

ON GOD'S NAME AND OUR PARTICIPATION IN IT

The impetus behind this particular article is an observation of the great impasse that seems to exist, in our day in age, between the secular and the sacred aspects of human life. It would appear, that, more than in any other time in human history there exists a great divide between “what is of God” and “what is of mankind.”

Now, granted, from the moment that Adam and Eve found themselves standing outside the Garden Gate, there was a tremendous strain put on the relationship between God and his “choicest form of creation.” But, there was never an abyss established between the two. This would be impossible, for the very fact that if God ever even stopped thinking about the disobedient man and his wife, they would have ceased to exist for ever. What God loves he creates, what he creates he sustains and what he sustains will endure for ever – thanks to the plan he set in motion immediately after he was forced to lock the doors of Paradise.

What is very evident in our day in age is a devious, false and potentially fatal flaw in the thinking of modern men and women: on this side is us, on that side is God, maybe; on this side we must sink or swim on our own, on that side God is aloof and oftentimes asleep, if he is there at all; on this side the goal is self-determination and aggrandizement, on that side God seems powerless, irrelevant and annoying, if he is even there. This truly is the scenario for a great many people in the world – especially in our own country.

But all of this is a lie. It is a ploy from the spiritual enemy that duped mankind in the first place, and is seeking the complete ruin of the human race - which will last eternally!

Can you afford not to believe this?

It is my opinion that God has given us a great many ways of reminding us exactly of what the situation really consists, but among them all there is one that I have never heard of before - and it is found in our very spoken and written vocabulary hundreds, if not thousands, of times daily. They are the words: “I am” and “I.”

There is no way we can ever pronounce either of these phrases and really be “cut off” from God. Their very utterance proves that “we are made in the image and likeness of God.”

Revelation tells us that God’s Name is “I AM.” Moses needed to know what to tell the Israelites about God who wanted to enter into a special relationship with them. “What shall I tell them,” Moses asked God, “who shall I say you are? What is your name?” And God told Moses to say that “I AM” sent him. He is the GREAT I AM.

Now this is the same I AM who is maker of all things, crowning his creative activity by “making man in his own image and likeness.” If man truly is such a creation, then there should be much evidence of it. This very verbal self-expression has a stamp on it which cannot be removed. When Adam, and his wife, Eve, first uttered the word “I” (“I am”) they manifested their indissoluble and eternal connection with God. Only in the GREAT I AM can man utter his own “small I am.” And the very fact that we cannot communicate anything to anyone, including ourselves without using those terms definitely means something *theological!*

It ought to be a comforting thing to know that our “I” and “I am” originates and resides in God’s “I AM.” But this can also - because of the effects of Original Sin - seem like a threatening thing. For, the Evil One trying his best to convince us that God is lying to us - and that he is not our benevolent, loving Father; and that we are basically on our own and must grasp and grab for everything we can get to succeed in life. And so, it appears that God can be a threat to us. Therefore, we try to increase the size of our own “I” and “I am” - to fill in the void where God’s loving Fatherhood ought to be. This, of course, is rubbish. It is when we surrender our own “I am” to his, that everything makes sense and we can see the great dignity of our own “I am” in relation to God’s. One of the most significant goals of our life needs to be to find out how we can most perfectly give everything over to God! It is only when we completely lose our life that we will find it!

Knowing this ought to cause us to use the terms “I am” and “I” carefully! God used his Name very prudently and only creatively! He used it to bring forth life! He used it to make a pact with the people he chose to be his own! He used it to forgive them when they sinned

against him over and over again! He used it to promise a savior and redeemer - One who would eventually set everything right between us and him! He used it in anger - only when truly justified! He used it to promote peace and hope and life! We ought to use our sharing in his name the same way! The words and actions that come out of us ought to reflect the God in whose image we are created!

We need to use “I am” and “I” productively and fruitfully! In every situation and circumstance of our lives we *always* have a choice! We have a choice of speaking with love and kindness, words of truth - which precede our actions of loving service and acts of justice and truth. When we choose to speak and act using our small “I am” - it ought to reflect its connection to God’s GREAT I AM! If it does not, then we are overstepping our bounds. We are setting ourselves up to be greater than we actually are! We are making gods of ourselves! We are sinning!

