The Promise of Light: A Christmas Story for All Ages

Michael Lindfield
It was Christmas Eve and the stars hung crisp and bright in the northern sky. The small town lay hushed and sleeping under a thick blanket of snow as the two children snuggled closer to each other and gazed in wonder at the visitor at the foot of their bed. They had never seen a real Angel before.

The tingling sensation inside their stomachs was definitely not one of fear - more a thrill of unexplained delight and curiosity. It was Sophie who spoke first while her younger brother, Jasper, watched with fascination as the visitor stabilized itself: moving from a shimmering silver light to a gentle golden pulse.

“Who are you and why have you come?” came the awed whisper from the girl. There was a silence that filled the room - not the disconcerting hollow kind that sometimes grew around them in the night as they tried to sleep - this silence was a living peace that washed over them like the warm and happy waves they remembered from holidays by the sea.

The two children were not sure how the Angel spoke because the sound did not seem to be coming across the short distance between them and the end of the bed. It was as if the comforting tones of the celestial traveler called to them inside their own heads.

“I have come because you called me”, reassured the Angel. “Last night I heard you asking your brother why people give presents to each other at Christmas and your voice was so full of deep searching that I could not resist coming in person to bring you a response.”

“All prayers and heartfelt questions are always answered”, the visitor explained.

“Usually we send down tiny seed-thoughts into your world for your imagination to capture. Many of the ideas and much of the understanding that you and other children possess started life as seeds sprinkled from heaven. However, as it is Christmas and as it has been a while since I last traveled through time and space to Earth, I thought that these seeds could be hand-delivered to you from the starry realms.”

By now it was clear to Sophie and Jasper that this was no ordinary Christmas and this no ordinary visitor. Any apprehension they might have had a while ago had now completely vanished. They relaxed in the secure warmth flowing from their new-found friend that was bathing the room in a gentle light.
“Perhaps you might like to hear a story that we Angels delight in telling.”

“Oh, yes please”, came the twin response, “do tell us!”

“Then close your eyes and relax and I will begin.”

Jasper and Sophie did what was asked of them and soon they were listening to a story the like of which they had never heard before.

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“Once, now and to be - beyond time and place,” the Angel intoned with a hint of magic in its voice, “there was and is a great wise Being known as Solar. So and Lah as you children know from your lessons at school are two of the notes on the musical scale. In a similar fashion you can think of Solar as being a special sound in the scale that makes up the Music of the Spheres - the eternal Song of Creation. Solar is the one who is directly responsible for singing into form our particular Sun system of which your Earth is one small yet important part.”

“Would it surprise you if I said that Solar is a Musician of Light whose purpose and work is to fashion great cosmic symphonies of creation that are dreamed and held in God’s Heart and Mind? Everything you see around you - your toys, the bed and the house you live in are all tiny fragments of God that are dancing to the shape and sound of that heavenly composition.”

The Angel paused a moment to allow Jasper and Sophie time to fully register his words and then he continued with the story.

“In fact, dear children, you two mortals are very much part of Solar’s present musings for your planet represents the fourth movement of the seven-part Second Celestial Symphony. Because of its special nature, Earth was chosen for the deep rich ‘andante’ movement that is to be played slowly and with great feeling.”

“I cannot tell you everything I know,” sighed the Angel with some reluctance, “as the music is still being written and must remain a mystery for a little while longer. What I can say is that you humans will play a major part in helping to compose the remaining notes that reveal the splendor of the Promise of Light. Your role is to both write and play the many long, dark and searching passages that eventually resolve themselves in a light-filled finale.”
Jasper turned dreamily to his sister and looked into her eyes and saw the far-away gaze that the Angel’s recounting had caused. He, too, did not fully comprehend all that had been said as he had never thought of things in this way before. However, an inner sense of rightness told him that this was a most important story and one that would live with him forever. The quietly chiming voice of the Angel brought his focus back into the here and now.

“However, dear children of the Earth, this particular symphony differs from all others in one fascinating way.” And here the Angel paused as if to create a silent space for the two listeners that would allow them to gain a deeper understanding.

“Normally all the players in the Solar Orchestra are given the musical score to read and rehearse in advance so they know what and when to play. This time, it will be different for the Earth section because no sheet music is being provided to you. Instead, each player has to listen inwardly to catch the sounds held within the heart and mind of the Great Composer. Solar’s whole body is like one giant tuning-fork vibrating and transmitting the celestial melody through the subtle waves of space. Each person is an instrument that needs to be finely tuned so that the music of the spheres can resound throughout the Earth.”

“Can you imagine what concentration and inner sensitivity is required for everyone to hear what is intended and to then play their part?” This was not really a question for the children but more a statement of awe on the part of the visiting narrator.

