

PART SIX

THREE

GREEN

BOOKS

Reformed Druids like stories and short pithy wisdom sayings. Over the years, various Arch-Druids have collected good stories to share with their fellow Grove members, especially during the meditative part of the Order of Worship. Some consider the meditation to be the very heart and purpose of the ritual, so chose a selection carefully. If you can't find one, perhaps one of these may work for you. At Carleton, the first Green Book (named after its cover), proved influential, but the 2nd and 3rd volumes seem much less so.

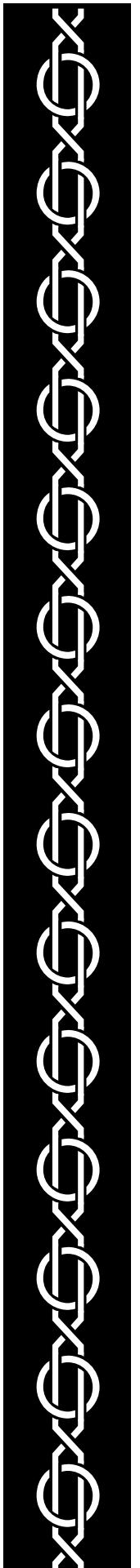


TABLE OF CONTENTS

1966 Introduction by Frangquist
1976 Introduction by Shelton
1996 Note by Scharding

GREEN BOOK Volume One

Sayings of the Ancient Druids

On Politics
On Religion
On Various Things

Sayings of the Hindus

Rig-Veda: To the Waters
The Arthura Veda: Hail!
Upanishads:Self
Rig-Veda: Creation
Bhagavad Gita: Atman
Sri-Ramakrishna

Sayings from the Buddhists

Four Noble Truths
Questions not Edification
Rain Cloud
Mahayana Ideal

Sayings from Zen Masters

Two Mice
Miracles
Gutei's finger
Dialogue for Lodging
Haiku

Sayings of the Taoist Sages

Thirty Spokes
Block of Wood
Water
Counting Words
Traveling

Sayings of Confucius

Confucius the Man
On learning
Reciprocity
Religion
Gentlemen

From the Old Testament

Psalm 104
Psalm 8

From the New Testament

Sermon on the Mount
I Corinthians 13

Sayings from the Zoroastrian

Prayer for Guidance

Sayings of Mohammed

Morning Star
Overwhelming

Sayings of the Unitarians

Out of the Stars

Sayings of Baha'u'llah

On the Soul

Sayings from the Poets

A Faery Song
The Prophet
Fergus and the Druid

Sayings of the Psychologists

GREEN BOOK Volume Two

Celtic, Native American,African, Hindu & Greek Writings

English Poetry

Stopping by the Woods
Jabberwocky

Welsh and Irish Poetry

The Waterfall
Sadness in Spring
Rain Outside
Winter and Warfare
Mountain Snow
Bright Trees
Spoils of Annwn
Cad Goddeau
Leadership
Sunshine Through My Window
Suggested further reading

Thirteen Fold Mysteries

Nichol's 13
Williams' 13
Graves' 13
Another 13

The Voyage of Bran

Proverbs of the Modern Gaels

Advice
Attitudes
Behavior
Company
Contentment
Death
Education & Experience
Fate
Fighting
Foolishness
God & Heaven
Greed
Hope
Humor

Hypocrisy & Integrity
Love
Nature
Politics
Pride
Tact & Talk
Wisdom
Work

Wisdom of the Native Americans

Born Natural
Sacred Earth
Silent Vigils
Simple Truth
Courtesy
Conversation
Persistence
Crowned Leadership
Pine Tree Chiefs
Not By Bread Alone
Show Me
Free Wisdom
Quarreling about God
God Made Me This Way
Pausing
Please Listen
The Views of Two Men
Misfortune
Pretty Pebbles
The Power of Paper
Frantic Fools
Cities
The White Man's Dreams
The Vigil

Wisdom of the Africans

Proverbs on Wisdom
Proverbs on Truth and Falsehood
Proverbs on Human Conduct
Proverbs on Virtue
Proverbs on Cooperation and Contentment
Proverbs on Opportunity
Proverbs on Human Beings
Proverbs on Nature
Proverbs on Leadership

More Wisdom of the African World

Wisdom of the Hindus and Greeks

Frogs Desiring a King
The Bat, the Birds and the Beasts
the Dog and the Wolf
The Fox and the Grapes
The Lion and the Statue
The Man and His Wives
The Two Crabs
Hercules and the Waggoner
The Man and the Wooden God
The Miser
The Bundle of Sticks
The Buffoon and the Countryman
The Serpent and the File

GREEN BOOK Volume Three Oriental and Monotheist Wisdom

Zen Koans

See his Buddha Nature
Yueh holds it
Pai-yuns' Black and white
The Dry Creek
Yueh-shan's Lake
Living Alone
Nan Ch'uan's rejection

Thoughts from Confucius

Tao of Pooh

The Stone cutter
The Cork

Te of Piglet

Making the best of it
Sherlock on religion
Emperor's horses
Incognito
Three Treasures
Fantasies
Live, but live well
Illusions
Samurai's late supper

The Gospel According to Zen

Jesus said...
Gasan and the bible
Stringless Harp
Eat when Hungry
Sporting Fish
Empty Boats
Three in the Morning
Zen Archery
Meshing Nets

The Butterflies of Chuang Tzu

The Dream
What is Acceptable?
The Argument
Happy Fish
Seven Openings
Look Under Your Feet
The Sacred Tortoise
The Frog in the Well
The Caged Sea-bird
Swimming Boatmen
Old Man Fall into Water

Christian Selections

Is God A Taoist?
Christian Thoughts
John Shea and bird
Monika Hellwig Catholic
On Nature and On Blood
Original Lilith Myth

Scots Gaelic Poems

The Heron
The Great Artist

Three Random Pieces

Brotherhood
A Starfish
An Island with Two Churches

Wit and Wisdom of Islam

The Fool and the King
The Breaking
The Stink of Greed
The Claim
Names
The Muezzin's Call
The Drum
The Majesty of the Sea
Ambition
Acquaintance
The Guest
The Man with the really ugly face
The Mirror
Is it Me?
The Gypsy and his Son
Where There's a Will
The Sermon of Nasrudin
Nasrudin and the Wise Men
First Things First
Whose Shot was That?
Same Strength
The Value of the Past
Second Thoughts
The Orchard
The Grammarian

Not a Good Pupil
Hidden Depths
The Secret
The Wisdom of Silence
Grateful to Allah
Safety
Happiness is not where you seek it
There is More Light Here
The Blind Man and the Lamp
Salt is not Wool
The Trip
Something Fell
The Tax Man
Appreciation
Forgotten Question
A Moment in Time
All I Needed was Time
The Short Cut
To Deal with the Enemy

Various Other Quotes

Art, Beauty, and Poetry
Community and Conversation
Custom, Justice, and Law
Death and Fate
Earth and Ecology
Education and Learning
Fear and Freedom
Fools and Humor
Leadership
Practical Simplicity
Prayer
Priests
Religion
Silence
Travel
Truth
Wisdom



The Green Book

Volume One

The Original 1966 Introduction

Those who join the Reformed Druids are, in one sense or another, religious rebels. They are usually fed up with the hypocrisies and inadequacies of the institutionalized churches. They seek a satyric outlet, and they find it in Druidism. But they are seldom anti-religious. On the contrary, they often feel that there is in fact some truth to be found in religion, and this belief is affirmed in the Basic Tenets. A common complaint among Druids is that the truth has been obscured because they have been forced, more or less against their will, into various particular religious molds. They seek to be freed—freed in order to freely seek, and to make independent judgments on what passes for religious truth.

Druidism, as an institution, must remain independent. It can never hope to profess absolute truth; for when it does, it then will become no better than the fossilized institutions from which its members have fled. But even while it systematically shuns dogmatism, it can—and must—still lead. It must provide the opportunity for discovery, which many of its members have never had. It must, in short, provide in its written meditations a taste of the writings of the world's great religions, in the hope that this taste will stimulate a wider search for knowledge and wisdom in the quest for religious truth.

As Arch-Druid, you are charged with preparing meditations which will prove meaningful to the congregation. In order to do this, you must choose selections from the Buddhists, the Hindus, the Taoists, the Muslims, and many others, as well as from the Bible. You must provide a wide variety in order to give truth a chance. The best method is to study widely yourself. But this can be too time-consuming. I therefore strongly urge you to purchase, for your own edification, an excellent and useful collection: Viking Portable #5, Henry Ballou's World Bible. It is available in paper for less than \$2.00, or in hard-cover for slightly more. The selections are short and illuminating, and the editor exhibits a bias which can almost be called Druidic. It makes a good beginning.

For those Arch-Druids who are lazier still, or who suddenly find themselves in desperate need of a meditation at the last minute, I offer the following collection. It is hoped that the collection, although short, is representative and especially useful for Reformed Druids.

David A. Frangquist
Editor, 1966

PREFACE to 1976 Edition

In the first few years after the foundation of Reformed Druidism at Carleton College, there became attached to the office of Arch-Druid three collections of written material, which became known collectively as the Three Books of the Arch-Druid. Handed down over the years from Arch-Druid to Arch-Druid, they have acquired for the Druids at Carleton some measure of venerability, such as the scant age of the Reform can confer.

The first of these, The Book of the Worship of the Earth-Mother, preserves much of the liturgy used in the beginning, though indeed as the Reform grew, so did the realization that liturgy cannot remain fixed and static while religious outlook changes. So today each presiding priest is encouraged to write liturgy that he can celebrate without antagonizing his own religious scruples; and while much is still drawn from the Book of Worship, its influence is less than it once was. The second book, the Archives, though of much historical interest, has hardly ever borne much influence on the religious activity at Carleton.

By contrast, the Book of Written Meditations has waxed large in

the consciousness of the Carleton Grove, larger even, perhaps, than the Druid Chronicles. These meditations were gathered by David Frangquist as an aid to lazy Arch-Druids (or so he said), and the collection was bound in green covers which readily distinguish it from the black covers of the Book of Worship and the blue covers of the Archives; indeed at Carleton it is called simply "the green book"—and that has become in effect its title. These meditations found their way with increasing frequency into services at Carleton, not from increasing laziness, but from increasing awareness of the treasures that David had gathered together between the green covers. Members of the grove would often borrow the book for their own meditation and reflection, and eventually the essence and core of Druidism at Carleton could be found in seminal form within this free-form, eclectic collection more than any place else—save only the great world at large, whence, after all, these meditations came.

And so we have thought it appropriate to print The Green Book to bring it to a larger audience, in the hope that others, too, may find it useful in the search for awareness. The pages of the original are unnumbered, for David encouraged his successors to add such meditations as they found appropriate. We encourage our readers to do likewise, and have accordingly left the pages unnumbered. There have been additions since David's time, but they have been few. For this edition we have included several selections that have long wanted adding; the Yeats poems, for example, which have almost become part of the Carleton liturgy. We have resisted the temptations to make a few excisions. We should especially have liked to excise the "Sayings of the Ancient Druids" which are no more Druidic than is Stonehenge, and which certainly cannot be said to represent the beliefs of the Reformed Druids; yet David included it, and we shall not gainsay him.

Herewith, then is The Green Book, in substantially the same form as it was bequeathed to Carleton by David. May you find joy in the reading!

Richard M. Shelton
Ellen Conway Shelton
Editors, 1974

Note by the Current Editor

The Green Book (volume 1) never quite made it to being officially published. By 1976, all but a few of the exemptions from copyrights were acquired. However, the task became too difficult and other concerns occupied the attention of the Sheltons. As a result, the legality of publishing this collection is rather dubious and it probably will remain as an underground publication. For no particular reason, I have kept their selections in the order that they were presented to me (including a rebellious selection from the Old Testament that is mischievously hiding in the Buddhist section of The Green Book). I have neither deleted nor added any new selections to the first volume, but you may feel free to add new selections or take out selections (especially the ones from the "Ancient Druids"), if you wish.

As stated before, The Green Book, was near to the heart of Druidism until the early 80's when Carleton Druidism lapsed. When it revived in the mid-80s, Carleton students had taken a greater interest in Neo-Paganism, Wiccan and Native American beliefs; areas rarely explored before that time. As a result, The Green Book has not received much attention since due to its Monotheistic and Asian foci. However for me, the Green Book is a powerful reminder of the breadth of sources that Reformed Druidism can and should draw upon during the searches for religious truth.

I have been especially encouraged to follow David's request that the Arch-Druid should collect and distribute meditations conducive to Druidism (a vague and daunting task!). I have, as of 1994, published two other volumes of meditation; which are just as dubious

legally as the original Green Book. However, my Green Books have failed to garner as much enthusiasm as the first Green Book. Perhaps it is a far more difficult task than I understood when I first began to publish them?

Feel free, yourself, at the potential risk of breaking the copyright laws, to make copies of The Green Book s for your friends. Happy reading.

Michael Scharding
Publisher, 1995

Another Fine Product of the Drynemton Press

Publishing History

1st Printing—1966 c.e.
2nd Printing—60s & Early 70s
3rd Printing—1976 c.e.
4th Printing—Seventies and Eighties
5th Printing—1993 c.e.
6th Printing—1996 c.e. in ARDA

Note: No particular statement, dogmatic point or doctrine expressed in these collected works should be construed as being the beliefs of one particular Druid or of all Reformed Druids. They are exercises and words to be thought upon and not necessarily agreed with.

Sayings of the “Ancient Druids”

(On Religion)

One God supreme the universe does sway
With rev'rence his omnipotence obey;
And know, that all we possibly can name,
From heav'n itself originally came;
Let no mean thoughts of dissolution fright,
Or damp you spirits with the dews of night.
The soul's immortal and can never die;
For frail existence no vain efforts make,
For fear to lose what he wants power to take.

Of awful vengeance ever shall be hurl'd
By nature's God against a sinful world;
In dreadful deluges we must expire
Or else consume in rapid flames of fire.
In these tremendous elements alone,
Mankind shall perish, and their sins atone.

Another world is ready to receive
Immortal souls, that earthly bodies leave
To dust the perishable parts return,
But at the grave eternal spirits spurn.
And if in virtue's path they trod below,
In heav'nly mansions 'tis their fate to glow;
But if by vice enslav'd, their doom's to roam
Without a heav'nly, or an earthly home.

On your young offspring spend your utmost care,
And of the early seeds of vice beware;
This noble talk you can't commence too soon,
Expand their virtues, and their follies prune.
Their youthful minds, like melted wax impress,
And heav'n's fair image in their souls express.

(On Politics)

Children must from their parents be removed,
Tho' fondly prized and tenderly belov'd;
Till fourteen times the sun with radiant rays,
Shall round the world in annual circuit blaze:
Lest blind partially in youth should wrong
Those rising minds that to the state belong.

'Tis just, upon emergencies of state,
To yield an individual to fate;
Better a part should perish than the whole,
A body's forfeit cannot hurt the soul;
The sacrifice, by feeling earthly pain,
May greater bliss in future life obtain.

Blind disobedience to the state's decree,
Shall always excommunicated be;
And interdicted thus, the wretch shall roam,
Secluded from society and home:
Devoid of trust in the most trifling cause,
And unprotected by the injured laws.

When danger calls, and delegates should meet,
Let not the senate wait for tardy feet;
For in the crisis of our country's fate,
He merits death who gives advice too late.

(On Various Things)

Those who lend money to the wretch decay'd,
In the next life will be again repay'd.
If by one newly dead you want to send,

A note to any long departed friend:
Compose your letter in a solemn stile,
And slowly cast it on the funeral pile;
Then know the sentiments therein express'd,
Will be deliver'd to the hand address'd.

Each member of a family we deem,
In his own habitation, Lord supreme;
O'er life and property his power extends,
If the state ratifies what he intends.

Prisoners of war are doomed by fate to die,
Then sacrifice them to some diety;
Upon the altars let them soon expire,
Or closed in wicker feed the sacred fire.
Be arts instill'd—be useful science shewn,
And wisdom taught in sacred groves alone;
There, and there only, shall the mind improve
In needful knowledge and in social love;
But let no lesson be in writing giv'n,
Trust all to memory—that great gift of heav'n.

When strong diseases, the weak frame enthrall,
The moon's the sovereign remedy of all.

Let mistletoe with reverent awe be sought,
Since as a boon, from heav'n itself 'tis bought;
The sacred oak ascend, and then with skill,
Cut the with'd branches with a golden bill.

Selections from:

William Augustus Russel. *History of England*. London, J. Cooke, 1777. p. 4.

Sayings of the Hindus

(The Rig-Veda: To the Waters)

Forth from the middle of the flood the waters—their chief the sea—
flow cleansing, never sleeping.
Indra, the bull, the thunderer, dug their channels: here let those
waters, goddesses, protect me.

Waters which came from heaven, or those that wander dug from the
earth, or flowing free by nature.
Bright, purifying, spreading to the ocean, here let those waters, god-
desses, protect me.

Those amid whom goes Varuna, the sovereign, he who discrimi-
nates men's truth and falsehood—
Distilling meath, the bright, the purifying, here let those waters, god-
desses, protect me.

They from who Varuna the king, and Soma, and all the deities drink
strength and vigour,
They into whom the universal Agni entered, here let those waters,
goddesses, protect me.

Selections from:

Robert O. Ballou. *The Bible of the World*. New York, The Viking
Press, 1939.

(The Atharva-Veda: To Heaven and Earth)

All hail to heaven!
All hail to earth!
All hail to air!
All hail to air!
All hail to heaven!
All hail to earth!

Mine eye is sun and my breath is wind, air is my soul and earth my
body.
I verily who never have been conquered five up my life to heaven
and earth for keeping.

Exalt my life, my strength, my deed and action; increase my under-
standing and my vigour.
Be ye my powerful keepers, watch and guard me, ye mistresses of life
and life's creators! Dwell ye within me, and forbear to harm me.

Selections from:

Robert O. Ballou. *World Bible*. New York, The Viking Press, 1944.
p. 37.

Sayings of the Hindus

(From the Upanishads)

Once when Yagnavalkya came to the court of King Janaka, the king welcomed him with a question.

Yagnavalkya, what serves as the light for man?

The light of the sun, Your Majesty; for by the light of the sun man sits, goes out, does his work, and returns home.

True indeed, Yagnavalkya. But when the sun has set, what serves then as his light?

The moon is then his light.

When the sun has set, O Yagnavalkya, and the moon has set, what serves then as his light?

The fire is then his light.

When the sun has set, O Yagnavalkya, and the moon has set, and the fire has gone out, what serves then as his light?

Sound is then his light; for with sound alone as his light, man sits, goes out, does his work, and returns home. Even though he cannot see his own hand, yet when he hears a sound he moves toward it.

True indeed, O Yagnavalkya. When the sun has set, and the moon has set, and the fire has gone out, and no sound is heard, what serves then as his light?

The Self indeed is his light; for by the light of the Self man sits, moves about, does his work, and when his work is done, rests.

Who is that Self?

The self-luminous being who dwells within the lotus of the heart, surrounded by the senses and sense organs, and who is the light of the intellect, is that Self. Becoming identified with the intellect, he moves to and fro, through birth and death, between this world and the next. Becoming identified with the intellect, the Self appears to be thinking, appears to be moving. While the mind is dreaming, the Self also appears to be dreaming, and to be beyond the next world as well as this.

Pure like crystal water is that Self, the only seer, the One without a second. He is the kingdom of Brahman—man's highest goal, supreme treasure, greatest bliss. Creatures who live within the bonds of ignorance experience but a small portion of his infinite being.

The Self is to be described as not this, not that. It is incomprehensible, for it cannot be comprehended; undecaying, for it never decays; unattached, for it never attaches itself; unfettered, for it is never bound. He who knows the Self is unaffected, whether by good or by evil. Never do such thoughts come to him as "I have done an evil thing" or "I have done a good thing." Both good and evil he has transcended, and he is therefore troubled no more by what he may or may not have done.

The eternal glory of the knower of Brahman, beginningless and endless, revealed by divine knowledge, is neither increased nor decreased by deeds. Let a man therefore seek to obtain it, since having obtained it he can never be touched by evil. Self-controlled is he who knows the Self, tranquil, poised, free from desire, absorbed in meditating upon it, he sees it within his own soul, and he sees all beings in it. Evil touches him not, troubles him not, for in the fire of his divine knowledge all evil is burnt away.

The Self, the great unborn, the undecaying, the undying, the immortal, the fearless, is, in very truth, Brahman. He who knows Brahman is without fear. He who knows Brahman becomes Brahman!

Selections from

Swami Prabhavananda & Frederick Manchester, trans. *The Upanishads : Breath of the Eternal*. New York, Mentor (MP386). 1957. p. 103.

(The Rig-Veda: Creation)

Then was not non-existent nor existent: there was no realm of air, no sky beyond it.

What covered in, and where? and what gave shelter? Was water there, unfathomed depth of water?

Death was not then, nor was there aught immortal: no sign was there, the day's and night's divider.

That One Thing, breathless, breathed by its own nature: apart from it was nothing whatsoever.

Darkness there was: at first concealed in darkness this All was indiscriminated chaos.

All that existed then was void and formless: by the great power of warmth was born that unit.

Who verily knows and who can here declare it, whence it was born and whence comes this creation?

The gods are later than this world's production. Who knows then whence it first came into being?

He, the first origin of this creation, whether he formed it all or did not form it,

Whose eye controls this world in highest heaven, he verily knows it, or perhaps he knows not.

Selections from:

Robert O. Ballou. *World Bible*. New York, The Viking Press, 1944. p. 32.

The Sayings of the Hindus

(From the Bhagavad-Gita)

Sri Krishna:

You have the right to work, but for the work's sake only. You have no right to the fruits of work. Desire for the fruits of work must never be your motive in working. Never give way to laziness either.

Perform every action with your heart fixed on the Supreme Lord. Renounce attachment to the fruits. Be even-tempered in success and failure....

Work done with anxiety about results is far inferior to work done without such anxiety, in the calm of self-surrender. Seek refuge in the knowledge of Brahman. They who work selfishly for results are miserable.

In the calm of self-surrender you can free yourself from the bondage of virtue and vice during this very life. Devote yourself, therefore, to reaching union with Brahman. To unite the heart with Brahman and then to act: that is the secret of unattached work. In the calm of self-surrender, the seers renounce the fruits of their actions, and so reach enlightenment. Then they are free from the bondage of re-birth, and pass to that state which is beyond all evil.

When your intellect has cleared itself of its delusions, you will become indifferent to the results of all action, present and future. At present, your intellect is bewildered by conflicting interpretations of the scriptures. When it can rest, steady and undistracted, in contemplation of the Atman (the Godhead within every being), then you will reach Union with the Atman.

Arjuna:

Krishna, how can one identify a man who is firmly established and absorbed in Brahman?

Sri Krishna:

He who knows bliss in the Atman
And wants nothing else.
Cravings torment the heart:
He renounces cravings.
I call him illumined.

Not shaken by adversity,
Not hankering after happiness:
Free from fear, free from anger,
Free from the things of desire.
I call him a seer, and illumined.
The bonds of his flesh are broken.
He is lucky, and does not rejoice:
He is unlucky, and does not weep.
I call him illumined.

The tortoise can draw in his legs:
The seer can draw in his sense.
I call him illumined.

The abstinent run away from what they desire
But carry their desires with them:
When a man enters Reality,
He leaves his desires behind him.

Even a mind that knows the path
Can be dragged from the path:
The senses are so unruly.
But he controls the senses
And recollects the mind
And fixes it on me.
I call him illumined.

Thinking about sense-objects
Will attach you to sense-objects;
Grow attached, and you become addicted;
Thwart your addiction, it turns to anger;
Be angry, and you confuse your mind;
Confuse your mind, you forget the lesson of experience;
Forget experience, you lose discrimination;
Lose discrimination, and you miss life's only purpose.

When he has no lust, no hatred,
A man walks safely among the things of lust and hatred.
To obey the Atman
Is his peaceful joy:
Sorrow melts
Into that clear peace:
His quiet mind
Is soon established in peace.

The uncontrolled mind
Does not guess that the Atman is present:
How can it meditate?
Without meditation, where is peace?
Without peace, where is happiness?

The wind turns a ship
From its course upon the waters:
The wandering winds of the senses
Cast man's mind adrift
And turn his better judgment from its course.
When a man can still the senses
I call him illumined.
The recollected mind is awake
In the knowledge of the Atman
Which is dark night to the ignorant:
The ignorant are awake in their sense-life
Which they think is daylight:
To the seer it is darkness.

Water flows continually into the ocean
But the ocean is never disturbed:
Desire flows into the mind of the seer
But he is never disturbed.
The seer knows peace:
The man who stirs up his own lusts
Can never know peace.
He knows peace who has forgotten desire
He lives without craving:
Free from ego, free from pride.

