

# Candela



Newsletter of the Swedenborg Association of Australia Inc.

Organisational Details are provided on the next page

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

JUNE 2025

ISSUE 120

Enjoy this next issue of Candela and find ways of allowing things in it to touch your life and the way you live.

I'm writing this and you're reading this. I can't see you, nor you me. We may be 1 km, 100 kms or 1000 kms apart, at a distance. But if you get what I'm writing about, we're closer together. If you know me or I know you, and we're good friends, we're closer still, and if you mean more to me than life itself, while you're not me, there's no gap.

Those are the worlds we live in, set physical distances and variable spiritual distances. And generally, we cope but if you mutually fall in love with a Peruvian tourist you met in Wollongong, the two distance types become a major problem.



In the spiritual world, physical being-apart distances don't happen because physicality is only an appearance there. It looks like distance to the eye because of the meaningful order of representations in the spiritual world but really,

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Photo by Bas Flaap on Unsplash

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Please note: the views expressed in this Newsletter are those of each contributor and do not necessarily reflect any particular position of the S.A.A. or its committee.

## NEXT ISSUE - September 2025

*I hope you enjoy reading and thinking about the ideas presented in this Candela. Would you like to share some ideas or write a short article. Please get them to me by 20<sup>th</sup> August.*

*Ruth*

email to [ruth@duckworth.me](mailto:ruth@duckworth.me)



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For details on how to join, call (02) 9416 2812 or browse <https://swedenborg.com.au/contact/>

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far and near, and there and here, are governed much more by affection and like-mindedness than by strolling over to someone you know. But there just has to be an overall order to it or else we'd be jettisoning and zooming all over the place.

And do just note that the opposite holds true and moves us apart. If you and I have little or nothing in common apart from being blood-related or neighbours here or tragically, married, we've no cause to think about meeting up. If we hate each other, it may even have first completely distanced us here in this world!

Now, let's bring God in. Is distance to do with God? I believe not, because I believe that God is always everywhere (over, under, between, around, and a whole stack of other prepositions). But an awful lot of religious ideas seem to depict God in distance terms - God on high, coming in the clouds, us 'going' to heaven, where is God when life hurts? and so on. I

remember a church board in my teens which dealt with this well, "When God seems far off, who has moved?"

In 1990, Bette Midler sang "God is watching us from a distance..." and while the lyrics speak of it looking like everything's perfect seen from a distance but close up you see the hurt and loss, equating God with distance is just not on! God is right there in every hurt, salving pain where human beings will let him.

But God definitely watches. God watches over, over us, over every atom in creation. "The Lord sees everything a person does. He knows every path you go along." (Proverbs 5:21) "The Lord is the one who keeps you safe. He is always with you." (Psalm 121:8) These are just two examples of many mentions of God's complete presence.



Photo by 法号 削你 on Unsplash

But all of this goes on without distance. Swedenborg makes a huge point that we are kept in life every moment, every fraction of every moment. But not from outside or over there, but from inside. Inside what? Not physically somewhere inside us; there isn't a God cell. But inside our heart, our mind, and basically, inside our whole being. To use the idea of one of our ministers, God does not knock on our door like a postman - God knocks on the door of our heart, and knocks from inside it, so as to come out into the open. That's what we're to open, and open ourselves to.

*Enjoy finding things you  
never knew were there.*

*Julian*



## Virtues - Courage by Darren Brunne

Virtues are the essence of our character. Practicing virtues can help open our life to new possibilities and greater joy and fulfillment.

Courage is the state we achieve when we use knowledge and determination to overcome our fears. Courage gives us the ability to move forwards when everything else says 'give up'. It allows us to face adversity with boldness and strength. The times that we need courage the most are when we have made poor choices ending in mistakes or are being assaulted by negative belief systems. Courage gives us the ability to look to the Divine for help during our most severe battles and thereby take the next step.