“To know the score from the inside requires whole-hearted participation in Life for each player to become a spontaneous instrument of the Creator capable of registering and expressing the subtle sounds of the Living Silence.” The Angel paused once more to allow these last two words to fully sink in.

“This is an experiment in Freedom and has never been attempted before by any of the Sun-Gods. It will be the ultimate expression of Solar’s love and compassion through the precious gift of personal choice.”

“How on earth will anyone ever remember that they are part of the Symphony?” interrupted an anxious child’s voice causing a ripple of concern to temporarily disturb the otherwise calm atmosphere.

“Ah”, smiled the Angel, “maybe I should remind you of your own Christmas Story as it holds a key that can unlock this mystery. You’ve heard the story many times before but I promise that this time it will be very different.”
“Before I begin the story I must tell you that there are some beings from our realms who doubt whether the musical seeds of Solar will ever germinate successfully and flourish in the dense soil of Earth. They feel that the task is too great to ask mere mortals to perform. I do not share their doubts because after watching over your struggles as a human family for many aeons, I have perceived signs of hope amidst your despair and points of light slowly appearing within the darkness.”

The aura surrounding the Angel glowed a little brighter as he uttered these words of encouragement and the children sensed the power of possibility stirring in their hearts.

“I have faith that all will work out for the best”, declared the Angel, “but there are no guarantees that I can offer except to state that any person who so desires can call upon the power of Solar to kindle the creative fire of the human heart. As I told you earlier, every earnest wish and prayer is always answered.”

The Angel seemed to expand and fill the room as if seeking to embrace the fullness of the story before recalling it for the children who by now were pleasantly captivated by the happenings of the evening and ready to absorb anything that this unexpected angelic messenger had to say.

“You see,” began the Angel in the most gentle tone that any mortal could imagine, “your Earth is made of a solid substance call physical matter. We Angels often refer to this as ‘black light’ because its true radiance is still hidden from the light of day. This dark and dense matter is like a great Mother in whose body something is awaiting birth. Seen in this way, the darkness is simply the womb of true light.”

“You Mother, the Earth, has been chosen from among many daughters of the Creator for the virgin birth of the One Light. At this very moment”, continued the story-teller from the stars, “the seeds of Solar lie within her body sleeping and biding their time. They need to be awakened from their slumber and brought to life by a special touch. They need watering with love and the only beings who have access to this source of nourishment in the fields of time and space are you humans.”

This last remark evoked an air of puzzlement within Sophie as she was so used to hearing stories about other people and other times and other places that it had never dawned on her that she might be part of a vast living story that was being enacted around her and through her with every heartbeat. The Angel noticed the changing expression on her face and, understanding these human signs of bewilderment, he chose to carry on with his account in a manner more suited for younger listeners.
“The planet you live on is called by some of my colleagues ‘the little daughter of a long-lost Son’ which goes some way in explaining why we often experience so much sadness surrounding your world. It is a place where forgetfulness reigns and yet, all who live here long to find their way home but sadly do not seem to know what to do with these troublesome inner stirrings. It is our job to watch over your long journey from the darkness of ignorance and unknowing as you take each painful step of learning into a greater light of understanding. You are still young and may not know of these things as profoundly as you will do in years to come but nevertheless, I can see your souls reaching out for something beyond this world. Hopefully my words can be stored like food to meet this future hunger.”

The Angel realized by now that he was stretching the minds of the children to their limits and yet he saw deep inside them a quiet hidden place that already knew the story by heart and so he searched for a way of helping them to connect and remember.

“Do either of you know how fire was discovered on Earth?”

The two children blinked and sat up in bed for the sudden question broke the spell that had entranced them for the past half-hour. They searched for a suitable response. Jasper was the first to give voice to his thoughts.

“Wasn’t it the cave-dwellers of long ago who found that by banging rocks together they could produce sparks?”

“Yes, that’s correct”, exclaimed the Angel, heartened by the receptive nature of his two young friends, “they had discovered ‘fire by friction’ which happens when two objects are strenuously rubbed together. Jasper and Sophie, try it for yourselves. Go on, rub your hands together and tell me what you notice.”

“It burns and if I’m not careful I may get nasty blisters!” shouted Sophie with glee.

“Very true”, agreed the Angel, “but what these people had discovered was only a fire that could warm them from the outside of their lives. And when this fire burned in their homes in the hearth it cast dancing shadows on the cave walls. This fire lit up the outside of things but could not illuminate the insides. For that, another kind of fire is required about which these early humans knew nothing.”
“All this may be very interesting to you but what’s it got to do with the Christmas story you promised to tell us!” interjected Jasper in a loud voice which quite startled him. He looked around somewhat surprised at his sister who was frantically tugging at his pajama jacket in an attempt to quieten him.