This is the state of enlightenment in Brahman:
A man does not fall back from it
Into delusion.
Even at the moment of death
He is alive in that enlightenment:
Brahman and he are one.

Selection from:

Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood, trans. *The Song of God, Bhagavad-Gita*. New York, Mentor (MP466), 1954. pp. 40-44.

Sayings of the Hindus

(From the works of Sri Ramakrishna)

People partition off their lands by means of boundaries, but no one can partition off the all-embracing sky overhead. The indivisible sky surrounds all and includes all. So common man in ignorance says, "My religion is the only one, my religion is the best." But when his heart is illumined by true knowledge, he knows that above all these wars of sects and sectarians presides the one indivisible, eternal, all-knowing bliss.

As a mother, in nursing her sick children, gives rice and curry to one, and sago arrowroot to another, and bread and butter to a third, so the Lord has laid out different paths for different men suitable to their natures.

Dispute not. As you rest firmly on your own faith and opinion, allow others also the equal liberty to stand by their own faiths and opinions. By mere disputation you will never succeed in convincing another of his error. When the grace of God descends on him, each one will understand his own mistakes.

So long as the bee is outside the petals of the lily, and has not tasted the sweetness of its honey, it hovers round the flower emitting its buzzing sound; but when it is inside the flower, it noiselessly drink its nectar. So long as a man quarrels and disputes about doctrines and dogmas, he has not tasted the nectar of true faith; when he has tasted it, he becomes quiet and full of peace.

A man after fourteen year's penance in a solitary forest obtained at last the power of walking on water. Overjoyed at this, he went to his Guru and said, "Master, master, I have acquired the power of walking on water." The master rebukingly replied, "Fie, O child! is this the result of thy fourteen years' labours? Verily thou has obtained only that which is worth a penny; for what thou hast accomplished after fourteen years' arduous labour ordinary men do by paying a penny to the boatman."

Selections from:

Robert O. Ballou. *World Bible*. New York, The Viking Press, 1944. p. 83, 88.

Saying from the Buddhist Sutras

(The Four Noble Truths)

Thus have I heard:

At one time the Lord dwelt at Benares at Isipatana in the Deer Park. There the Lord addressed the five monks:

These two extremes, monks, are not to be practiced by one who has gone forth from the world. What are the two? That conjoined with the passions and luxury, low, vulgar, common, ignoble, and useless; and that conjoined with self-torture, painful, ignoble, and useless. Avoiding these two extremes the Tathagata has gained the enlightenment of the Middle Path, which produces insight and knowledge, and tends to calm, to the higher knowledge, enlightenment, Nirvana.

And what, monks, is the Middle Path, of which the Tathagata has gained enlightenment, which produces insight and knowledge, and tends to calm, to higher knowledge, enlightenment, Nirvana? This is the Eightfold Way: namely, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This, monks, is the Middle Path, of which Tathagata has gained enlightenment, which produces insight and knowledge, and tends to calm, to higher knowledge, enlightenment, Nirvana.

Now this, monks, is the noble truth of pain: birth is painful, old age is painful, sickness is painful, death is painful, sorrow, lamentation, dejection, and despair are painful. Contact with unpleasant things is painful, not getting what one wishes is painful. In short the five groups of grasping are painful.

Now this, monks, is the noble truth of the cause of pain: the craving, which tends to rebirth, combined with pleasure and lust, finding pleasure here and there; namely, the craving for passion, the craving for existence, the craving for non-existence.

Now this, monks, is the noble truth of the cessation of pain: the cessation without a remainder of craving, the abandonment, forsaking, release, non-attachment.

Now this, monks, is the noble truth of the way that leads to the cessation of pain: this is the noble Eightfold Way; namely, right views, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

Selections from

Edwin A. Burtt. *The Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha*. New York, Mentor (MP380), 1955. p. 29.

Sayings from the Buddhist Sutras (Questions Not Tending to Edification)

Thus have I heard:

The venerable Malunkyaputta arose at eventide from his seclusion, and drew near to where The Blessed One was; and having drawn near and greeted The Blessed One, he sat down respectfully at one side. And seated respectfully at one side, the venerable Malunkyaputta spoke to The Blessed One as follows:

“Revered Sir, it happened to me, as I was just now in seclusion and plunged in meditation, that a consideration presented itself to my mind, as follows: ‘These theories which the Blessed One has left unelucidated, has set aside and rejected—that the world is finite, that the world is infinite, that the saint exists after death, that the saint does not exist after death, that the saint both exists and does not exist after death, that the saint neither exists nor does not exist after death—these the Blessed One does not elucidate to me. And the fact that The Blessed One does not elucidate them to me does not please me nor suit me. I will draw near to The Blessed One and inquire of him concerning this matter. If The Blessed One will elucidate (them) to me, in that case will I lead the religious life under The Blessed One. If The Blessed One will not elucidate (them) to me, in that case will I abandon religious training and return to the lower life of a layman.’”

“If The Blessed One knows that the world is eternal, let The Blessed One elucidate to me that the world is not eternal; if The Blessed One knows that the world is not eternal, let The Blessed One elucidate to me that the world is not eternal. If The Blessed One does not know either that the world is eternal or that the world is not eternal, the only upright thing for one who does not know, or who has not that insight, is to say, ‘I do not know; I have not that insight.’”

(And The Blessed One replied:)

“Malunkyaputta, anyone who should say, ‘I will not lead the religious life under The Blessed One until The Blessed One shall elucidate (these things) to me’—that person would die, Malunkyaputta, before the Tathagata had ever explained this to him.

“It is as if a man had been wounded by an arrow thickly smeared with poison, and his friends and companions were to cure for him a physician; and the sick man were to say, ‘I will not have this arrow taken out until I have learnt whether the man who wounded me belonged to the warrior caste, or to the Brahmin caste, or to the agricultural caste, or to the menial caste.’

“Or again he were to say, ‘I will not have this arrow taken out until I have learnt the name of the man who wounded me, and to what clan he belongs.’

“Or again he were to say, ‘I will not have this arrow taken out until I have learnt whether the man who wounded me was tall, or short, or of the middle height.’

“That man would die, Malunkyaputta, without ever having learnt this.

“This religious life does not depend on the dogma that the world is eternal; nor does the religious life depend on the dogma that the world is not eternal. Whether the dogma obtain that the world is eternal, or that the world is not eternal, there still remain birth, old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief, and despair, for the extinction of which in the present life I am prescribing.

“Accordingly, bear always in mind what it is that I have elucidated, and what it is that I have not elucidated. And what have I not elucidated? I have not elucidated that the world is eternal; I have not elucidated this? Because this profits not, nor has it to do with the fundamentals of religion, nor tends to aversion, absence of passion, cessation, quiescence, the supernatural faculties, supreme wisdom, and Nirvana; therefore I have not elucidated it.”

Selections from:

Henry Clarke Warren. *Buddhism, in Translation*. New York, Atheneum (19), 1963. p. 117.

Sayings from the Buddhist Sutras (The Rain Cloud)

It is as if a cloud rising above the horizon shrouds all space (in darkness) and covers the earth.

That great rain-cloud, big with water, is wreathed with flashes of lightning and rouses with its thundering call all creatures.

By warding off the sunbeams, it cools the region; and gradually lowering so as to come in reach of hands, it begins pouring down its water all around.

And so, flashing on every side, it pours out an abundant mass of water equally, and refreshes this earth.

And all herbs which have sprung up on the face of the earth, all grasses, shrubs, forest trees, other trees small and great;

The various field fruits, and whatever is green; all plants on hills, in caves and thickets;

All those grasses, shrubs, and trees are vivified by the cloud that both refreshes the thirsty earth and waters the herbs.

Grasses and shrubs absorb the water of one essence which issues from the cloud according to their faculty and reach.

And all trees, great, small, and mean, drink that water according to their growth and faculty, and grow lustily.

the great plants whose trunk, stalk, bark, twigs, pith, and leaves are moistened by the water from the cloud develop their blossoms and fruits.

They yield their products, each according to its own faculty, reach, and their particular nature of the germ; still the water emitted (from the cloud) is of but one essence.

In the same way the Buddha comes into the world like a rain-cloud, and, once born, he, the world’s Lord, speaks and shows the real course of life.

And the great Seer, honoured in the world, including the gods, speaks thus: I am the Tathagata, the highest of men, the Gina; I have appeared in this world like a cloud.

I shall refresh all being whose bodies are withered, who are clogged to the triple world. I shall bring to felicity those that are pining away with toils, give them pleasures and (final) rest.

I am inexorable, bear no love nor hatred towards any one, and proclaim the law to all creatures without distinction, to the one as well as the other.

I recreate the whole world like a cloud shedding its water without distinction; I have the same feelings for respectable people as for the low; for moral persons as for the immoral;

For the depraved as for those who observe the rules of good conduct; for those who hold sectarian views and unsound tenets as for those whose views are sound and correct.

I also pour out rain: the rain of the law by which this whole world is refreshed; and each according to his faculty take to heart this well-spoken law that is one in its essence.

Even as all grasses and shrubs, as well as plants of middle size, trees and great trees at the time of rain look bright in all quarters;

So it is the very nature of the law to promote the everlasting weal of the world; by the law the whole world is recreated, and as the plants (when refreshed) expand their blossoms, the world does the same when refreshed.

So then is the preaching of the law like the water poured out by the cloud everywhere alike; by which plants and men thrive, endless (and eternal) blossoms (are produced).

Selections from

H. Kern. *Saddharma-Pundarika or The Lotus of the True Law*. New York, Dover (T1065), 1963.* p. 122.

*H. Kern's translation is originally vol. XXI of *The Sacred Books of the East*, edited by F. Max Muller.

(The Mahayana Ideal)

By constant use the idea of an "I" attaches itself to foreign drops of seed and blood, although the thing exists not. then why should I not conceive my fellow's body as my own self? That my body is foreign to me is not hard to see. I will think of myself as a sinner, of others as oceans of virtue; I will cease to live as self, and will take as my self my fellow-creatures. We love our hands and other limbs, as members of the body; then why not love other living beings, as members of the universe? By constant use man comes to imagine that his body, which has no self-being, is a "self;" why then should he not conceive his "self" to lie in his fellows also? Thus in doing service to others pride, admiration, and desire of reward find no place, for thereby we satisfy the wants of our own self. Then, as thou wouldst guard thyself against suffering and sorrow, so exercise that spirit of helpfulness and tenderness towards the world....

Make thyself a spy for the service others, and whatsoever thou seest in thy body's work that is good for thy fellows, perform it so that it may be conveyed to them. be thou jealous of thine own self when thou seest that it is at ease and thy fellow in distress, that it is in high estate and he is brought low, that it is at rest and he is at labour....

Selections from:

Edwin A. Burt. *The Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha*. New York, Mentor (MP380), 1955. p.140.

From the Old Testament

(Ecclesiastes 1)

The words of the Preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem. Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; vanity of vanities, all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour wherein he laboureth under the sun? One generation goeth, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth for ever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and hasteth to its place where it ariseth. The wind goeth toward the south; it turneth about unto the north; it turneth about continually in its course, and the wind returneth again to its circuits. All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; unto the place whither the rivers go, thither they go again. All things are full of weariness; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. That which hath been is that which shall be; and that which hath been is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there a new thing whereof it may be said, See this is new? it hath been long ago, in the ages which were before us. There is no remembrance of the former generations; neither shall there be any remembrance of the latter generations that are to come, among those that shall come after.

I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem. And I applied my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven: it is a sore travail that God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith. I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind. That which is crooked cannot be made straight; and that which is wanting cannot be numbered. I communed with mine own heart, saying, Lo, I have gotten me great wisdom above all that were before me in Jerusalem; yea, my heart hath had great experience of wisdom and knowledge. And I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also was a striving after wind. For in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.

Selections from:

The American Standard Version of *The Holy Bible*.

Sayings of the Zen Masters

(Two Mice)

Buddha told this parable: A traveler, fleeing a tiger who was chasing him, ran till he came to the edge of a cliff. there he caught hold of a thick vine, and swung himself over the edge.

Above him the tiger snarled. Below him he heard another snarl, and behold, there was another tiger, peering up at him. The vine suspended him midway between the two tigers.

Two mice, a white mouse and a black mouse, began to gnaw at the vine. He could see they were quickly eating it through. Then in front of him on the cliffside he saw a luscious bunch of grapes. Holding onto the vine with one hand, he reached and picked a grape with the other hand.

How delicious!

(Miracles)

While Bankei was preaching quietly to his followers, his talk was interrupted by a Shinshu priest who believed in miracles, and thought salvation came from repeating holy words.

Bankei was unable to go on with his talk, and asked the priest what he wanted to say.

"The founder of **my** religion," boasted the priest, "stood on one shore of a river with a writing brush in his hands. His disciple stood on the other shore holding a sheet of paper. And the founder wrote the holy name of Amida onto the paper across the river through the air. Can you do anything so miraculous?"

"No," said Bankei, "I can only do little miracles. Like: when I am hungry I eat, when I am thirsty I drink, when I am insulted, I forgive."

(Gutei's Finger)

Gutei raised his finger whenever he was asked a question about Zen. A boy attendant began to imitate him in this way. When anyone asked the boy what his master had preached about, the boy would raise his finger.

Gutei heard about the boy's mischief. He seized him and cut off his finger. The boy cried and ran away. Gutei called and stopped him. When the boy turned his head to Gutei, Gutei raised up his own finger. In that instant the boy was enlightened.

When Gutei was about to pass from this world he gathered his monks around him. "I attained my finger—Zen" he said, "from my teacher Tenryu, and in my whole life I could not exhaust it." Then he passed away.

Mummon's commentary: Enlightenment, which Gutei and the boy attained, has nothing to do with a finger. If anyone clings to a finger, Tenryu will be so disappointed that he will annihilate Gutei, the boy, and the clinger all together.

Gutei cheapens the teaching of Tenryu,
Emancipating the boy with a knife.

Compared to the Chinese god who pushed aside a mountain with one hand

Old Gutei is a poor imitator.

Selections from:

Zen Buddhism. Mount Vernon, The Peter Pauper Press, 1959. pp.61, 55.

Sayings of the Zen Masters

(Trading Dialogue for Lodging)

Providing he make and wins an argument about Buddhism with those who live there, any wandering monk can remain in a Zen temple. If he is defeated, he has to move on.

In a temple in the northern part of Japan two brother monks were dwelling together. The elder one was learned, but the younger one was stupid and had but one eye.

A wandering monk came and asked for lodging, properly challenging them to a debate about the sublime teaching. The elder brother, tired that day from much studying, told the younger one to take his place. "Go and request the dialogue in silence," he cautioned.

So the young monk and the stranger went to the shrine and sat down.

Shortly afterwards the traveler rose and went in to the elder brother and said: "Your young brother is a wonderful fellow. He defeated me."

"Relate the dialogue to me," said the elder one.

"Well," explained the traveler, "first I held up one finger, representing Buddha, the enlightened one. So he held up two fingers, signifying Buddha and his teaching. I held up three fingers, representing Buddha, his teaching, and his followers, living the harmonious life. then he shook his clenched fist in my face, indicating that all three come from one realization. Thus he won and so I have no right to remain here." With this, the traveler left.

"Where is that fellow?" asked the younger one, running in to his elder brother.

"I understand you won the debate."

"Won nothing. I'm going to beat him up."

"Tell me the subject of the debate," asked the elder one.

"Why, the minute he saw me he held up one finger, insulting me by insinuating that I have only one eye. Since he was a stranger I thought I would be polite to him, so I held up two fingers, congratulating him that he has two eyes. Then the impolite wretch held up three fingers, suggesting that between us we have only three eyes. So I got mad and started to punch him, but he ran out and that ended it!"

Selections from:

Paul Reys, ed. *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*. Garden City, Doubleday Anchor (A233), 1961. pp. 92, 28.

Haiku from the Japanese Poets

(Basho)

The Oak Tree stands
Noble on the hill even in
Cherry Blossom time.

(Ransetsu)

Waking before dawn, See
How the constellations are all
Turned around!

(Masahide)

Since my house
Burned down, I now own a better view
of the rising moon.

(Soseki)

The leaves never know
Which leaf will be the first to fall...
Does the wind know?

(Soseki)

A rain cloud darkens
Red maples clinging to crags
By a waterfall.

(Basho)

Hello! Light the fire!
I'll bring inside a lovely
Bright ball of snow!

Selections from:
Peter Beilenson & Harry Behn, trans. *Haiku Harvest*. Mount Vernon,
Peter Pauper press, 1962.

Sayings of the Taoist Sages

(Lao Tzu: #11)

Thirty spokes will converge
In the hub of a wheel;
But the use of the cart
Will depend on the part
Of the hub that is void.

With a wall all around
A clay bowl is molded;
But the use of the bowl
Will depend on the part
Of the bowl that is void.

Cut out the windows and doors
In the house as you build;
But the use of the house
Will depend on the space
In the walls that is void.

So advantage is had
From whatever is there;
But usefulness rises
From whatever is not.

(Lao Tzu: #32)

The Way eternal has no name.
A block of wood untooled, though small,
May still excel the world.
And if the king and nobles could
Retain its potency for good,
Then everything would freely give
Allegiance to their rule.

The earth and sky would then conspire
To bring the sweet dew down;
And evenly it would be given
To folk without constraining power.

Creatures came to be with order's birth,
And once they had appeared,
Came also knowledge of repose,
And with that was security.

In this world,
Compare those of the Way
To torrents that flow
Into river and sea.

Selections from:
Raymond B. Blakney. *The Way of Life: Tao Te Ching*. New York,
Mentor (MP416), 1955. p.63, 85. Sayings of the Taoist Sages

(Lao Tzu: #78)

Nothing is weaker than water,
But when it attacks something hard
Or resistant, then nothing withstands it,
And nothing will alter its way.

Everyone knows this, that weakness prevails
Over strength and that gentleness conquers
The adamant hindrance of men, but that
Nobody demonstrates how it is so.

Because of this the Wise Man says
That only one who bear the nation's shame
Is fit to be its hallowed lord;
That the only one who take upon himself
The evils of the world may be its king.

This is paradox.

Selections from:
Raymond B. Blakney. *The Way of Life: Tao Te Ching*. New York,
Mentor (MP416), 1955. p.131.

Sayings of the Taoist Sages

(Chuang Tzu)

Take the case of some words, Chuang Tzu says, parodying the logicians, I do not know which of them are in any way connected with reality or which are not at all connected with reality. If some that are so connected and some that are not so connected are connected with one another, then as regards truth or falsehood the former cease to be in any way different from the latter. However, just as an experiment, I will now say them: IF there was a beginning, there must have been a time before the beginning began, and if there was a time before the beginning began, there must have been a time before the time the beginning began. If there is a being, there must also be a not-being. If there was a time before there began to be any not-being, there must also have been a time before the time before there began to be any not-being. But here I am, talking about being and not-being and still do not know whether it is being that exists and not-being that does not exist, or being that does not exist and not-being that really exists! I have spoken, and do not know whether I have said something that means anything or said nothing that has any meaning at all.

"Nothing under Heaven is larger than a strand of gossamer, nothing smaller than Mt. Tai. No one lives longer than a child that dies in its swaddling-clothes, no one dies sooner than 'Methuselah.'" Heaven and earth were born when I was born; the ten thousand things and I among them are but one thing." All this the sophists have proved. But if there were indeed only one thing, there would be no language with which to say so: And in order that anyone should state this, there must be more language in which it can be stated. Thus their one thing together with their talk about the one thing makes two things. And their one thing together with their talk and my statement about it makes three things. And so it goes on, to a point where the cleverest mathematician could no longer keep count, much less an ordinary man. Starting with not-being and going on to being, one soon gets to three. What then would happen if one started with being and went on to being?

Selections from:
Arthur Waley. *Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China*. Garden City,
Doubleday Anchor (A75), 1956. p. 8.



Fisher, Nelson, Hotz, & Franquist, Hill of Three Oaks, c. 1963

Sayings of the Taoist Sages

(Chuang Tzu)

In the beginning Lieh Tzu was fond of traveling. The adept Hu-ch'iu Tzu said to him, "I hear that you are fond of traveling. What is it in traveling that pleases you?" "For me," said Lieh Tzu, "The pleasure of traveling consists in the appreciation of variety. When some people travel they merely contemplate what is before their eyes; when I travel, I contemplate the process of mutability." "I wonder," said Hu-ch'iu Tzu, "whether your travels are not very much the same as other people's, despite the fact that you think them so different. Whenever people look at anything, they are necessarily looking at processes of change, and one may well appreciate the mutability of outside things, while wholly unaware of one's own mutability. Those who take infinite trouble about external travels, have no idea how to set about the sight-seeing that can be done within. The traveler abroad is dependent upon outside things; he whose sight-seeing is inward, can in himself find all he needs. Such is the highest form of traveling; while it is a poor sort of journey that is dependent upon outside things."

After this Lieh Tzu never went anywhere at all, aware that till now he had not known what traveling means. "Now," said Hu-ch'iu Tzu, "you may well become a traveler indeed! The greatest traveler does not know where he is going; the greatest sight-seer does not know what he is looking at. His travels do not take him to one part of creation more than another. That is what I mean by true sight-seeing. And that is why I said, 'Now you may well become a traveler indeed!'"

Selections from:

Arthur Waley. *Three Ways of Thought in Ancient China*. Garden City, Doubleday Anchor (A75), 1956. p. 37.

Sayings of Confucius

(Confucius the Man)

Confucius was gentle yet firm, dignified but not harsh, respectful yet well at ease. (VII:37)

When Confucius was pleased with the singing of someone he was with, he would always ask to have the song repeated and would join in himself. (VII:31)

The Duke of She asked Tzu Lu about Confucius, and Tzu Lu gave him no answer. Confucius said: "Why didn't you tell him that I am a person who forgets to eat when he is enthusiastic about something, forgets all his worries in his enjoyment of it, and is not aware that old age is coming on?" (VII:18)

Confucius said: "Having only coarse food to eat, plain water to drink, and a bent arm for a pillow, one can still find happiness therein. Riches and honor acquired by unrighteous means are to me as drifting clouds." (VII:15)

(On learning and education)

Confucius said: "When walking in a party of three, I always have teachers. I can select the good qualities of the one for imitation, and the bad ones of the other and correct them in myself." (VII:21)

There were four things that Confucius was determined to eradicate: a biased mind, arbitrary judgments, obstinacy, and egotism. (IX:4)

Confucius said: "Those who know the truth are not up to those who love it; those who love the truth are not up to those who delight in it." (VI:18)

Confucius said: "Having heard the Way (Tao) in the morning, one may die content in the evening." (IV:8)

Confucius said: "In education there are no class distinctions." (XV:38)

Confucius said: "The young are to be respected. How do we know that the next generation will not measure up to the present one? But if a man has reached forty or fifty and nothing has been heard of him, then I grant that he is not worthy of respect." (IX:22)

Confucius said: "When it comes to acquiring perfect virtue, a man should not defer even to his own teacher." (XV:35)

Confucius said: "Learning without thinking is labor lost; thinking without learning is perilous." (II:15)

Confucius said: "Yu, shall I teach you what knowledge is? When you know a thing, say that you know it; when you do not know a thing, admit that you do not know it. That is knowledge." (II:17)

(Teachings on reciprocity or humanity)

Confucius said: "Shen! My teaching contains one principle that runs through it all." "Yes," replied Tseng Tzu. When Confucius had left the room the disciples asked: "What did he mean?" Tseng Tzu replied: "Our Master's teaching is simple this: loyalty and reciprocity." (IV:15)

Tzu Kung asked: "is there any one word that can serve as a principle for the conduct of life?" Confucius said: "Perhaps the word 'reciprocity': Do not do to others what you would not want others to do to you." (XV:23)

Confucius said: "It is man that can make the Way great, not the Way that can make man great." (XV:28)

Fan Ch'ih asked about humanity. Confucius said: "Love men." (XII:22)

Tzu Chang asked Confucius about humanity. Confucius said: "To be able to practice five virtues everywhere in the world constitutes humanity." Tzu Chang begged to know what these were. Confucius

said: "Courtesy, magnanimity, good faith, diligence, and kindness. He who is courteous is not humiliated, he who is magnanimous wins the multitude, he who is of good faith is trusted by the people, he who is diligent attains his objective, and he who is kind can get service from the people." (XVII:6)

Confucius said: "Only the humane man can love men and can hate men." (IV:3)

(Confucius on religion)

Lin Fang asked about the fundamental principle of rites. Confucius replied: "You are asking an important question! In rites at large, it is always better to be too simple rather than too lavish..." (III:4)

Tzu Lu asked about the worship of ghosts and spirits. Confucius said: "We don't know yet how to serve men, how can we know about serving the spirits?" "What about death," was the next question. Confucius said: "We don't know yet about life, how can we know about death?" (XI:11)

Fan Ch'ih asked about wisdom. Confucius said: "Devote yourself to the proper demands of the people, respect the ghosts and spirits but keep them at a distance—this may be called wisdom." (VI:20)

Confucius said: "I wish I did not have to speak at all." Tzu Kung said: "But if you did not speak, Sir, what should we disciples pass on to others?" Confucius said: "Look at Heaven there. Does it speak? The four seasons run their course and all things are produced. Does Heaven speak?" (XVII:19)

(On the gentlemen)

Ssu-na Niu asked about the gentleman. Confucius said: "The gentleman has neither anxiety nor fear." Ssun-na Niu rejoined: "Neither anxiety nor fear—is that what is meant by being a gentleman?" Confucius said "when he looks into himself and finds no cause for self-reproach, what has he to be anxious about; what has he to fear?" (XII:4)

Tzu Kung asked about the gentleman. Confucius said: "The gentleman first practices what he preaches and then preaches what he practices." (II:13)

Confucius said: "The gentleman reaches upward; the inferior man reaches downward." (XIV:23)

Confucius said: "The gentleman understand what is right; the inferior man understands what is profitable." (IV:16)

Confucius said: "The gentleman makes demands on himself; the inferior man makes demands on others." (XV:20)

Confucius said: "The gentleman seeks to enable people to succeed in what is good but does not help them in what is evil. The inferior man does the contrary." (XII: 16)

Confucius said: "The gentleman is broad-minded and not partisan; the inferior man is partisan and not broad-minded." (II:14)

Selections from:

Wm. Theodore de Bary, ed. *Sources of the Chinese Tradition*, Vol. I. New York, Columbia University Press, 1960. pp. 20-33.

