis of genius within the human. He will use the examples of the great leaders of mankind to entice educational models to follow their example and develop original minds as agents to create a real and better world for everyone so that education is not an instrument of social control.

The book will continue towards a basic understanding of the drive that propels life and the need to embrace opposites to achieve wholeness in personal and societal life.





## Chapter One

### The Search for Reality

The road towards world peace will be paved with understanding. As humans we have the ability and luxury of thought, which at times comes into conflict. We continuously see as a daily occurrence and through out history have witnessed numerous wars and brutalities as a result of conflicting ideologies. The savagery of these conflicts may not lie entirely at the base of the differences themselves, but more so in how those differences are entertained. When believers of any persuasion have a righteous attitude—presuming to know what’s best for all and therefore feeling justified in enforcing their ideology on the needing masses, whether in the name of God or science—we have the formula for conflict resolved by might. The religious and the secular are equally guilty of this, with hundreds of millions of lives sacrificed at the altar of each. Defending a truth or principle is an entirely different premise and even justification from that of propagating it. There are examples of both fighting in defense of a right or belief and also of crusades and wars fought to expand an ideology. It’s time to shift the paradigm and bring about a world of mutual engagement conditioned by a patient attitude.

Let’s start with the premise of all life seen and unseen being awesome in its totality, with each indivisible aspect in its uniqueness celebrated as part of the larger whole. In that regard we can value everyone’s lives, and their myriad perspectives, as

important ingredients of the whole, never to be discounted. This is not to suggest that every thought expressed is golden, but that each is entitled to expression. I'm sure that many, if not most, people feel disinclined to publish their opinion on matters due to a sense of internalized intimidation—i.e., a feeling that they have no authority or permission to publicize their own thoughts. Name a topic and there is an authority or body of supporters ready to defend an official position. In many ways the world and its opinions—indeed the opinions of societies—are protected by systems requiring credentials.

Ideas become institutionalized with recognized authorities as gatekeepers. Empirical knowledge is often rejected for no other reason than it did not come from a source perceived to be reliable. Credible information and knowledge is rejected at times, as it destroys the bases of long held positions, which institutions have been built upon, or simply rejected because of who you are, such as your race or socioeconomic class. This same phenomenon happens at times in reverse: many frauds have been committed where individuals masqueraded and got away with scams simply because they looked like they fit a particular profile. In fact even heroes, in many cases, are more a result of populism or myth, than a reality.

On a macro level, there are also geopolitical perspectives in which people's thoughts are conditioned by their specific region, such as the Western European, Eastern European, Asian, South American, aboriginal or indigenous mind. These differences in thinking make the exercise of international relations problematic. In order to be fair and allow thinking to escape local and regional propagandist control, it is important to understand the variances in perspectives and take a balanced approach. To do this on a global level requires the spirit of immersion and not the position of a sceptical observer examining cultures other than his own as strange or alien.

There are other control factors that influence thought, such as culture or just the customary experience of life and way of doing things. There are cultures whose customs are set, with very little change even over centuries and perhaps thousands of years. In contrast, there are cultures whose style is ever changing, where social acceptability is in continuous flux. It is important that we understand the cultural environment from which we have grown in order to understand the influences that stimulate preconditioned attitudes and responses. The world is currently caught in the crossfire of two cultural perspectives and threatens to tip into World War III over the Middle East and ISIL issue, which has as its subtext a culture thousands of years old whose values, drawn from that long-gone era, continue to be held as valid today. Before examining the validity or invalidity of these notions, it is helpful to understand firstly the intellectual predicament. It would be too easy for a Western mind to consider the actions of persons in the Middle East and associated with ISIL as barbaric, but unfortunately it is just as easy for that Middle Eastern mind to see the world of the Westerner as depraved and simply antagonistic. The question for our era is whether or not there is a hybrid or golden means of thought that bridges the two worlds, or is it just a clash of civilization with an outcome determined by war?

Juxtaposed to the Middle East quagmire is the Nuclear threat in Korea. North Korea is already a nuclear state, which has taken them decades to develop, they are not now just becoming one. The American imperative is to prevent their capability and threat from reaching the coast of the USA. Korea's Kim Jung Un feels the justification of his nuclear program because of a perceived and at times even quoted nuclear threat from the USA. The reality is Korea and it's people must be embraced into the family of nations. Korea must be treated on an even footing

with other nuclear nations, not hypocritically demonized into surrendering its armaments over the threat of facing starvation or possible nuclear strike from self righteous Western powers. When we negate the long history of Korea, the US seems justified particularly, since what remains is a North Korean dictatorship. Perhaps the real solution to the problem may lie in ending the 67 year internal war and the reunification of the entire peninsula with a totally democratized Korea, no matter how far fetched it seems, it may be the only lasting diplomatic position. The Korean's fears are based on the example of what happened to once nuclear Libya, now in tattering ruin, alongside the presumption that the US has the universal right to world military superiority.