“Please Jasper”, implored Sophie, “let our visitor finish the story.”

“That is quite alright dear friends, I understand your impatience for this story takes its own time to tell”, commented the Angel while gazing with affection at the humans sitting on the bed before him. “I will soon be coming to the part of the story which is more familiar to your ears.”

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“Over the millenia, many messengers from our realms have been sent to your planet carrying a Torch of Truth but the dimness that was your early human consciousness could not perceive the light and so our missions were not altogether successful.” Here the Angel stopped and was lost in a moment’s deep reflection as though he was recalling those early sojourns. Collecting himself and breathing gently, he explained, “What we needed was a way of bringing that light to humanity so that it could be sensed and understood.”

“We conferred on this topic at great length in our heavenly councils and finally decided that, instead of sending down more angelic messengers and teachers, we would choose someone who could be in the world and at the same time, not of it. We needed to find someone who could enter the spiritual darkness and lead out the light that slumbers within the Earth.”

“I remember that time most clearly”, mused the Angel as a flicker of warm recollections spread across his face, “for it was a period of some anxiety for us watchers.”

“It was just over two thousand years ago and chaos threatened to engulf your world in a manner similar to this present time”, emphasized the Angel.

“Every attempt to bring compassion and understanding into your daily lives was met by the relentless forces of retrogression that exerted a gravitational pull on all that sought to rise up into the light pulling it back to ground level. This caused much consternation in our councils but the choice we had already made brought feelings of hope and possibility to even the most ardent doubters among our ranks.”
The Angel checked to see if Sophie and Jasper were still awake and receptive and, after receiving confirmation of this fact, he quietly declared, “We chose a soul who seemed particularly suited for this task - a Soul born of your Earth evolution who had traveled the many long and winding roads through the deserts and mountains, who knew the cities and villages and who had crossed the vast tracts of ocean in search of truth. Here was a person whom we believed could say, ‘Look, if I can successfully make the journey from darkness into light, then so can all of you’. This soul was and is, the Jesus of your own Christmas story.”

With the pronouncing of this name, both Jasper and Sophie opened their eyes a little wider and felt the thrill of recognition move gently over their skin. They were now wide awake and ready for whatever the mysterious visitor from the stars had to impart.

“Two parents, Mary and Joseph, were chosen to care for this divine traveler who would be bringing the secret of the Solar Fire with him to Earth”, continued the Angel with a flicker of joy. “This Fire is the special sunlight I spoke of earlier that can illumine the inside of all things and drive away the shadows.”

The story was now beginning to register in the minds and hearts of Sophie and Jasper and the anticipation of Christmas began to bubble up inside them like a warm crystal fountain.

“It was decided that Jesus should be born at the time of mid-winter in the northern hemisphere”, continued the messenger, “as that is when the human heart longs the most for the light. The Archangel who would herald the coming of Jesus would of course be Gabriel for it is He who stands watch over the gate of Winter.”

“Does the story seem more familiar to you now?”, enquired the Angel.

“It does seem to make a little more sense than it did a few minutes ago”, came the brief response from Sophie.

“Good, I’m glad that I have stirred something in you”, declared the visitor whose body was still pulsing with the same golden glow bringing warmth and reassurance to the cold winter’s night.

“I know that you have heard the next portion of the story because I saw you both act out the scenes in your school nativity play only last week. Unbeknownst to you, there were a few invisible friends watching that day.”
“Joseph and Mary traveled the long road to Bethlehem and although weary from their wanderings, they trudged around the town looking for a place to rest. They knocked on every door in sight but there was no room to rent - nowhere for a mother to give birth to her child. It was then when all hope was nearly gone that they chanced upon a man who took pity on them both and who led them to a small cave on the outskirts of the town where the animals had their shelter. The two travelers didn’t complain about the simple surroundings for the sight of fresh straw and a place to lay their heads was comfort enough.”

“That still night the whole Earth was filled with an expectancy and heaven held its breath”, and the Angel did likewise before gently exhaling and carrying on without dropping a word.

“Solar had waited countless ages for this special day and I remember the sounds and smells of that clear, bright night so well”, the Angel sighed and to the children it seemed as if he sang out these words with a mixture of pleasure and relief.

“All the Angels had gathered in the skies to witness the coming of the Son of Solar and our cheering and rejoicing grew so loud that it startled some shepherds on the hills overlooking Bethlehem. Can you imagine the joy when after all these aeons of waiting, the light of the heavens had finally been born upon the Earth.”

