

In Search of Harmony: Peace in the Samoan Indigenous Religion

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Introduction

Peace in the Samoan religious tradition equates with harmony. A search for peace is a search for harmony. There are four key harmonies that hold the balance of peace for Samoans. These are: harmony with the cosmos; harmony with the environment; harmony with one's fellow men; and harmony with one's self. When all four harmonies come together there is peace.

In this paper I trace these four harmonies and in doing so I raise discussion on the Samoan concepts of *tapu* or taboo, *feagaiga* or sacred covenants and *tuaoi* or boundaries. Together these three concepts (of *feagaiga*, *tapu* and *tuaoi*) are used to help illustrate the character of peace as understood by indigenous Samoan society in their search for harmony.

Harmony in Samoan life recognises that all living things are equal. Human life is equivalent and complementary to cosmic, plant and animal life. In the balance of life, all living things share equal status and power. Man is no less powerful or greater than the heavens, the trees, the fish or cattle and vice versa. In the organisation of life, the relationship between man and the cosmos, man and the environment, man and man, and man and himself is, each and together, premised on the search for balance, peace and harmony.

The religious logic that sustains the Samoan search for harmony is premised on Samoan indigenous narratives of creation. For ancient Samoans it was a logic that operated more as a collection of related principles and metaphors that gave meaning and connection rather than as a religion with set theological parameters.

In other words, the Samoan indigenous religion operated on the logic of *aiga* or family. In telling the story of family, genealogy and history are intertwined. Here metaphors, proverbs and stories operate as powerful tools for conveying a message. The message over time becomes a religion. The messages of peace and harmony shared in this paper are offered as testament to the wisdom and insights of my forefathers and mentors and offered as part of their legacy to Samoa and humanity in our continual quest for peace and harmony.

Samoan Indigenous Story of Creation

Within the Samoan religious tradition there exists the God Tagaloa, progenitor of mankind. He is revered by Samoans not as the feared

creator but as the paternal progenitor of all things. All life-forms are the issues of *Tagaloa*: from the heavens, moon and stars through to the sea, the trees and land and including all animal and mankind. *Tagaloa* is both male and female.

For Samoans there are many gods. In the beginning of time these gods travelled the expanse as different elements of the cosmos, forming marriage unions with each other.

The origins of Samoa begin with the union and separation of the gods Lagi and Papa. Both were issues of Tagaloa. It is at the separation of this union between Lagi (a female god) and Papa (a male god) that heaven and earth were formed. Conflict, instigated by the respective siblings of Lagi and Papa, caused their separation. Their separation was marked by storms, earthquakes and floods – what are referred to today as ‘natural disasters’.

The Samoan name for the heavens is *Lagi*. *Papa* is the Samoan word for earth or rock. When Lagi ascended to the heavens, Papa remained beneath Lagi. The Samoan name for the planet earth is *Lalolagi*, literally meaning beneath Lagi or the heavens. According to Samoan mythology Tagaloa, who issued Papa and Lagi, also issued man. Man came to reside within the embrace of Lagi and Papa, i.e. within the cosmos, beneath the heavens, on earth.

The Samoan term *maluāpapa* meaning ‘security in your connection to Papa’ is akin to the Maori word, *whakapapa*, meaning ‘a heritage that derives origins from Papa’. Both terms continue to have currency today and underlie the significance of Papa to indigenous Polynesian religions.

The residence and residency of Samoan peoples on the lands of Samoa was therefore as a consequence of their genealogical links with Tagaloa, Lagi and Papa. The connection between humankind, the animal world, the cosmos and the environment is one of genealogy, a genealogy that is at once divine and temporal. The balance of this connection defines the balance of peace.

Harmony between the divine and the temporal is achieved by privileging the balance, equivalence and complementarity of all living things. The achievement of balance and the recognition of equivalence and complementarity is core to the Samoan equation of peace and are recorded through the continued existence in Samoan society of *tapu*

(taboo) and *feagaiga* (sacred covenants) relations. *Tapu* and *feagaiga* operate within each of the four harmonies.

