

**Is Your Soul In
Here?
A Poet's Struggle
With God**

Alexander M Zoltai

A Project of

Benevolence In Dharmic Exploration

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Dedicated To My Daughter, Audra

Not really knowing what to say;
Only knowing there's
So much...

Not even knowing how to say
Except with poetic crutch.
The years all lost,
The times unspent
Make understanding dim...
But,

My heart's non-stop in
Loving you; and, even on this limb of
Shaky, distant fatherhood and
struggling
Moral worth, I need to make
This absolute:

The world will praise
Your
Birth!

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Introduction

My Bread is
Cast; They'll
Eat who do...
Yet, knowing how their
Belly
Feels—a
Poet's
Golden
Rule.

This book took me fifty-nine years to write. Fifty of those years were spent growing up: first, under the influence of two ministers—Mom, the truly spiritual person, and Dad, the reigning dictator (thankfully, they're both in the next life reaping their rewards); next, getting through the U.S. educational system where round pegs have trouble fitting into square holes; then, trying to find a profession (I tried to fool myself by attempting to be a regular, upright citizen [not to put upright citizens down but I'm wired differently]); living through the trials of dating, courtship, commitment, lust, fun,

and pain; reading everything I could get my hands on about self-improvement, success and, *finally*, spirituality, which led me back to my ripped-up roots and started me on the road to being truly human.

So, what about the last nine years? That's what the poems in this book recount. They're not arranged chronologically.

Why?

Good question!

I felt, after living through the most intense years of my life and trying to express the spiritual growth I was able to achieve, that a different ordering was appropriate. I might call it “spiritological”—from the times of greatest darkness to the times of greatest light. Some of the poems that appear late in this collection were written early on—a condition many poets experience of writing things that will be true in the future—essentially, being faced with a poem one has to struggle to live up to.

Nearly half the poems are about my relationship with a woman (or, Woman, if I

give full vent to my feelings). Which brings up one of the great facts of life—we are most often working out our relationship with God by working out our relationships with other people.

So...

The early part of this book has poems that express my efforts to capture (and sometimes hide from) the Light—that inexpressible feeling of connection with the spiritual realm. The later part has poems that show my steady connection to that Realm.

Life is cyclic. The spiritual struggle is no different (for most of us...). Up, then down, then up is the way it is. But, while I was putting these poems in order, I felt that inspiration was more important than history—why not show the process in a more ideal way—why not make the message clearer? Yet, even after I smoothed them out, my final ordering still contains peaks and valleys...

I know a woman who heard one prayer being recited and was able to completely change her life from that point on. Not so for me... I've had to start over countless times. Regrets? Not any more. Each attempt to rise above the constraints I put on myself has gifted me with the strength and faith to "Carry on".

So...

I present my poems in the order I feel will most aid others on the Path—that Path that leads from the darkness of Uncertainty to the light of Certitude.

Enjoy!

Alexander M Zoltai

Summer, 2005

Introductory Poems

Making Poems

In the beginning,
I rush towards
Reunion—my inner
Eye spies a
Gleam that
Dazzles into
Words that
Fall

Far short...

Space for All

We
Are
All
Stars—
Some searing white,
Some mellowing yellow,
Some rudely ruddy red; and,
Then,
The blasted ones, dense with
Death; and,
The loneliest ones, falling into
Themselves—dragging
Life into some other
Universe...

The Struggle

Relativity

Dreams are
Easy, sweet as pie, so soft to
Lie on, so quick to
Die.

Again?

Creeping up a
Hill of life from a
Valley too well-known;
This time, this
Time reach some
Height not leading
Back to have-to;
This time, this
Time free enough to
See beyond these
Patterns locked in
Self so locked in
Dust.

Forebear

The chains of hollow
Imitation clasp their sterile links on
Minds so lost in routinized
Intentions even
Love can spawn but
Crimes; and,
Faithless certainties, like
Clockwork, build their
Superstitious blinds so even
Faith becomes the Devil trading
Hope for fruitless
Rinds.