We also know the GREAT I AM to be LOVE, and TRUTH. He has revealed himself as such! Somehow, then, the usage that we make of “I am” and “I” must also include love and truth.

It would seem that “saying and doing the loving thing” - as explained in Scripture - would offer insight into how best to use the terms “I am” and “I” - and thus guide our words and actions. For example: we have heard it said in Paul’s letter to the Corinthians:

Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, it is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.

We know that it is not a far leap to substitute the word God (GREAT I AM) for the word love in the above paragraph.

GREAT I AM, is patient, GREAT I AM is kind. GREAT I AM is not jealous, GREAT I AM is not pompous, GREAT I AM is not inflated, GREAT I AM is not rude, GREAT I AM does not seek its own interests, GREAT I AM is not quick-tempered, GREAT I

AM does not brood over injury, GREAT I AM does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. GREAT I AM bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. GREAT I AM never fails.

Now, after reading this article thus far, is it also not a distant leap to substitute the word “I am - I” for the word love in the above paragraph - so that it refers to myself.

“I am - I” is patient, “I am - I” is kind. “I am - I” is not jealous, “I am - I” is not pompous, “I am - I” is not inflated, “I am - I” is not rude, “I am - I” does not seek its own interests, “I am - I” is not quick-tempered, “I am - I” does not brood over injury, “I am - I” does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. “I am - I” bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. “I am - I” never fails.

Though we can only do these things imperfectly, we strive for perfection in them.

We need to spend our lives making efficacious and fruitful “informed” statements followed by “performative” actions that match what we have first thought and said. Then all will be better, until one day when all will be well: and *all will be all in Christ!*

The following table demonstrates what the usage of the terms: “I am” and “I” might look like in ordinary everyday language. These are only examples that are meant to spark deeper thought and discussion about them. They are about ingrained, basic attitudes that - when “tabled” - might generate some desire for change.

ORDERED	DISORDERED
“I am open...”	“I am closed...”
“I am receptive...”	“I am grasping...”
“I am welcoming...”	“I am aloof...”
“I give...”	“I take...”
“I love...”	“I hate...”
“I expect...”	“I demand...”

"I want what is best for you..."	"I want what is best for me..."
"I surrender what is mine..."	"I want what is yours..."
"I believe what I cannot see..."	"I believe only what I can see..."
"I am free only to say and do what is right and good..."	"I insist that I am free to say or do anything that I want to..."
"I forgive..."	"I resent..."
"I am a grateful child of God..."	"I am grateful that I am not like other dependent, subordinate people..."
"I obey..."	"I refuse to listen..."
"I pray..."	"I disclaim..."

And so I ask you, are you more on the right side, or the left side of the table? Do you believe that you can make necessary changes?

What participates in the Name of God - the GREAT I AM - is on the left hand side!

Speaking and doing anything less - anything less than what is of God - is speaking and doing what is disordered, and to varying degrees sinful. We are called to holiness of life and not a life of sin!

Once we believe that "we" are a part of God's love and truth in sharing life in his Name, then we must live it out - all the days of our lives - or our lives will be full of confusion, chaos and calamity!

And so I ask: what is your life full of right now?

Our words and our actions ought to proclaim God as love and truth. We have been given free will so that we can loving will to choose charity and truth as the manifestation of our faith in our Father's love for us - our Father who has loved us first! And isn't this what God intended in the first place? Didn't he intend for us to be caring, honest, truthful people - as we deal peaceably and lovingly with one another in this life, while we await fulfillment and eternal beatitude in the next.

Perhaps the greatest statement we can make to God is simply this:

**“I am thankful for everything, Father!
What can I do for you today?”**

The bottom line: [try to remember that whenever we say “I” or “I am” - we are participating in the very **Name of God**. This, by indissoluble association, obliges us to speak and act accordingly! Otherwise, the consequences are of our own making.](#)

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