Harmony between man and the cosmos

Harmony with the cosmos involves an acknowledgement by man of the sacred relations between mankind and the heavens.

The importance of understanding the synthesis between the heavens and the environment has long been respected by Samoans, like other seafaring peoples, whose livelihood depended on cosmically-based navigational knowledges.

Fishing, planting and sailing were determined by the timely appearances of the moon and stars. The calculation of months and years were assessed by the timely appearances of the moon. The timely interactions of sunlight and shadow determined the hours of the day. These timed appearances by sun, moon and stars, underlined the cosmic harmony that provided balance to life on earth. Samoans believed that to tamper with this cosmic balance was to tamper with the balance of life.

In the Samoan story of Tapuitema (the female cannibal who became the morning and evening star), the point about harmony and genealogy with the cosmos is underlined.

Tapuitema was a human female cannibal who fed on her siblings and kin. One day she was thwarted in her attempts to feed on her kin because her kin managed to escape her grasp and get help from her parents. Tapuitema was severely rebuked by her parents. In recognition of her parents' reprimand Tapuitema decided to abjure and make amends. In her remorse she declared: "From this day I renounce cannibalism. I shall ascend to the heavens where I will appear as the morning and evening star, where I shall be the guide for fishing and sailing expeditions".

When the story of Tapuitema is told to the young it reminds both the young and the old that Tapuitema is earth originated, that she had committed wrong, that she was truly remorseful and that she sought forgiveness by performing penance as the morning and evening star. In using the morning and evening star as a source of guidance her kin acknowledge her service and provide forgiveness.

For the ancient Samoan, whether fisherman, navigator or planter, the value of Tapuitema's service is acknowledged and passed through generations. Each time her story is told, or her service reflected upon, her message about remorse and forgiveness, about the connection between man and the cosmos, endures. Her presence as morning and evening star therefore acts as constant reminder to all living things that the guide to gaining balance and peace lies in the recognition that man and the cosmos are just as bound as remorse and forgiveness.

Harmony between man and the environment

The way in which Samoans draw links between man and his earthly environment is by equivalence. The harmony between man and the environment involves, in the main, the relationship between man and plant and animal life. There are many Samoan proverbs commemorating the sacred significance of this relationship. There are also many Samoan terms which are still used today that continue to bond man and his environment in deeply spiritual ways.

For example, the Samoan term *eleele* meaning earth and *palapala* meaning mud are also the words for blood. *Fatu* meaning rock is also the word for heart. *Fanua* meaning placenta is also the word for land. For Samoans these terms point to Papa and Eleele as the progenitors of man.

The linking of man and Papa and Eleele is further referenced by the ritual burial of the *pute* (i.e. umbilical cord) and *fanua* (i.e. placenta) into the land or earth. There is more than mere symbolism in these rituals, there is spiritual continuity, a spiritual continuity that ensures harmony and respect for the environment.

The ritual of burying the *pute* and *fanua* reminds of the common birthing between the human female and mother earth. What this invites is recognition that the environment lives, shares pain, grows and dies in a manner and form similar to humankind.

In the indigenous Samoan religion it was crucial that before a tree was cut that *faalanu* or a prayer chant was performed. The chant sought from the god of the forest pardon for taking the life of the tree or any of its member parts.

In the village of Asau, renowned for its building guilds, such prayer chants were commonly performed. When cutting a tree the word used to

describe the cutting is *oia*, which derives from the word *oi*, meaning to cry in pain. This presupposes that a tree suffers pain. The prayer chant therefore also seeks forgiveness from the tree for having to cause it pain.

