

A Take-Off from the Council of Chalcedon

A few years ago I had examined the formula or creed from the Council of Chalcedon (451) ¹. Most everyone will agree that such documents are quite uninteresting and dry as bones, best left to historians. You might find someone doing a doctoral thesis tucked away in some theological school, out of sight, out of mind. Nowadays familiarity with theology—and especially on the rather abstract level as the Chalcedon formula—is fading (or has faded) from public awareness since it's deemed as having no relevance. People aren't waging wars over doctrine as in the past, something that looks not only quaint but downright foolish.

Even if interest has pretty much faded, for some unfathomable reason personal interest in the Chalcedon formula had persisted between composition of the first article and what we have here. Hopefully the current one will expand upon why such interest never had waned. It should be noted that other thoughts not directly related to the formula are introduced, namely, those that had come to mind within this interval. That's why the title includes the phrase "Take-Off." It's a warning that some amateurish or unprofessional material lays up ahead. The main point is that it's done with a sincere desire to expand more fully upon the Chalcedon creed.

The Chalcedon formula neatly sums up the nature of Jesus Christ as both divine and human. Prior to that and despite several ecumenical councils, how these two natures came together in one person hadn't been clarified sufficiently. Even the idea of person was confusing. Are we talking about Jesus-as-God or Jesus-as-man or some admixture of both, one more and the other less? It was Pope Leo the Great who had brought matters to a head by making a clarification that seems obvious to us today. He insisted that both natures of Christ were maintained equally and that both abide in one person. In other words, not a little bit here nor a little bit over there. For many people, popes are a turn-off, let alone church councils and ecumenical councils as just noted.

¹**Some Reflections upon Chalcedon** posted on this home page. As for the formula, it's included at the end of this essay.

However, Leo is a glorious exception. All one has to do is pick up any of his homilies on the liturgy to appreciate how he makes scripture come alive relative to the liturgy¹. And to top it off, most if not all his stuff is available online.

Despite the just mentioned decline of interest in theology, a lot of people remain pretty much interested in Jesus Christ. Even though varying presentations are put forward, the thoroughly orthodox formula of Chalcedon, fresh now as it was centuries ago, offers an opportunity for practical application. In other words, we can expand upon some aspects of the text's "dry bones." Keeping in mind this skeletal imagery, let's begin by looking at certain elements of the text that give it structure. More precisely, much of this short formula hangs on one important, albeit overlooked, preposition. That preposition is *kata* which generally means according to and is suggestive of motion downward as from above. In fact, we'll use *kata* for some further reflections after the following is introduced.

In the formula we have five references to *kata* which are in bold red within the Greek text followed by red with regard to which *kata* refers. Afterwards is an outline of these five instances in order that they may stand out better.

Creed or Formula of Chalcedon

Ἐπόμενοι τοίνυν τοῖς ἀγίοις πατράσιν ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν ὁμολογεῖν υἱὸν τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν συμφώνως ἅπαντες ἐκδιδάσκομεν, τέλειον τὸν αὐτὸν ἐν θεότητι καὶ τέλειον τὸν αὐτὸν ἐν ἀνθρωπότητι, θεὸν ἀληθῶς καὶ ἄνθρωπον ἀληθῶς τὸν αὐτὸν, ἐκ ψυχῆς λογικῆς καὶ σώματος, ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ **κατὰ τὴν θεότητα**, καὶ ὁμοούσιον τὸν αὐτὸν ἡμῖν **κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα**, **κατὰ πάντα ὅμοιον ἡμῖν χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας**· πρὸ αἰώνων μὲν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα **κατὰ τὴν θεότητα**, ἐπ' ἐσχάτων δὲ τῶν ἡμερῶν τὸν αὐτὸν δι' ἡμᾶς καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν ἐκ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου τῆς θεοτόκου **κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα**, ἕνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν Χριστόν, υἱόν, κύριον,

¹To boot, Leo staved off Attila the Hun from invading Rome, this, we can assume while composing these homilies!