Numbers in parentheses are references to the Analects.

From the Old Testament

(Psalm 104)

Bless the Lord, O my soul. O lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty:

Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain:

Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind:

Who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:

Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever.

Thou coveredst it with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains.

At thy rebuke they fled; at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away.

They go up by the mountains; they go down by the valleys unto the place which thou has founded for them.

Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth.

He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills.

They give drink to every beast of the field: the wild asses quench their thirst.

By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches.

He watereth the hills from his chambers: the earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.

He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth:

And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart.

The trees of the Lord are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted;

Where the birds make their nests: as for the stork the fir-trees are her house.

The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats; and the rocks for the conies.

He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.

Thou makest darkness, and it is night: wherein all the beast of the forest do creep forth.

The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God.

The sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens.

Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour until the evening.

O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches.

So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts.

There go the ships: there is that leviathan, whom thou hast made to play therein.

These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.

That thou givest them, they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.

Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.

The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: the Lord shall rejoice in his works.

He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth: he toucheth the hills,

and they smoke.

I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.

My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord.

Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the Lord, O my soul. Praise ye the Lord.

Selections from:

The Authorized Version (King James) of *The Holy Bible*.

(Psalm 8)

O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

For thou has made him a little lower than the angels, and has crowned him with glory and honour.

Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:

All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the fields;

The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

Selections from:

The Authorized Version (King James) of *The Holy Bible*.

From the New Testament

(From the Sermon on the Mount)

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into the mountain: and when he had sat down, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying,

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the sons of God.

Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a lamp, and put it under the bushel, but on a stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house. Even so let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through and steal: for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also. The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness! No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment? Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit unto the measure of his life? And why are ye anxious concerning the raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first his kingdom, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore anxious for the morrow: for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Selections from:

Matthew 5:1-16, 6:19-34. The Authorized Version (King James) of *The Holy Bible*.

(I Corinthians 13)

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child; now I am become a man, I have put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known. But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three: and the greatest of these is love.

Selections from:

The Authorized Version (King James) of *The Holy Bible*.

From the Zoroastrian Scriptures

(A Prayer for Guidance)

O Ahura Mazda, this I ask of thee: speak to me truly!
How should I pray, when I wish to pray to one like you?
May one like you, O Mazda, who is friendly, teach one like me?
And may you give us supporting aids through the friendly Justice,
And tell us how you may come to us with Good Disposition?

O Ahura Mazda, this I ask of thee: speak to me truly!
Whether at the beginning of the best life
The retributions will be of profit to their recipients?
And whether he, who is bounteous to all through Justice, and who
watches the end
Through his Mentality,—whether he is the life-healing friend of the
people?

O Ahura Mazda, this I ask of thee: speak to me truly!
Who was the first father of Justice by giving birth to him?
Who established the sunlit days and the star glistening sphere and
the Milky Way?
Who, apart from thee, established the law by which the moon waxes
and wanes?
These and other things would I like to know!

O Ahura Mazda, this I ask of thee: speak to me truly!
Who was from beneath sustaining the earth and the clouds
So that they would not fall down? Who made the waters and the
plants?
Who yoked the two swift ones, thunder and lightning, to the wind
and to the clouds?
Who is the creator of Good Disposition?

O Ahura Mazda, this I ask of thee: speak to me truly!
Who produced well-made lights and darkness?
Who produced sleep, well-induced through laborious waking?
Who produced the dawns and the noon through the contrast with
the night
Whose daily changes act for the enlightened believers as monitors of
their interests?

O Ahura Mazda, this I ask of thee: speak to me truly!
Is the message I am about to proclaim genuine?
Does Love support Justice through deeds?
Dost thou with Good Disposition destine the realm for these believ-
ers?
For whom but these believers didst thou shape the fortune-bringing
cattle?

O Ahura Mazda, this I ask of thee: speak to me truly!
Who shaped prized Love with Power?
Who, by guidance, rendered sons reverent to their Fathers?
It is I who strive to learn to recognize thee
Through the bounteous Mentality, as giver of all good things!

O Ahura Mazda, this I ask of thee: speak to me truly!
I would like to know what sort of a purpose is thine, that I may be
mindful of it;
What are thy utterances, about which I asked through the aid of
Good Disposition;
The proper knowledge of life through Justice—
How shall my soul, encouraged by bliss, arrive at that reward?

O Ahura Mazda, this I ask of thee: speak to me truly!
How may I accomplish the sanctification of those spirits
To whom thou, the well-disposed Master of the coming Kingdom,
Has pronounced promises about its genuine blessings,
Promising that those spirits shall dwell in the same dwellings with
Justice and Good Disposition?

O Ahura Mazda, this I ask of thee: speak to me truly!
How will Love actually, in deeds, extend over those persons
To whom thy spirit was announced as a doctrine?
On account of whom was I first elected, and whom I love;
All others I look upon with hostility of mentality!

O Ahura Mazda, this I ask of thee: speak to me truly!
How shall I carry out the object inspired by you,
Namely, my attachment to you, in order that my speech may grow
mighty, and
That by that word of mine the adherent of Justice
May in the future commune with Health, and Immortality?

Selections from:
Robert O. Ballou. *World Bible*. New York, The Viking Press, 1944.
p.210

Sayings of Muhammad

(The Morning Star)

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful:
By what heaven and the Morning Star
—Ah, what will tell thee what the Morning Star is!
—The piercing Star!
No human soul but hath a guardian over it.
So let man consider from what he is created.
He is created from a gushing fluid
That issued from between the loins and ribs.
Lo! He verily is able to return him (unto life)
On the day when hidden thoughts shall be searched out.
Then will he have no might nor any helper.
By the heaven which giveth the returning rain,
And the earth which splitteth (with the growth of trees and plants)
Lo! this (Qur'an) is a conclusive word,
It is no pleasantry.
Lo! they plot a plot (against thee, O Muhammad)
And I plot a plot (against them).
So give a respite to the disbelievers. Deal thou gently with them for a
while.

(The Overwhelming)

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
Hath there come unto thee tidings of the Overwhelming?
On that day (many) faces will be down cast,
Toiling, weary,
Scorched by burning fire,
Drinking from a boiling spring,
No food for them save bitter thorn-fruit
Which doth not nourish nor release from hunger.
In that day other faces will be calm,
Glad for their effort past,
In a high garden
Where they hear no idle speech,
Wherein is a gushing spring,
Wherein are couches raised
And goblets at hand
And cushions ranged
And silken carpets spread.
Will they not regard the camels, how they are created?
And the heaven, how it is raised?
And the hills, how they are set up?
And the earth, how it is spread?
Remind them, for thou art but a remembrancer,
Thou art not at all a warder over them.
But whoso is averse and disbelieveth,
Allah will punish him with direst punishment.
Lo! unto Us is their return
And Our their reckoning.

Selections from:
Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall, trans. *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*. New York, Mentor (MT223), 1953. p. 437, 438.

Sayings of the Unitarian Universalists

(Out of the Stars)

Out of the stars in their flight, out of the dust of eternity, here have we come,
Stardust and sunlight, mingling through time and through space.

Out of the stars have we come, up from time
Out of the stars have we come.

Time out of time before time in the vastness of space, earth spun to orbit the sun,
Earth with the thunder of mountains newborn, the boiling of seas.

Earth warmed by sun, lit by sunlight: this is our home;
Out of the stars have we come.

Mystery hidden in mystery, back through all time;
Mystery rising from rocks in the storm and the sea.

Out of the stars, rising from the rocks and the sea,
Kindled by sunlight on earth, arose life.

Ponder this thing in your heart; ponder with awe:
Out of the sea to the land, out of the shallows came ferns.

Out of the sea to the land, up from darkness and light,
Rising to walk and to fly, out of the sea trembled life.

Ponder this thing in your heart, life up from sea:
Eyes to behold, throats to sing, mates to love.

Life from the sea, warmed by sun, washed by rain,
Life from within, giving birth rose to love.

This is the wonder of time; this is the marvel of space;
Out of the stars swung the earth; life upon earth rose to love.

This is the marvel of man, rising to see and to know;
Out of your heart, cry wonder: sing that we live.

Selections from:

Robert T. Weston, "Out of the Stars." Unitarian- Universalist Hymnbook Commission, *Hymns for the celebration of life*. Boston, Beacon Press, 1964 , no. 345.

Sayings of Baha'u'llah

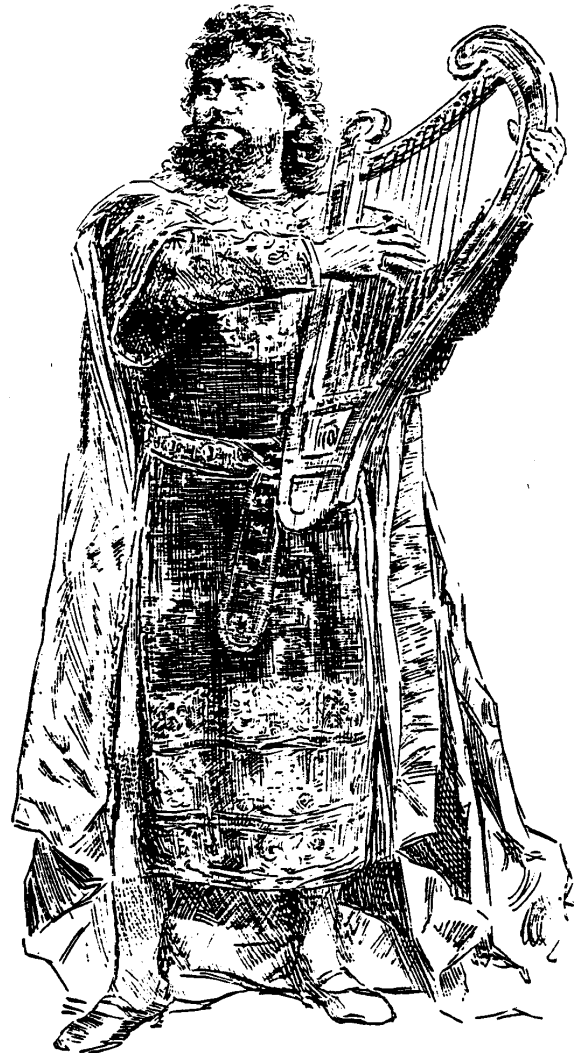
(On the Soul)

Consider the sun when it is completely hidden behind the clouds. Though the earth is still illumined with its light, yet the measure of light which it receiveth is considerably reduced. Not until the clouds have dispersed, can the sun shine again in the plenitude of its glory. Neither the presence of the cloud nor its absence can, in any way, affect the inherent splendor of the sun. The soul of man is the sun by which his body is illumined, and from which it draweth its sustenance, and should be so regarded.

Consider, moreover, how the fruit, ere it is formed, lieth potentially within the tree. Were the tree to be cut into pieces, no sign nor any part of the fruit, however small, could be detected. When it appeareth, however, it manifesteth itself, as thou has observed, in its wondrous beauty and glorious perfection. Certain fruits, indeed, attain their fullest development only after being severed from the tree.

Selections From:

Shoghi Effendi, trans. *Gleanings From the Writings of Baha'u'llah*. Wilmette, Baha'i Pub. Trust, 1952. p. 155.



Sayings of the Poets

(A Faery Song)

(Sung by the people of the Faery over Diarmuid and Grania, in their bridal sleep under a Cromlech.)

We who are old, old and gay,
O so old!
Thousands of years, thousands of years,
If all were told:

Give to these children, new from the world,
Silence and love;
And the long dew-dropping hours of the night,
And the stars above:

Give to these children, new from the world,
Rest far from men.
Is anything better, anything better?
Tell us it then:

We who are old, old and gay,
O so old!
Thousands of years, thousands of years,
If all were told:

Selection from:

W.B. Yeats. "A Faery Song," from *The Rose*. In M.L. Rosenthal, *Selected Poems and Two Plays of William Butler Yeats*. New York: Collier Books, 1962. p.12.

(Fergus and the Druid)

Fergus. This whole day have I followed in the rocks,
And you have changed and flowed from shape to shape,
First as a raven on whose ancient wings
Scarcely a feather lingered, then you seemed
A weasel moving on from stone to stone,
And now at last you wear a human shape,
A thing grey man half lost in gathering night.

Druid. What would you, king of the proud Red Branch knights?

Fergus. This would I say, most wise of living souls:
Young subtle Conchubar sat close by me
When I gave judgment, and his words were wise,
And what to me was burden without end,
To him seemed easy, so I laid the crown
Upon his head to cast away my sorrow.

Druid. What would you, king of the proud Red Branch kings?

Fergus. A king and proud! and that is my despair.
I feast amid my people on the hill,
And pace the woods, and drive my chariot-wheels
In the white border of the murmuring sea;
And still I feel the crown upon my head.

Druid. What would you, Fergus?

Fergus. Be no more a king,
But learn the dreaming wisdom that is yours.

Druid. Look on my thin grey hair and hollow cheeks
And on these my hands that may not lift the sword,
This body trebling like a wind-blown reed.
No woman's loved me, no man sought my help.

Fergus. A king is but a foolish labourer
Who wastes his blood to be another's dream.

Druid. Take, if you must, this little bag of dreams;
Unloose the cord, and they will wrap you round.

Fergus. I see my life go drifting like a river
From change to change; I have been many things—
A green drop in the surge, a gleam of light
Upon a sword, a fir-tree on a hill,
An old slave grinding at a heavy quern,
A king sitting upon a chair of gold—
And all these things were wonderful and great;
But now I have grown nothing, knowing all.
Ah! Druid, Druid, how great webs of sorrow
Lay hidden in the small slate-coloured thing!

Selection from:

W.B. Yeats. "Fergus and the Druid," from *The Rose*. In M.L. Rosenthal, *Selected Poems and Two Plays of William Butler Yeats*. New York: Collier Books, 1962. p.7-8.

(The Prophet)

And an old priest said, "Speak to us of Religion."

And he said:

Have I spoken this day of aught else?

Is not religion all deeds and all reflection,

And that which is neither deed nor reflection,

And that which is neither deed nor reflection, but a wonder and a surprise ever springing in the soul, even while the hands hew the stone or tend the loom?

Who can separate his faith from his actions, or his belief from his occupations?

Who can spread his hours before him, saying, "This for God and this for myself; This for my soul, and this other for my body?"

All your hours are wings that beat through space from self to self.

He who wears his morality but as his best garment were better naked.

The wind and the sun will tear no holes in his skin.

And he who defines his conduct by ethics imprisons his song-bird in a cage.

The freest song comes not through bars and wires.

And he to whom worshipping is a window, to open but also to shut, has not yet visited the house of his soul whose windows are dawn to dawn.

Your daily life is your temple and your religion.

Whenever you enter into it take with you your all.

The things you have fashioned in necessity or for delight.

For in reverie you cannot rise above your achievements nor fall lower than your failures.

And take with you all men:

For in adoration you cannot fly higher than their hopes nor humble yourself lower than their despair.

And if you would know God be not therefore a solver of riddles.

Rather look about you and you shall see Him playing with your children.

And look into space; you shall see him walking in the cloud, outstretching His arms in the lightning and descending in rain.

You shall see him smiling in flowers, then rising and waving His hands in trees.

Selections from:

Kahlil Gibran. *The Prophet*. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1963. p.77.

Sayings of (Good Grief!) the Psychologists

In the traditional psychologies, one group may find that a certain technique works well in a given situation. Its members may tend to apply it in situations where it is inappropriate, or with people for whom it is inappropriate. Because the technique works for them, they come to believe that it ought to work for everyone at all times. The technique becomes the end, and may become an obsession. Those who are involved in using such a technique, be it a particular meditation technique or a certain breathing exercise, can become fixated and restricted to what the technique has to offer. The adherents may set up schools to teach the “sacred” ritual, forgetting that any technique has its relevance only for a certain community at a certain time. Just as can happen with any scientific technique which is overextended or which persists for too long, the original application and intent of the esoteric technique may become lost, although the surface appearance of the enterprise is well-maintained. Religions construct cathedrals and design robes, just as scientist develop elaborate equipment and professional journals, but all too often the enterprise may become limited to a propagation of the means, with the original end, the desired objective, forgotten.

Selection from:
Robert E. Ornstein. *The Psychology of Consciousness*. New York, The Viking Press, 1972. pp. 97-98.



SO ENDS THE FIRST VOLUME OF THE GREEN BOOK

A Green Book of Meditations

Volume Two:

Celtic, Native American, African, Hindu and Greek Writings

I assembled this volume during one of my more nativist phases. There is a good reason that the Founders of the RDNA originally chose a Celtic flavor to their group, because Celtic literature is full of beautiful observations of Nature, as did the Native Americans, Africans, Hindus and Greeks. Each of the other groups have had to deal with the approach of Westernization and the destruction of traditional ways. However, I feel that these selections may provide useful solitary pondering and some may even make good readings at various Druidic services, campfires and tea parties. The translations of the works found in the Green Book Volume Two, with few exceptions, originally from old books and are probably safely past the copyright limit, so feel free to share.

It was originally titled "Celtic and English Writings" and released in 1993, during a flurry of activity when I released new printings of two volumes of Green Books, the Book of the African Jedi Knight, Book 2 of Poetry, The Dead Lake Scrolls, The Dead Bay Scrolls and a new edition of The Druid Chronicles. I was a bit overly busy.

The original edition of the Green Book of Meditations, volume two had quite a different content than this edition, edited for ARDA. The English Poetry section is the same, but the Irish and Welsh Poetry section was rearranged in order to reduce space. I removed the 7 translations by Matthews and Nichol's to avoid copyright problems here. Similarly I have removed the 10 Scottish Gaelic Poetry translations out of respect for those authors. I'll put them into a separate file on the web-site for people to observe. I've also removed a Rosicrucian piece and some Grateful Dead song lyrics. Less than a third of the original volume remains in this edition.

This editing was also done because I felt that I had done too heavy a focus on Celtic writings than is good for the destiny of the Reform. I feel that people should be wide ranging in their studies, so I have replaced those removed sections with writings from other native wisdom traditions. I feel the final product is more intriguing and balanced.

Please Learn and Enjoy,

Michael Scharding
Grand Patriarch of the Ancient Order of Bambi

Big River Grove, Saint Cloud Minnesota
Day 73 of Earrach, Year XXXIII of the Reform
April 14th, 1996 c.e.

English Poetry

Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening by Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep.
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

JABBERWOCKY by Lewis Carroll

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogroves;
And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand:
Long time the manxome foe he sought
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
And stood awhile in thought.
And as in uffish thought he stood,
The jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whirring through the tulgey wood,
And bumbled as it came!

One, two One, two And through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

"And hast thou slain the jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day Callooh! Callay!"
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slimy toves
Did gyre and gamble in the wabe;
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

Irish & Welsh Poetry

Most of the “Druidic” material used by modern Druid groups has survived in the form of obscure poetry. Many groups go to great lengths to “read into” many of these poems for Druidical material, “hidden” by the Bards during the persecutions. Since some of you will “progress” on to more “serious” Druid groups, it is good to be familiar with some of the more “stressed” reading material.

Only the English Translations have been provided. In the original, these poems had marvelous rhymes, meters and clever poetic devices that a literal translation cannot hope to convey. Use the symbolism and nature imagery to open your mind. Please don't try to rush through these poems, many are of interminable length and will just bog you down. Skip the longer ones when you are just perusing, that way you'll enjoy them more when you have time.

The Waterfall By Dafydd y Coed

Rough, bold, cold Rhayadr, with tiny tresses,
Piddling pennyworths,
Blare, blow, blaze, soft arses' snare,
Sewer to Hell's hollow coombe.

Harsh foul-smelling hollow, threatening harm,
Dark candleless bedlam,
Captive waterfall, uncurbed,
Hard-pressing repress, sly slut.

Slyness bound in dark banks, foul dump of dregs,
Where my slaughter was sought,
Sad tale, may there come to town
Fierce flame through vile Wye's Rhayadr.

Hateful is filthy Rhayadr,
I hate its foul sow-like lake,
Hateful, haughty, shit-hole's stink,
Hounds' hate, hate, hate, hate, hate, hate,
Hateful, stagless, my grievance,
Thick-thwacking furrow for churls!

Sadness in Spring

From *The Earliest Welsh Poetry*, pg. 99

Springtime, loveliest season,
Noisy the birds, new the shoots,
Ploughs in furrow, oxen yoked,
Green the sea, fields are dappled.

When cuckoos sing on comely tree-tops,
The greater is my sadness,
Smoke bitter, loss of sleep plain,
Because my kinsmen are gone.

In mount, in meadow, in ocean isles,
in each way one may take,
From Christ there is no seclusion.

Rain Outside

From *The Earliest Welsh Poetry*, pg. 99

Rain outside, drenches bracken;
Sea shingle white, fringe of foam;
Fair candle, man's discretion.

Rain outside, need for refuge;
Furze yellowed, hogweed withered;
Lord God, why made you a coward?

Rain outside, drenches my hair;
The feeble plaintive, slope steep;
Ocean pallid, brine salty.

Rain outside, drenches the deep;
Whistle of wind over reed-tips;
Widowed each feat, talent wanting.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following poems use a Welsh (and Irish) tradition of writing in three line poems called Triads. The use of triplets makes it more powerful.

Winter and Warfare

From *The Earliest Welsh Poetry*, pg. 96

Wind piercing, her bare, hard to find shelter;
Ford turns foul, lake freezes.
A man could stand on a stalk.

Wave on wave cloaks countryside;
Shrill the shrieks from the peaks of the mountain;
One can scarce stand outside.

Cold the lake-bed from winter's blast;
Dried reeds, stalks broken;
Angry wind, woods stripped naked.

Cold bed of fish beneath a screen of ice;
Stag lean, stalks bearded;
Short evening, trees bent over.

Snow is falling, white the soil.
Soldiers go not campaigning.
Cold lakes, their colour sunless.

Snow is falling, white hoar-frost.
Shield idle on an old shoulder.
Wind intense, shoots are frozen.

Snow is falling upon the ice.
Wind is sweeping thick tree-tops.
Shield bold on a brave shoulder.

Snow is falling, cloaks the valley.
Soldiers hasten to battle.
I go not, a wound stays me.

Snow is falling on the slope.
Stallion confined; lean cattle.
No summer day is today.

Snow is falling, white the mountain's edge.
Ship's mast bare at sea.
A coward conceives many schemes.

Gold rims round horns, horns round bards.
Roads frozen, air gleaming bright;
Brief twilight, tree-tops bowed down.

Bees in honeycombs, faint cry of birds.
Day bleak,
White-mantled hill-ridge, red dawn.

Bees in refuge, cold lid on the ford,
Frozen when ice forms.
None may escape death's coming.

Bees in prison, green-hued ocean.
Stalks dried out, hillside hard.
Frigid, bitter, the world today.