In ancient Samoa protocols were developed to ensure that the environment was preserved. During times of re-growth certain trees and plants were prohibited from being cut or picked. These protocols and the *tapu* associated with them provided a conservation plan that dictated what man could take from the environment, when and how much. Such a plan prioritised need rather than profit. In this context the taking of natural resources was never to go beyond what nature herself could not sustain in terms of natural re-growth. Tasks associated with fishing, planting, harvesting and building were therefore coordinated in accordance with predetermined cosmic and environmental timings. Here the harmony between man and the environment is most pronounced.

As with the relationship between man and trees, there is *tapu* and equivalence in the relationship between man and his animal kin. In the Samoan indigenous religion certain birds and fish were regarded as *sa* or sacred. Some birds were *sa* because they were the earthly manifestations of village Gods: such as the *matu'u* (or sea heron) in *Manono* or the *lulu* (or owl) in *Saleimoa*. *Tapu* associated with these birds or fish protected them from being killed and eaten. Such *tapu* reminded man of the divine and temporal character of all living things and of the genealogical connections between human and animal kind. Village protocols and chants marked man's equivalence with animal life.

Also in the village of Asau there is a tradition associated with the rise of the *atule* (mackerel).

In Samoa fish are honorifically referred to as *tamasoaalii* (meaning, the companion of the chief). Fishing is in turn referred to as *faa-tamasoaalii*. The use of honorifics denotes status and respect.

In Asau when a small fish known as the *fa* appears the people would say, 'the *tamasoaalii* is about to rise'. The *tautai* or head fisherman then consults with his god as to when exactly to receive the *tamasoaalii*. The relationship between the *tautai* and his god is *tapu*.

On the appointed day the *tautai* and the *aiga tautai* or fishing guild proceed to a point known as Maluafiti (which is a rock formation close to the beach in Utuloa, a sub village of Asau, named in remembrance of the endowment made by Fiji). At this point, a fire is lit from carefully

selected wood. The fire burns throughout the night until the mackerel is formally received.

Throughout the day (before the *tamasoaalii* is formally received) the *tautai* and the *aiga tautai* will *anapogi* or abstain from food. Special food is prepared for them for when they break their fast in the morning.

Early in the morning the head fisherman will head out in his canoe on his own to a place known as the *ava o atule* (meaning the ‘entry of the mackerel’). Once there he addresses the school of mackerel in chiefly language:

Afio maia oe le manaia
(Welcome to you the *manaia*)

Afio maia oe le tausala
(Welcome to you the *tausala*)

O lea ua talisoa le aiga o Tautaufau ma le au
taliuta
(The fishing guild and the village await you)

O loo faatali Aiga ma Salafai ma lo latou maopu
(The dignity of Asau await you)

Afio mai oe le tamasoalii
(I welcome you, the man who is the aide of the chief)

The mackerel in heeding the *tautai*'s call will proceed to the *tautai*'s canoe and accompany him to the net laid close to the shore. The mackerel comes willingly, without fight.

The movement of the fish into the net is a high point in the spiritual culture of fishing and underlines the mystical union, the harmony, between man and nature. This harmony is celebrated by the proverb: *O le i'a a le tautai e alu i le faaaloalo*, meaning, the *tautai*'s fish defers to his will.

As the *tautai* and the school of fish move towards the shore, the fishing guild and reception party chant:

*Afio maia oe le manaia e
Afio maia oe le tausala e
O loo talisoa lou nu'u ma lou aiga*

(Welcome to you the manaia
Welcome to you the tausala
Your village and family await you)

When the *tautai* gets close to the net, he calls out:

*la solia a faufau!
Logo i taiao! Ae 'aua ne'i leua lau o le fo!
Aua uputuu mai anamua ma le igaga to!*

(Follow the established path!
Notify the attendees of each net!
Do not disrupt the entry of the fish!
Bear in mind you are the heirs of an immemorial tradition!)

This tradition commemorates history, genealogy and harmony. It is cited for its message about the harmony between man and the environment.

The contribution of plant and animal life to ensuring the survival of man and earth is divine. The onset of natural disasters currently experienced by the world can be understood in ancient Samoan terms as the gods attempting to restore balance and harmony between man and nature.