μονογενή, [ἐκ δύο φύσεων or ἐν δύο φύσεσιν], ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀδιαιρέτως, ἀχωρίστως, γνωριζόμενον· οὐδαμοῦ τῆς τῶν φύσεων διαφορᾶς ἀνηρημένης διὰ τὴν ἔνωσιν, σωζομένης δὲ μᾶλλον τῆς ιδιότητος ἐκατέρας φύσεως καὶ εἰς ἓν πρόσωπον καὶ μίαν ὑπόστασιν συντρεχούσης, οὐχ εἰς δύο πρόσωπα μεριζόμενον ἢ διαιρούμενον, ἀλλ' ἓνα καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν υἱὸν καὶ μονογενῆ, θεὸν λόγον, κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν· καθάπερ ἄνωθεν οἱ προφῆται περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς ἡμᾶς ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐξεπαίδευσε καὶ τὸ τῶν πατέρων ἡμῶν παραδέδωκε σύμβολον.

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; consubstantial [co-essential] with the Father **according to the Godhead**, and consubstantial with us **according to the Manhood**; **in (kata) all things like unto us, without sin**; begotten before all ages of the Father **according to the Godhead**, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, **according to the Manhood**; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ; as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning Him, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.¹

¹ An alternate translation but with less emphasis upon the notion of *kata*: “We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body; consubstantial with us according to the manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the virgin Mary, the mother of God, according to the manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one

Kata¹

11. ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ **κατὰ τὴν θεότητα**
of one substance² with the Father according to his *Godhead*
2. ὁμοούσιον τὸν αὐτὸν ἡμῖν **κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα**
at the same time of one substance with us according to his *manhood*
3. **κατὰ πάντα** ὅμοιον ἡμῖν χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας
In (i.e., *kata*) *all things* like unto us, without sin
4. πρὸ αἰώνων μὲν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα **κατὰ τὴν θεότητα**
according to his *Godhead*, begotten of the Father before the ages
5. ἐκ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου τῆς θεοτόκου **κατὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα**
born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God according to his *manhood*

This outline may reduced even further to the five elements involved (two of God, two of humankind and one of everything else: that is, two of God and three not of God) and which are italicized as above:

- 1) Godhead
- 2) manhood
- 3) all things
- 4) Godhead
- 5) manhood

So the million dollar question is what do we do with this from the vantage point of *lectio divina*? That vantage point differs from the scholarly one insofar as

Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning have declared concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.”

¹Numbers one, two and four pertain to Christ’s divinity or *theotetes* whereas number three and five pertain to his humanity or *anthropotes*. Number three doesn’t mention *anthropotes* but implies it, that is, relative to “us.”

²The word *homoousios* means "same substance", whereas the word *homoiousios* means "similar substance". Chalcedon affirmed the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Godhead) are of the *homoousios* (same substance).

it's a serious attempt to make the creed come alive in one's own life, not just sit there or let it be proclaimed out loud and then brushed aside. Most likely people contemporary with the formulation saw it represented something very much alive and exciting. We don't have records of this except for historical ones of how Chalcedon was (and wasn't) received. Important but not what we're after here. Enthusiasm for the creed as a culmination of Christianity's struggles with defining the nature of Jesus Christ propelled it forward through the late ancient world, then on through the Dark and Middle Ages followed by the Reformation. Even though the third event was quite earth shattering, people of all stripes remained Christian in one form or another. They were as such even as they killed each other over whose interpretation of the Bible and view of the Church was the right one. This continued, albeit greatly modified by reason of the rise of science in subsequent centuries. Quibbling over abstract doctrines seemed more ridiculous than ever in favor of real scientific advancements put at the service of everyone.

As for Christianity in general, it kept a pretty much firm grasp over people, this being within the memory of people living today. Then suddenly the rug was pulled out from under our collective feet, and Christianity began to unravel big time. The reasons why remain debated today. Two general ones stand out: the cultural shifts usually pin-pointed to the year 1968 and the Second Vatican Council a few years before. Now as we advance through the third millennium the spin-offs associated with those two events have sunk in more deeply. Looking back just a generation or two—certainly not more—shows that despite the pervasiveness of religion, it was more a veneer. The shallowness of it all still amazes people raised during those years not long ago.

So if we look at the confession of Chalcedon in light of where we are today, the vast majority of people consider it more or less irrelevant with little or no application to real life. Being fully aware of what went into formulating Chalcedon's confession, is it possible to play around and see if it has relevance? "Play" can be taken as a distasteful word suggestive of willful manipulation and a certain casual, non-nonchalant approach. Still, it can be applied to a concise document essential to Christianity not meant for this history books but

to be inserted into life and if permitted to say so, enjoyed and lived to the full. Hence the word play.