Bees in shelter from winter's wetness.
Pale honey, hogweed hollow.
Foul hold on a man, cowardice.

Long night, bare heath, brown hillside,
Grey shore, gulls in a clamour,
Rough seas: it will rain today.

Dry wind, wet road, brawling water-ways,
Cold corpses, lean stag,
River in flood: it will clear.

Storm on the mountain, rivers embroiled,
Floors of houses flooded:
To one's sight, the world is a sea.

You're not a schoolman, you're not a greybeard,
You'll not answer a crisis:
Ah, Cyndilig, if you'd been a woman!

Stag crouches curled in the coombe's nook.
Ice crumbles, countryside bare.
The brave may survive many battles.

Bankside crumbles beneath the scrawny stag's hoof
High-pitched the wind, screeching.
One can scarcely stand outside.

Winter's first day, darkened surface of heather.
Spuming the sea-wave.
Brief day: let your counsel be done.

With shield for shelter and stallion's spirit
And men, fearless, peerless,
Fine the night for routing foes.

Swift the wind, stripped the woods.
Hollow stalks, hardy stag.
Stern Pelis, what land is this?

Though high as the tawny horse were the snow,
The dark would not make me grieve.
I would lead a band to Bryn Tyddwl.

With high seas beating the embankment and ford,
Snows falls on the hillside,
Pelis, how can you lead us?

Not a worry for me in Britain tonight
Raiding Nuchein's lord's lands
On white steed, Owain leading.

Before you were bearing arms and buckler,
Fierce bulwark in battle,
Pelis, what region reared you?
The man God releases from too strait a prison,
Red lance of a leader,
Owain of Rheged reared me.

Though a ruler's gone to Iwerydd's ford,
From the band, do not flee!
After mead, do not seek disgrace.

The morning of grey daybreak,
When Mwng Mawr Drefydd was charged,
Mechydd's steeds were not pampered.

Drink does not make me merry,
What with the tales and my thoughts,
Mechydd, branches your cover.

They encountered at Cafall
A bloody carcass, despised.
Rhun's clash with another hero.

Because the spearmen of Mwng slew Mechydd,
Bold lad who knows it not,
Lord of heaven, you've given me anguish.

Men in combat, ford frozen,
Wave frigid, ocean's breast grey:
These may summon to battle.

Mechydd ap Llywarch, dauntless nobleman,
Comely, swan-coloured cloak,
The first to. bridle his steed.

Mountain Snow

The Earliest Welsh Poetry, pg. 100

Mountain snow, each region white;
Common the raven calling;
No good comes of too much slumber.

Mountain snow, deep dingle white;
Woods bend before wind's onslaught;
Many couples are in love
And never come together.

Mountain snow, wind scatters it;
Moonlight far-spread, leaves pale;
Rare the rogue who claims no rights.

Mountain snow, stag nimble;
Common to Britain, proud princes;
A stranger requires cunning.

Mountain snow, stag in rut;
Ducks on the lake, ocean white;
Slow the old, soon overtaken.

Bright Trees
(Taliesin by Williams)

Mountain snow, stag bending;
The heart laughs for one loved;
Though a tale be told of me,
I know shame wherever it be.

Mountain snow, shingle white grit;
Fish in ford, shelter in cave;
Who acts harshly is hated.

Mountain snow, stag in flight;
Common for a lord, gleaming blade,
And mounting a saddle-bow,
And dismounting, anger well-armed.

Mountain snow, stag hunched-up;
Many have muttered, truly,
This is not like a summer day.

Mountain snow, stag hunted;
Whistle of wind over tower eaves;
Burdensome, Man, is sin.

Mountain snow, stag bounding;
Whistle of wind over high white wall;
Common, a quiet beauty.

Mountain snow, stag on sea-strand;
An old man knows his youth lost;
A foul face keeps a man down.

Mountain snow, stag in grove;
Raven dark-black, roebuck swift;
One free and well, strange he should groan.

Mountain snow, stag in rushes;
Marshes freezing, mead in cask;
Common for the crippled to groan.

Mountain snow, tower's breast studded;
The beast searches for shelter;
Pity her who has a bad man.

Mountain snow, crag's breast studded;
Reeds withered, herd shunning water;
Pity him who has a bad wife.

Mountain snow, stag in gully;
Bees are sleeping well-sheltered;
A long night suits a robber.

Mountain snow 'liverwort in river;
Wed unwilling to trouble,
The sluggard seeks no swift revenge.

Mountain snow, fish in lake;
Falcon proud, prince in splendour;
One who has all does not groan.

Mountain snow, lords' front rank red;
Lances angry, abundant;
Ah god, for my brother's anguish!!

Bright are the ash-tops; tall and white will they be
When they grow in the upper part of the dingle;
The languid heart, longing is her complaint...

Bright are the willow-tops; playful the fish
In the lake; the wind whistles over the tops of the branches;
Nature is superior to learning.

Bright the tops of the furze; have confidence
In the wise; and to the universe be repulsive;
Except God, there is none that divines.

Bright are the tops of the clover; the timid have no heart;
jealous ones weary themselves out;
Usual is care upon the weak.

Bright the tops of the reed-grass; furious is the jealous,
And he can hardly be satisfied;
It is the act of the wise to love with sincerity.

Bright the tops of the oat; bitter the ash branches;
Sweet the cow-parsnip, the wave keeps laughing;
The cheek will not conceal the anguish of the heart.

Bright the tops of the dogrose; hardship has no formality;
Let everyone preserve his purity of life.
The greatest blemish is ill manners.

Bright the tops of the broom; let the lover make assignations;
Very yellow are the clustered branches;
Shallow ford; the contented enjoy sleep.

Bright the tops of the apple tree; circumspect is
Every prudent one, a chider of another;
And after loving, indiscretion leaving it.

Bright the hazel-tops by the hill of Digoll;
Unafflicted will be every neglected one;
It is an act of the mighty to keep a treaty.

Bright the tops of reeds; it is usual for the sluggish
To be heavy, the youth to be learners;
None but the foolish will break the faith.

Bright the tops of the lily; let every bold one be a servitor;
The word of a family will prevail;
Usual with the faithless, a broken word.

Bright the tops of the heath; usual is miscarriage
To the timid; water will be intrusive along the shore;
Usual with the faithful, an unbroken word.

Bright the tops of rushes; cows are profitable,
Running are my tears this day;
No comfort is there for the miserable.

Bright the tops of fern, yellow
The charlock; how reproachless are the blind;
How apt to run about are youngsters!

Bright the tops of the service-tree; accustomed to care
Is the aged one, and bees to the wilds;
Except God, there is no avenger

Bright the tops of the oak; incessant is the tempest-
The bees are high; brittle the dry brushwood;
Usual for the wanton is excessive laughter.

Bright the tops of the grove; constantly the trees
And the oak leaves are failing;
Happy is he who sees the one he loves.

Bright the tops of the oaks; coldly purls the stream;
Let the cattle be fetched to the birch-enclosed area;
Abruptly goes the arrow of the haughty to give pain.

Bright the tops of the hard holly; let gold be shared;
When all fall asleep on the rampart,
God will not sleep when he gives deliverance.

Bright the tops of the willows; inherently bold
Will the war-horse be in the long day, when leaves abound;
Those with mutual friends will not hate each other.

Bright the tops of the rushes; prickly will they be
When spread under the pillow;
The wanton mind will be ever haughty.

Bright the tops of the hawthorn; confident the steed;
It is usual for a lover to pursue;
May the diligent messenger do good.

Bright the tops of the cresses; warlike the steed;
Trees are fair ornaments for the ground;
Joyful the soul with what it loves.

Bright is the top of the bush; valuable the steed;
It is good to have discretion with strength;
Let the unskillful be made powerless.

Bright are the tops of the brakes; gay the plumage
Of birds; the long day is the gift of the light;
Mercifully has the beneficent God made them.

Bright the tops of the meadow-sweet; and music
In the grove; bold the wind, the trees shake;
Interceding with the obdurate will not avail.

Bright the tops of the elder-trees; bold is the solitary singer;
Accustomed is the violent to oppress;
Woe to him who takes a reward from the hand.

Am I not a candidate for fame to be heard in the song,
In *Caer Pedryvan* four times revolving
The first word from the cauldron, when was it spoken?
By the breath of nine damsels gently warmed.
Is it not the cauldron of the Chief of *Annwn* which is social?
With a ridge round its edge of pearls,
It will not boil the food of a coward nor of one excommunicated.
A sword bright flashing to him will be brought,
And left in the hand of *Llyminawg*.
And before the door of the porch of hell a lantern is burning.
And when we went with Arthur in his splendid labours,
Except seven, none returned from *Caer Vendiwid*.

Am I not a candidate for fame, to be heard in song ?
In *Caer Pedryfan*, the island of *Pybyrdor*,
Twilight and darkness meet together.
Bright wine was their drink in their assembly.
Thrice the burden of *Prydwen* we went on the sea.
Except seven, none returned from *Caer Rigor*.

I will not allow great merit to the directors of learning.
Beyond *Caer Wydr* they have not beheld the prowess of Arthur.
Three score hundred men were placed upon the wall;
It was difficult to converse with the sentinel.
Thrice the fullness of *Prydwen* we went with Arthur.
Except seven, none returned from *Caer Golur*.

I will not allow merit to the multitude trailing on the circuit
They know not on what day or who caused it,
Nor what hour in the splendid day *Cwy* was born,
Nor who prevented him from going to the vales of *Deowy*.
They know not the brindled ox, with this thick headband,
And seven score knobs in his collar.
And when we went with Arthur of mournful memory,
Except seven, none returned from *Caer Vandwy*.

The Spoils of Annwn

Earliest Welsh Poetry, pg. 213 The following poem, the Spoils of Annwyn, refers to the adventures of the Mabinogian hero, Pwyll, who visits the land of the Dead (Annwn)

Praise to the Lord, Supreme Ruler of the high region,
Who hath extended his dominion to the shores of the world.
Complete was the prison of Gwair in *Caer Sidi*;
Through the permission of Pwyll and Pryderi,
No one before him went to it.
A heavy blue chain firmly held the youth;
And for the spoils of Annwn gloomily he sings,
And till doom shall continue his lay. Thrice the fullness of *Prydwn*
we went into it.
Except seven, none returned from *Caer Sidi*.

Cad Goddeu "Battle of the Trees"

by Taliesin, found in John Matthews books *Taliesin*, pg. 297, which I highly recommend. Take this piece for instance. The next piece is extremely overused by Celtophiles because of it's marvelous description of fighting trees and plants. Many think this refers to the Ogham alphabet, which represents trees by their first letter in the Irish language. Therefore, many believe this song contains hidden Druidic knowledge. I think so too, but it also is great for fighting imagery.

"Taliesin" was a Welsh bard (or even an Irish one writing Welsh) of the 5th-8th century who is accredited with writing many of the earliest surviving poems in the Welsh language. He shows up in the Mabinogian with the other gods of the Welsh and may act as the Welsh "Muse."

I have been in many shapes
Before I assumed a constant form:
I have been a narrow sword,
A drop in the air,
A shining bright star,
A letter among words
In the book of origins.
I have been lantern light
For a year and a day,
I have been a bridge
Spanning three score rivers.
I have flown as an eagle,
Been a coracle on the sea,
I have been a drop in a shower,
A sword in a hand,
A shield in battle,
A string in a harp.
Nine years in enchantment,
In water, in foam,
I have absorbed fire,
I have been a trout in a covert,

There is nothing of which
I have not been part.

I fought, though small,
At the battle of Goddeu Brig.
With Prydain's ruler,
With his rich-laden fleet.
Unwise bards pretend
A terrible beast
With a hundred heads—
The battle was contested
At the root of its tongue,
At the back of its skull.
The hundred-clawed black toad,
The crested, speckled snake
Are the soul's punishment,
A torment to the flesh.

I was at Caer Nefenhir,
Where grass and trees came swiftly—
Wayfarers perceived them,
Warriors stood astonished,
At the might of the Britons,
Shown forth by Gwydion.
Men called upon the Christ,
On the Saints as well,
To deliver them swiftly

From terrible rage.
Answer they got
In elemental language:
Rush, ye chiefs of the Wood
With the princes in your thousands,
To hinder the hosts of the enemy.
The trees were enchanted
For work of destruction,
The battle was joined
with the music of harps.
In the tumult many fell,
But brought forth new heroes ..
[four lines omitted].

The Alders, first in line,
Thrust forward in time.
The Willows and Mountain Ash
Were late to the array.
The Blackthorns, full of spines,

And their mate, the Mediar
Cut down all opposition.
The Rose marched along
Against a hero throng.
The Raspberry was decreed
To serve as useful food,
For the sustenance of life—
Not to carry on the strife.
The Wild Rose and the Woodbine
With the Ivy intertwined
How the Poplar trembled,
And the Cherry dared.
The Birch, all ambition,
Was tardily arrayed;
Not from any diffidence, but
Because of its magnificence
The Laburnum set its heart
On beauty not bravery.
The Yew was to the fore,
At the seat of war.
The Ash was most exalted
Before the sovereign powers.
The Elm, despite vast numbers,
Swerved not half a foot,
But fell upon the centre,
On the wings, and on the rear.
The Hazel was esteemed,
By its number in the quiver.
Hail, blessed Cornell,
Bull of battle, King of all.
By the channels of the sea,
The Beech did prosperously.
The Holly livid grew,
And manly acts it knew.
The White Thorn checked all—
its venom scored the palm.
The Vines, which roofed us,
Were cut down in battle
And their clusters plundered.
The Broom, before the rage of war
In the ditch lay broken.
The Gorse was never prized;
Thus it was vulgarized—
Before the swift oak-darts
Heaven and earth did quake.
The Chestnut suffered shame

At the power of the Yew.
Forest, that caused obstruction,
The multitude was enchanted,
At the Battle of Goddeu Brig. [12 lines omitted]

Not of mother nor of father was my creation.
I was made from the nine fold elements—
From fruit trees, from paradisiacal fruit,
From primroses and hill-flowers,
From the blossom of trees and bushes.
From the roots of the earth was I made,
From the broom and the nettle,
From the water of the ninth wave.
Math enchanted me before I was made immortal,
Gwydion created me with his magic wand.
From Emrys and Euryon, from Mabon and Modron,
From five fifties of magicians like Math was I made
Made by the master in his highest ecstasy—
By the wisest of druids was I made before the world began,
And I know the star-knowledge from the beginning of Time.

Bards are accustomed to praises.
I can frame what no tongue utters.
I slept in purple,
I was in the enclosure
With Dylan Eil Mor,
I was a cloak between lords,
Two spears in the hand of the mighty,
When the torrent fell
From the height of heaven.
I know four hundred songs
Which bards both older and younger cannot sing—
Nine hundred more, unknown to any other.
I will sing concerning the sword
Which was red with blood.
I will sing the boar-slaying,
Its appearance, and its vanishing—
Of the knowledge it contained.
I have knowledge of splendid starlight,
The number of ruling stars
Scattering rays of fire
Above the world.

I have been a snake enchanted on a hill,
I have been a viper in a lake;
I have been a star, crooked at first,
The heft of a knife, or a spear in battle.
Clearly shall I prophesy

Of battle where smoke comes drifting.
Five battalions of lads will dance on my knife.
Six yellow horses - the best of the breed—
Better than any is my cream-coloured steed,
Swift as a sea-mew along the shore.
I myself am a power in battle,
A cause of blood from a hundred chieftains.
Crimson is my shield, gold my shield-rim.
Only Geronwy, from the dales of Edrywy,
Is better than I.

Long and white are my fingers.
Since I was a shepherd,
Since I was learned,
I have traveled the world;
I have made my circuit,
I have dwelled in a hundred islands,

In a hundred caers.
O wise and proficient druids
Do you prophesy of Arthur—
Or is it I you celebrate?
I know what is to be—
You what has been;
I know the saga of the flood,
Christ's crucifixion,
The day of doom.
Golden, Jeweled,
I shall be richly bedecked
Luxury shall attend me
Because of Virgil's (or 'the Ffyrllt's') prophecy.

Leadership

Be not too wise, not too foolish,
be not too conceited, nor too diffident,
be not too haughty, nor too humble,
be not too talkative, nor too silent
be not too hard, nor too feeble.
for:
If you be too wise, one will expect too much of you;
if you be too foolish, you will be deceived;
if you be too conceited, you will be thought vexatious;
if you be too humble, you will be without honor;
if you be too talkative, you will not be heeded;
if you be too silent, you will not be regarded;
if you be too hard, you will be broken;
if you be too feeble, you will be crushed.

"It is through these habits," adds Cormac,
"That the young become old and kingly warriors."

Sunshine through the Window

Pleasant to me is the glittering of the sun today upon these margins,
because it flickers so.

Irish; marginal note by an unknown Irish scribe; 9th century

Further Readings

An excellent book to continue your readings is *A Celtic Miscellany* collected by Kenneth Hurlstone Jackson which is available in the Penguin Classics section. It has a great many selections of ancient Irish and Welsh poems, stories and prayers.

The Thirteen Fold Mystery

Section

Editor's Note: Both OBOD and the RDNA use the following poem by Amergin, as he tries to dispel the Druidic wind that is keeping his Milesian fleet of boats off the shore of Ireland. Translators of Old Irish take great liberty with it, and so each rendering is different in the imagery of its inherent shamanistic qualities. Therefore I'll give many versions, so choose the version you wish. It is from the "Book of Invasions," one of the major Irish mythological cycles. In the RDNA, we call this passage, The Thirteen Fold Mystery.

Amergin's Song

(Found in *Book of Druidry*, pg. 289)

I am a wind on the wave,
I am a wave of the ocean,
I am the roar of the sea,
I am a powerful ox,
I am a hawk on a cliff,
I am a dewdrop in the sunshine,
I am a boar for valor,
I am a salmon in pools,
I am a lake in a plain,
I am the strength of art,
I am a spear with spoils that wages battle,
I am a man that shapes fire for a head.
Who clears the stone-place of the mountain?
What the place in which the setting of the gun lies?
Who has sought peace without fear seven times?
Who names the waterfalls?
Who brings his cattle from the house of Tethra?
What person, what god,
Forms weapons in a fort?
In a fort that nourishes satirists,
Chants a petition, divides the Ogam letters,
Separates a fleet, has sung praises?
A wise satirist.

Amergin's Song

(from "Taliesin" by Edward Williams)

At once, the wind dropped and the sea became flat calm. The Milesians sailed on and despite some losses, landed finally at Inber Colptha. There Amergin, the Druid, spoke this rhapsody:
I am the wind upon the sea,
I am a wave upon the ocean,
I am the sound of the sea,
I am a stag of seven points,
I am a bull of seven fights,
I am a bull a cliff,
I am a hawk upon a cliff,
I am a teardrop of the sun,
I am the fairest of blossoms,
I am a boar of boldness,
I am a salmon in a pool,
I am a lake on a plain,
I am a word of skill,
I am a battle-waging spear of spoil,
I am a God who fashions fire in the mind.
Who but I knows the secrets of the stone door?
Who has seven times sought the Places of Peace?
Who, save I, knows the ages of the moon,
The place and time the sun sets?
Who calls the kine from Tethra's house,

And sees them dance in the bright heavens?
Who shapes weapons in a fort of glass,
In a fort that harbors satirists?
Who put the poet, the singer of praises,
Who but I divides the Ogam letters,
Separates combatants, approaches the Faery mound?
I, who am a wind upon the sea.

Based on the original Irish, and on the translations of Macalister, Hull & Cross and Slover 170, 130.

The Song of Amergin I

(as arranged by Robert Graves)

Year of 13 Months

Dec 24-Jan 21
Jan 22-Feb 18
Feb 19-Mar 18
Mar 19-Apr 15
Apr 16-May 13
May 14-June 10
June 11-July 8

July 9-Aug 5
Aug 6-Sept 2
Sept 3-Sept 30
Oct 1-Oct 28
Oct 29-Nov 25
Nov 26-Dec 22
Dec 23 ?

God is speaking
I am a stag of seven tines.
I am a wide flood on a plain
I am a wind on the deep waters
I am a shining tear of the sun.
I am a hawk on a cliff.
I am a fair amongs flowers
I am a god who sets the head afire with smoke
I am a battle waging spear
I am a salmon in a pool
I am a hill of poetry
I am a ruthless boar
I am a great noise from the sea.
I am a wave of the sea
Who but I knows the secret of the unhewn dolmen?

Tree Alphabet

Beith the Birch
Luis the Rowan
Nuinn the Ash
Fearn the Alder
Saille the Willow
Huath the Hawthorn
Duir the Oak

Teinn the Holly
Coll the Hazel
Muinn the Vine
Gort the Ivy
Ngetal the Reed
Ruig the Elder tree

Spirit

I am the Wind that blows over the sea,
I am the Wave of the Ocean;
I am the Murmur of the billows;
I am the Ox of the Seven Combats;
I am the vulture upon the rock;
I am a Ray of the Sun;
I am the fairest of Plants;
I am a Wild Boar in valour;
I am a Salmon in the Water;
I am a Lake in the plain;
I am the Craft of the artificer;
I am a Word of Science;
I am the Spear-point that gives battle;
I am the god that creates in the head of man the fire of thought.

The Voyage of Bran, Son of Febal

(pg. 589 of *Taliesin* by Edward Williams, 1848)

Editor's Note: The following extensive poem from the Irish(?) is about a young prince who journeys by boat into the land of faeries. Islands were considered somewhat magical by the Celtic peoples. References to the afterlife can be found in the descriptions of what faeries do to pass the time. It's really long, but good.

'Twas fifty quatrains that the woman from unknown lands sang on the floor of the house to Bran son of Febal, when the royal house was full of kings, who knew not whence the woman had come, since the ramparts were closed.

This is the beginning of the story. One day, in the neighborhood, of his stronghold, Bran went about alone, when he heard music behind him. As often as he looked back, 'twas still behind him the music was. At last he fell asleep at the music, such was its sweetness—When he awoke from his asleep, he saw close by him a branch of silver with white blossoms, nor was it easy to distinguish its bloom from the branch. Then Bran took the branch in his hand to his royal house. When the hosts were in the royal house, they saw a woman in strange raiment therein. 'Twas then she sang the fifty quatrains to Bran, while the host heard her, and all beheld the woman. And she said:

A branch of the apple-tree from Emne
I bring, like those one knows;
Twigs of white silver are on it,
Crystal brows with blossoms.

There is a distant isle,
Around which sea-horses glisten:
A fair course against the white-swelling surge,—
Four pillars uphold it.

A delight of the eyes, a glorious range,
Is the plain on which the hosts hold games:
Coracle contends against chariot
In the southern Plain of White Silver.

Pillars of white bronze under it
Glittering through beautiful ages.
Lovely land throughout the world's age,
On which the many blossoms drop.

An ancient tree there is with blossoms,
On which birds call the canonical Hours.
'Tis in harmony it is their wont
To call together every Hour.

Splendors of every color glisten
Throughout the gentle-voiced plains.
Joy is known, ranked around music,
In southern White-Silver Plain.

Unknown is wailing or treachery
In the familiar cultivated land,
There is nothing rough or harsh,
But sweet music striking on the ear.
Without grief, without sorrow, without death,
Without any sickness, without debility,
That is the sign of Emne—
Uncommon is an equal marvel.

A beauty of a wondrous land,
Whose aspects are lovely,
Whose view is a fair country,
Incomparable is its haze.

Then if Silvery Land is seen,
On which dragon stones and crystals drop,
The sea washes the wave against the land,
Hair of crystal drops from its mane.

Wealth, treasures of every hue,
Are in Ciuin, a beauty of freshness,
Listening to sweet music,
Drinking the best of wine.

Golden chariots in Mag Rein,
Rising with the tide to the sun,
Chariots of silver in Mag Mon,
And of bronze without blemish.

Yellow golden steeds are on the sword there
Other steeds with crimson hue
Others with wool upon their backs
Of the hue of heaven all-blue.

At sunrise there will come
A fair man illumining level lands;
He rides upon the fair sea-washed plain,
He stirs the ocean till it is blood.

A host will come across the clear sea,
To the land they show their rowing;
Then they row to the conspicuous stone,
From which arise a hundred strains.

It sings a strain unto the host
Through long ages, it is not sad,
its music swells with chorus of hundreds—
They look for neither decay nor death.

Many-shaped Emne by the sea,
Whether it be near, whether it be far,
In which are many thousands of variegated women,
Which the clear Sea encircles.

If he has heard the voice of the music,
The chorus of the little birds from Imchiunn,
A small band of women will come from a height
To the plain of sport in which he is.

There will come happiness with health
To the land against which laughter peals,
Into Imchiuin at every season
Will come everlasting joy.

It is a day of lasting weather
That showers silver on the lands,
A pure-white cliff on the range of the sea,
Which from the sun receives its heat.