Harmony between fellow men

Humans are social, cultural, political and spiritual beings. Human life, as a collective, revolves around harmony between fellow men. Disharmonies arise in the collective when conflict assumes. Conflict assumes when the *tuaoi* or boundaries within are transgressed or misunderstood. Conflicts are products and reflections of disharmony. In the Samoan indigenous religion disharmonies are resolved through the co-existence of remorse and forgiveness on the one hand, and the

privileging of *alofa* (meaning, love and compassion) and *aiga* (or family) on the other.

In the harmony between fellow men Samoans find that there exist special relationships between people. As with the relationship between man and the cosmos and man and the environment, there exists in the relationship between men certain *tapu*. These *tapu* are accompanied by sacred covenants called *feagaiga*. As a result of these *tapu* and/or *feagaiga*, boundaries or *tuāoi* emerge. The term *feagaiga* refers to both a status and covenant. This is explained further on.

In this harmony between fellow men, there are numerous relationships of significance. I only wish to draw on three. These are the relations between parent and child; between brother and sister; and between offender/s and offended. Each provides different and interesting insights into Samoan indigenous understandings of peace.

Harmony between parent and child

The relationship between parent and child is sacred. The bond between the mother and child is spiritual and material, for the mother nurtures her child from the womb. The father, together with the mother, nurtures the child through life by instruction and example.

Harmony between the parent and child is also metaphor for harmony between family heads and family members and/or between the state and its citizens. Samoans recognise that the emotions and values of love and compassion begin in the microcosm of the home, in the relationship between parent and child. Compassion for fellow men in the macrocosm of humanity draws from the harmonies between parent and child.

The connection between familial nurturing and gaining perspective and balance as peoples is implied in the common Samoan and Tongan saying: '*pīi pīi ama vae vae manava*' or '*piki piki hama vae vae manava*'. Here '*pīi pīi ama*' means 'hanging on to the outrigger' and '*vae vae manava*' means 'sharing the womb'. For Samoans this saying refers to the instructions of parents, whereby a parent says to his or her child: "there are two things to remember in life, first is the importance of love and second is the importance of balance and good judgement".

This saying implies that parents have a responsibility to raise and care for their children well and that children in turn have a responsibility to

respect and care for their parents. The mark of parental and child irresponsibility is any shame that befalls the family.

The importance of the relationship between parent and child is marked by the power invested in parents to give blessings (or *faamanuiaga*) or conversely to impose curses (or *malamatuā*) on their children. Harmony between parent and child breeds harmony in society.

Harmony between brother and sister

The sacred and special relationship between brother and sister in Samoan indigenous religion is another of its more distinguishing cultural features. Harmony presides in this relationship when the sacred character of the relationship is respected. This sacred relationship between brother and sister is often referred to as *feagaiga*.

The *feagaiga* is both status and covenant. It underlines indigenous Samoan principles of gender, and as well the social and political organisation of ancient Samoan society. Formerly the *feagaiga* was the birthright of high-born. Christianity and contemporary practice has extended the *feagaiga* status to all families and as well to the Christian pastor.

The relationship between brother and sister underscores the ideal of male and female relationships. Indigenous Samoan society promoted the virtues of women as special and different but complementary to that of men. The *feagaiga* was founded on the principle that women have the gift of producing and nurturing life. As child-bearers women were seen as sharing divinity with the gods. By virtue of their links with the gods, namely their family gods, sisters were known as *ilamutu*. *Ilamutu* is the Samoan term for family gods. *Feagaiga* and the family gods are *ilamutu* because they share divine intercessory powers. Hence, when the role of the *feagaiga* as peacemaker is rejected or spurned, the curse of the *feagaiga*, known as *mala o le ilamutu*, may be imposed.