Crisis

Warping

Heat; opposing

Passions—space is time and

Time is lost.

Blood should flow and

Brains should shatter—

Heart is dead but beats in

Pain.

A Cycle of Hope

Confusion rankles history's
Bluff—all flats are steep and
Cycles warped. I cringe, all
Senses cross-wired
Deep, and
Wait for
Clearings dim...

~

Get what you can while the
Getting's loose and
Tuck it, quick,
Away.
Certainty's lost and
Luck is dead and we can't even
Pray.

~

Why am I sick of my
Dearly-won
Self; and, why are
You so deaf to
Pleas?
Sanity's crying from being so
Lost and I don't actually feel
Quite like me...

~

World-sick and
Wandering,
Mind lost, can't
See what makes any
Clear difference or
Not. We've lost quite
Profoundly, we've muddled our path.
All
Endings are flimsy with
Rot.

~

Soul-sick and
Searching, I lay with no
Breath, no real strength left to
Move, no respite. Even
Life seems a joke, even
Love brings but
Pain and the
Self of my
Search seems so Trite...

~

Battling brain-floods and
Snows of the
Heart with a
Stoic persistence not
Mine. I'm moving again, some small
Heat comes my way; of this
World? You tell me; I'm still
Lost...

~

One
Choice is
All that's truly left—let my body go
On with this
Still moving
Soul?

~

Grief and
Joy are past me now—
I'm heading for the
Road, where souls before have
Clearly marked the
Way—
Self's
Death in
SELF.

~

Hope is what I've never
Owned—on lease from way
On-High; or, so, so deep
Direction's lost; so what? At least
I'm
Free!

On The Line

Playing a deadly game—
Stakes so high
I gamble my heart.
Anguish loses meaning in
Angst lost in love.
Love—word that holds more
Meaning than it can
Bear—bears up the
Heart that's forgotten
Itself.
Suffering won for
Passion's gesture—
Heart's most welcome
Resurrections—repeated until...

Trauma

Pain sits
Heavy in the
Heart un-
Healed.
Rips at
Judgment,
Opens the
Sealed to
Rip at feelings
Floating in the
Past, to bring them
Up, to make them
Last till
Time, if gracious, can
Mend the
Wound, till space is made that's
Not

Marooned.

Mystery

When the
Thunder of the
Ancient God
Rolls out and says,
"Don't dare!" There's a
Shiver runs up every
Spine but
Mine.

I believe He's
Right and makes the
Rules that
Guide us all through
Life; but, He made
You, too, and that gives
Pause for
Thought.

There's a
Difference here that
Comes from
Time that lives just out of
Space; and, we
Dance to
Rhythms older than we
Know.

When it comes
Right down to
Choosing which
Path leads to
Safety's den, God's
Way leads me by my
Heart right up to
You.

So the rules work even if my
Choice is seen as something
Wrong,
Since, as God's child, you make
Everything all
Right.

Wild

Primal
Fires
Burn and
Melt all
Rationality.

Primal
Feelings
Surge within my
Soul.

Primal, not just
Strong,
Intense,
Acute or
Keenly felt—Primal
Almost to the
Sacred
Tree...

Rationality will
Order all these
Feelings, by and by; but,
No matter what the
Patterns then
Produced,
Primal
Fires are
Ablaze with a
Healing all their
Own; and, they can't, they
Won't now
Ever be
Reduced.

Lament

“Loving her now is
Suffering you say, so
Quit man!” “Nay, my heart
Cannot, she's my
Soul's
Touché...”

Passion's Yield

The tears will keep the
Flame in check,
The flame that's killing-
Sweet.

My heart throbs white-
Hot, molten
Streams of
Pain from
Love beat down.

The tears will keep the
Flame in check,
The flame that's killing
Me. But,
Dying is the only
Way to keep my
Heart unbound.

The tears will keep the
Flame in check,
Till death from
Love
Reveals that
Love is
Truth and only
Pain from
Love can set me
Free.

The tears will keep the
Flame in check,
Will feed its lonely
Heat till
Love can do its
Mystic work and make a
Blind man
See.