The host race along Mag Mon,
A beautiful game, not feeble,
In the variegated land over a mass of beauty.
They look for neither decay nor death.

Listening to music at night,
And going into Ildathach,
A variegated land, splendor on a diadem of beauty,
Whence the white cloud glistens.

There are thrice fifty distant isles
In the ocean to the west of us;
Larger than Erin twice
Is each of them, or thrice.

A great birth will come after ages,
That will not be in a lofty place,
The son of a woman whose mate will not be known,
He will seize the rule of the many thousands.

A rule without beginning, without end,
He has created the world so that it is perfect,
Whose are earth and sea,
Woe to him that shall be under His unwill
'Tis He that made the heavens,
Happy he that has a white heart,
He will purify hosts under pure water,
'Tis He that will heal your sickness.

Not to all of you is my speech given,
Though its great marvel has been heard:
Let you, Bran, only hear from among this crowd
What of wisdom has been told to him.

Do not fall on a bed of sloth,
Let not thy intoxication overcome thee;
Begin a voyage across the clear sea,
If perchance thou mayst reach the land of women.

Thereupon the woman went from them, while they knew not
whither she went. And she took her branch with her. The branch
sprang from Bran's hand into the hand of the woman, nor was there
strength in Bran's hand to hold the branch.

Then on the morrow Bran went upon the sea. The number of his
men was three companies of nine. One of his foster-brothers and
shield mates was set over each of the three companies of nine. When
he had been at sea two days and two nights, he saw a man in a
chariot coming towards him over the sea. That man also sang thirty
other quatrains to him, and made himself known to him, and said
that he was; Manannan son of Lir, and said that it was upon him to
go to Ireland after long ages, and that a son would be born to him,
Mongan son of Fiachna—that was the name which would be upon
him. So Manannan sang these thirty quatrains to Bran:

Bran deems it a marvelous beauty
In his coracle across the clear sea:

While to me in my chariot from afar
It is a flowery plain on which he rows about.

That which is a clear sea
For the prowed skiff in which Bran is,
That is a happy plain with profusion of flowers
To me from the chariot of two wheels.
Bran sees
The number of waves beating across the clear sea:
I myself see in Mag Mon
Rosy-colored flowers without fault.

Sea-horses glisten in summer
As far as Bran has stretched his glance:
Rivers pour forth a stream of honey
In the land of Manannan son of Lir.

The sheen of the main, on which thou art,
The white hue of the sea, on which thou rowest,
Yellow and azure are spread out,
It is land, and is not rough.

Speckled salmon leap from the womb
Of the white sea, on which thou lookest:
They are calves, they are colored lambs
With friendliness, without mutual slaughter.

Though but one chariot-rider is seen
In Mag Mell of many flowers,
There are many steeds on its surface,
Though them thou seest not.

The size of the plain, the number of the host,
Colors glisten with pure glory,
A fair stream of silver, cloths of gold,
Afford a welcome with all abundance.

A beautiful game, most delightful,
They play sitting at the luxurious wine,
Men and gentle women under a bush,
Without sin, without crime.

Along the top of a wood has swum
Thy coracle across ridges,
There is a wood of beautiful fruit
Under the prow of thy little boat.

A wood with blossom and fruit,
On which is the vine's veritable fragrance,
A wood without decay, without defect,
On which are leaves of golden hue.

We are from the beginning of creation
Without old age, without consummation of earth,
Hence we expect not that there should be frailty;
Sin has not come to us.

An evil day when the Serpent went
To the father to his city!
She has perverted the times in this world,
So that there came decay which was not original

By greed and lust he has slain us,
Through which he has ruined his noble race:
The withered body has gone to the fold of torment,
And everlasting abode of torture.

It is a law of pride in this world
To believe in the creatures, to forget God,
Overthrow by diseases, and old age,
Destruction of the soul through deception.

A noble salvation win come
From the King who has created us,
A white law will come over seas;
Besides being God, He will be man.

This shape, he on whom thou lookest
Will come to thy parts;
'Tis mine to journey to her house,
To the woman in Moylinny.,

For it is Manannan son of Lir,
From the chariot in the shape of a man;
Of his progeny will be a very short while
A fair man in a body of white clay.

Manannan the descendent of Lir will be
A vigorous bed-fellow to Caintignern:
He shall be called to his son in the beautiful world,
Fiachna will acknowledge him as his son.

He will delight the company of every fairy-mound,
He will be the darling of every goodly land,
He will make known secrete-a course of wisdom—
In the world, without being feared.

He will be in the shape of every beast,
Both on the azure sea and on land,
He will be a dragon before hosts at the onset,
He will be a wolf in every great forest.

He will be a stag with horns of silver
In the land where chariots are driven,
He will be a speckled salmon in a full pool,
He will be a seal, he win be a fair-white swan.

He will be throughout long ages
A hundred years in fair kingship,
He will cut down battalion,—a lasting grave—
He will redden fields, a wheel around the track.

It will be about kings with a champion
That he will be known as a valiant hero,
Into the strongholds of a land on a height
I shall send an appointed end from Islay.

High shall I place him with princes,
He will be overcome by a son of error;
Manannan the son of Lir
Will be his father, his tutor.

He will be—his time will be short—
Fifty years in this world:
A dragon-stone from the sea will kill him
In the fight at Senlabor.

He will ask a drink from Loch Lo,
While he looks at the stream of blood;
The white host will take him under a wheel of clouds
To the gathering where there is no sorrow.

Steadily then let Bran row,
Not far to the Land of Women,
Emne with many hues of hospitality
Thou wilt reach before the setting of the sun.

Thereupon Bran went from Manannan mac Lir. And he saw an island. He rowed round about it, and a large host was gaping and laughing. They were all looking at Bran and his people, but would not stay to converse with them. They continued to give forth gusts of laughter at them. Bran sent one of his people on the island. He ranged himself with the others, and was gaping at them like the other men of the island. Bran kept rowing round about the island. Whenever his man came past Bran, his comrades would address him. But he would not converse with them, but would mostly look at them and gape at them. The name of this island is the Island of Joy. Thereupon they left him there.

It was not long thereafter when they reached the Land of Women. They saw the leader of the women at the port. Said the chief of the women: "Come hither on land, O Bran son of Febal! Welcome is thy coming!" Bran did not venture to go on Shore. The woman threw a ball of thread to Bran straight over his face. Bran put his hand on the ball, which adhered to his palm. The thread of the ball was in the woman's hand, and she pulled the coracle towards the port. Thereupon they went into a large house, in which was a bed for every couple, even thrice nine beds. The food that was put on every dish vanished not from them. It seemed a year to them that they were there—it chanced to be many years. No savor was wanting to them. Home-sickness seized each one of them, even Nechtan son of Collbran. Bran's kindred kept praying him that he should go to Erin with them. The woman said to them their going would make them rue.

However, they went, and the woman said that none of them should touch the land, and that they should visit and take with them the man whom they had left in the Island of Joy.

Then they went until they arrived at a gathering at Srub Brain on the coast of Erin. The men asked of them who it was came over the Erin. Said Bran: "I am Bran the son of Febal." One of the men said: "We do not know such a one, though the 'Voyage of Bran' is in our ancient stories."

One of Bran's men sprang from them out of the coracle. As soon as he touched the earth of Ireland, forthwith he was a heap of ashes, as though he had been in the earth for many hundred years. 'Twas then that Bran sang this quatrain:

For Collbran's son great was the folly
To lift his hand at age,
Without any one casting a wave of pure water
Over Nechtan, Collbran's son.

Thereupon, to the people of the gathering Bran told all his wanderings from the beginning until that time. And he wrote these quatrains in ogam, and then bade them farewell. And from that hour his wanderings are not known.

Wisdom of the Modern Gaels

The Gaelic peoples of Ireland, Scotland and the Isle of man have always been known for their wits and wisdom, although not always carried out in practice. The following proverbs are taken from two collections: *Irish Proverbs and Sayings: Gems of Irish Wisdom* by Padraic O'Farrell from Mercier Press in Dublin Ireland 1980 and *Scottish Proverbs* by Lang Syne Publishers Ltd. of Newtongrange, Midlothian 1980. While they are sort of short for a meditational reading, they are good for solitary reading.

Advice

It's no use giving good advice unless you have the wisdom to go with it.

Neither give cherries to pigs nor advice to a fool.

Good advice often comes from a fool.

It is foolish to scorn advice but more foolish to take all advice.

Don't throw away the dirty water until you are sure you have clean water.

If you have to give advice to lovers find out what they want first and advise them to do that.

The ambitious man is seldom at peace.

A gentle answer quells the anger.

Don't go to the goat's shed if it's wool you're seeking.

There's no point in keeping a dog if you are going to do your own barking.

Attitudes

The best way to get an Irishman to refuse to do something is by ordering it.

Bigots and begrudgers will never bid the past farewell.

The man with the broken ankle is most conscious of his legs.

Hating a man doesn't hurt him half as much as ignoring him.

All men praise their native country.

Initiative is praiseworthy when it succeeds, stupid when it fails.

A cynic is "... a man who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing." —Wilde

Titles distinguish the mediocre, embarrass the superior and are disgraced by the inferior. —Shaw

Morality is simply the attitude we adopt towards people whom we personally dislike. —Wilde

There is no satisfaction in hanging a man who does not object to it. —Shaw

Say what you will, an ill mind will turn it to ill.

Behaviour

Keep a blind eye when you're in another man's corner.

The more you step on the dunghill, the more dirt you'll get in.

Don't bless with the tip of your tongue if there's bile at the butt.

Here's to absent friends and here's twice to absent enemies.

Company

If you lie down with dogs you'll rise with fleas

The loneliest man is the man who is lonely in a crowd.

Talk to yourself rather than to bad companions.

If you want to be with the company you'll call it good company

Don't keep company with your betters. You won't like them and they won't like you.

There's no war as bitter as a war between friends.

The best way to make friends is to meet often. The best way to keep them is to meet seldom.

Choose your friend among the wise, and your wife among the virtuous.

Friendship multiplies our joys, and divides our grief.

Hearts may agree, though heads differ.

Contentment

Enough is as good as plenty.

Be happy with what you have and you'll have plenty to be happy about.

The far hills may be greener, but the hill you climb on the way to work is less steep.

The slow horse reaches the mill.

Night never yet failed to fall.

If you rush the cook the spuds will be hard.

The apple won't fall till it is ripe.

A pund o' care winna pay an ounce o' debt.

Death

Death looks the old in the face and lurks behind the youths.

Dead men tell not tales, but there's many a thing learned in a wake house.

There are more lies told in a wake-room than in a court-room.

Death is deaf, and will hear nae denial.

Education and Experience

A knowledgeable man frowns more often than a simpleton.

No use having the book without the learning.

You won't learn to swim on the kitchen floor.

A wiseman doesn't know his master's mistakes.

Learning is a light burden.

Sense bought by experience is better than two senses learned by book.

Don't start to educate a nation's children until its adults are learned.

A scholar's ink lasts longer than a martyr's blood.

The school house bell sounds bitter in youth and sweet in age.

An experienced rider doesn't change his horse in midstream.

An old broom knows the dirty corners best.

The wearer knows best where the boot pinches.

An old dog sleeps near the fire but he'll not burn himself.

The lesson learned by a tragedy is a lesson never forgotten.

A family of Irish birth will argue and fight, but let a shout come from without and see them all unite.

Fate

If you're born to be hanged, you'll never be drowned.

No matter how long the day, night must fall.

Who's drowned in the storm is to be mourned for—after the storm has calmed.

An oak is often split by a wedge from its branch.

Never miss the water till the well runs dry.

We learn in suffering what we teach in song.

Flee as fast as you will, your fortune will be at your tail.

Fighting

He who faces disaster bravely can face his maker.

If you're the only one that knows you're afraid, you're brave.

One brave man forms a majority.

Courage against misfortune, and reason against passion.

Better to come in at the end of a feast than at the beginning of a fight.

The quarrelsome man is lucky. Everybody has to put up with him except himself.

If we fought temptation the way we fight each other we'd be a nation of saints again.

Better bear the palm than face the fist.

An Irishman is seldom at peace unless he is fighting.

The first blow is half the battle. —Goldsmith

This contest is one of endurance and it is not they that can inflict the most, but they who can suffer the most who will conquer. —Terence MacSwiney.

Anger begins wi' folly, and ends wi' repentance.

Anger's mair hurtfu' than the wrang that caused it

He that will be angry for ony thing, will be angry for naething.

When drums beat, law is silent.

Muscles won't bend a strong man's will.

The strong man may when he wishes; the weak man may when he can.

It's not the strongest who live longest.

The man with the strongest character is attacked most often.

Foolishness

There's no fool like an old fool.

Correct your own mistakes from those made by fools.

A man may speak like a wise man, and act like a fool.

God and Heaven

God gave us two ears and one mouth and we should use them in the same proportion.

God is good but don't dance in a canoe.

God's help is closer than the door.

Prayers from a black heart are like thunder from a black sky—neither are wanted by God nor man.

The road to Heaven is well signposted but badly lit at night.

Forsake not God till you find a better master.

A good life is the only religion

A good example is the best sermon.

A good conscience is the best divinity.

Greed

Every man is born clean, clever and greedy. Most of them stay greedy.

The greedy man stores all but friendship.

Dispensing charity is the only advantage in amassing a fortune.

A mean act is long felt.

If you lend your coat don't cut off the buttons.

There's little difference between a closed hand and a fist.

It's easy to sleep on your neighbour's misfortune.

Charity begins at home, but shouldna end there.

Hope

"I hope to" is a weak man's way of refusing.

He who has never hoped can never despair.

There's nothing that trouble hates facing as much as a smile.

Humor

A sense of humor is not a burden to carry yet it makes heavy loads lighter.

One man with humour will keep ten men working.

Humour, to a man, is like a feather pillow. It is filled with what is easy to get but gives great comfort.

When a thing is funny, search it for a hidden truth. —Shaw

Hypocrisy and Integrity

The bigger the patch, the bigger the hole.

The man that hugs the altar-rails does not always hug his own wife.

Before you shake the right hand of an enemy make sure he's not left handed.

It's harder to become honest than it is to become rich.

When an Irishman talks of "principle" he is a danger to everybody. —O'Connor

Those who make the laws are often their greatest breakers.

Greatness in a man knows modesty.

Bribe the rogue and you needn't fear the honest man.

Man can climb the highest summits, but he cannot dwell there long. —Shaw

The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. —Shaw

Love

If you live in my heart, you live rent-free.

A flicker that warms is better than a blaze that burns.

Love is like sun to a flower—it invigorates the strong but wilts the weak.

Nature

It costs nothing to see nature's great non-stop show.

It takes every blade of grass to make the meadow green.

Politics

The politician is a man who can find a problem in every solution.
An ambassador is a politician who can do less harm away from home.
The successful political leader can divide the national cake so that everybody thinks he's getting a slice.
There's nothing like a few shots to change the fanatic into a non-partisan.
A patriotic politician will always lay down your life for his country.
A political party is the madness of the many for the gain of a few. — Swift

Pride

You cannot soothe the proud.
Pride is the author of every sin.
Pride never stops growing until it's ready to challenge God.
The gentry's pride prevents their seeing the beauty of humility.
He that winna be counseled canna be helped.

Tact and Talk

A diplomat must always think twice before he says nothing.
Never talk about a rope in the house of a hanged man.
A tactful word is better than a pound in the hand.
Never talk about the blow that's not yet struck.
Tact is clever humility.
If you say everything you want to say, you'll hear something you don't want to hear.
A kind word never got a man in trouble.
Whisper into your cup when ill is spoken.
You can easily win an argument if you start off by being right.
Leave the bad news where you found it.
Every man is wise till he speaks.
You need not praise the Irish language—simply speak it. —Pearse
There are two types of theater critic. One thinks he's God Almighty, the other is sure of it.
A gossip speaks ill o' a', and a' o' her.

Wisdom

A man begins cutting his wisdom teeth the first time he bites off more than he can chew.
Taking the second thoughts means taking the first steps to wisdom.
A questioning man is half way to begin wise.
The wisest words ever written were the ten commandments. The most foolish words were written by those who ignored them.
The wisest man sees the least, says the least, but prays the most.
A word to the wise is enough.
A small leak will sink a great ship.
Let sleeping dogs lie.
Truth has a gude face but raggit claes.
Truth will aye stand without a prop.
A wise man wavers, a fool is fixed.
He's wise that can mak a friend o' a fae.

The first step to virtue is to love it in another.
Commonsense has its feet planted in the past.
On an unknown path it is better to be slow.
A blind man should not be sent to buy paint.
It's no use carrying an umbrella if your shoes are leaking.
In spite of the fox's cunning, many a woman wears its skin.
The clever man discovers things about himself and says them about others.
The incompetent talk, the competent walk.

Work

It's better to like what you do than to do what you like.
The willing horse is always loaded.
Well begun is half done.
Many hands make light work.
It's not a delay to stop and sharpen the scythe.
Work hard, work long and have nothing to worry about—but in doing so don't become the boss or you'll have everything to worry about.
Work is the refuge of people who have nothing better to do. —Wilde
Perseverance performs greater works than strength.



Wisdom of the Native Americans

From a collection of sayings entitled *Native American Wisdom* by Kent Nerburn & Louise Mengelkoch, published in the Classic Wisdom series by New World Library 1991.

Born Natural

I was born in Nature's wide domain! The trees were all that sheltered my infant limbs, the blue heavens all that covered me. I am one of Nature's children. I have always admired her. She shall be my glory: her features, her robes, and the wreath about her brow, the seasons, her stately oaks, and the evergreen—her hair, ringlets over the earth—all contribute to my enduring love of her.

And whenever I see her, emotions of pleasure roll in my breast, and swell and burst like waves on the shores of the ocean, in prayer and praise to Him who has placed me in her hand. It is thought great to be born in palaces, surrounded by wealth—but to be born in Nature's wide domain is greater still!

I would much more glory in this birthplace, with the broad canopy of heaven above me, and the giant arms of the forest trees for my shelter, than to be born in palaces or marble, studded with pillars of gold! Nature will be Nature still, while palaces shall decay and fall in ruins.

Yes, Niagara will be Niagara a thousand years hence! The rainbow, a wreath over her brow, shall continue as long as the sun, and the flowing of the river—while the work of art, however carefully protected and preserved, shall fade and crumble into dust!

George Copway (Kahgegagahbowh) Ojibwe

Sacred Earth

The character of the Indian's emotion left little room in his heart for antagonism toward his fellow creatures... For the Lakota, mountains, lakes, rivers, springs, valleys, and woods were all finished beauty. Winds, rain, snow, sunshine, day, night, and change of seasons were endlessly fascinating. Birds, insects, and animals filled the world with knowledge that defied the comprehension of man.

The Lakota was a true naturalist—a lover of Nature. He loved the earth and all things of the earth, and the attachment grew with age. The old people came literally to love the soil and they sat or reclined on the ground with a feeling of being close to a mothering power.

It was good for the skin to touch the earth, and the old people liked to remove their moccasins and walk with bare feet on the sacred earth.

Their tipis were built upon the earth and their altars were made of earth. The birds that flew in the air came to rest upon the earth, and it was the final abiding place of all things that lived and grew. The soil was soothing, strengthening, cleansing, and healing.

That is why the old Indian still sits upon the earth instead of propping himself up and away from its life-giving forces. For him, to sit or lie upon the ground is to be able to think more deeply and to feel more keenly; he can see more clearly into the mysteries of life and come closer in kinship to other lives about him.

—Chief Luther Standing Bear Teton Sioux

Silent Vigils

In my opinion, it was chiefly owing to their deep contemplation in their silent retreats in the days of youth that the old Indian orators acquired the habit of carefully arranging their thoughts.

They listened to the warbling of birds and noted the grandeur and the beauties of the forest. The majestic clouds—which appear like mountains of granite floating in the air—the golden tints of a sum-

mer evening sky, and all the changes of nature, possessed a mysterious significance.

All this combined to furnish ample matter for reflection to the contemplating youth.

—Francis Assikinack (Blackbird) Ottawa

Simple Truth

I believe much trouble and blood would be saved if we opened our hearts more. I will tell you in my way how the Indian sees things. The white man has more words to tell you how they look to him, but it does not require many words to speak the truth.

—Chief Joseph Nez Perce

Courtesy

Children were taught that true politeness was to be defined in actions rather than in words. They were never allowed to pass between the fire and an older person or a visitor, to speak while others were speaking, or to make fun of a crippled or disfigured person. If a child thoughtlessly tried to do so, a parent, in a quiet voice, immediately set him right.

Expressions such as “excuse me,” “pardon me,” and “so sorry,” now so often lightly and unnecessarily used, are not in the Lakota language. If one chance to injure or cause inconvenience to another, the word *wanunhecun*, or “mistake,” was spoken. This was sufficient to indicate that no discourtesy was intended and that what had happened was accidental.

Our young people, raised under the old rules of courtesy, never indulged in the present habit of talking incessantly and all at the same time. To do so would have been not only impolite, but foolish; for poise, so much admired as a social grace, could not be accompanied by restlessness. Pauses were acknowledged gracefully and did not cause lack of ease or embarrassment.

In talking to children, the old Lakota would place a hand on the ground and explain: “We sit in the lap of our Mother. From her we, and all other living things, come. We shall soon pass, but the place where we now rest will last forever.” So we, too, learned to sit or lie on the ground and become conscious of life about us in its multitude of forms.

Sometimes we boys would sit motionless and watch the swallows, the tiny ants, or perhaps some small animal at its work and ponder its industry and ingenuity; or we lay on our backs and looked long at the sky, and when the stars came out made shapes from the various groups.

Everything was possessed of personality, only differing from us in form. Knowledge was inherent in all things. The world was a library and its books were the stones, leaves, grass, brooks, and the birds and animals that shared, alike with us, the storms and blessings of earth. We learned to do what only the student of nature ever learns, and that was to feel beauty. We never railed at the storms, the furious winds, and the biting frosts and snows. To do so intensified human futility, so whatever came we adjusted ourselves, by more effort and energy if necessary, but without complaint.

Even the lightning did us no harm, whenever it came too close, mothers and grandmothers in every tipi put cedar leaves in the coals and their magic kept danger away. Bright days and dark days were both expressions of the Great Mystery, and the Indian reveled in being close to the Great Holiness.

Observation was certain to have its rewards. Interest, wonder, admiration grew, and the fact was appreciated that life was more than mere human manifestation; it was expressed in a multitude of

forms.

This appreciation enriched Lakota existence. Life was vivid and pulsing; nothing was casual and commonplace. The Indian live—lived in every sense of the word—from his first to his last breath.

—Chief Luther Standing Bear Teton Sioux

Conversation

Praise, flattery, exaggerated manners, and fine, high sounding words were no part of Lakota politeness. Excessive manners were put down as insincere, and the constant talker was considered rude and thoughtless. Conversation was never begun at once, or in a hurried manner.

No one was quick with a question, no matter how important, and no one was pressed for an answer. A pause giving time for thought was the truly courteous way of beginning and conducting a conversation.

—Chief Luther Standing Bear Teton Sioux

Persistence

When you begin a great work you can't expect to finish it all at once; therefore do you and your brothers press on, and let nothing discourage you until you have entirely finished what you have begun.

Now, Brother, as for me, I assure you I will press on, and the contrary winds may blow strong in my face, yet I will go forward and never turn back, and continue to press forward until I have finished, and I would have you do the same.

Though you may hear the birds singing on this side and that side, you must not take notice of that, but hear me when I speak to you, and take it to heart, for you may always depend that what I say shall be true.

—Teedyuscung Delaware

Crowned Leadership

We now crown you with the sacred emblem of the deer's antlers, the emblem of your Lordship. You shall now become a mentor of the people of the Five Nations. The thickness of your skin shall be seven spans— which is to say that you shall be filled with peace and goodwill and your mind filled with a yearning for the welfare of the people of the confederacy.

With endless patience you shall carry out your duty, and your firmness shall be tempered with tenderness for your people. Neither anger nor fury shall lodge in your mind, and all your words and actions shall be marked with calm deliberation.

In all your deliberations in the Council, in your efforts at lawmaking, in all your official acts, self-interest shall be cast into oblivion. Cast not away the warnings of any others, if they should chide you for any error or wrong you may do, but return to the way of the Great Law, which is just and right.

Look and listen for the welfare of the whole people and have always in view not only the present but also the coming generations, even those whose faces are yet beneath the surface of the earth—the unborn of the future Nation.