The role of the *feagaiga* as peacemaker, as family conciliators, on behalf of the family gods, underscores understandings of *feagaiga* as status and covenant. Thus in times of family and village conflict *feagaiga* were expected to intercede.

The *feagaiga* as manifested in the woman is celebrated and epitomised as the highest of womanly virtues. In many ways it is analogous to Mariology in Christianity. The ideal of womanhood implicit in *feagaiga*

is marked by the deference and respect shown by the brother towards the sister. The link between the *feagaiga* and the Mary culture is that Mary like the *feagaiga* intercedes and conciliates. The *feagaiga* of brother and sister is therefore the harmony between brother and sister, man and wife, male and female, each core relationships in family and society.

Harmony between 'offender/s and offended'

The final harmony between fellow men that I want to raise here is the harmony between offenders and offended. In the relationship between offenders and offended the boundary between right and wrong, between harm and good, is most pronounced.

Justice in indigenous Samoan times involved restoring family, village and personal harmony. Punishment for wrongs committed was judged not according to any pain imposed on the physical being but more on the pain imposed on the spiritual. When an offence is committed disharmony arises. Restoring harmony needs to follow. The *ifoga* was core to restoring that harmony.

The *ifoga* is an ancient Samoan ritual where the offending party pleads for pardon from the offended party. In early Samoan times it was done mainly for serious breaches such as murder and adultery: murder because of the termination of life and adultery because of the blight on legitimate inheritance. In these cases there is an imperative on the family of the offending party to perform *ifoga* as soon as possible. This is because in the intervening period between the murder incident and *ifoga*, retribution by the family of the victim on the family of the perpetrator is culturally permissible.

Three elements sustain *ifoga*: (1) a sense of remorse and shame by the perpetrator; (2) accountability by the family and village; and (3) forgiveness by the victim's family. The only way that harmony can be restored when a wrong is committed is to recognise that the core of *ifoga* is the co-existence of remorse and forgiveness. One can not gain harmony without remorse and forgiveness. The Samoan saying, *e mu le taulaga i le faamagalo* (meaning, the penance of the penitent gains substance and meaning not only through remorse and penance but equally by the forgiveness of the injured party) underlines the importance of remorse and forgiveness in the Samoan equation of peace and harmony between fellow men.

Harmony between man and self

In the harmony between man and self it is acknowledged that humans are self-reflective beings. Human intelligence and wisdom transpires as much through self-reflection and personal experience as by objective analyses or peer and elder mentoring. Self-reflection through *anapogi* (meaning fasting and meditation) and *moe manatunatu* (meaning dream dialogue with ancestors and/or family gods) are methods or tools promoted by the indigenous Samoan religion for gaining perspective on the harmony between man and his inner self.

In the Samoan indigenous religion there are three key parts to a person or self: the *tinu* or body, the *mafau* or mind and the *agaga* or soul. Harmony with the self requires harmony in the body, the mind and most importantly the soul.

The body and all its movements and/or performances reflect at all times God's divinity, from the most physical and ceremonial to the most mundane, hence the Samoan saying: '*O le faiva o le Tamaalii o le gase*' meaning, 'it is the mark of the chief and the progeny of chief to perform or serve well'.

For Samoans harmony in the body was crucial because it determined how well people could engage in core survival tasks such as planting, hunting, fishing, cooking, sex, play, martial arts and so on. A harmonious body was therefore one that exhibited physical dexterity and symmetry and enabled sexual and reproductive prowess. Beauty and harmony in the body was reflected in the physical and spiritual symmetry achieved through the performance of the twin disciplines of physical exercise and dietary control. The Samoan saying, '*e le soona ai Tamaalii*' (meaning, 'a mark of a chief is reflected in his eating regime') alludes to the importance of dietary discipline to achieving harmony in the body.

Harmony in the mind involves finding unity in the messages conveyed by the senses. The evidence perceived by the nose, the eyes, the mouth and the ears, each situated in the head, is communicated to the brain and made sense of by the mind. It is the function of the mind to assess sensory evidence for cognitive meaning.