“Jesus had landed safely on your planet and was being held in the arms of a loving mother and a caring father. The stars twinkled extra brightly that night and we angels were sent to bring the good news of the birth to all corners of the world. There were those who did not need our message for they read the signs themselves. Three wise men from the East had seen the promised light appear to them as a brilliant star and they had followed it as one would a homing beacon.”

The children thought back to last week when they performed in the nativity play. Jasper was a shepherd with a white bed-sheet draped around his body and Sophie wore a gold-colored dress with painted cardboard wings attached to her back to represent the Archangel Gabriel. Therefore, they felt quite involved in the narrative as the Angel proceeded to recount the next chapter.

“The news was broadcast across the Earth and people journeyed from near and far to welcome the babe and to give thanks for this wondrous gift. However, not everyone was pleased to learn of the arrival of Jesus, the Son of Solar. King Herod was definitely not pleased with the news.”
“When King Herod was told that a new king had been born who was destined to lead his people out of slavery, he became afraid that he might lose the power of his royal position as well as the good life that he had been leading at the expense of others. Herod then did something which saddened the hearts of all the watchers in the skies”, the Angel duly noted and, for an instant, an almost imperceptible shadow passed through the bedroom.

“King Herod ordered that all baby boys in the region were to be found and killed for he believed that in this way he could do away with the threat to his throne.”

“But even Herod with all his wickedness could not stop the longed-for light of heaven shining on the earth at last through the presence of the newly arrived boy-child. The birth of Jesus became a great Festival of Light for the human family and gave real hope to all souls who were lost in the darkness and who needed a light to guide them safely home. At last, there was a Path of Light which all could follow without fear of ever getting lost again.”

“That was two thousand years ago”, said Jasper suddenly, “so what has happened since that time because the Earth looks as dark today as it did back then?”

“It may still look dark on the outside to your eyes”, responded the messenger, “but we who have vision to see into the heart of things know that the Christ Light is firmly anchored in humanity and, like a seed, it has germinated and is growing slowly and surely.”

“It is only a matter of time”, reassured the Angel, “before the conditions are right and that the Light of the Sun will burst forth into your world and all will be able to bathe in its healing glow.”

The Angel noticed that the evening was ticking away and that it would soon be time for the children to sleep if they were to be fresh and wide awake to enjoy their Christmas morning. He turned to them and enquired, “Are there any questions that you would like to ask me before we bring this evening to a close and bid farewell of each other?”

Jasper shook his head indicating that he had nothing to ask. His sister, however, was readying herself to say something important.

“Why”, asked a puzzled Sophie, “is Jesus sometimes referred to as Christ? Are they two different people?”
“Ah”, exclaimed the Angel, “that is a common misunderstanding. Jesus was the person born in Bethlehem who later in life was over-lighted and infused with the Christic presence. As a result of this deep experience he became Jesus the Christed One or Jesus Christ for short. The Christic Presence is simply the Living Fire of Love that burns within the Heart of Solar and it is a flame from this Fire that lives inside each human heart and is the true promise of light in the world. You and Jasper also have the promise of the Christ-Light in your hearts!”

“Wow”, was the amazed response from both listeners.

“Let me leave you with a few final thoughts to ponder”, the Angel offered with a warm and generous smile.

“Can you truly comprehend, dear children of the Earth, that a spark of Solar now lives within you and in all your brothers and sisters who are part of this great human family? The special light that illumines the darkest of places and lights up the inside of all things is now yours. Each of you is a Christmas story waiting to be told by how you choose to live your lives.”

The messenger from the stars could sense the deep longing for light, love and meaning that lives within each human soul reflected in the faces of Jasper and Sophie as they gazed in awe at him. He took a deep breath and slowly stated, “I promise that this inner light will never fade and you must promise me you will never hide it. It is your responsibility to carry this light through the coming years so that eventually you become the light itself. Just like Jesus Christ, it is your human destiny to shine as the Light of the World. I will continue to watch over you as you journey through life and we Angels are always ready to help whenever you call on us for guidance.”

“Ah”, noted the Angel, “I see that you are getting tired and so I will take my leave now. Remember the story I’ve told for whenever you have doubts and wonder how anyone can possibly remember their part in the great Symphony of Solar or if you are not sure how to find your way home in the dark, just think of the Christmas Light that burns in your heart.”

“Sleep well dear mortals, dream your dreams and when you wake up on Christmas morning go and give to all you meet the most wonderful Christmas present ever - namely the gift of Light from a loving heart.”

And with that, the Angel shifted frequency, glowed a brilliant gold and faded into the starry sky leaving the children asleep with a warm glow in their hearts and the promise of light sparkling behind shuttered eyes.

The Promise of Light: A Christmas Story for All Ages - Michael Lindfield © 1986
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