—Constitution of the Five Nations

Pine Tree Chiefs

Should any man of the Nation assist with special ability or show great interest in the affairs of the Nation, if he proves himself wise,

honest, and worthy of confidence, the Confederate Lords may elect him to a seat with them and he may sit in the Confederate Council. He shall be proclaimed a Pine Tree sprung up for the Nation and be installed as such at the next assembly for the installation of Lords.

Should he ever do anything contrary to the rules of the Great Peace, he may not be deposed from office—no one shall cut him down— but thereafter everyone shall be deaf to his voice and his advice. Should he resign his seat and title, no one shall prevent him. A Pine Tree Chief has no authority to name a successor, nor is his title hereditary.

—Constitution to the Five Nations

Not by Bread Alone

My friends, how desperately do we need to be loved and to love. When Christ said that man does not live by bread alone, he spoke of a hunger. This hunger was not the hunger of the body. It was not the hunger for bread. He spoke of a hunger that begins deep down in the very depths of our being. He spoke of a need as vital as breath. He spoke of our hunger for love.

Love is something you and I must have. We must have it because our spirit feeds upon it. We must have it because without it we become weak and faint. Without love our self-esteem weakens. Without it our courage fails. Without love we can no longer look out confidently at the world. We turn inward and begin to feed upon our own personalities, and little by little we destroy ourselves.

With it we are creative. With it we march tirelessly. With it, and with it alone, we are able to sacrifice for others.

—Chief Dan George

Show Me

Brother! We are told that you have been preaching to the white people in this place. These people are our neighbors. We are acquainted with them. We will wait a little while, and see what effect your preaching has upon them. If we find it does them good and makes them honest and less disposed to cheat us, we will then consider again becoming Christians.

—Red Jacket Seneca

Free Wisdom

We have men among us, like the whites, who pretend to know the right path, but will not consent to show it without pay! I have no faith in their paths, but believe that every man must make his own path!

—Black Hawk Sauk

Quarreling about God

We do not want churches because they will teach us to quarrel about God, as the Catholics and Protestants do. We do not want to learn that.

We may quarrel with men sometimes about things on this earth. But we never quarrel about God. We do not want to learn that.

—Chief Joseph Nez Perce

God Made Me This Way

I am of the opinion that so far as we have reason, we have a right to use it in determining what is right or wrong, and we should pursue the path we believe to be right.

If the Great and Good Spirit wished us to believe and do as the whites, he could easily change our opinions, so that we would see, and think, and act as they do. We are nothing compared to His power, and we feel and know it.

Black Hawk, Sauk

Pausing

Whenever, in the course of the daily hunt, the hunter comes upon a scene that is strikingly beautiful, or sublime—a black thundercloud with the rainbow's glowing arch above the mountain, a white waterfall in the heart of a green gorge, a vast prairie tinged with the blood-red of the sunset—he pauses for an instant in the attitude of worship.

He sees no need for setting apart one day in seven as a holy day, because to him all days are God's days.

—Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiyesa), Santee Sioux

Please Listen

Grandfather, Great Spirit, once more behold me on earth and lean to hear my feeble voice. You lived first, and you are older than all needs, older than all prayers. All things belong to you—the two legged, the four legged, the wings of the air, and all green things that live.

You have set the powers of the four quarters of the earth to cross each other. You have made me cross the good road, and the road of difficulties, and where they cross, the place is holy. Day in, day out, forevermore, you are the life of things.

—Black Elk Oglala Sioux

The Views of Two Men

Nothing the Great Mystery placed in the land of the Indian pleased the white man, and nothing escaped his transforming hand. Wherever forest have not been mowed down, wherever the animal is recessed in their quiet protection, wherever the earth is not bereft of four-footed life—that to him is an “unbroken wilderness.”

But, because for the Lakota there was no wilderness, because nature was not dangerous but hospitable, not forbidding but friendly, Lakota philosophy was healthy—free from fear and dogmatism. And here I find the great distinction between the faith of the Indian and the white man. Indian faith sought the harmony of man with his surroundings; the other sought the dominance of surroundings.

In sharing, in loving, all and everything, one people naturally found a due portion of the thing they sought, while in fearing, the other found need of conquest.

For one man the world was full of beauty; for the other it was a place of sin and ugliness to be endured until he went to another world, there to become a creature of wings, half-man and half-bird.

Forever one man directed his Mystery to change the world He had made; forever this man pleaded with Him to chastise his wicked ones; and forever he implored his God to send His light to earth. Small wonder this man could not understand the other.

But the old Lakota was wise. He knew that man's heart, away from nature, becomes hard; he knew that lack of respect for growing, living things soon led to lack of respect for growing, living things soon led to lack of respect for humans, too. So he kept his children close to nature's softening influence.

Chief Luther Standing Bear, Oglala Sioux

Misfortune

Do not grieve. Misfortunes will happen to the wisest and best of men. Death will come, always out of season. It is the command of the Great Spirit, and all nations and people must obey. What is past and what cannot be prevented should not be grieved for. . . Misfortunes do not flourish particularly in our live—they grow everywhere.

Big Elk Omaha Chief

Pretty Pebbles

As a child, I understood how to give; I have forgotten that grace since I became civilized. I lived the natural life, whereas I now live the artificial. Any pretty pebble was valuable to me then, every growing tree an object of reverence.

Now I worship with the white man before a painted landscape whose value is estimated in dollars! Thus the Indian is reconstructed, as the natural rocks are ground to powder and made into artificial blocks that may be built into the walls of modern society.

Charles Alexander Eastman (Ohiyesa), Santee Sioux

The Power of Paper

Many of the white man's ways are past our understanding. . . They put a great store upon writing; there is always a paper.

The white people must think paper has some mysterious power to help them in the world. The Indian needs no writings; words that are true sink deep into his heart, where they remain. He never forgets them. On the other hand, if the white man loses his papers he is helpless.

I once heard one of their preachers say that no white man was admitted to heaven unless there were writings about him in a great book!

Four Guns, Oglala Sioux

Frantic Fools

The English, in general, are a noble, generous minded people, free to act and free to think. They very much pride themselves on their civil and religious privilege; on their learning, generosity, manufacturing, and commerce; and they think that no other nation is equal to them..

No nation, I think, can be more fond of novelties than the English; they gaze upon foreigners as if they had just dropped down from the moon...

They are truly industrious, and in general very honest and upright. But their close attention to business produces, I think, too much worldly mindedness, and hence they forget to think enough about their souls and their God.

Their motto seems to be “Money, money, get money, get rich, and be a gentleman.” With this sentiment, they fly about in every direction, like a swarm of bees, in search of the treasure that lies so near their hearts.

Peter Jones, or Kahkewaquonaby
 (“Sacred Waving Feathers”), Ojibwe

Cities

The sight of your cities pains the eyes of the red man. But perhaps it is because the red man is a savage and does not understand.

There is no quiet place in the white man's cities, no place to hear the leaves of spring or the rustle of insects' wings. Perhaps it is because I am a savage and do not understand, but the clatter only seems to insult the ears.

The Indian prefers the soft sound of the wind darting over the face of the pond, the smell of the wind itself cleansed by a midday rain, or scented with pinon pine. The air is precious to the red man, for all things share the same breath—the animals, the trees, the man.

Like a man who has been dying for many days, a man in your city is numb to the stench.

Chief Seattle, Suqwanish and Duwamish

The White Man's Dreams

A few more hours, a few more winters, and none of the children of the great tribes that once lived on this earth, or that roamed in small bands in the woods, will be left to mourn the graves of a people once as powerful and hopeful as yours.

The whites, too, shall pass—sooner than other tribes. Continue to contaminate your own bed, and you will one night suffocate in your own waste.

When the buffalo are all slaughtered, the wild horses all tamed, the secret corners of the forest heavy with the scent of many men, and the view of the ripe hills blotted by talking wires, where is the thicket? Gone. Where is the eagle? Gone.

And what is it to say farewell to the swift and the hunt, to the end of living and the beginning of survival? We might understand if we knew what it was that the white man dreams, what he describes to his children on the long winter nights, what visions he burns into their minds, so they will wish for tomorrow. But we are savages. The white man's dreams are hidden from us.

Chief Seattle, Suqwanish and Duwamish

The Vigil

by Lame Deer at Willow, at Rosebud, South Dakota, 1967, recorded by Erdoes.

Editor's Note: The following story is from *Myths and Legends of the American Indian* by Boez and Endroes (available on Open Reserve) describes what can go wrong on an all night vigil, one like the RDNA do in preparation for entering the 3rd Order.

The vision quest is a tradition among the Plains people. A man or woman seeking the way and the road of life, or trying to find the answer to a personal problem, may go on a vision quest for knowledge and enlightenment. This means staying on top of a hill or inside a vision pit, alone, without food or water, for as long as four days and nights. It is said, that if the quiet voices reveal or confer a vision that shapes a person's life, then the quest is worth all the suffering'. The following tale, however, treats the vision quest with less than complete solemnity, with Sioux man Lame Deer's characteristic quirks.

A young man wanted to go on a lumbasa, or vision quest, thinking that would give him the stuff to be a great medicine man. Having a high opinion of himself, he felt sure that he had been created to become great among his people and that the only thing lacking a vision.

The young man was daring and brave, eager to go up to the mountain top. He had been brought up by good, honest people who were raised in the ancient ways and who prayed for him. All through the night they were busy getting him ready, feeding him wasna, corn, and lots of good meat to make him strong. At every meal they set aside everything for the spirits so that they would help him to get a great vision.

His relatives thought he had the power even before he went up there. That was putting the cart before the horse, or rather the travois before the horse, as this is an Indian legend.

When at last he started on his quest, it was a beautiful morning in late spring. The grass was up, the leaves were out, nature was at its best.

Two medicine men accompanied him. They put up a sweatlodge to purify him in the hot, white breath of the sacred steam. They smoked him with the incense of sweet grass, rubbing his body with salve of bear grease. Around his neck they hung it with an eagle's wing. They went to the hilltop with him to the vision pit and make an offering of tobacco bundles.

They told the young man to cry, to humble himself, to ask for holiness, to cry for power, for a sign from the Great Spirit, for a gift which would make him into a medicine man. After they had done all they could, they left him there.

He spent the first night in the hole the medicine men had dug for him, trembling and crying out loudly. Fear kept him awake, yet he was cocky, ready to wrestle with the spirits for the vision, the power that he wanted. But no dreams came to ease his mind. Toward morning light, the sun came up, he heard a voice in the swirling white mists of day.

Speaking from no particular direction, as if it came from different places it said: "See here, young man, there are other spots you could have picked; 'there are other hills around here. Why don't you go there and cry for a dream? You disturbed us all night, all us creatures, animals and birds; you even kept the trees awake. We couldn't sleep. Why should you cry here? You're a brash young man, not yet ready or worthy to receive a vision."

But the young man clenched his teeth, determined to stick it through. He resolved to force that vision to come. He spent another day in the pit, begging for enlightenment which would not come, and then another night of fear and cold and hunger.

The young man cried out in terror. He was paralyzed with fear, unable to move. The boulder dwarfed everything in view; it towered over him, he stared openmouthed, but as it came to crush him, it stopped. Then, as the young man stared, his hair standing up, his eyes starting out of his head, the boulder ROLLED UP THE MOUNTAIN, all the way to the top. He could hardly believe what he saw.

He was still cowering motionless when he heard the roar and ramble again and saw that immense boulder coming down at him once more. This time he managed to jump out of his vision pit at the last moment. The boulder crushed it, obliterated it, grinding the young man's peace pipe and gourd rattle into dust.

Again the boulder rolled up the mountain, and again it came down. "I'm leaving, I'm leaving!" hollered the young man. Regaining his power of motion, he scrambled down the hill as fast as he could. This time the boulder actually leapfrogged over him, bouncing down the slope, crushing and pulverizing everything in its way. He ran unseeingly, stumbling, falling, getting up again. He did not even notice the boulder rolling up once more and coming down for the fourth time. On this last and most fearful descent, it flew through the air in a giant leap, landing right in front of him and embedding itself so deeply in the earth that only its top was visible. The ground shook itself like a wet dog coming out of a stream and flung the young man this way and that.

Gaunt, bruised, and shaken, he stumbled back to his village. To the medicine men he said: "I have received no vision and gained no knowledge." He returned to the pit, and when dawn arrived once

more, he heard the voice again: “Stop disturbing us; go away!” The same thing happened on the third morning. By this time he was faint with hunger, thirst, and anxiety. Even the air seemed to oppress him, to fight him. He was panting. His stomach felt shriveled up, shrunk tight against his backbone. But he was determined to endure one more night, the fourth and last. Surely the vision would come. But again he cried for it out of the dark and loneliness until he was hoarse, and still he had no dream. Just before daybreak he heard the same voice again, very angry: “why still here?” He knew then that he had suffered in vain.

He now knew he would have to go back to his people and confess that he had gained no knowledge and no power. The only thing he could tell them was that he got bawled out every morning. Sad and cross, he replied “I can’t help myself this is MY last day, and I’m crying my eyes out. I know you told me to go home, but who are you to give me orders? I don’t know you. I’m going to stay until my uncles come to fetch me, whether you like it or not.!”

All at once there was a rumble from a larger mountain that shook the hill. It became a mighty roar, and the whole hill trembled. The wind started to blow. The young man looked up and saw a boulder poised on the mountain’s summit. He saw lightning hit it, saw it sway. Slowly the boulder moved. Slowly at first, then faster and faster, it came tumbling down the mountain side, churning up the earth, snapping huge trees as if they were little twigs. And the boulder WAS COMING RIGHT DOWN ON HIM!

He barely made it back to the village and talked to his uncles. “I have made the spirits angry. It was all for nothing.”

“Well you did find out one thing,” said the older of the two, who was his uncle. “You went after your vision like a hunter after buffalo, or a warrior after scalps. You were fighting the spirits. You thought they owed you a vision. Suffering alone brings no vision nor does courage, nor does sheer nor will power. A vision, comes as a gift born of humility, of wisdom, and of patience. If from your vision quest you have learned nothing else, you have already learned much. Think about it.”

Wisdom of the Africans

Source: These proverbs are from the Akan people of Ghana and were collected from the book; *Speak to the Winds, Proverbs from Africa* by Kofi Asare Opoku, Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Company, New York 1975.

Proverbs on Wisdom

A fool’s walking stick helps the wise person to stand.

Wisdom is not like money which should be kept in a safe.

If you are greedy in conversation, you lose the wisdom of your friends.

The wise person who does not learn ceases to be wise.

All knowledge is acquired by learning.

It is through other people’s wisdom that we learn wisdom ourselves; a single person’s understanding does not amount to anything.

One must come out of one’s house to begin learning.

Proverbs on Truth and Falsehood

If you travel with fraud, you may reach your destination but will be unable to return.

Whereas a liar takes a thousand years to go on a journey, the one who speaks the truth follows and overtakes the liar in a day.

Proverbs on Human Conduct

If you see wrong-doing or evil and say nothing against it, you become its victim.

One who refuses to obey cannot command.

The saying is, “Visit a foreign country and respect its citizens,” and not “Visit a foreign country and act better than its citizens.”

If you build a poor wooden bridge across the river, it never seems to rot until you have to cross it yourself.

It is easier to put out the fire in the house of neighbors than to deal with the smoke in one’s own house.

Proverbs on Virtue

When virtue founds a town, the town grows and lasts long.

Goodness is hidden, but eventually appears.

The seed of goodness is as difficult to sow as it is hard to uproot the plant.

Proverbs on Cooperation and Contentment

When the right hand washes the left and the left hand washes the right, then both hands will be clean.

Good fellowship is sharing good things with friends.

The string can be useful until a rope can be found.

Proverbs on Opportunity

The one who asks the way does not get lost.

One does not throw the stick after the snake has gone.

Proverbs on Human Beings

Lack of companionship is worse than poverty.

May death not kill the person who tortures us, may the gods protect

the one who ill-treats us; however long it takes our destiny to give us victory.

Proverbs on Nature

If you want to speak to God, speak to the winds.

If the mouse were the size of a cow, it would be the cat's slave nevertheless.

If plain water were satisfying enough, then fish would not take the hook.

However poor the crocodile becomes, it hunts in the river, not in the forest.

Proverbs on Leadership

People count what they are refused, not what they are given.

The ears of the leader are like a strainer; there are more than a thousand openings to them.

Power must be handled in the manner of holding an egg in the hand: if you hold it too firmly it breaks; if you hold it too loosely it drops.

The hen knows when it is dawn but she leaves the crowing to the cock.

More Wisdom of the African World

Editor's Note: These quotes were taken from *Wisdom of the African World* edited by Reginald McKnight and published by the Classic Wisdom series of the New World Library.

Even the most incorrigible maverick has to be born somewhere. he may leave the group that produced him—he may be forced to—but nothing will efface his origins, the marks of which he carries with him everywhere. —James Baldwin

The various cultures of people of color often seem very attractive to white people. (Yes, we are wonderful, we can't deny it.) But white people should not make a playground out of other people's cultures. We are not quaint. We are not exotic. We are not cool. —Amoco Three Rivers

Europeans created and popularized the image of Africa as a jungle, a wild place where people were cannibals, naked and savage in a countryside overrun with dangerous animals. Such an image of the Africans was so hateful to Afro-Americans that they refused to identify with Africa. We did not realize that in hating Africa and the Africans we were hating ourselves. You cannot hate the roots of a tree and not hate the tree itself. —Malcolm X

Honor a child and it will honor you. —Ila

Grown people know that they do not always know the why of things, and even if they think they know, they do not know where and how they got the proof. Hence the irritation they show when the children keep on demanding to know if a thing is so and how the grown folks got the proof of it. It is so troublesome ... to the pigeonhole way of life. —Zora Neale Houston

A child that asks questions isn't stupid. —Ewe

Even we old people must learn, and recognize that the things people know today were not born with us. No, knowledge is not a hereditary thing. —Sembene Ousmane

A cynical young person is almost the saddest sight to see, because it means that he or she has gone from knowing nothing to believing in nothing. —Maya Angelou

It takes a whole village to raise a single child. —Yoruba

If you see an old man running, either he is chasing something or something is chasing him. —Nupe

If with the right hand you flog the child, with your left hand draw her unto your breast. —Yoruba

You need not tell a child that there is a god. —Nzima

Not where I was born, but where it goes well with me is my home. —Kanuri

Love is the understanding that all people are bound together in guilt and only individuals are capable of achieving personal salvation. The duty of every sensitive individual is to see to it that conditions are created in which he and others like him can become the majority. —Lewis Nixon.

No friendship, except after enmity. —Egypt

Whoever loves thee, even a dog, thou wilt also love. —Tsonga

It is preferable to change the world on the basis of love of mankind. But if that quality be too rare, then commonsense seems to be the next best thing. —Bessie Head

Make friends when you no need them. —Jamaica

He who pulls a branch brings the leaves with it. —Ila

There's a time when you have to explain to your children why they're

born, and it's a marvelous thing if you know the reason by then. —Hazel Scott

A person can run for years but sooner or later he has to take a stand in the place which, for better or worse, he calls home, do what he can to change things there. —Paule Marshall

If you wish to be blamed, marry; if you wish to be praised, die. —Galla

Before you marry, keep both eyes open; after you marry, shut one. —Jamaica

Tell me whom you love, I'll tell you who you are. —Creole

God created us so that we should form the human family, existing together because we were made for one another. We are not made for an exclusive self-sufficiency but for interdependence, and we break the law of being at our peril. —Desmond Tutu

God made the sea, we make the ship; He made the wind, we make the sail; He made the calm, we make oars. —Swahili

Every society is really governed by hidden laws, by unspoken but profound assumptions on the part of the people, and ours is no exception. It is up to the American writer to find out what these laws and assumptions are. —James Baldwin

People wish to be poets more than they wish to write poetry and that's a mistake. One should wish to celebrate more than one wishes to be celebrated. —Lucille Clifton

The artistic innovator is perhaps our society's most valuable citizen. He or she does not so much change the world, as change how we view it. They are ambassadors of peace and advocates of understanding. They melt our differences into the common ground of the dance floor, the theater, the concert hall, and a million living rooms across the nation. That is why it is important that we so diligently search for them. —Ossie Davis.

I have a great belief in the fact that whenever there is chaos, it creates wonderful thinking. I consider chaos a gift. —Septima Poinsette Clark

There is no beauty but in relationships. Nothing cut off by itself is beautiful. Never can things in destructive relationships be beautiful. All beauty is in the creative purpose of our relationships; all ugliness is in the destructive aims of the destroyer's arrangements.

—Ayi Kwei Armah

Back of the problem of race and color lies a greater problem which both obscures and implements it; and that is the fact that so many civilized persons are willing to live in comfort even if the price of this is poverty, ignorance and disease of the majority of their fellowmen; that to maintain this privilege men have waged war until today war tends to become universal and continuous, and the excuse for this war continues largely to be color and race. —W.E.B. DuBois

Fright is worse than a blow. —Morocco

Nonviolent passive resistance is effective as long as your opposition adheres to the same rules as you do. But if peaceful protest is met with violence, its efficacy is at an end. For me, non-violence was not a moral principle but a strategy; there is no moral goodness in using an ineffective weapon. —Nelson Mandela

We will either find a way or make one. —Hannibal

The knife does not know its owner. —Nda

Racism is easy to see, hard to prove, impossible to deny. —Anonymous

The man who goes ahead stumbles so that the man who follows may have his wits about him. —Bondei

When two elephants struggle it is the grass that suffers. —Swahili

Mediocrity is safe. —Nikki Giovanni

An elephant does not die of one broken rib. —Tsonga

The lion which kills is not one that roars. —Xhosa

A man dies before we appreciate him. —Jabo

Always being in a hurry doesn't hinder death, neither does going slowly hinder living. —Swahili

Because it rained the day the egg was hatched the foolish chicken swore he was a fish. —Wole Soyinka.

The thing that makes you exceptional, if you are at all, is inevitably that which must also make you lonely. —Lorraine Hansberry

He who hopes fares better than he who wishes, and he who wishes fares better than he who despairs. —Morocco

What is a cynic but a romanticist turned sour? —Lewis Nkosi

When you have been bitten by a snake you flee from a worm. —Basa

Every man honest till the day they catch him. —Jamaica

A man is his words. —Kru

In the midst of your illness you will promise a goat, but when you recover, a chicken will seem sufficient. —Jukun

People do not wish to appear foolish; to avoid the appearance of foolishness, they were willing to remain actually fools. —Alice Walker

A fool is a treasure to the wise. —Botswana

When the fool does not succeed in bleaching ebony he then tries to blacken ivory. —Amharic

At the bottom of patience there is heaven. —Kamba

Never be afraid to sit awhile and think. —Lorraine Hansberry

The indolent person reckons religious fasting a labor. —Yoruba

I believe in the brotherhood of all men, but I don't believe in wasting brotherhood on any one who doesn't want to practice it with me. Brotherhood is a two-way street. I don't think brotherhood should be practiced with a man just because his skin is white. Brotherhood should hinge upon the deeds and attitudes of a man. —Malcolm X

There is no agony like learning an untold story inside you. —Zora Neale Hurston

Ancient things remain in the ears. —Oji

Never give up what you have seen for what you have heard. —Swahili

A good conversation is better than a good bed. —Galla

He who gives you the diameter of your knowledge, prescribes the circumference of your activities. —Minister Louis Farrakhan

That which is written is binding, but that which is spoken is forgotten. —Amharic

Suddenly, it has become popular to defend tribal people, their world view and their life ways. But while the West is engaged in a great debate about what it means to preserve culture, the indigenous world is aware that it has already lost the battle. It seems obvious to me that as soon as one culture begins to talk about "preservation" it means that it has already turned the other culture into an endangered species. —Malidoma Patrice Some

People are easier to kill if they come from nowhere. If they have no names, no fathers or mothers.... The dead piles of corpses are nobodies who began nowhere, go nowhere, except back where they belong. Nowhere. No count. Nothing. —John Edgar Wideman

You can live without anything you weren't born with, and you can make it through on even half of that. —Gloria Naylor

The monkey says there is nothing like poverty for taking the conceit out of a man. —Oji

Work is good provided you do not forget to live. —Bantu

The grumbler does not leave his job, but he discourages possible applicants. —Ganda

Wealth is like hair in the nose; if much is pulled out, it is painful, if little, it is painful. —Madagascar

Wealth, if you use it, comes to an end; learning, if you use it, increases. —Swahilli

Everything will satisfy you except money; as much as you have, so much more you will want. —Morocco

The one-eyed man does not thank God till he see the blind man. —Toucouleur

As a leader... I have always endeavored to listen to what each and every person in a discussion had to say before venturing my own opinion. Oftentimes, my own opinion will simply represent a consensus of what I heard in the discussion. I always remember the axiom: a leader is like a shepherd. He stays behind the flock, letting the most nimble go out ahead, whereupon the others follow, not realizing that all along they are being directed from behind. —Nelson Mandela

Respect depends on reciprocity. —Nyang

Justice becomes injustice when it makes two wounds on a head which only deserves one. —Bakongo

A devotion to humanity is too easily equated with a devotion to a cause, and causes, as we know, are notoriously bloodthirsty. —James Baldwin

If they come for me in the morning, they will come for you at night. —Angela Davis

We decide our affairs, then rest them with God. —Jabo

I have walked the long road to freedom but I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom comes responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not ended. —Nelson Mandela

Slowness comes from God and quickness from devil. —Morocco

To commit ten sins against God is better than to commit one sin against a servant of God. —Morocco

God gives and does not remind us continually of it; the world gives and constantly reminds us. —Nupe

Prayer needn't be long when faith is strong. —Jamaica

It is not our custom to fight for our gods... Let us not presume to do so now. If a man kills the sacred python in the secrecy of his hut, the matter is between him and the god. We did not see it. If we put ourselves between the god and his victim we may receive blows intended for the offender. When a man blasphemes, what do we do? Do we go and stop his mouth? No, we put our fingers into our ears to stop us hearing. That is a wise action. —Chinua Achebe

Every knot has an unraveler in God. —Egypt

Don't blame God for having created the tiger, but give him thanks for not having given the tiger wings. —Amharic

If you are going to ask from God, take a big receptacle. —Hausa

Wisdom of the Hindus & Greeks

Origin of the Fables of Aesop

These famous stories were taken from Schoken Book's 1966 reprint of the 1894 version translated by Joseph Jacobs. Although I will not give a full history of the origins of these fables. Most people that the animal story developed independently in Greece and India between 1000 b.c.e and 500 b.c.e. The Greek origin reputedly began with Aesop, an Ethiopian slave in Samos Greece. The India origin began with Kasyapa, not long before Sakayamuni (the Buddha). The Buddhists quickly adopted the animal tale and began to pass them onto the Greeks. I've chosen some example that I feel are particularly Druidical to me. Enjoy.