Such a cautionary note applies to the five-fold outline above with regard to *kata* in the Chalcedon formula. That means we can look at each of the five *kata* references not from a historical or scholarly vantage point but in the spirit of *lectio divina*...not that the first two are unimportant. At the same time it's crucial to observe what's going on within us. Do these references awaken something that had been latent and require articulation? Chances are high that they do even if dimly perceived. After all, the excerpts deal with God, and if we take God as Ultimate Reality, a connection between them and ourselves is bound to exist.

We can single out two ways of approaching the formula of Chalcedon. The first comes from our Western heritage, *anamnesis* or recollection of one's true nature. The second comes from the East or the practice of mindfulness. Both have to be brought together somehow if religion is to remain pertinent. If the possibility exists, two halves of the world can be bridged. More on that later. For now let's stay with *anamnesis* because it's part and parcel of our human constitution.

We can work from this assumption because everyone has a hankering for the unlimited even if they can't express it. This bottom line, if you will, is simply undeniable. Plato is the one who had made *anamnesis* famous, and a quote from the **Meno** is in order to describe it:

The soul is immortal, *has been born* often and *has seen* all things here and in the underworld, there is nothing which it *has not learned*; so it is in no way surprising that it can *recollect* the things it *knew before*, both about virtue and other things. As the whole of nature is akin, and the soul *has learned* everything, nothing prevents a man, after *recalling* one thing only—a process men call learning—discovering everything else for himself, if he is brave (**andreios**) and does not tire (**apokamno**) of the search, for searching and learning are, as a whole, *recollection*. 81c

Note the importance placed upon the past as indicated by the eight italicized words and phrases. Plato is very much aware that we've been somewhere before we got where we're at now and carry knowledge of it somewhere into the present. Such is the way we've been born whether we like it or not. As from where we go from here—and invariably that means death—it doesn't matter right now. We don't get an answer despite our burning desire to know. The reason? Plato wants to hammer *anamnesis* into our awareness as quickly as possible. All other questions will be resolved if we subscribe to it. Hence two underlined words in the **Meno** passage are singled out, *andreios* and *apokamno*. The first means manly, strong as well as stubborn, and the second means to flinch from toil or to avoid it all costs. Both demonstrate that engaging in the practice of *anamnesis* is paramount to anything else in life.

So the practice of *anamnesis* deals with our innate humanity and is not foreign to us. It ties in with happiness insofar as it isn't something we acquire in the sense of learning this or that. It puts us in direct contact with what we are here and now (and always have been). This is an idea unfamiliar if not alien to us moderns who might see this as a make-believe, feel-good outlook on life to ward off all the bad stuff that's going on. Recollecting our innate happy condition presupposes that we're already in it and have no need to acquire it as we would acquire a possession or talent. Unfortunately we take for granted as normal operating procedure our inability to perceive happiness as part and parcel of our human constitution.

With these observations in mind, let's take a look at the five *kata* references lifted from the Chalcedon formula. Retaining the same color scheme, we may see if they can be a pattern for us: not so much for modeling our lives but for recognizing that already we have been fashioned in accord with these five statements. This approach, of course, takes into consideration our faculty of *anamnesis* outlined above, of how when reading them, they activate something deep within us.

1. ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ **κατὰ** τὴν θεότητα
of one substance with the Father **according to** his Godhead

Obviously we aren't of the same substance as the Father, simple as that. Case closed. So where does the *kata* delineated here come into play as far as we're concerned? Again, our faculty of *anamnesis* is a parallel to this Godhead ¹, not an imitation. Such is the most fundamental aspect of our humanity which also could go under the more familiar being made in God's image. However, I'm not sure if *eikon* taken as *anamnesis* is correct but throw it out there for consideration. It should be noted that in addition to *eikon* we have the equally important but lesser known *homoiosis* for likeness (compare with *homoousios* relative to the Father). As for the word "image," we use icon or *eikon* instead of the Hebrew *tselem* which isn't familiar to a more general audience. As for *anamnesis*, perhaps *homoiosis* may be taken as the actualization of *eikon*, of how it actually functions. Applied to the first *kata* reference, Jesus is a kind of *anamnesis* of his Father—a living memory of him unlike anything human—with us being not so much an *eikon* of this eternal relationship but a *homoiosis*, likeness. So in that sense we're just as eternal as God, created-ly speaking, if we may put it as such.