Photo by The Chaffins on Unsplash

### Definition

The ability to do something that frightens one; bravery. strength in the face of pain or grief.  
*Synonyms* - bravery · braveness · courageousness · pluck · pluckiness · valour · fearlessness · intrepidity · intrepidness · nerve · daring · audacity · boldness · dauntlessness

**Opposite** – cowardice · timidity

### Quotes

*"Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."*

— **Winston S. Churchill**

*"Courage is the most important of all the virtues because without courage, you*

*can't practice any other virtue consistently."*

— **Maya Angelou**

*"You cannot swim for new horizons until you have courage to lose sight of the shore."*

— **William Faulkner**

*"A ship is safe in harbour, but that's not what ships are for."*

— **John A. Shedd**

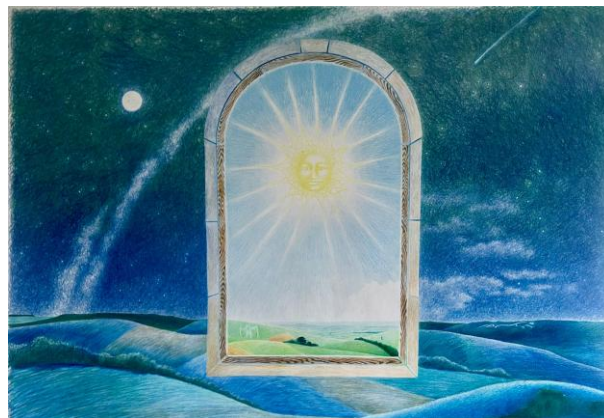
*"Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear - not absence of fear."*

— **Mark Twain**

### Scriptural Quotes

*"Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."*

**Deuteronomy 31:6**



**Drawing by David Fitzjohn**

*"Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all*





that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be



thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

**Joshua 1:7-9**

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

**2 Timothy 1:7**

### **Meditation/Statement/Prayer**

- I give myself permission to go into places that are uncomfortable.
- I welcome new challenges that life sends my way.
- I believe in always thinking and acting aright even though it may cost me.
- I allow the truth to confront me even though it may hurt, knowing that in the end courage will prevail.
- I resist fear, knowing that it will flee and peace will take its place.
- I daily find courage in the Lord's Word and His promises.

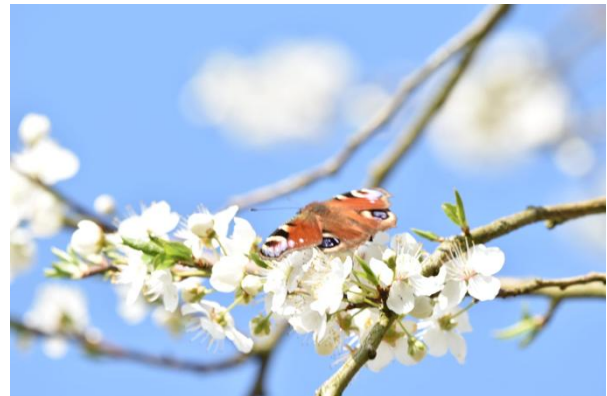
I am thankful Lord, for the gift of Courage. You cause me to ride upon the high places of the earth and my enemy flees in seven directions.

### **John 16:33**

I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take courage; I have overcome the world!"

### **Secrets of Heaven 3780**

I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith Jehovah, thoughts of peace ([Jer. 29:11](#)) So in Haggai: The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former; for in this place will I give peace ([Hag. 2:9](#)). And in Zechariah: They shall be a seed of peace; the vine shall give her fruit. And the earth shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew ([Zech. 8:12](#)). In David: Keep integrity and behold the upright, because the end for that man is peace ([Ps. 37:37](#)). In Luke: Jesus saith to his disciples, Into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: but if not, it shall turn to you again ([Luke 10:5-6](#)). In John: Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you ([John 14:27](#)). Again: Jesus said, These things have I spoken unto you that in Me ye may have peace ([John 16:33](#)).



In all these passages in the supreme sense "peace" signifies the Lord; and in the representative sense His kingdom. And good from the Lord therein, thus the Diving which flows into good, or into the affections of good, which also causes joy and happiness from the inmost. From this it is manifest what is meant by these words of the benediction:

Jehovah lift up His faces upon thee and give thee peace ([Num. 6:26](#))

Photos by Stephanie White.



