

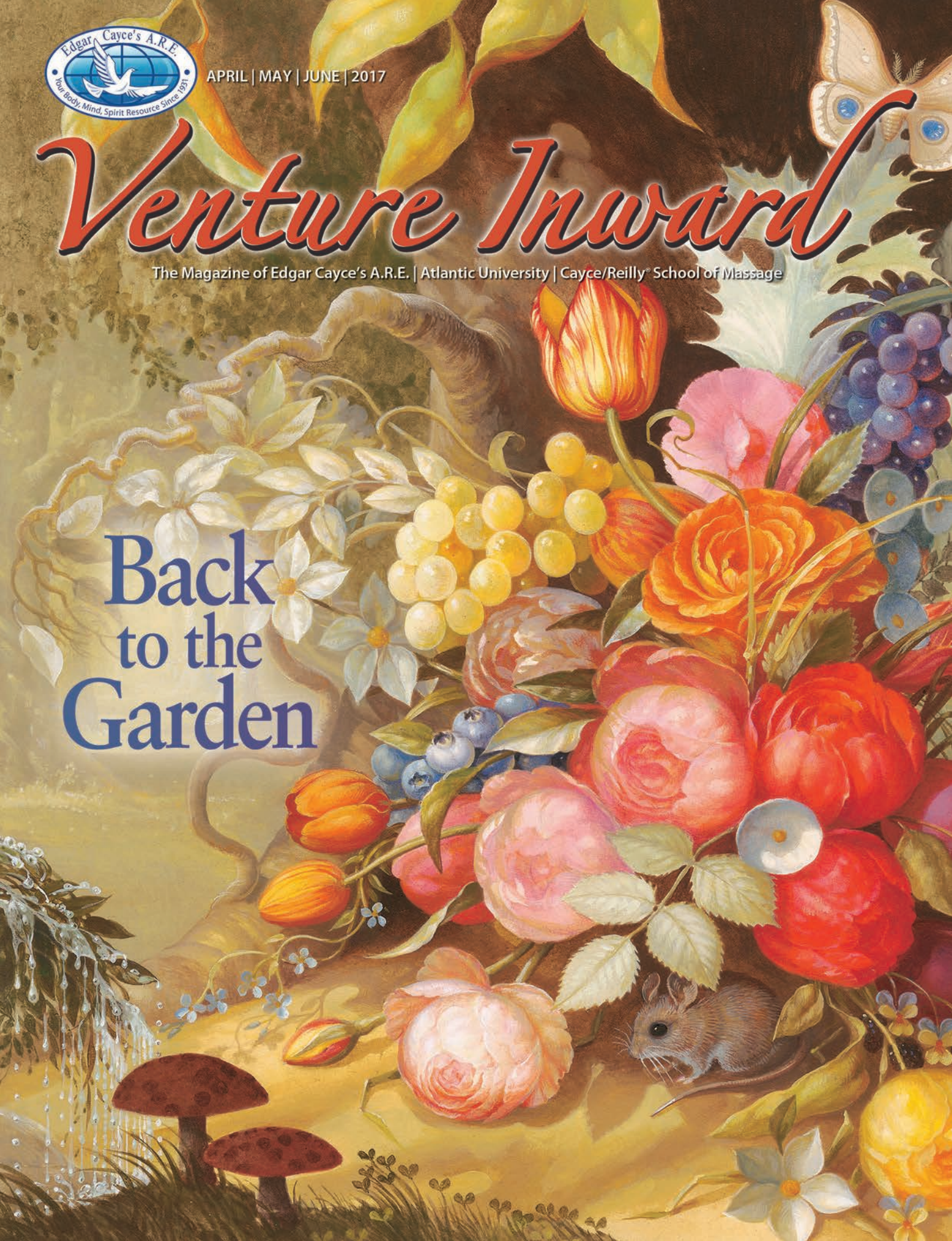


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Back
to the
Garden



From Eden to Gethsemane

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ADAM'S JOURNEY BEGAN in the Garden of Eden and ended in the garden of Gethsemane. The first Adam fell from grace through willful disobedience; the last Adam came into grace through perfect obedience. Exile from Eden can be defined in one word: disobedience; Gethsemane in one phrase: "Thy will be done." Symbolically, a soul's entire journey takes place between these two gardens. It's worth every whit, if we wish to travel from the first garden to the last, following the pattern of the Christ: from Adam to Jesus.