2. ὁμοούσιον τὸν αὐτὸν ἡμῖν **κατὰ** τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα
at the same time of one substance with us **according to** his manhood²

Here *homoousios* (one substance) is qualified or brought to our human level through the divine person of Jesus Christ. "With us" is crucial as well as "manhood" meaning that despite (using that word loosely) being "of one substance with the Father," Jesus Christ is the same *kata* his manhood. That is to say, *kata* here allows an unfolding of his divinity: *kata* his Godhead with us humans, the two running con-currently.

3. **κατὰ πάντα** ὅμοιον ἡμῖν χωρὶς ἁμαρτίας
In (i.e., *kata*) *all things* like unto us, without sin

¹As far as Godhead is concerned, no one...absolutely no one...has a clue about it. This and similar terms are thrown around almost with a free abandon, so we have to get right to the point, namely, that it's more or less equivalent with complete ignorance.

²Or..."con-substantial with us according to the manhood" in accord with the alternate translation from the footnote above.

Kata with regard to *pan* or “all things” which means everything conceivable and then some with the sole exception of sin ¹ That means Christ didn’t lack one aspect of what it means to be human or better, “like us,” not “like humanity” abstractly considered. The same applies to him not being supernaturally superior in the sense of being some kind of superman. With focus upon *anamnesis*, Christ had the exact same faculty where he was aware of being born fully whole and entire. Absence of sin is the deciding factor insofar as it didn’t obstruct realization of this in his life.

4. πρὸ αἰώνων μὲν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα **κατὰ** τὴν θεότητα
according to his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages

Here *kata* with respect to Christ’s Godhead is similar to #1, the same phrase “according to his Godhead” being used a second time. “Begotten” can be misunderstood as being secondary or inferior to the Father. However, with #1 in mind (‘of one substance with the Father’), the verb emphasizes relationship. This, of course, has been hashed out *ad infinitum* among theologians and not the place to add more. Besides, it’d detract from the present document’s intent.

The basic sense of *aion* or ages refers to a period of existence in the more definite sense. To associate it with the idea of being begotten, a generative word, means that Christ’s relationship with the Father transcends anything an *aion* has to offer. In other words, his faculty of *anamnesis* was wholly oriented without distortion to the Father whereas a human one is subject to distortion, *sin-as-chata*’ as the last footnote observes.

5. ἐκ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου τῆς θεοτόκου **κατὰ** τὴν ἀνθρωπότητα
born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, **according to** his manhood

¹ Sin is another word like Godhead in the last footnote which is tossed around freely or even with greater abandon because presumably we know what it is. The original Hebrew sense is helpful to keep in mind because while denoting something defective, it holds out hope. *Chata*’ or to sin suggests missing the mark as someone shooting an arrow...target practice. If you miss the bull’s eye, you don’t throw down the bow. Instead, your desire to hit it increases.

Manhood is mentioned in #1 but here with reference to the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus Christ. While this suggests obviously important devotional elements, we could say that Mary has a unique awareness of her faculty of *anamnesis*. This sets an example for the rest of humanity different from Jesus, thereby introducing a female element.

While this brief outline of the Chalcedon formula contains nothing new (nor is it intended to do such), viewing it in light of our faculty of *anamnesis* throws new light on it for incorporating into our lives. This is done with the intent of supplementing the formula viewed normally from the confessional point of view. By contemplating the five different ways the humble preposition *kata* is associated with “being in accord with,” we can parallel divine revelation with the reality of our daily lives.

Virtually every person interested in the spiritual life wishes to integrate what they’ve learned and tie it in with daily life. After the initial discovery of things spiritual, life comes crashing in a way that can catch us off guard without notice. Earlier bumps in the road came along and were taken as pretty much normal. Now for some apparently inexplicable reason they hit us with a ferocity we haven’t experienced before. Even when this is worked out to some degree, always there remains that dualism between the spiritual and material. Though theologians and philosophers had spilled gallons of ink on the matter, no one seems to have come up with a viable solution. In light of this, the bottom line is live with it.