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## Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and ....Star Wars

By Julian Duckworth

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### Introduction

Let me first explain the title. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are Biblical figures who feature very prominently early in the Bible. They are, Abraham, then Abraham's son Isaac, and then Isaac's son and Abraham's grandson, Jacob. As a trio, they are referred to all through the Bible. The three of them are seen as the patriarchs or 'first founding fathers' of Israel. Each of them contributed significantly to the creation of the people of Israel as the embodiment of all human beings - like you and me - who can relate to God as the source of our life.

Please note: None of what we will look at is political or race-related, but only spiritual, as the whole Bible is, as the revelation of God.

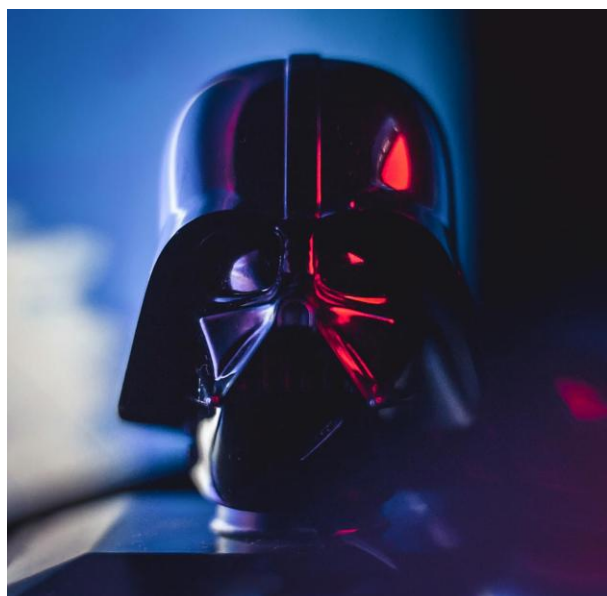


Photo by Lucas Ianiak

And then, in the title, comes 'and ... Star Wars'. The Star Wars movies are

a set of nine movies since 1977, plus additional movies and recent series since, which connect and fill in the gaps to give us a more cohesive understanding of the Star Wars series as a whole. This article attempts to see meaningful connections between these two very different portrayals, one ancient from around 800 BC and Biblical, and one there in our own lifetime and culture from 1977 onward. The connection is in the message we get and in the accurate portrayals of our human condition, seen in subtle overlapping layers of goodness and badness.

One important point to realise is that sacred texts, ancient and global myths, folk tales, and many of today's movies try to describe and bring home to us our genuine human condition and our spiritual complexity.

We'll be looking at a curious feature which is there in the Bible stories of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. Each of these three important figures has what is nowadays called a 'foil', a person who stands in opposition, contrast, or you could say as a 'spanner in the works'. We see this in movies too, with Batman's nemesis being The Joker, and Superman's being Lex Luthor, and it is most subtly there in Star Wars as we will see later on. The fascinating thing about a foil or a nemesis (arch-enemy) is that very often it has been a close companion in the first part of the relationship, but things then changed. This is tremendously important for us to be aware of.



Here is a question for you. Is genuine religion 'simple' or 'complex'. Some would say it's simple - you obey, you live a good life as ordered by God, you stop doing all the bad things. Some actually go further with the simplicity of it. We're bad, and Jesus died on the cross to be the sacrifice for our badness. Believe in that fully, and our inherent badness is dealt with and we're saved. As someone recently said to me, "Julian, I'm really a very simple person..."

This has an element of truth to it. Morally, it's really important to see that good is good and bad is bad. In that way they stand distinctly apart. Jesus did die on the cross from his love for us all, but this redeems us (frees us) to enable us to examine and see ourselves and keep choosing what is 'the good' and turning from what is 'the bad'. This is spiritual life which is more than moral life. We are then involved in our continual salvation.

Complex can mean 'complicated' of course, like a car engine or a business venture. Note that the word 'complex' originally means 'seeing the whole reality in all its parts' and that is a very accurate description, and it's also true of real religion. Swedenborg fronts up to this spiritual complexity all the time, basically saying, 'Keep turning away from any wrongs you see you have, and God will then be able to keep re-creating you, re-forming you with your continual help, and your life will be progressively regenerated.'