We can only hope that some diplomacy amongst the global powers can facilitate a peaceful resolution. Indeed with the 180 degree switch in foreign policy from President Obama, whose tendency was towards diplomacy and reneged perhaps even failed on the battle field, and President Donald Trump who lacks any intellectual appreciation of both the history and the people around the world including the Middle East, the hope is some level of understanding will emerge through his advisors. However, the wisdom for this era and "golden means" is not only in the heads of state like Presidents Obama or Putin, it can also come from unlikely sources. The leaders of the world, many of whom are driven by hidden agendas, don't necessarily have the right solution. The real solutions may be espoused by lay persons not associated with any political processes. The question is, by what process can their thoughts be entertained? For the most part our great thinkers are not recognized or appreciated. Many can recall the early developmental experiences of Albert Einstein, whom the world enjoys today as one of the greatest scientists of the twentieth century. History will show that

his manner of reasoning wasn't always as appreciated, yet he persisted. There is little or no space within traditional thinking and educational constructs for original thought, leaving many persons to feel uncomfortable, ignored and dismissed, simply because their thoughts and methods sit outside the mainstream.

One of the universal functions of all sentient beings is to tell one's own story. Not to express or resonate with what is seen or experienced is repression. This book is enjoined by the spirit of that natural function of intelligence, and the author hopes to challenge readers to shed the fixations of imposed beliefs and validate life through one's own cognitions. We want to open up the door of humanity to let in more light and possibilities.

The world now comprises over seven billion people, and it would be fair to say that the overwhelming majority professes to belong to or associate with one religion or other. This is so because most people are born into a particular faith and, without too much thought or questioning, have inherited systems of beliefs. What child wants to disrespect or not follow in the footsteps of its parents? That's a natural process, and by extension, most parents will insist their children follow them. So the religion of the country where people are born basically predetermines their faith. Nevertheless, for many, at some point independent of learned information, thoughts about a supreme source of life, however faint, have stirred their minds to question, if not ponder over, the possible nature of a supreme source, our origins and ultimate destiny. There are those who express no faith in any divinity, preferring to be referred to as atheist, yet they also, like the religious persons, have questions about our origins and destiny. So, in some measure, questions regarding the phenomena of our origins and destiny are universal. This unheralded unified interest towards understanding the awe, if not the essence, of our existence inextricably links all mankind together—religious and

nonreligious—and unwittingly shows up in our separate attempts to define our origins and destiny. In our innate desire to know our origins, we all are in the same boat. It doesn't matter how hard we try to justify our separateness arising from differences in approaches or beliefs; our oneness remains as a fact.

The neurosis that polarizes our societies into separate camps stems from the notion of naming something that is beyond mental conception and cannot be defined. History will show the human society going back several thousand years, trying to bring a definitive answer to the question of God. Like a chain evolution, you can observe history and see the conceptual changes of what society has regarded as God from prehistoric times until now. In fact, the very word 'God' never existed prior to its emergence with the English language around 600 years ago. Nor was it a borrowed derivative of a prior terminology for a supreme source from the Judaic religion from which Christianity evolved. Before the 14th century, the word God was never part of any religious or cultural language, particularly not the Judaic Hebrew or Aramaic language from which the Bible was translated into Greek, they had other terminologies. Society's dilemma lies in its poetic challenge to make reaching the proverbial unreachable star into a tangible exercise. Said differently, our definitions are like trying to fit all the oceans and rivers of the world into a teacup, but infinitely worse in proportion.

However, without trying to sound contradictory, it would be untrue to suggest that society has not shown abundant signs of enlightenment in its search for that unreachable star. This enlightenment has come as a result of benefactors who, as mirrors, brought inspiration and evidence of real connection to that intangible source.

To define something or to know it with any degree of certainty, one has to be in a position to experience and examine all of its

parts and functions. Rational deduction only goes part of the way, yet it is difficult to tell the mind that it is not the authority. The mind finds comfort in conceptualizing and experiences unease about things outside its grasp. That unease is the nature of the mind manifesting as inquisitive; its universal function is to question or unravel what it doesn't know. However, knowing is a faculty of its own. Knowing is the end of the journey; knowing is peace, satiation, fulfillment.

Try describing an apple to a person who has never tasted one; his or her mind cannot comprehend with any certainty how it would taste, and you will never be able to describe it adequately. However, when that person's tongue comes in contact with the apple and his or her taste buds signal a response to the brain, it finally registers. Ultimately, as in the case of describing the apple, the mind does not recall the attributes and descriptions that were given as taste; it is the initial contact with the tongue and subsequent imprint upon the nervous system that really teaches the mind. Similarly, our natural mind will drive us to continue seeking the real answers to things because every element of our being is striving for certainty of knowledge, and it won't be satisfied until it experiences that certainty—just like the tasting of an apple. Hence, certainty is one of the ingredients of peace.

In that regard, as it relates to the ultimate question of our origin, the mind does not achieve certainty as a result of having been taught a belief system, nor does it achieve certainty as a result of its inquisitive reasoning function. The mind gives up when reasoning is exhausted, just before the doorway of certainty. It's through exposure to another faculty, which we may refer to as self, that certainty is attained. Then, through this faculty of self, the mind becomes enlightened.

The question may arise: Well, what faculty other than the mind is being referred to when the term "self" is used? The proper