Lagi which is the term for the heavens, the highest point in the cosmos, is also the honorific term for the head. To touch the head of a chief is a serious breach of *tapu*, because the head as the residence of divine discernment should not be tampered with. The divinity of the head gives rise to the Samoan saying: '*o le faiva o mafau o le faatonu ma le*

faasoasoa' (meaning, the function and purpose of the mind is to discern evidence and make good judgements). So if the function of the mind is senses-oriented the function of the soul relates to matters beyond or outside the senses.

The soul, which in Samoan is the *agaga* or *mauli*, resides between the heart (or *fatu*) and the lungs (or *māmā*). The significance of this is that the heart represents God as the prime mover, who provides rhythm and life to the mind and body, whilst the lungs are the custodians of the breath of life. When Samoans want to establish death in the body it is the heart that they first consult. When a chief blesses his successor he breathes his blessing (i.e. *feula le faamanuiaga*) into his successor's open mouth. Moreover, when two people greet in embrace, cheek to cheek, they will breathe in through their noses the *mana* of the other. Samoans call this *sogi*. The spiritual contents of the chief's blessing and the breathed-in *mana* of the *sogi*, travel first to the lungs, the custodians of the breath of life, then to other parts of the body and mind.

The function of the heart is to make and provide blood for the body. The function of the lungs is to provide oxygen to facilitate the work of the heart. Together they give life to the body and mind. So the question becomes how do you give life to the soul? I want to address this question by briefly examining the processes of *anapogi* and *moe manatunatu*.

Anapogi literally refers to the rituals of the evening. It is a ritual of self denial, prayer and meditation, i.e. the denial of food, company, sex and other distraction. The ritual often entailed isolation of self from the village, often in the still of the forest and evening, where the person can contemplate the harmonies and gain spiritual insight.

Moe manatunatu, on the other hand, is a dream dialogue with ancestors and family gods which is available to man depending on the spiritual levels attained in his processes of *anapogi*. *Tofa* and *moe* are both terms associated with the *moe manatunatu*. Both mean sleep: i.e. *tofa* is the sleep of the chief and *moe* the sleep of the orator. Moreover, *tofa* and *moe* also refer respectively to the views of chiefs and orators and such views can be informed by their *moe manatunatu*. Through *moe manatunatu* the gods and ancestors are able to assist the chief and orator not only in decisions concerning the self but also in decisions relating to family and community.

Through both the *moe manatunatu* and *anapogi*, the soul is fed. Both invite self-reflection and re-assessment, not only of the contexts of today,

but of yesterday and tomorrow. Spiritual insight assists in the achievement of mental and physical harmony. Through the harmonies of body, mind and soul, the self searches and achieves levels of spiritual harmony or personal peace.

In the Samoan indigenous religion there are ten levels of spirituality or heavens that man aspires to. In the ninth heaven lives Amoā, the daughter of Tagaloa, who personifies the *feagaiga*. In the tenth heaven resides Tagaloa. Man, in his quest for spiritual development, can only attain the first nine heavens. To want to reach the tenth heaven is presumptuous. It is presumptuous because the tenth heaven is the absolute and in it resides Tagaloa, the absolute.

To be presumptuous is to lack humility. In Samoan the term for humility is *loto maualalo*, meaning to have mental and emotional acceptance of a lower status. In Samoan indigenous religious terms the status implied here is that lower to the status of the ultimate and absolute, lower to that of Tagaloa.

In the search for peace the harmonies between man and the cosmos, man and the environment, man and man and man and the self are each and together, about man's continual search for the ultimate harmony. It is this search rather than the finding of these harmonies that gives emphasis, purpose and meaning to the self and to life.

Conclusion

Heaven and earth have a common origin which is God Tagaloa. God Tagaloa is progenitor not creator. Because he is progenitor he shares divinity with the cosmos and the earth, with the void and the substance, with night and day, with darkness and light, with man and woman, life and death.