The Frogs Desiring a King

The Frogs were living as happy as could be in a marshy swamp that just suited them; they went splashing about caring for nobody and nobody troubling with them. But some of them thought that this was not right, that they should have a king and a proper constitution, so they determined to send up a petition to Jove to give them what they wanted. "Mighty Jove," they cried, "send unto us a king that will rule over us and keep us in order." Jove laughed at their croaking, and threw light. He knows that mankind destroysdown into the swamp a huge Log, which came down -kerplash!- into the swamp. The Frogs were frightened out of their lives by the commotion made in their midst, and all rushed to the bank to look at the horrible monster; but after a time, seeing that it did not move, one or two of the boldest of them ventured out towards the Log, and even dared to touch it; still it did no move. Then the greatest hero of the Frogs jumped upon the Log and commenced dancing up and down upon it, thereupon all the Frogs came and did the same; and for some time the Frogs went about their business every day without taking the slightest notice of their new King Log lying in their midst. But this did not suit them, so they sent another petition to Jove, and said to him: "We want a real king; one that will really rule over us." Now this made Jove angry, so he sent among them a big Stork that soon set to work gobbling them all up. Then the Frogs repented when too late.

Better no rule than cruel rule.

The Bat, the Birds and the Beasts

A great conflict was about to come off between the Birds and the Beasts. When the two armies were collected together the Bat hesitated which to join. The Birds that passed his perch said: "Come with us"; but he said: "I am a Beast." Later on, some Beasts who were passing underneath him looked up and said: "Come with us"; but he said: "I am a Bird." Luckily at the last moment, peace was made, and no battle took place, so the Bat came to the Birds and wished to join in the rejoicings, but they all turned against him and he had to fly away. He then went to the Beasts, but had soon to beat a retreat, or else they would have torn him to pieces. "Ah," said the Bat, "I see now that *he that is neither one thing nor the other has no friends.*"

The Dog and the Wolf

A gaunt Wolf was almost dead with hunger when he happened to meet a House-dog who was passing by. "Ah, Cousin," said the Dog, "I knew how it would be; your irregular life will soon be the ruin of you. Why do you not work steadily as I do, and get your food regularly given to you?"

"I would have no objection," said the Wolf, "if I could only get a place."

"I will easily arrange that for you," said the Dog; "come with me to my master and you shall share my work."

So the Wolf and the Dog went towards the town together. On the way there the Wolf noticed that the hair on a certain part of the Dog's neck was very much worn away, so he asked him how that had come about.

"Oh, it is nothing," said the Dog. "That is only the place where the collar is put on at night to keep me chained up; it chafes a bit, but one soon gets used to it."

"Is that all?" said the Wolf. "Then good-bye to you, Master Dog. *Better starve free than be a fat slave.*"

The Fox and the Grapes

One hot summer's day a Fox was strolling through an orchard till he came to a bunch of Grapes just ripening on a vine which had been trained over a lofty branch. "Just the thing to quench my thirst," quoth he. Drawing back a few paces, he took a run and a jump, and just missed the bunch. Turning round again with a One, Two, Three, he jumped up, but with no greater success. Again and again he tried after the tempting morsel, but at last had to give it up, and walked away with his nose in the air, saying: "I am sure that they are sour." *It is easy to despise what you cannot get.*

The Lion and the Statue

A Man and a Lion were discussing the relative strength of men and lions in general. The Man contended that he and his fellows were stronger than lions by reason of their greater intelligence. "Come now with me," he cried, "and I will soon prove that I am right." So he took him into the public gardens and showed him a statue of Hercules overcoming the Lion and tearing his mouth in two.

"That is all very well," said the Lion, "but proves nothing, for it was a man who made the statue."

We can easily represent things as we wish them to be.

The Man and His Two Wives

In the old days, when men were allowed to have many wives, a middle-aged Man had one wife that was old and one that was young; each loved him very much, and desired to see him like herself. Now the Man's hair was turning grey, which the young Wife did not like, as it made him look too old for her husband. So every night she used to comb his hair and pick out the white ones. But the elder Wife saw her husband growing grey with great pleasure, for she did not like to be mistaken for his mother. So every morning she used to arrange his hair and pick out as many of the black ones as she could. The consequence was the Man soon found himself entirely bald.

Yield to all and you will soon have nothing to yield.

The Two Crabs

One fine day two Crabs came out from their home to take a stroll on the sand. "Child," said the mother, "you are walking very ungratefully. You should accustom yourself to walking straight forward without twisting from side to side."

"Pray, mother," said the young one, "do but set the example yourself, and I will follow you."

Example is the best precept.

Hercules and the Waggoner

A Waggoner was once driving a heavy load along a very muddy way. At last he came to a part of the road where the wheels sank halfway into the mire, and the more the horses pulled, the deeper sank the wheels. So the Waggoner threw down his whip, and knelt down and prayed to Hercules the Strong. "O Hercules, help me in this my hour of distress," quoth he. But Hercules appeared to him and said:

"Tut, man, don't sprawl there. Get up and put your shoulder to the wheel." *The Gods help them that help themselves.*

The Man and the Wooden God

In the old days men used to worship stocks and stones and idols, and prayed to them to give them luck. It happened that a Man had often prayed to a wooden idol he had received from his father, but his luck never seemed to change. He prayed and he prayed, but still he remained as unlucky as ever. One day in the greatest rage he went to the Wooden God, and with one blow swept it down from its pedestal. The idol broke in two, and what did he see? An immense number of coins flying all over the place.

The Miser

Once upon a time there was a Miser who used to hide his gold at the foot of a tree in his garden; but every week he used to go and dig it up and gloat over his gains. A robber, who had noticed this, went and dug up the gold and decamped with it. When the Miser next came to gloat over his treasures, he found nothing but the empty hole. He tore his hair, and raised such an outcry that all the neighbours came around him, and he told them how he used to come and visit his gold. "Did you ever take any of it out?" asked one of them.

"Nay," said he, "I only came to look at it."

"Then come again and look at the hole," said a neighbour; "it will do you just as much good."

Wealth unused might as well not exist.

The Bundle of Sticks

An old man on the point of death summoned his sons around him to give them some parting advice. He ordered his servants to bring in a bundle of sticks, and said to his eldest son: "Break it." The son strained and strained, but with all his efforts was unable to break the Bundle. The other sons also tried, but none of them was successful. "Untie the bundle," said the father, "and each of you take a stick." When they had done so, he called out to them: "Now, break," and each stick was easily broken. "You see my meaning," said the father. *"Union gives strength."*

The Buffoon and the Countryman

At a country fair there was a Buffoon who made all the people laugh by imitating the cries of various animals. He finished off by squeaking so like a pig that the spectators thought that he had a porker concealed about him. But a Countryman who stood by said: "Call that a pig's squeak! Nothing like it. You give me till to-morrow and I will show you what it's like." The audience laughed, but next day, sure enough, the Countryman appeared on the stage, and putting his head down squealed so hideously that the spectators hissed and threw stones at him to make him stop. "You fools!" he cried, "see what you have been hissing," and help up a little pig whose ears he had been pinching to make him utter the squeals.

Men often applaud an imitation, and hiss the real thing.

The Serpent and the File

A Serpent in the course of its wanderings came into an armourer's shop. As he glided over the floor he felt his skin pricked by a file lying there. In a rage he turned round upon it and tried to dart his fangs into it; but he could do no harm to heavy iron and had soon to give over his wrath.

It is useless attacking the insensible.

A Green Book of Meditations

Volume 3

Oriental and Monotheist Wisdom

I was not wholly satisfied with my second volume and I wished to further emulate Frangquist and Shelton in collecting a broad selection of instructional meditations from the world religions. Perhaps I should have practiced their silence? In any case, I spent a summer putting together this volume from my favorite books. I don't think I did as good a job as my predecessors, but I think that there are some fascinating pieces nestled inside this volume for you.

I don't have copyright permission on many of these articles. I am not making money off this deal, so I don't feel too bad about this. In fact, I consider it free advertising for the authors. It's probably best if people receiving this copy do not further distribute it. Use your judgement.

The original edition is much different from this one. The Zen Koans, Haiku & Christian Thoughts are the same, but I removed many selections from the Tao of Pooh and the Te of Piglet, because many represented the sole thoughts of Benjamin Hoff (a recent writer) and were not the retold timeless stories of old Taoists (which I kept in this volume). This amounted to about 5 pages being removed out of 40 from the Third Volume. I will put those removed selections into a file on the web-site for observing, but not for downloading. I have recently added all the selections in "Zen and the Gospel," "Scots Gaelic Poems," "Three Random Pieces," "Is God A Taoist?," "Wit and Wisdom of Islam" and "Various Other Quotes." The end result is a more diversity and intriguing stories and Druidical one-liners.

Please enjoy,

—Michael Scharding

Big River Grove, Saint Cloud Minnesota
Day 88 of Geamreadh, Year XXXIII of the Reform
January 28th, 1996 c.e.

Printing History

1st Printing 1993

2nd Printing 1996

Zen Harvest #710

The one
Who's escaped the world
To live in the mountains,
If they are still weary,
Where should they go?

Zen Harvest #217

Today's praise,
Tomorrow's abuse;
It's the Human way.
Weeping and Laughing...
All utter lies.

"The Iron Flute"

A Zen Buddhist Collection of Koans

Editor's Note: A koan is a short parable or story in which a gleam of Buddhist wisdom is trapped. It is usually followed by short lectures that enlarge and explain further that wisdom. Several teachers comment on each of the following Koans. This book is available on open reserve.

34- Hsueh-feng Sees His Buddha-nature

A monk said to Hsueh-feng, "I understand that a person in the stage of Cravaka sees his Buddha-nature as he sees the moon at night, and a person in the stage of Bodhirattva sees her Buddha nature as he sees the sun at day. Tell me how you see your own Buddha-nature."

For answer Hsueh-feng gave the monk three blows with his stick. The monk went to another teacher, Yen-t'ou, and asked the same thing.

Yen-t'ou, slapped the monk three times.

NYOGEN: If a person studies Buddhism to escape the sufferings of the world, he finds that all suffering is caused by his own greed, anger, and ignorance. As he seeks to avoid these three poisons and to purify his heart, he may see his Buddha-nature as beautiful and as remote as a new moon, but most of the time he misses seeing even this. He is in the stage of Cravaka.

Another person studies Buddhism to save all sentient beings. He realizes the true nature of man, and sees Buddha-nature in every person without exception. Cloud, rain, and snow he sees with sadness, but he does not blame the sun, and at night he knows other parts of the earth have bright daylight. He knows that mankind destroys things foolishly, but can also create and build things wisely. He is a Bodhisattva.

The monk's first statements were all right, but if he really understood them, he would know better than to ask Hsueh-feng about his Buddha-nature. Hsueh-feng tried to bring the monk back from dreamland with his blows, but the monk took his dream to Yen-t'ou, where he received similar treatment. I can imagine his stupid, sleepy face!

10 Yueh-shan Holds It

The governor of a state asked Yueh-shan, "I understand that all beasts possess Sila (precepts), Dhjana (meditation) and Prajna (wisdom)—Do you keep the precepts? Do you practice meditation? Have you attained wisdom?"

"This Poor monk has no such junk around here," Yueh-shan replied.

"You must have a very profound teaching" the governor said "but I do not understand it."

"If you want to hold it," Yueh-shan continued, "you must climb the biggest mountain and sit on the summit or dive into the deepest sea and walk on the bottom. Since you cannot enter even your own bed without a burden on your mind, how can you grasp and hold my Zen?"

NYOGEN: When one keeps the precepts, he can meditate well; when his meditation becomes matured, he attains wisdom. Since these three, Sila, Dhyana, and Prajna, are interrelated and equally essential, no one of the three can be carried as an independent study. But the governor was trying to understand the teaching as he might a civil-service examination. He himself had often selected men who might be deficient in one quality, provided that they were strong in another. What foolish questions to ask Yueh-shan! If a monk is deficient in the precepts, he cannot accomplish his meditation; if his meditation is not complete, he never attains true wisdom. He cannot specialize in any one of the three. Today there are Buddhist students

who write books but never practice meditation or lead an ethical life and Zen masters” who lack many of the simpler virtues. Even though they shave their heads, wear yellow robes, and recite the sutras, they never know the true meaning of Dharma. What can you do with these imitators? The governor could not understand Yueh-shan’s steep Zen, but when he admitted it, Yueh-shan saw there was hope and proceeded to give him some instruction.

GENRO: Yueh-shan uses the mountain and the sea as an illustration. If you cling to summit or bottom, you will create delusion. How can he hold “it” on the summit or the bottom? The highest summit must not have a top to sit on, and the greatest depth no place to set foot. Even this statement is not expressing the truth. What do you do then? (He turns to the monks.) Go out and work in the garden or chop wood.

FOGAI: Stop! Stop! Don’t try to pull an unwilling cat over the carpet. She will scratch and make the matter worse.

NYOGEN: Now! How are you going to express it?

14. Pai-yun’s Black and White

Pai-yun, a Zen master of the Sung Dynasty wrote a poem

Where others dwell,
I do not dwell.
Where others go,
I do not go.
This does not mean to refuse
Association with others;
I only want to make
Black and white distinct.

NYOGEN: Buddhists say that sameness without difference is sameness wrongly conceived and difference without sameness is difference wrongly conceived. My teacher, Shen Shaku, used to illustrate this beautifully, and Dr. D. T. Suzuki has put it into English: “Billows and waves and ripples all surging, swelling and ebbing, yet are they not so many different motions of the eternally self-same body of water?”

The moon is serenely shining in the sky, alone in all the heavens and the entire earth; but when she mirrors herself in the brilliant whiteness of evening dew, which appear like glittering pearls sown upon the earth—how wondrously numerous her images! Is not every one of them complete in its own fashion?”

Zen stays neither in assertion nor denial. It is like a steering wheel turning to the left or to the right to guide the vehicle onward. The master in this story was not insisting on his own course, but was warning students not to cling to one side or the other. He sought only to play the game of life fairly even though he knew the fact of non-individuality.

There are many lodges, clubs, and lecture halls, where all sorts of discourses are delivered, each speaker with an urgent message to give to his audience. You can attend these meetings and enjoy the different opinions and arguments, but I advise you to recall occasionally, “Where others dwell, I do not dwell. Where others go, I do not go.” It may save you from nervous strain.

The koan also says, “This does not mean to refuse association with others.” We can sympathize with different movements in the world without belonging to any of them. We can welcome visitors from any group and serve them tea, brimful of Zen. Each of you may come and go as you wish.

The koan ends, “I only wanted to make black and white clear.” That is to say, we are without color.

40. The Dry Creek

A monk asked Hsueh-feng, “when the old creek of Zen dries out and there is not a drop of water left, what can I see there?” Hsueh-feng answered, “There is the bottomless water, which you cannot see.” The monk asked again, “How can one drink that water?” Hsueh-

feng replied, “He should not use his mouth to do it.”

The monk later went to Chao-Chou and related the dialogue. Chao-Chou said, “If one cannot drink the water with his mouth, he also cannot take it through his nostrils.” The monk then repeated the first question, “When the old creek of Zen dries out and there is not a drop of water, what can I see there?” Chao-Chou answered, “The water will taste as bitter as quinine.” “What happens to one who drinks that water?” asked the monk. “He will lose his life” came the reply.

When Hsueh-feng heard of the dialogue, he paid homage to Chao-Chou saying, “Chao-Chou is a living Buddha. I should not answer any questions hereafter.” From that time on he sent all newcomers to Chao-Chou.

NYOGEN: As long as there remains a faint trace of Zen, the creek has not been completely drained. Each person coming here brings his own particular tinge to add to the stream. When Chao-Chou referred to losing his life, he meant to lose one’s self and enter Nirvana. A person who attempts to become a sage must pass through many difficulties, and even at the last he must quench his thirst with bitterness. If YOU do not mind these obstacles, I say, “Go to it.”

98. Yueh-shan’s Lake

Yueh-shan asked a newly-arrived monk, “Where have you come from?”

FOGAI: Are you enjoying the atmosphere?

The monk answered, “From the Southern Lake.”

FOGAI: You give a glimpse of the lake view.

“Is the lake full or not?” inquired Yueh-shan.

FOGAI: Are you still interested in the lake?

“Not yet,” the monk replied.

FOGAI: He glanced at the lake. “There has been so much rain, why isn’t the lake filled?” Yueh-shan asked.

FOGAI: Yueh-shan invited the monk to see the lake, actually.

The monk remained silent

FOGAI: He must have Drowned.

NYOGEN: Zen monks like to dwell intimately with nature. Most Chinese monasteries were built in the mountains or by a lake. Zen records many dialogues between teacher and monks concerning natural beauty, but there must also be many monks who never asked questions, simply allowing themselves to merge with nature. They are the real supporters of Zen—better than the chatterboxes with all their noise in an empty box.

GENRO: If I were the monk, I would say to Yueh-shan, “I will wait until you have repaired the bottom.”

FOGAI: It was fortunate the monk remained silent.

NYOGEN: Genro sometimes sounds like a shyster with unnecessary argument.

GENRO: The thread of Karma runs through all things;

{One can pick up anything as a koan.}

Recognition makes it a barricade.

[If you look behind there is no barricade.]

The poor monk asked about a lake

[Go on! jump in and swim!]

Made an imaginary road to heaven.

[Where are you standing?]

94. Living Alone

A monk came to Yun-chu and asked, “How can I live alone at the top of the mountain?”

FOGAI: You are lost in a cloud.

Yun-chu answered, “Why do you give up your Zen-do in the valley and climb the mountain?”

FOGAI: This is not the way to handle ghosts.

NYOGEN: American friends often ask me how to find the “quiet place to meditate.” My usual answer is, “Can you not find a quiet

spot in your home?" No matter how busy one's daily life is, he can find certain minutes in which to meditate and a certain place to sit quietly. Merely pining for a quiet place away from his own home is entirely wrong. This monk could not harmonize himself with other monks in the Zen-do and wished to live alone on a mountain peak. Even though Yun-chu cornered the monk with the question, no wonder Fogai thought Yun-chu too luke warm in his method. If I were Yun-chu, I would demand that the monk tell me where he is at this moment. If he hesitated, I would push him out of the room immediately.

GENRO: If I were Yun-chu, I would say to the monk, "If you do not neglect your own Zen-do, I will allow you to stay on the mountain peak. But how can you stay on the mountain without neglecting your own Zen-do?"

FOGAI: Destroy that Zen-do and that mountain!

NYOGEN: Fogai is like an anarchist. I do not wish to associate with this radical monk. Genro's first remark is splendid. Why did he add the last? Look at my associates!

44. Nan-ch'uan Rejects Both A Monk and Layman

A monk came to Nan-Ch'uan, stood in front of him, and put both hands to his breast. Nan-Ch'uan said, "You are too much of a layman. "The monk then placed his hands palm to palm. "You are too much of a monk," said Nan-Ch'uan. The monk could not say a word. When another teacher heard of this, he said to his monks, "If were the monk, I would free my hands and walk away backward."

NYOGEN: When the monk came for sanzen, he meant to express his freedom by not conforming to the rules of entering or leaving the Zen-do, but Nan-Ch'uan's first words jolted him so that he changed his attitude. Where was his freedom then? The world is filled with people who are "too much" of this or that, and there are those who think that by being iconoclastic they can express their freedom. They are all bound.

A free person does not display his freedom. He is free, and so passes almost unnoticed. Since he clings to nothing, rules and regulations never bother him. He may bow or walk backwards; it makes no difference.

GENRO: If I were Nan-Ch'uan, I would say to the monk, "You are too much of a dumb-bell," and to the master, who said he would free his hands and walk backward, "You are too much of a crazy man." True emancipation has nothing to hold to, no color to be seen, no sound to be heard.

A free man has nothing in his hands.

He never plans anything, but reacts according to others' actions.

Nan-Ch'uan was such a skillful teacher

He loosed the noose of the monk's own robe.

NYOGEN: Silas Hubbard once said, "As I grow older, I simplify both my science and my religion. Books mean less to me; prayers mean less; potions, pills and drugs mean less; but peace, friendship, love and a life of usefulness mean more . . . infinitely more."

Here we see a good American who learned Zen naturally in his old age. But why should one wait until he is old? Many people do not know how to free themselves from science and religion. The more they study science, the more they create destructive power. Their religions are mere outer garments too heavy where, they walk in the spring breeze.

Books are burdens to them and prayers but their beautiful excuses. They consume potions, pills, and drugs, but they do not decrease their sickness physically or mentally. If they really want peace, friendship, love, and a life of usefulness, they must empty their precious bags of dust and illusions to realize the spirit of freedom, the ideal of this country.

Thoughts from Confucius

Editor's Notes: Confucius helped to stabilize the chaotic Chinese political scene by promoting a new "religion" based on honor and patriarchy. The term "benevolence" is the golden quality of the "gentleman" that is perhaps wisdom of attunement with the Way. The numbers refer to passages in The Analects, which are a collection of sayings of Confucius by his disciples and grand-disciples. I like the Penguin Classics edition of the Analects. I also recommend the writings of Mencius who further built on the Confucian tradition.

Tseng Tzu said, "Every day I examine myself on three counts. In what I have undertaken on another's behalf, have I failed to do my best? IN my dealings with my friends have I failed to be trustworthy in what I say? Have I passed on to others anything that I have not tired out myself?" (I:4)

When the Master went inside the Grand Temple, he asked questions about everything. Someone remarked, "Who said that the son of the man from Tsou understood the rites? When he went inside the Grand Temple, he asked questions about everything."

The Master, on hearing of this, said, "The asking of questions is in itself the correct rite." (III:15)

The Master said, "Virtue never stands alone. It is bound to have neighbours." (IV:25)

The Master said to Tzu-kung, "Who is the better man, you or Hui?" "How dare I compare myself with Hui? When he is told one thing he understands ten. When I am told one thing I understand only two."