Realization

Hole in my
Heart—flaming
Pain—
Gift for God.

Imperious

“Back so
Soon with
Scars so
Fresh,
Willing to be
Pressed against the
Sharp
Edge of
Pain?”

“Howling yet from
Severance
Won and
Sacrifice obtained by
Standing in the
Prow of
Life and
Facing every
Tempest hot, I turn
Again and
Lay it down—my
Blood a warming
Storm of
Victory.”

Endings

Worn to the nub and sharply
Wizened to the core—
Never to be fooled again; but,
Waiting at the well...

Her

Blazing eyes dancing in a
Dew-fresh, dawn-sweet smile; and
Her
Swaying to
Pulsations
Deep and
True, so true...
And with all the other reasons to
Adore this soaring soul, there's no
Reason left to leave her
Aura's web.
Yet, the
Dying from her
Passion breeds a
Rhythm all its own and its
Beat is birthing
Magic in my
Soul...

Sharp Choice

On the edge is where I live, and
Edges can be fine. So fine they
Sever wants from acts and leave no
Blood behind.

This edge I'm on comes from the
Depths—a well of yearning
Yawns—and
Severance is the
Price to
Pay for
Grace to
Carry
On...

Old Flame

Loving the impossible,
I shutter-down my heart;
Keeping light from pouring out;
Safe within the dark.
Dark is good for nursing wounds,
Good for growing strong;
Also good for spawning dreams
Impossible to stop.

Much time between youth's tragic
Faults and middle-aged remorse.
More time to wonder at the cost.
Yet more to humble pride.
Still the shutters creak and moan
From love-star's sultry breath;
Still the light leaks through the
Dark
To brighten friendship's path...

Response

Only briefly,
Whispering soft,
Comes the
Visitation.

Tickling limbs,
Diverting thought,
Most precious
Delectation.

Captured in the
Afterglow,
Burning from the
Root.

Death is welcomed as a
Friend for
Life is merely
Moot.

Lust

Grounded in the
Basement of my
Body's sweet
Demands and
Wishing
Sweetness could be
More than just some
Sex.
How about some
Reverie or just a little
Touch of mental
Bliss that makes no harsh
Demand on
Willingness that's weak.

Ritual

Emotional soup tastes good with
Stake but holding the heart
Still takes
Practice.

Challenge

As great tides of meaning
Merge and
Life asks questions that
Stir us to
Depths untested, we
Pause in that place
Beyond and embrace the
Fire—the radiant blaze of
Selfhood that stands
Free of
Culture,
Bondage,
Suffering,
Pain.

We embrace the
Fire and find renewal in the
Glowing
Reflections from
Beyond—beyond the cramp of
Solitude,
Loneliness,
Anguish,
Hurt.

We break with
Repetition and begin
Regeneration;
Rising on wings of
Passion,
Power,
Freedom,
Love.

Relation

Two seas met
In the ocean of life.
The passage between was narrow
And full of hazard.
Yet, they met
And their waters mingled.

Each sea had its own storms.
Each had its own shores.
Yet, they met
And their shores touched;
But, their storms were calmed
In that narrow, hazardous passage.

Each sea had its own commerce.
Each had its own depths.
Yet, they met
And traffic through that
Passage was
Difficult.
But, their depths were joined and
The waters which were deep had
A trade all their own.

The land surrounding their
Passage was
Mysterious.
And things happened in those
Rocky cliffs;
And things happened in those
Lush green hills;
Things that no tongue can tell...

Time, as it will, passed...
And, the depths continued to
Deepen;
And, the common shore widened;
And, the land still held its mystery...
But, most gradually, there was
Created a
Wider channel, more common shore
That both seas used to
Lay up treasures.

Many said they couldn't believe
There was ever a time when the
Passage between the
Seas was narrow and hazardous.
But, the
Seas
Remembered.
Remembered
The days of uncertain passage,
The days of hazard.
And
They
Laughed

Perspective

Pebbles of sadness
Play in the streets;
Rocks of grim circumstance
Bred them in grief.
Fire and
Pressure of God's sweet
Decree is the
Crucible making them
Gems.