### Abraham - Isaac - Jacob Abraham

While there are people in the Bible before Abraham, he really is the starting point of the main Bible narrative. Abram (his earlier name) was called by God to

leave where he was and go to a land which he would be shown. He did so. In due course he took his nephew, Lot, under his wing. This led to complications, rescues, divisiveness, and finally Abraham and Lot separated, and Lot chose to live in Sodom and Gomorrah, an attractive green well-watered area. Abraham stayed where he was. Lot's daughters seduced their father and fell pregnant and their children became the Moabites and the Ammonites, related to Israel but problematic.

Please note that Abraham and Lot were **uncle and nephew**.

### Isaac

Abraham's son, Isaac was born to his wife Sarah who had been barren. Before this, Abraham had a son, Ishmael, by Sarah's handmaid, Hagar. When Isaac was born, Ishmael kept mocking him, and Sarah demanded that Hagar and Ishmael be banished. They were saved from death in the desert by the Angel of God, and Ishmael traditionally became the father of the Arab people. Hagar was an Egyptian, and she gave Ishmael a wife from Egypt. So now, please note that Isaac and Ishmael were **half-brothers**, a closer relationship.



### Jacob

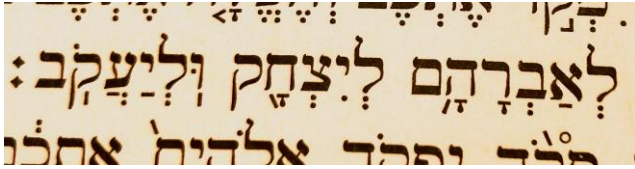
Isaac married Rebekah who, after twenty years of barrenness, gave birth to twins, Esau and Jacob. They struggled together in the womb, and at birth, Jacob seized Esau's heel. They had a tempestuous relationship as they grew up, and Jacob deceived Esau twice, first to get the firstborn birthright for a bowl of stew, and second, to get Isaac's blessing by pretending to be Esau, the firstborn, which deceived Isaac. "So Esau hated Jacob." Much later they reconciled. Esau is said to be the father of the Edomites, a Canaanite people.

And now, please note very much that Esau and Jacob were **twins**, the closest relationship.





Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the patriarchs, are the start of the Israelites, the people of God.



But each human being is one of the people of God, and the 'complexity' of these first three illustrates the subtle interplay and co-existence in us all of the presence of 'the good' and 'the bad'. These are both there in us like wheels within wheels, layers within layers. It shows the complex and complexity of our existence, our states, our tensions, our sense of self, often caught up in appearances and how things seem, and our sense of others, which is ideally a thing of heaven, but in life, it can be real hard work. It all has to be seen, accepted, managed, with God there alongside us.

Before we move on to Star Wars, note the following about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob:

- They are grandfather - father - son.
- Each one of them has a problematic counter-figure, Lot, Ishmael, Esau.
- Progression each time is towards a closer and closer genetic relationship
- The starting-point is either good or more uneventful than the later conflicting events.
- All three are the 'founders' of the people of Israel, who represent humanity, including you and me, in living a spiritual life.
- And, lastly and perplexingly, Jacob is himself the problem son, and yet it is he who is the father of the twelve tribes of Israel. His problems led him to become open to God.

We need something from Swedenborg to help us with this example of Biblical figures and their meaning. Swedenborg emphasises that the Bible as a whole has an inner, personal, spiritual meaning which is represented by the storyline, imagery

and people in the text we read. The spiritual meaning is about God and about our spiritual life and growth.

So, while Abraham, Isaac and Jacob may have been historical, their dealings and developments represent spiritual things in ourselves. Two examples - how Abraham obeyed God's call to him and he went to 'a land he knew not' means our desire to live a different life than living just for ourselves, a life we know nothing about at that point. Sarah and Rebekah's barrenness shows us how our life can be unproductive until we see that and want this new life, the 'child' they each bore.