When all is said and done about the matter, we’re forced back in upon ourselves and learn not much to cope with this dualism but to embrace it. One aspect of life shortly comes to the fore. Thrown back upon ourselves we find it best to abandon practices we may have taken up relative to the spiritual life. Once the initial pain of renunciation fades away, we discover that our physical bodies continue to function as they did before we had taken up spiritual practices. Not only that, they continue on their merry way regardless of how we perceive them. No change has occurred from “then” until “now.” We eat, drink, pee and drive to work as usual. Throughout it all we’ve been looking for

(and let's admit it) an escape or a "divine" intervention to relieve us of this determinism. It turns out that we're looking to be set from from a state in which already we're free, a paradox if ever there was one.

With these observations in mind from everyday life we can look anew at how the five *kata* references lifted from the Chalcedon formula have direct bearing on the way we comport ourselves. The preposition *kata* represents a certain determinism. When using the phrase "according to" (that is, *kata*) something...anything at all...we mean that the subject we're talking about is being controlled or determined by something else. For example, take the first of the five *kata* references, ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρὶ κατὰ τὴν θεότητα or "of one substance with the Father according to his Godhead." Chalcedon is talking about one substance (relative to Jesus Christ) *kata*...in accord with...his Father's Godhead. And so this *kata* is immediate with no interference.

Another aspect about *kata* is that it holds the promise of introducing a story. It sets the stage for this unfolding as in the instance concerning Christ's substance and his Father's Godhead. As we all know, a story can go on for some time and hold the listener's attention until it's finished. Such is a use of *kata* with regard to the Gospels proclaimed at Mass. For example, we heard "The Gospel *kata* St. John," and this phraseology is for the listeners: "stop and prepare yourself for the story you're about to hear."

It turns out that the abstract nature of the Chalcedon creed has a way of coming to life if we interject the notion of determinism through the preposition *kata*. This sounds strange, even repulsive. Determinism is pretty much as a dirty word but turns out to be the tool needed when structuring one's live with the creed in mind. *Kata* grabs out attention, puts us on a given path without deviation and keeps us there as we relinquish our so-called freedom. Yet it turns out that relinquishing this freedom quickly turns out to be quite different from what we had thought it to be. Instead of being blindly self-propelled, if you will, we discover that we're moved by an agent far greater than ourselves which has our interests in mind beyond anything we can

conceive. This is another way of saying that we're in the process of being divinized, a notion dear to Eastern Orthodox theology.

As for the goal of prayer, often it's thought of in terms of being at peace, and certainly this is indisputable. The reason peace is harped upon so much is that it's sorely lacking in the lives of most of us and is noticed by others once procured. For many it's fleeting but imparts a lasting memory. But what happens once in actuality we do get it? Boredom or at least the fear of it. We're grateful for the new-found rest but something inside presses us to move on and engage in activity which, of course, opens us up to losing this peace. Here we hit upon an important discovery. We prefer being in motion instead of sitting still. Movement is more important than being in the light which is one of the most common themes associated with the spiritual life.

And so after experiencing peace, we discover our disconcerting preference for movement over stillness. We may gotten glimpses of it here and there but haven't realized this earlier. Now it hits us head-on. Our preference for movement is a mistaken, mis-perceived one for life over death because it's based on input from reality *after* we've superimposed our personal thoughts. What we take as movement/life is an imitation, and because an imitation by necessity is secondary, it isn't the source of all we witness that's transpiring around us.

So the loss of peace we find hits us so poignantly rests on the fact that we're physical beings made for action and not for hanging around like a rock or plant. Being-made-for-movement is a kind of determinism that follows set rules meaning it has a *kata* or works according to whatever rules, guidelines or the like that are applicable. Staying close within their confines—in other words, staying close to *kata*—starts off confining us. Quickly it's apparent shackles fall off or perhaps better, show their true colors by leading to freedom. It's a different freedom from what we experienced earlier which amounts to batting from pillar to post, pretty much aimlessly.

As we look at everyone else, they're doing their thing as we are, just as you'd expect. We're doing the exact same things but differently. So what does that

consist of? We can get back to the five *kata* references and their strict adherence to them as a model. Because they're important and need to be tied in with a practical application, here they are again:

1) *kata* his Godhead, 2) *kata* his manhood, 3) *kata* all things, 4) *kata* his Godhead and 5) *kata* his manhood. We use them as a take-off point because they touch upon both the human and divine applicable to Jesus Christ who as God became man. Thus they bind us immediately to what they signify neither diverting left nor right but advancing straight ahead. They serve as strictures (the essence of *kata*) by binding us to the very essence of the person of Jesus Christ minus foreign impulses emanating from our thoughts and reveries. Re-phrased, they run as 1) *kata* our participation in Christ's Godhead, 2) *kata* our participation in Christ's manhood, 3) *kata* our participation of all things in both Christ's Godhead and manhood, 4) *kata* our participation in Christ's Godhead (before time) and 5) *kata* our participation in Christ's manhood relative to the Virgin Mary.