Small, perfect
Diamonds are born through
Pain;
Pearls rise from crushing-dark
Depths;
Rubies remember calamity's
Breath;

Jewels all prove
Spirit's dread
Grace.

Gifts

God
Gave me
More than I could
Hold unless I
Held to Him.

I
Saw and
Felt such
Wondrous things but
Then would come the
Pain—I'd let Him
Go and
Everything became
Too much to
Bear—to
See so
Well it hurt to
Look; to
Feel so
Deep it
Burned...

A
Price was
Paid in early
Days:
Confusion,
Guilt and black
Remorse; and,
No
Hand
Holding
God's. I'd
Surge into the
Finest plans...
Reduced to
Rubble bleak.
All me, no Him—
Disaster—the
Wax without the
Wick.

These later
Days are
Steadying, though
Eyes and
Heart still
Flood... I'm
Clinging
Tight
God, happy with the
Holding—mine to
Give!

Heart

Keep it open,
Best protection;

Slam it shut,
All griefs arrive.

Reach it out,
Offensive safety;

Pull it back,
Defend till death.

Going Higher

O sweet God, Please take this Fire
Swirling in my breast!
Breathe Thy Breath into my Passion.
May I have no rest from any
Fervor I may feel nor any blaze
Divine; but, quench my ego in Thy
Will and
Love this love of mine...

Just Do It

Will's just fine when
Tethered sure to something
Greater than self.

Self's just fine when
Flowing free of
Ego's clinging
Stealth.

Compass

God's
Will, so hard for
Most of us to
See with
Willing eyes, is
Obvious for
Those who's hearts are
Still; serene in fiercest
Trial or
Test, well-focused on the
Goal—
Submission to His
Sovereignty, unhampered by
Ego.

Certitude

Not to know what I
Will do at any given point in
Time is
Calming long as what I
Know is God's
Will for all
Time.

Religion

One thin thread is
All that binds me
Back. A thin,
Steel thread stretched
Taut and tested
True.

One pure thought is
All that holds me
Up. A pure,
Bold thought so
Broad it
Humbles me.

Detachment

Christians surge into the fray;
Muslims beat themselves and pray;
Jews are eager to repay;
Hindus starve, Buddhists decay...

Where's the love and unity
Behind this grisly sovereignty?
Why are We so deaf and dumb
To God's pure equilibrium?

Jesus loved Moses;
Mohammed loved both; and,
Krishna and Buddha
Have taught the same growth
But we close our
Eyes and our
Ears and our
Hearts while millions,
Religiously, suffer these darts of
Hatred and bigotry
Turned into arts...

The Answer of the Ages to this
Horrible
Plight?
"Attachment to the Lantern is not
Loving the
Light."

~~~ Quote from the Bahá'í Writings

## Worth

Don't get caught in the  
Drowning wave of  
History's memory loss;  
Don't let all your effort  
Puff and die.

Follow the footsteps of  
Those we praise for  
Service to the Cause;  
Service with its  
Prize beyond the Veil...

## Prescription

Drift into the twilight, gleaming;  
Leave this small world behind.  
Enter the Source for all your healing;  
Return, all fruit, no rind...

## Child's (?) Prayer

Now I lay me down to sleep  
And hope for dreams of bliss.  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep;  
His wish may I not miss.  
If I should die before I wake,  
May He make loved ones glad.  
I pray the Lord my soul to take  
But let folks not be sad.

## Spirit Ship

And the  
Waves keep rolling  
Over; some of  
Blood—most vital  
Suffering; some of  
Oil—healing  
Balm; and, some of  
Water—  
Mercy granted to this  
Heart still coming  
Home...

## Perception

See the  
Sea of  
Bounty or  
Die of drowning  
Thirst.

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to deepen the experience, visit:

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This is where we discuss the poems' ideas  
and feelings...

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“Spiritual struggle:  
an activity best performed alone...”  
~ Alexander M Zoltai