Photo by [Aarón Blanco Tejedor](#) on [Unsplash](#)

## The Symbolism of the Family

Swedenborg tells us that family relationships - father, mother, child, brother, sister, son, daughter, in-laws, and others, as well as people who come into Bible stories, are all meaning things in ourselves in our spiritual life. Our heart and mind are related almost as a marriage and the 'child' is our spiritual offspring of living a new and truer life.

This deeper meaning isn't a code; it is a representation which enables us to recognise aspects of ourselves and what goes on in us. A sort of psycho-drama, but perhaps better to call it a 'revelation'. If you want a start, think of Judas Iscariot, the disciple, then the betrayer.

One way of depicting this is to draw a circle and then put about ten dots outside



this circle. Then draw the same circle and now put the ten dots inside it. Aha! This changes everything. The circle is me or you, and first you're reading, watching, enjoying whatever is going on out there in the interaction of the characters ... we all love a good drama unfolding before our eyes. But the second circle shows us that this is going on in ourselves, pictured in the drama and its players. We often enjoy drama because we are seeing ourselves in it.

## Star Wars

Now we will move on to Star Wars, that epic series of sci-fi movies, the details of which would fill a whole book. We are mainly on the look-out for parallels and illustrations of relationships and how certain figures change their nature.

The basic storyline of Star Wars follows the rise and fall of Anakin Skywalker, a \*Jedi who becomes Darth Vader, and the subsequent generations of his family. It's a story of good and evil, the struggle against tyranny, represented by the Galactic Empire, and the potential for redemption through rebellion and courage. The saga spans three main trilogies: the prequel trilogy (following Anakin's rise, and his turning to the dark side), the original trilogy (focusing on his son Luke Skywalker's journey), and the sequel trilogy (introducing a new generation led by Rey).

\*A Jedi is a member of the mystical knightly order in Star Wars, trained to guard the peace and order of the universe.



Photos by [Matt Hudson](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Here are the main relationships in Star Wars. I have left out the third sequel trilogy.

I have created this as a list, for clarity and brevity, and highlighted some points after.

### Original Trilogy

- Luke Skywalker and Leia Organa (Princess Leia) (twin brother-sister)
- Darth Vader (was Anakin Skywalker, and Luke Skywalker (father-son))
- Han Solo and Leia Organa (love interests, husband and wife)
- Han Solo and Luke Skywalker (close friends)
- Obi-Wan Kenobi (noble Jedi Master) and Luke Skywalker (master and apprentice)

### Prequel Trilogy

- Obi-Wan Kenobi and Darth Maul (a major Sith figure) (enemies)
- Anakin Skywalker and Padmé Amidala (husband and wife)
- Anakin Skywalker and Obi-Wan Kenobi (best friends)
- Obi-Wan Kenobi and Padmé Amidala (close friends)

Luke Skywalker and Princess Leia do not at first know they are twin brother and sister.

Luke Skywalker does not know until their duel that Darth Vader (who was Anakin Skywalker) is his father.

Anakin Skywalker is encouraged to turn to the dark side by Lord Palpatine, Emperor of the Galactic Empire.

### Drawing all of this to a conclusion

I recently had two separate conversations about Star Wars, and in each case, the point that came across to me was the subtle nature of the story development in the movies. They simply are not black and white characters, playing the classic good versus evil that we see in stories like St George and the Dragon. Sacrifices are made, deaths of noble figures happen, and there is no certainty of the happy ending.





Characters by and large have qualities and outlooks and some actions that reveal an opposite twist to the one we might expect. This is definitely there, in some more than others. Whatever this comes from, it reveals a complex reality in human nature that speaks a lot to our own complex lives.

This is powerfully added to in the revelations at certain points that main figures in the movie are in fact closely related to each other but they never knew of this until it came out into the open. The fact that they are so related and even across good and bad boundaries provides an integrity to the whole story and to its meaning for us and about us.

Along with all of this is the scenario of gradually turning to the dark side, most of all in Anakin Skywalker, a Jedi, turning because of the Empire Lord Palpatine who similarly has succumbed to black darkness in his long ascendancy to power and control. Palpatine worked on Anakin with utter craft and insinuation, never forcing but planting dark power's allurements.