Obedience

The word obedience has negative connotations. This is because people associate being obedient to being subjugated by others. Obedience may imply submissiveness without our choice—as in being cowed into submission. Well-trained dogs follow their master's commands: "sit," "stand," "run," "fetch." They are obedient.

The scriptural use of the word obedience doesn't imply servitude nor becoming automatons. Obedience is our personal choice. Nobody is forcing us; it's a choice of our free will to become fully compliant with spiritual laws. When we say "Thy will be done," we mean to say that we'll be in accord with God's will, with all the consequences that come with it, crosses included.

To make it palatable, we may replace the word obey with, "adhere to," "comply with," "conform to," "to be at one with" and so on—all of which the readings used synonymously. But, for the moment, let's stay with this word so that we can understand the scriptural as well as the Cayce readings' perspective.

Obedience implies that there is disobedience. Disobedience is non-compliance with spiritual laws. When we give in to the ways of the world—hatred, jealousy, gossip, violence, lust, sloth, arrogance—we are being disobedient to truth or the

will of God. In his counsel to a variety of people, Cayce told them what he once told a 38-year-old woman: "*Faults and failures, sin and sorrow, are the outgrowth of disobedience to the divine law.*" (2408-1) Obedience is choosing to live with the fruits of the spirit: "love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." (Galatians 5:22-23) Once we choose to align our will with the will of God, we're being obedient to spiritual laws and no longer "servants of sin." (Romans 6:15-23) Put differently, we are no longer under karmic law, but we live by grace.

Most suffering is a natural outgrowth of disobedience to spiritual, mental, and physical laws. In a physical reading given for a 59-year-old woman, between prescribing treatments, Cayce said that her condition was "*a result of disobedience of laws.*" She has an opportunity now to become obedient to spiritual laws, even as she undergoes physical treatments. To bring about healing, she was told she could attune to the divine if she was willing, and He will direct, adding: "*Then let Him have His way with thee.*" (69-4)

In the Catholic Church, obedience to superiors is greatly stressed. Catholic saints seem to live this virtue to a high degree. One such saint was St. Martin de Porres (1579-1639). Growing up in Lima,

Peru, he was trained under a barber-surgeon and gained experience in treating wounds and illnesses using herbal remedies. When he became a lay brother in the Dominican Order, he continued to care for the sick within his religious community as well as lay people. Because of his miraculous healing abilities and his unlimited generosity, many sick people came for treatments. Often, he had to lodge them at the monastery overnight. Because of the overwhelming number of people who needed his help, he even gave his own bed for the sick. This was against the rules of the order, for which he was warned. On a later occasion, his superior chastised him for allowing someone to stay in his cell, again citing his violation of the rule. While he was known for his obedience to his superiors, Martin reasoned with him: "Forgive me, Father, but I have not sinned in what I did. True, I put him there, but he came with an open stomach. The urgency of the case demanded the action. And when charity calls, should it not be above obedience?" The obedience referred to here is obedience to a Catholic hierarchy, not to God. Martin was aware of this, and willing to reason that obedience to God may be disobedience to the worldly rules. Martin wasn't afraid to take this risk in order to love his neighbor as himself.



Leaving Eden

The Garden of Eden is the original consciousness of purity and grace, the superconscious state, that all souls enjoyed in the beginning. God had warned Adam and Eve not to eat from the tree of good and evil, lest they experience death. (Deuteronomy 30:15) Eating of the apple symbolizes the exercise of their free will, in defiance to God's commandment rather than being in harmony with God's will. This disobedience is "Original Sin."

In exercising their free will in this way, Adam and Eve's citizenship to Eden or the Kingdom of God was revoked. It was a point of departure and separation from God, from the infinite to the finite, from Spirit to matter. In this fallen state, oneness or at-onement with God was lost.