In the Samoan indigenous religion the unity and harmony between the temporal and the divine, between time and space and all living things is God. Man's purpose in life is to search for that unity and harmony, to search for God.

In the Samoan indigenous religion man is limited to the ninth heaven. To presume that man can attain the tenth heaven is to presume the absolute. To presume the absolute is to lose the beginnings of humility which is the core of our search for harmony.

To talk about harmony is therefore to talk about peace and humility. Peace exists when harmony exists. Harmony in the Samoan indigenous religion finds equivalence and balance in all living things. To respect nature is to respect man; to respect one's fellow men is to respect one's self; respecting the soul is to respect the body and mind; respecting life is to respect death. Each and together they provide the '*pī pī ama vae vae manava*' for mankind.

If you are unable to find peace in today's world the message suggested here is not that you can never find God but that you may need to revise your search for God. Through the explication of the four harmonies, some of the legacies of ancient Samoa may continue. In our global world of increasing human contact and tolerance of cultural differences, such legacies may serve as morning and evening star to those in need.

Soifua.

Ftn:

The Names and Movements of the Heavenly Bodies: As looked at from a Samoan Point of view

By the Reverend John B Stair,
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The Samoans were attentive observers of the movements of the heavenly bodies, so that various constellations and individual stars had their names, which were often most suggestive. Mars was called *Mata-memea*, or red-face; Sirius, *Telengese*, slow-goer; the Pleiades, *Li'i* - whence the name for chief, Ali'i¹. Another star was called *Le Tu'ingā-lama*, lampblack pounders; the Great Bear, *Le Anava*, war-club. One star was named *Le Toloa*, the duck; and another two, *Tau-lua-tua-fanua* and *Tau-lua-alofi*. The Morning star, *Le Fetu-ao*; Venus, *Tapuitema*; Jupiter, *Tupua-le-ngase*, undying Tupua.

The Samoans had a very noted star, which they called *Le Soa-o-Tapuitema*, the love messenger, or companion of Venus, of which they say “*E le sau so'o; a, iloa mai ua soaina Tapuitema, ua tua i se ali'i*” “It does not come often but when it is visible it is said “Tapuitema has a companion, or soa, and forebodes the death of a chief”. I have sometimes thought it possible that this statement may refer to the conjunction of Venus and Jupiter. Another noted star of the Samoans indignantly call the *Tāelo*, the stinking-striker, or hitter; respecting which, they say, “When this star is visible, Samoa is sure to be visited by an afa, or cyclone”. It is red in colour, twinkles constantly, and has a jagged appearance at the edges.

The *Amonga* (balance-pole), Orion's Belt, was the usual guide to voyagers sailing to Tonga. The Milky Way and Magellan Clouds were called *Le Ao-lēlē* and *Ao-tea*; the Shooting-Star, *Le Fetu-afi*, the fire-seeking star, from the saying that “the star had gone to seek fire”. The apparent daily motions of the stars, as well as the changes in position of various constellations at different seasons of the year, were minutely observed by the Samoans and carefully noted in their memories. On an eclipse of the sun occurring, the natives were accustomed to say *Na-Ngase-eleele-le-la*, “the sun is passed away in dirt”, and on an eclipse of the moon, *Ua Ngase-toto-le-masina*, “the moon has passed away in blood”.

¹ In most of the Polynesian Groups the Pleiades are named Mata-riki, which we should translate “Little eyes” or “Little points”. We think Alii has a different origin to that given by the author. - EDITORS

The dreaded appearance of a comet, Le pusa-loa (the long-smoker), or and eclipse of the sun or moon caused intense excitement, since they were always considered to presage the death of a chief, or other national calamity, in the shape of war or bloodshed. The sudden appearance of the magnificent comet of March, 1843, caused great excitement. It was a lovely evening, not a cloud to be seen upon the clear blue sky, when the gorgeous visitor silently but suddenly into view. Everyone's attention was fixed upon it, and the natives stood in groups as, with bated breath, they discussed the probable consequences of its appearance. Very shortly after it was first seen a messenger arrived from the assembled chiefs, who had been quickly gathered for consultation, to ask me what I thought about it, and did I apprehend that it boded ill to the land. As a matter of fact, it was followed by intense heat, which culminated in a severe drought.