Steadfast figures like Yoda, Obi-Wan Kenobi, and the Jedi Council, serve as guardians for the order in the whole realm. They stay constant but they can only observe and decide what can be done, but they cannot impose or ensure an outcome. We have that within us as well, with its great potential and the need for it. It is essentially the will in us for good to prevail and it is for us to seize it.

The stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of Star Wars give us helpful and powerful pictures in different ways about our humanity, with its potential strengths and its possible descent into the abyss and the loss. The two sets came together in my mind during one of my conversations, which then seemed to suggest that I explore them some more. I deeply believe that the presence of books, stories, scriptures, movies and other portrayals of interaction, conflict, passion, weakness, strength, resolution and triumph are all

incredibly popular because we are watching ourselves without realising that we are. But I feel that somewhere inside us, we know very well.

We finish with this quote from Swedenborg, from Divine Providence paragraph 23

"The Lord provides for the union of what is good and true in others by the balance between heaven and hell. What is evil and what is false are continually breathing out together from hell, and what is good and what is true are continually breathing out together from heaven. Every one of us is kept in that balance as long as we are living in this world, and this is what gives us our freedom to think, intend, speak, and act, the freedom in which we can be reformed."



## Welcome to our new members

We have some new members,

Vicky Karmogianni - Sydney

Paul Spence – Sydney

And welcome back to David Stagg



We hope you enjoy the Candela and can make use of the many activities offered at the Swedenborg Centre.

Photo by Stephanie White



## Mental images – Are we responsible for them?

By Stephen Russell-Lacy

Emanuel Swedenborg was an 18th-century Christian mystic. He has something to say about the origin of our mental images. He claimed he could converse with people occupying, what for most of us is usually, a hidden spirit realm. This he termed the 'spiritual world'. He said this communication took place in full waking consciousness on a daily basis for the last 27 years of his life. I would suggest that his extraordinary sense of the presence of a spirit realm give us evidence of the unconscious presence of spirits in our own minds.

Also, they provide a rational understanding of why we need not identify with the mental images and other contents of our own consciousness. This is because he says what comes into the mind does not originate from ourselves but from spirits present with us.

### Knowing about spirits and our mental images

*There is nothing that a person thinks or wills that can originate within himself. Rather, everything flows into him; goodness and truth flow in. (E. Swedenborg)*

According to this view when we make good choices then troubling spirits are no longer welcome in our minds. And so go away because they no longer find in us a kindred spirit. This happens when we stop identifying with their unwanted mental images. Then the inflow of spiritual life into our souls is not hindered by them. We can then experience unhindered states of calm and peace as they are replaced by the influence of good spirits.

When the social presence, or even the mere mental image of someone, makes us cross and upset, we cannot immediately change how we feel. You may remember feeling in the grip of an overwhelming negative emotion.



We cannot feel differently in an instant. But if we wish to receive higher inspiration what we can do is disown what in our mind's eye we disapprove of. Not identifying ourselves with the mental images, thoughts and feelings of lower spirits can dramatically change our state of mind. Instead of focusing on resentful thoughts, we might listen to the higher spirit of reason and bring to mind

someone's good points. And this can help moderate our anger. Likewise, instead of raising one's voice and clenching one's fists, one could speak more quietly and try to relax the body. In these ways, we remove blocks to the presence of inner light and negative feelings can be slowly modified. We are not compelled to entertain what is bad for us.

### Freedom to change our mental images

Once we have decided what needs to change in ourselves then the question arises is this even possible? Don't social norms, the law, bodily health and abilities, finances, climate, the state of public services, and so on, all limit personal choice?



Yet, deep down within the human spirit is there not a sense of inner freedom of the individual to choose between what we see as negative and positive, good and bad, right and wrong? There are several spiritual practices that support personal change. They all require this inner freedom to choose to follow their guidelines and commit to regular performance.