Realization of all five comes about by an immediate perception of their operation already present within us, for that's how we've been fashioned. In other words, they comprise what was discussed above as our faculty of *anamnesis*. Inability to recognize our nature in and by itself derives from our preoccupation with mental images concerning everything under the sun...and then some. The five *kata* references are a pattern where this is knocked out from under us not so much by renunciation as commonly perceived but by direct insight which is simultaneously harder and easier to effect. Hard because it's difficult to comprehend. Easy because we're already there.

The "place" where this direct insight lies is a keen, close watch of our physicality in all its dimensions. Only momentarily are we are of them, preferring mental constructs which we consider more advanced or belonging to a higher plane. By perceiving our physicality in a way suggested by this talk about *kata*, all physical movements come to life in a way we haven't known before, as though they were magical. The temptation exists, however, to take this form of attention as a denigration of our so-called higher powers.

However, it turns out to be a revalorization of them, something we discover only by practice. As we move on in this awareness, we perceive ourselves tied in with other people, even those on the other side of the earth. We lose this perception, obviously, when taken up with thoughts and preoccupations that consisted of our old life.

The dualism of the spiritual vs. the material as noted above doesn't disappear but goes on. While we may be enthralled hearing about enlightenment, liberation and all that. In reality it doesn't quite fit the bill, for anything posited as beyond our reach doesn't ring true. What we do realize, however, is that what we had been perceived earlier as a struggle between the spiritual and material is much lighter now. We can see past it to something else which we may dub as living in hope. Hope can be misunderstood as not having what we want, wishing for the un-wishable. A closer look reveals that it is tied in directly with our faculty of *anamnesis* and makes present that which is perceived normally as not present.

At this point towards the end of this highly imperfect article seems to be a place where some insight from Eastern forms of meditation ties in. The overall point of agreement from there is that we are made whole and entire. This insight is similar to the one just presented. How it differs lays beyond our scope here but seems to be a valid insight. We don't need to add anything nor strive after some goal. The fact that we're at where we've always been is quite disconcerting. It may sound great but doesn't concur with what we see around us, notably what we see in ourselves. In fact, everything seems to militate against this. Yet bringing up the very idea raises questions as to how we were raised and whether we've allowed ourselves to be, well, duped. And all with the best of intentions.

Should we persevere by allowing our thoughts and strong feelings about such an impossibility to wash over us and remain still (again, that preference for movement over stability), we discover some truth to being made whole and entire. It's like finding a buried treasure in our own back yard, the contents being our own selves. The first temptation is to rush ahead in that we wish to

appropriate what we've hit upon. Another word for this is greed. Then with time we find this to be a dead end and once again take refuge in that being still and shunning preference for movement. Then the reality of us being made whole and entire comes back on the scene.

The reason for all these alterations is twofold. First we have a non-physical reality looking at a physical reality, a spectator looking at ourselves. Two realities composed of different material, if you will, have a tough time co-existing regardless of what we hear about transcendence. Secondly, we find it incredibly challenging to accept what was just put forward, namely, that already we're whole and entire. Such is what the West calls *anamnesis* and the East, mindfulness. It goes against everything as to how we've been raised. Some may think it as alien to human nature and must be avoided. They look at this claim of us being made whole and entire in light of need for Christians to suffer, sin obviously included. There's some truth to this, but is this position misguided? Is there room for correction as well as development in this regard?

Yet when we consider the best of Christian tradition (usually the early centuries as well as the East, both Greek and Syriac), a picture of the essential part of human nature isn't far removed from the one just presented. Besides, this time of history is unencumbered by later centuries which don't seem to have advanced the earlier ones very much. Obviously this a flawed observation but one containing some truth provided you take the time and care to look at the Greek and Syriac material. A personal preference for the latter sneaks in here due to it bordering the Mediterranean (Latin and Greek) and the Far Eastern worlds, thus in a position to be a bridge between the two. Much of the appeal, it seems rests on two things, one of which having been noted: *anamnesis* and a poetic sense of Jesus Christ. Put these two together, and you really have something.

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