A STRANGE PHENOMENON :
A Red Star, encircled by other ordinary Stars
May 13, 1840.

Several reliable natives reported to me that they had seen that morning in the north, a little before sunrise, a strange phenomenon – a bright red star – that had the extraordinary appearance of being closely encircled by a number of other stars of the ordinary appearance.

This strange phenomenon was observed at Falelatai, on the south coast of Upolu, Samoa, by persons in whom I had every confidence.

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Ftn: [ATTACHMENT 2: TUPUA TAMASESE EFI - IN SEARCH OF HARMONY: PEACE IN SAMOAN INDIGENOUS RELIGION PAPER]

Karakia mo te tango i nga rakau kawakawa (Traditional incantation used when picking leaves from the kawakawa tree)

Mai ea te Tupua (clear the pathway to the godly beings, which is symbolised in the male elements)

Mai ea te tawhito (clear the pathway to the ancient ones)

Mai ea te kahui o nga ariki (clear the pathway to the exalted ones)

Mai ea ta whiwhi atu ki nga Atua

O i ka ta kinga te mauri ko te mauri i ahua noa mai (let the sacred rituals of the life force commence, the life force that has come from the spiritual realm)
 Ki runga ki enei taura, ki runga ki enei taurira, (place the life force upon these pupils, place the life force upon these scholars)
 Kia tau te mauri ki runga ki enei tama (let the life force be placed upon the female and the male elements)
 He tukunga no te whaiororo a tane te waiora (the life force that came from the forest of tane, from the spring of creation)
 Tenei te matatau kia eke whakatu tawera ki te rangi (this is the knowledge of the ancestors from the forest that is uplifted)
 Uhi wero tau mai te mauri hau mai e (let it be placed upon, let it be debated, so that through this [the life essence may come through strongly])
 Ui e, taiki e.

Karakia given by Pouroto Ngaropo, Representative of the Ngati Awa people before plucking leaves from a kawakawa tree.

- **Ftn: O le molimau a Fao Isaia o Asau**

- **Ftn: O le molimau a Soifuā Nesetolio Solia o Falealupo**

One of the main rituals in the funeral of a chief is known as the *auala*. *Auala* literally means the ‘way’ or the ‘passage’ – the passage to heaven – specifically the passage from the first heaven to the ninth heaven.

The party known as *ositaulaga* when they reach the house where the corpse is lying in state known as the *maota osilagi* they will chant the honorifics of each heaven. If the rituals and the chants by the *ositaulaga* are correct and adequate, the house of the *osilagi* will declare *lagimalie* – *lagimalie* meaning the honorifics are pleasing to the ear because they are correct and adequate – *lagimalie* in this context also means ‘you are now in harmony with the first heaven and you can move on to the honorifics of the second heaven’ – and so it goes on until the ninth heaven when the spokesman for the house of the *osilagi* will come forward and say: *Ua oo le taulaga. Malolo atu ia i le maota o le a faasino atu*, literally meaning ‘your offering has been accepted and you may retire to a house which will be designated.

Before performing the *auala* ritual, it is common practice to inquire as a matter of caution about the house/houses of sanctuary. The reason is, if the *ositaulaga* make a mistake in the rituals, they will have to run for dear life to a house of sanctuary; for the lapse is more than an insult because it can hamper the passage of the soul to the ninth heaven if the lapse displeases the gods.

The nine heavens accessible to man explains the nine days in the *anapogi* (ritual of denial and meditation). Each heaven symbolizes a specific spiritual concept for meditation.