Photo by [Brett Jordan](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Swedenborg wrote that our inner freedom to choose comes from an enlightened ability to understand what is good and true. This spiritual gift enables us to distinguish a choice between for example what we crave and what would be more sensible. The heart may sometimes want something now, that in the long run is bad for us, but the good sense of the head may occasionally remind us of the pitfalls in pursuing it – whether it be fattening food, overspending on something we cannot afford, or always insisting on getting our own way.

Understanding that we need not identify ourselves with mental images or for that matter anything in the conscious mind helps us to either disown or attach ourselves to some fleeting thoughts, feelings, etc. that come from elsewhere. So which desire we take on board is up to us.

## Responding to our mental images

Some writers take the view that we are able to gain our inner potential by getting in touch with our true self simply through gaining self-insight. However, there is a problem with the view that awareness and understanding is sufficient for personal growth. Are we not responsible for using our inner freedom of personal choice so that insights and ideals show up in our daily conduct?

**It's hard to sit down and meditate after a day of lying, cheating and hurting people. (Jack Kornfield)**

Have you heard this story?

A man was preparing a great feast and invited many guests. But they all began to make excuses. The first said, "I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me." Another said, "I have just bought five oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me." Still another said, "I have just got married, so I can't come."

The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant to go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.

We may not be responsible for the impulses, thoughts, fantasies, and feelings that enter our minds. However, this story tells us something about this. We are responsible for how we choose to respond to them. Do we make up excuses for not attending to the feast of spiritual nourishment that flows into us, such as uplifting, enlightening inspiration, and tolerant, patient, considerate, kindly impulses?

## Over-emphasis on guilt in Christianity

I think it's up to us. No excuses allowed. The more we employ our personal strengths, insights, skills and talents for the sake of what is useful then the more





## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

To become a member of the Swedenborg Association of Australia, check the website at [www.swedenborg.com.au](http://www.swedenborg.com.au) and click "Contact" in the top menu, which has details on benefits of **membership** and an application form listing current membership rates.

Also check the website at [www.swedenborg.com.au](http://www.swedenborg.com.au) for details of **group events** which are held online, but you can also be physically at various locations around Australia. Follow the "about → contact" menu items on the website for a list of locations and contact info of your nearest group convenor, and see the "events" menu item for Zoom links so you can join online events.

Our new website is continually being updated with new study material and latest news and information.

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spiritual mental images and gifts we will receive. But if we waste them, then we will lose whatever we had been given to start with. Use it or lose it. We use or lose our talents and the good ideas that are given to us.

Do we speak and act on any discriminatory, self-serving, self-indulgent fantasies and impulses that happen to come our way? If not, we are not culpable for them and they won't take hold of us.

*It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles. (Gospel of Matthew)*

In other words, we may have present in consciousness all sorts of things for which we cannot be blamed. However, what we speak is prompted by the heart. What comes out of our mouth we have taken on board in our heart. What we intend and will is what becomes part of our make-up. If it's bad then it sullies us.

What comes into the mind creates an illusory false self for which we are not responsible unless we confirm its ways in our daily living.

I can't say strongly enough that there has been an overemphasis in Christianity on personal sin and judgment. Guilt and shame have often resulted in harmful repression and denial of related thoughts, urges, and impulses,

etc. Instead, if we were to remember 'what goes into the mouth' does not 'defile' us, then we wouldn't feel we need to defend ourselves by minimizing or denying much of what passes through the mind.

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## We must look into ourselves

We must start seeing our personal states of mind in our thoughts and feelings, good or not, kind or unkind. This is a big change for us, but it opens up a new level in us where we see we do have faults and we can start dealing with them.

"Do you want to be saved? Then you must admit to your wrongdoing and do the work of being sorry for it.

Admitting our wrongdoing means recognising the things we are doing that are destructive, seeing them in ourselves, admitting them, taking responsibility for them, and criticising ourselves for them. When we do this in front of God, we are admitting our wrongdoing.

Doing the work of being sorry for it means, after admitting our wrongs, asking with a humble heart for help in giving them up, not doing them anymore, and living a new life in harmony with the principles of kindness and faith."

Take some time to look back at your own thoughts and feelings over recent days and see when it's been lovely, calm, and enjoyable and when it's been hard, strange, or upsetting in some way.