To reestablish at-onement, earthly incarnations were necessary. Once separated, they had to "*pass through all stages of development*" in the earth and its solar system. (900-10) It was the start of a painful but grand journey in the process of soul evolution or soul development. Earth provided the opposing influences of good and evil in which the free will could be tested. Choosing good meant choosing God's will, which manifested as acts of pure love—kindness, patience, forgiveness, charity and truthfulness for instance. Evil was essentially selfishness manifesting as "*self-exaltation, self-glorification, self-indulgence, self-gratification,*" with little or no consideration for others. (254-91) Separating ourselves through selfishness means misusing divine and innate creative energy, the same inheritance that the prodigal son squandered.

Adam journeyed, incarnation after incarnation in time and space, until the evolution was completed in the last Adam, Jesus. With patience, he lived the truth and overcame the enticing influences of the world, becoming aware of his oneness with God. "*Tempted in the fires of flesh and purified, Jesus entered into the glory of companionship with God.*" (262-89)

Jesus "*learned obedience from the things that he suffered*" in physical conditions as well as in mental anguish. But he did so with the *purpose* of making his will one with God's. (900-232) and (Hebrews 5:8-9) Jesus became "*one in creative purpose and in activity*" with

God. (2420-1) The *purpose* was to love God with all his heart, soul, and strength and the *activity* was to love his neighbor as himself—to go about doing good. Thus, Jesus became the author and finisher, the alpha and the omega, of the perfect pattern for spiritual evolution.

Jesus could have taken the offer Satan made to him during the 40 days of fasting in the wilderness. And just as well he could have avoided the cross. However, choosing either would have meant following his own will, not God's. This would have kept him exiled from Eden.

"You are Gods."

(John 10:34)

While praying in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus agonized over the coming cross and death experience. But through prayer and meditation he received strength and courage: "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will." (Matthew 26:39) Having realized that it was God's will that he embrace the cross, he placed his full faith in God. In other words, he "*fought with self*" or wrestled with the situation in the garden, and reconciled himself with it there. Thus, Jesus "*overcame that Cross in Gethsemane's meditations.*" (1213-1) The inner crucifixion happened in Gethsemane when Jesus chose God's will over his own. Jesus was not only obedient to the will of God in life, but "obedient unto death." (Philippians 2:8) The result was resurrection, ascension, and a glorified state.

Cayce said that when we look at our own Gethsemane experiences, we only see "*a road of thorns; the perspiration, the sweat of blood...anything but Happiness.*" This is the way it is commonly depicted. Yet, having overcome the cross in Gethsemane's meditations, Jesus was happy. Even on the way to Calvary, he laughed and joked, and spoke kind words that brought happiness to others. (262-111)


Entering Gethsemane

If Eden represents the point of departure, Gethsemane represents the point of arrival. Somewhere along the Eden-to-Gethsemane journey, an awakening

comes to us: "I will arise and go to my Father." Farther along, we realize: "I must be about my Father's business," until we complete our spiritual evolution: "I and my Father are one." (Luke 15:18, Luke 2:49, John 10:30) The whole experience from Eden to Gethsemane is about wrestling with and conquering self to find our god-self. (364-7)

Until and unless we've entered our own personal Gethsemane we haven't reached our spiritual maturity. Without reaching Gethsemane, there's no resurrection and no reinstatement of our citizenship to the Kingdom of God. If we enter Gethsemane, we can return to the Garden of Eden without the tempter—even as Jesus did. Our journey hasn't been in vain; we return fit to be companions and co-creators with God and to claim our spiritual heritage: "You are gods." (John 10:34) The path has been laid out, the way made open, to those who would care to enter.

God breathed into Adam and he became a living being; God baptized Jesus with the Holy Spirit and he became a life-giving being, a quickening spirit. (1 Cor. 15:45) Holy Spirit is given only to those who obey God. (Acts 5:32) Hence, there's no greater prayer than "Thy will be done," just as long as our actions mirror our prayer. "Thy will be done" is attuning our will with God's, and thus the at-onement we lost in Eden can be restored. And so, we meet every cross, every difficulty, and every challenge in our own garden. And after passing through our Gethsemane experiences, we too will become life-giving beings.

Jesus often went to Gethsemane to meditate and pray to learn the will of God, and so should we. We departed Eden a long time ago; Gethsemane is beckoning us. 



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