The Master said, "You are not as good as he is. Neither of us is as good as he is." (V:9)

The Master said, "You can tell those who are above average about the best, but not those who are below average." (VI:11)

The Master said, "I never enlighten anyone who has not been driven to distraction by trying to understand a difficulty or who has not got into a frenzy trying to put his ideas into words. When I have pointed out one corner of a square to anyone and he does not come back with the other three, I will not point it out to him a second time." (VII:8)

The Master said, "is benevolence really far away? No sooner do I desire it than it is here." (VII:30)

There were four things the Master refused to have anything to do with: he refused to entertain conjectures or insist on certainty; he refused to be inflexible or egotistical. (IX:4)

The Master said, "I have yet to meet the man who is as fond of virtue as he is of beauty in women." (IX:18)

The Master said, "As in the case of making a mound, if, before the very last basketful, I stop, then I shall have stopped. As in the case of leveling the ground, if, though tipping only one basketfull, I am going forward, then I shall be making progress." (IX:19)

The Master said, "One cannot but give assent to exemplary words, but what is important is that one should rectify oneself. One cannot but be leashed with tactful words, but what is important is that one should reform oneself. I can do nothing with the man who gives assent but does not rectify himself or the man who is pleased but does not reform himself." (IX:24)

The Master said, "Make it your guiding principle to do your best for others and to be trustworthy in what you say. Do not accept as friend anyone who is not as good as you. When you make a mistake do not be afraid of mending your ways." (IX:25)

The Master said, "The gentleman helps others to realize what is good in them; he does not help them to realize what is bad in them. The small man does the opposite." (XII:16)

Fan Chi'ih asked about wisdom. The Master said, "Know your fellow men." (XII:22)

Tzu-kung asked about how friends should be treated. The Master said, "Advise them to the best of your ability and guide them properly, but stop when there is no hope of success. Do not asked to be snubbed." (XII:23)

Tzeng Tzu said, "A gentleman makes friends through being cultivated, but looks to friends for support in benevolence." (XII:24)

The Master said, "The gentleman agrees with others without being an echo. The small man echoes without being in agreement." (XIII:23)

The Master said, "A man of virtue is sure to be the author of memorable sayings, but the author of memorable sayings is not necessarily virtuous. A benevolent man is sure to possess courage, but a courageous man does not necessarily possess benevolence." (XIV:4)

The Master said, "Men of antiquity studied to improve themselves; men today study to impress others." (XIV:24)

The Master said, "It is not the failure of others to appreciate your abilities that should trouble you, but rather your own lack of them." (XIV:30)

The Master said, "To fail to speak to a man who is capable of being benefited is to let a man go to waste. To speak to a man who is incapable of being benefited is to let one's words go to waste. A wise man let neither men nor words go to waste." (XV:8)

The Master said, "What the gentleman seeks, he seeks within himself; what the small man seeks, he seeks in others." (XV:21)

The Master said, "The gentleman is conscious of his own superiority without being contentious, and comes together with other gentlemen without forming cliques." (XV:22)

The gentleman is devoted to principle but not inflexible in small matters.

In instruction there is no separation into categories.

There is no point in people taking counsel together who follow different ways.

It is enough that the language one uses gets the point across. (XV:37-41)

Confucius said, "Those who are born with knowledge are the highest. Next come those who attain knowledge through study. Next again come those who turn to study after having been vexed by difficulties. The common people, in so far as they make no effort to study even after having been vexed by difficulties, are the lowest." (XVI:9)

The Master said, "Yu, have you heard about the six qualities and the six attendant faults?"

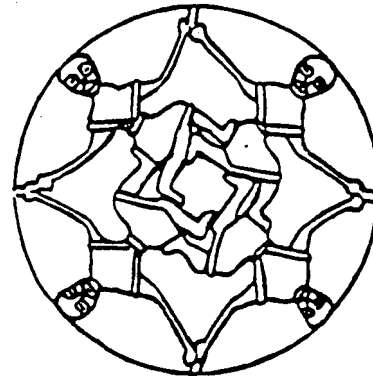
"No."

"Be seated and I shall tell you. To love benevolence without loving learning is liable to lead to foolishness. To love cleverness without

loving learning is liable to lead to deviation from the right path. To love trustworthiness in word without loving learning is liable to lead to harmful behaviour. To love forthrightness without loving learning is liable to lead to intolerance. To love courage without loving learning is liable to lead to insubordination. To love unbending strength without loving learning is liable to lead to indiscipline." (XVII:8)

Tzu-hsia said, "A Man can, indeed, be said to be eager to learn who is conscious, in the course of a day, of what he lacks and who never forgets, in the course of a month, what he has mastered." (XIX:5)

Tzu-hsia said, "Learn widely and be steadfast in your purpose, inquire earnestly and reflect on what is at hand, and there is no need for you to look of benevolence elsewhere." (XIX:6)



Haiku

Editor's Note: The next section of this collection is taken from A Zen Harvest (LOC# BQ 9267 .Z48 1988) by Soiku Shigematsu.

Each time wishing
Beforehand to talk it out
I've never parted from You
Without feeling many words
Unspoken...1.

Autumn coming-
It's almost unnoticed, but
I feel its
Invisible arrival
In the rustling winds. 3.

Rain, hail,
Snow, ice:
All Different, but
They finally meld into
One valley stream. 19.

Over the pond
Every night the moon
Casts its light.
But the water won't be soiled;
The moon won't either. 44.

Nothing seems
So transient as
Human life:
The dew on the petal
Of the morning glory. 64

Should the moon
Distinguish
Rich and poor,
It would never brighten
A poor man's hut. 70.

White face, yellow face,
Ugly or beautiful: it's
Hard to change.
But our mind can be changed,
So set it right. 72.

By their colors
Flowers attract us, but
Soon they fade, fall, and
Finally turn into dust. 74.

To be born
And be unborn is one thing:
Penetrate this fact.
Death is
Illusion. 91

Yes or no,
Good or bad, all
Arguments are gone:
More beautiful tunes come
From pine winds on the hills. 94.

Life is one rest
On the way back from Illusion
To Nirvana;
Let it rain if it rains!
Let winds blow if they blow! 101.

I really love
My barrel-making job;
Connecting each board into
One round barrel. 113.

Walk on deliberately
And you'll surely see the world
Beyond the thousand miles,
Even if you walk
As slow as a cow. 114.

How regrettable!
Never
To return:
Days and months, flowing water,
And Human lives! 120.

Mistaken if you
Think you see the moon
With your own eyes:
You see it with
The light it sheds. 130.
Wisdom, if you
Devise it, is
False;
The true wisdom is
What you never know. 131.

No hesitation anymore!
Having given it all up,
I'm quite ready
To die..... 143.

No parents, no friends,
No children, no wife,
How lonely!
I would rather
Die! 149.

No parents,
No wife,
No children,
No job, no money;
But, no death, thank you. 150.

The wind is you breath;
The open sky, your mind;
The sun, your eye;
Seas and mountains,
Your whole body. 166.

What shall I leave as
A keepsake after I die?
In spring, flowers;
Summer, cuckoos;
Fall, red maple leaves;
Winter, snow. 169.

Woman and man:
They look different
But inside
Their skeletons are
Almost the same. 189.

Were our skins peeled off,
Yours and mine,
Which is you, Which is I? 190.

Cold moon:
Sounds of the bridge
As I walk alone. 191.

Duty and humanity
Are often incompatible:
The road forks—
But my body is one. 219.

In the dark
I lost sight of
my shadow;
I've found it again
By the fire I lit. 235.

Coming out of darkness
I'm likely to enter
The Darker path again.
Shine far all over,
Moon on the Mountain edge. 236.

As I stumble on the slope,
My lantern has gone out;
I'm treading all alone
In complete darkness. 282.

When the lantern goes out,
Where, I wonder, does
Its light go?
Darkness is my own
Original house. 408

Love too
Is
Rooted in
Piss
And shit. 245

Make your mind
Flexible as water:
Now square,
Now round—up to
The shape of the bowl. 264.

Feeling helpless, I go out
To meet the moon
Only to find every mountain
Veiled with cloud. 268

Never regard this world as
The only one;
The next world
And the one after the next...
All the worlds are here now. 275

Everyone admires
Beautiful flowers in bloom,
But the ones who know
Visit them
After they've fallen. 284

Even strong winds are
Weakened by
Obedient willow twigs;
They'll never
Be broken in the storm. 308

Reverence is
The source of divine favors;
Without it,
Buddhas and wooden clogs are
Only pieces of wood. 322

Good and bad, are the
Reflections in the mirror:
Watch them closely
And you'll know they're
Nothing but yourself. 334

Your parents,
Grandparents....
All constituted in Yourself.
Love yourself,
Revere yourself. 374

Moonlight—
The Four Gates and Four Schools
Are nothing but one. 386

Whilst everyone
Washes their dirty
Hands and feet,
Few remove
Stains from their minds. 395

Even in the dew
On the tiny blade
Of some nameless grass,
The moon
Will show herself. 420

We wish
Our lives were long
While our hair's
Growing long
Is a nuisance. 423

A person who
Does everything as it
Naturally goes
Gets along easily in
This world and the next. 445

Everything is
A lie in this world
Because even
Death isn't so. 451

The moon reflects
Even on dirty water;
This realized,
Our mind clears up. 461

When the water
In your mind
Clears up
Calm stars can be seen
Reflected on it. 462

Someone else's question,
Somehow
You can answer;
But, your mind's question,
How can you answer? 538

The jewel
Is in your bosom;
Why look for it
Somewhere
Else? 557

Push aside
Those leaves heaped on
The Old Path;
You'll see the invisible footprints
Of the Sun Goddess. 568

Pine trees in the wind
Don't break;
They always scatter
The snow before it's
Too heavy for their branches. 569

Pine winds,
Moonlight on the field grasses
Are all that I have:
Besides,
No visitors. 593

So the full moon is admired
Like a well-rounded mind
But once it was a
Sharp-edged crescent. 603

Be round,
Thoroughly round,
Human mind!
Square minds
Often scratch. 604

You may try to be round,
But keep one corner,
O mind,
Otherwise you'll
Slip and roll away. 605

While faithfully throwing their
Shadows to the water,
Flirting with the wind:
Willows by the river. 615

No sound is heard
In the creeks where
Waters run deep;
Shallow streams
Always splash. 618

The man
Who's escaped the world
To live in the mountains,
If he's still weary,
Where should he go? 710

The Tao of Pooh

(A must buy by Benjamin Hoff)

The Stone Cutter *The Tao of Pooh* pg. 118

There was once a stonecutter, who was dissatisfied with himself and his position in life.

"One day, he passed a wealthy merchant's house, and through the open gateway, saw many fine possessions and important visitors. "How powerful that merchant must be" thought the stonecutter. He became very envious, and wished that he could be like the merchant. Then he would no longer have to live the life of a mere stonecutter.

To his great surprise, he suddenly became the merchant, enjoying more luxuries and power than he had ever dreamed of, envied and detested by those less wealthy than himself. But soon a high official passed by, carried in a sedan chair, accompanied by attendants, and escorted by soldiers beating gongs. Everyone, no matter how wealthy, had to bow low before the procession. "How powerful that official is" he thought. "I wish that I could be a high official!"

Then he became the high official, carried every where in his embroidered sedan chair, feared and hated by the people all around, who had to bow down before him as he passed. It was a hot summer day, and the official felt very uncomfortable in the sticky sedan chair. He looked up at the sun. It shone proudly in the sky, unaffected by his presence. "How powerful the sun is" he thought. "I wish that I could be the sun!"

Then he became the sun, shining fiercely down on everyone, scorching the fields, cursed by the farmers and laborers. But a huge black cloud moved between him and the earth, so that his light could no longer shine on everything below. "How powerful that storm cloud is!" he thought. "I wish that I could be a cloud!"

Then he became the cloud, flooding the fields and villages, shouted at by everyone. But soon he found that he was being pushed away by some great force, and realized that it was the wind. "How powerful it is!" he thought. "I wish that I could be, the wind!"

Then he became the wind, blowing tiles off the roofs of houses, uprooting trees, hated and feared by all below him. But after a while, he ran up against something that would not move, no matter how forcefully he blew against it—a huge, towering stone. "How powerful that stone is!" he thought. "I wish that I could be a stone!" Then he became the stone, more powerful than anything else on earth. But as he stood there, he heard the sound of a hammer pounding a chisel into the solid rock, and felt himself being changed. "What could be more powerful than I, the stone?" he thought. He looked down and saw far below him the figure of a stonecutter.

The Cork *The Tao of Pooh* pg. 88

The Wu Wei principle underlying Tai Chi Ch'uan can be understood by striking at a piece of cork floating in water. The harder you hit it, the more it yields; the more it yields, the harder it bounces back. Without expending energy, the cork can easily wear you out. So, Wu Wei overcomes force by neutralizing its power, rather than by adding to the conflict. With other approaches, you may fight fire with fire, but with Wu Wei you fight fire with water.

The Te of Piglet

(a must buy by Benjamin Hoff)

Making the Best of It *The Te of Piglet* pg. 234

It is fitting that for centuries Taoists have been associated with magic, as Taoism is, on one level or another, a form of magic—a very practical form, perhaps, but magic all the same. Here we will briefly describe two secrets of that—magic—two principles of Taoist transformation that may prove useful in the coming years. The first is Turn the Negative into Positive. The second is Attract Positive with Positive. Unlike some other Taoist secrets, there is little danger of these principles falling into the Wrong Hands; because in the wrong hands, they won't work. We might add that they work best for Piglets.

Turn the Negative into Positive is a principle well known in the Taoist martial arts. Using it for self-defense, you turn your attacker's power to your benefit by deflecting it back at him. In effect, he swings his fist and hits himself in the face. And after a while, if he has any intelligence at all, he stops and leaves you alone. Transforming negative into positive, you work with whatever comes your way. If others throw bricks at you, build a house. If they throw tomatoes, start a vegetable stand.

You can often change a situation simply by changing your attitude toward it. For example, a Traffic Jam can be turned into an Opportunity to Think, or Converse, or Read or Write a Letter. When we give up our images of self-importance and our ideas of what should be, we can help things become what they need to be.

Sherlock Holmes, in The Naval Treaty. *Te of Piglet* pg. 254

"There is nothing in which deduction is so necessary as in religion," said he, leaning with his back against the shutters. "It can be built up as an exact science by the reasoner. Our highest assurance of the goodness of Providence seems to me to rest in the flowers. All other things, our Powers; our desires, our food, are all really necessary for our existence in the first instance. But this rose is an extra. Its smell and its colour are an embellishment of life, not a condition of it. It is only goodness which gives extras, and so I say again that we have much to hope from the flowers."

The Emperor's Horses *The Te of Piglet* pg. 196

"A Great man retains a child's mind." And, as the following story by Chuang-tse shows, the great man respects the child's mind, as well:

Accompanied by six of his wisest men, the Yellow Emperor journeyed to Chu-T'zu Mountain, to speak to the mystic Ta Kuei. In the wilderness of Hsiang Ch'eng, the procession lost its way. After wandering for some time, the men came upon a boy tending horses.

"Do you know the way to Chu-T'zu Mountain?" they asked him.

"I do," the boy replied.

"In that case," they said, "would you know where we might find the hidden dwelling of the hermit Ta Kuei?"

"Yes," he answered, "I can tell you."

"What a fascinating child!" said the emperor to his companions. "He knows this much!" He stepped from his chariot. "Let me test him," and called the boy to him.

"Tell me, said the Yellow Emperor. "If you were in charge of the empire, how would you go about ruling it?"

"I know only the tending of horses," the boy replied. "Is ruling the empire any different from that?"

Not satisfied, the emperor questioned him again. "I realize that

governing is hardly your concern. Still, I would like to know if you have ever had any thoughts about it.”

The boy did not answer. The emperor asked him once more. The boy replied by asking,

“Is governing the empire different from tending horses?”

“Explain the tending of horses,” said the Yellow Emperor, “and I will tell you.”

“When taking care of horses,” said the boy, “we make sure that no harm comes to them. In doing so, we put aside anything within ourselves that would injure them. Can ruling a nation differ from that?”

The Yellow Emperor bowed his head twice to the ground. “Heavenly Master” he exclaimed.

Incognito *The Te of Piglet* pg. 186

The word for Taoist sensitivity is Cooperate. As Lao-tse wrote, “The skilled walker leaves no trace nor tracks—he is sensitive to (and therefore respectful toward) his surroundings and works with the natural laws that govern them. Like a chameleon, he blends in with What’s There. And he does this through the awareness that comes from reducing the Ego to nothing. As Chuang-tse put it:

“To him who dwells not in himself, the forms of things reveal themselves as they are. He moves like water, reflects like a mirror, responds like an echo. His lightness makes him seem to disappear. Still as a clear lake, he is harmonious in his relations with those around him, and remains so through profit and loss. He does not precede others, but follows them instead.”

The Taoist alchemist and herbalist Ko Hung described one of the benefits of non egotistical awareness: contentment.

“The contented man can be happy with what appears to be useless. He can find worthwhile occupation in forests and mountains. He stays in a small cottage and associates with the simple. He would not exchange his worn clothes for the imperial robes, nor the load on his back for a four horse carriage. He leaves the jade in the mountain and the pearls in the sea. Wherever he goes, whatever he does, he can be happy—he knows when to stop. He does not pick the brief blossoming flower; he does not travel the dangerous road. To him, the ten thousand possessions are dust in the wind. He sings as he travels among the green mountains.

He finds sheltering branches more comforting than red-gated mansions, the plow in his hands more rewarding than the Prestige of titles and banners, fresh mountain water more satisfying than the feasts of the wealthy. He acts in true freedom. What can competition for honors mean to him? What attraction can anxiety and greed possibly hold? Through simplicity he has Tao, and from Tao, everything else comes; the light in the “darkness,” the clear in the “cloudy,” the speed in the “slowness,” the full in the “empty.”

The cook creating a meal with his own hands has as much honor in his eyes as a famous singer or high official. He has no profits to gain, no salary to lose; no applause, no criticism. When he looks up, it is not in envy. When he looks down, it is not with arrogance. Many look at him, but nobody sees him. Calm and detached, he is free from all danger, a dragon hidden among men.

I have Three Treasures *The Te of Piglet* pg. 220

I have three treasures, Which I guard and keep.

The first is compassion.

The second is economy.

The third is humility.

From compassion comes courage.

From economy, comes the means to be generous.

From humility comes responsible leadership.

Today, men have discarded compassion in order to be bold.

They have abandoned economy in order to be big spenders.

They have rejected humility in order to be first.

This is the road to death.

Fantasies *Te of Piglet* pg. 132

The fearful fantasies we have inherited have conditioned us to believe that we need to be protected from the natural world, Better Living Through Heavy Industry, and so on. In reality, as anyone ought to be able to see by now, the natural world needs to be protected from us. Its wisdom needs to be recognized, respected, and understood by us, and not merely viewed through the distorted lenses of our illusions about it. As Sir Arthur Conan Doyle cautioned, through his character.

“One’s ideas must be as broad as Nature if they are to interpret Nature,” and “When one tries to rise above Nature one is liable to fall below it.”

Live, But Live Well *The Te of Piglet* pg. 155

Taoism is not the reject-the-physical-world theory of living that some scholars (and a few Taoists) would have others believe. Even Lao-tse, the most reclusive of Taoist writers, wrote, “Honor all under Heaven as your body.” To a Taoist, a reject-the-physical-world approach would be an extremist absurdity, impossible to live without dying. Instead, a Taoist might say: Carefully observe the natural laws in operation in the world around you, and live by them. From following them, you will learn the morality of modesty, moderation, compassion, and consideration (not just one society’s rules and regulations), the wisdom of seeing things as they are (not of merely collecting “facts” about them) and the happiness of being in harmony, with the Way (which has nothing to do with self-righteous “spiritual” obsessions and fanaticism). And you will live lightly, spontaneously, and effortlessly.

Illusions *Te of Piglet* pg. 109

We will begin our examination of illusions with a narrative concerning the Perception of illusions, which show that It All Depends on How One Looks at Things. The first is by the Tao writer Lieh-tse:

“A man noticed that his axe was missing. Then he saw the neighbor’s son pass by. The boy looked like a thief, walked like a thief, behaved like a thief. Later that day, the man found his axe where he had left it the day before. The next time he saw the neighbor’s son, the boy looked, walked, and behaved like an honest, ordinary boy.”

The Samurai's Late Supper *Te of Piglet* pg. 96

A certain samurai had a reputation for hot-tempered behavior. A Zen master known for his excellent cooking, decided that the warrior needed to be taught a lesson before he became any more dangerous. He invited the samurai to dinner.

The samurai arrived at the appointed time. Zen master told him to make himself comfortable while he finished preparing the food. A long time passed. The samurai waited impatiently. After a while, he called out: "Zen Master-have you forgotten me?"

The Zen master came out of the kitchen. "I am very sorry," he said. "Dinner is taking longer to prepare than I had thought." He went back to the kitchen.

A long time passed. The samurai sat, growing hungrier by the minute. At last he called out, a little softer this time: "Zen Master-please. When will my dinner be served?"

The Zen master came out of the kitchen. "I am truly sorry. There has been a further delay. It won't be much longer." He went back to the kitchen.

A long time passed. Finally, the samurai couldn't endure the waiting any longer. He rose to his feet, chagrined and ravenously hungry. Just then, the Zen master entered the room with a tray of food. First he served miso shiru (soybean soup).

The samurai gratefully drank the soybean soup up, enchanted by its flavor. "Oh, Zen Master," he exclaimed, "this is the finest miso shiru I have ever tasted! You truly deserve your reputation as an expert cook!"

"It's nothing," replied the Zen master, modestly. "Only miso shiru."

The samurai set down his empty bowl. "Truly magical soup! What secret spices did you use to bring out the flavor?"

"Nothing special," the Zen master replied.

"No, no I insist. The soup is extraordinarily delicious!"

"Well, there is one thing

"I knew it!" exclaimed the samurai, eagerly leaning forward. "There had to be something to make it taste so good! Tell me-what is it?"

The Zen master softly spoke: "It took time," he said.

The Gospel According to Zen

Editor's Note: This collection of sayings was taken from a book called The Gospel According to Zen: Beyond the Death of God edited by Robert Sohl in 1970. I highly recommend the book to you.

Three Sayings of Jesus

Jesus said to his disciples: Make comparisons; tell me what I am like.

Simon Peter said to him: You are like a just angel.

Matthew said to him: You are like a wise philosopher.

Thomas said to him: Master, my mouth will in no way endure my saying what you are like.

Jesus said: I am not your master.

Jesus said: Let him who seeks not cease his seeking until he find;
and when he find, he will be troubled,
and if he is troubled, he will marvel,
and will be a king over All.

Jesus said:

I am the light which is over everything.

I am the All;

from me the All has gone forth,

and to me the All has returned.

Split wood: I am there.

Lift up the stone, and you will find me there.

Gasan and the Bible

A university student while visiting Gasan asked him: "Have you ever read the Christian Bible?" "No, read it to me," said Gasan.

The student opened the Bible and read from St. Matthew: "And why take ye thought for rainment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these... Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself."

Gasan said: "Whoever uttered those words I consider an enlightened man."

The student continued reading: "Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened."

Gasan remarked: "That is excellent. Whoever said that is not far from Buddhahood."

Stringless Harps

Men know how to read printed books, they do not know how to read the unprinted ones. They can play on a stringed harp, but not on a stringless one. Applying themselves to the superficial instead of the profound, how should they understand music or poetry?

Eat when you are Hungry

The Zen sect says, "When you are hungry, eat; when you are weary, sleep." Poetry aims at the description in common language of beautiful scenery. The sublime is contained in the ordinary, the hardest in the easiest. What is self-conscious and ulterior is far from the truth; what is mindless is near.

Sporting Fishes

If your heart is without stormy waves, everywhere are blue mountains and green trees. If our real nature is creative like nature itself, wherever we may be, we see that all things are free like sporting fishes and circling kites.

The Empty Boat

Suppose a boat is crossing a river and another boat, an empty one, is about to collide with it. Even an irritable man would not lose his temper. But suppose there was someone in the second boat. Then the occupant of the first would shout to him to keep clear. And if he did not hear the first time, nor even when called to three times, bad language would inevitably follow. In the first case there was no anger, in the second there was—because in the first case the boat was empty, in the second it was occupied. And so it is with man. If he could only pass empty through life, who would be able to injure him?

Three in the Morning

What is meant by “Three in the Morning”? In Sung there was a keeper of monkeys. Bad times came and he was obliged to tell them that he must reduce their ration of nuts. “It will be three in the morning and four in the evening,” he said. The monkeys were furious. “Very well then,” he said, “you shall have four in the morning and three in the evening.” The monkeys accepted with delight.

Zen Archery

One day Heiko Sensei led his student, Ito, up to the top of a cliff. The waves crashed against the base of the cliff, several hundred feet below. Heiko took up a bow and set up a target 50 yards away.

“Let’s have a contest,” he told the student.

Ito fired an arrow and hit the red bullseye on the target.

“Not bad,” the Master replied. Heiko Sensei took the bow and then fired an arrow into sky as high as it could go and it landed hundreds of yards away in the ocean. He exclaimed loudly, “Bullseye!”

Meshing Nets

“As a net is made up of a series of ties, so everything in this world is connected by a series of ties. If anyone thinks that the mesh of a net is an independent, isolated thing, he is mistaken. It is called a net because it is made up of a series of interconnected meshes, and each mesh has its place and responsibility in relation to other meshes.”
—The Buddha

The Butterflies of Chuang Tzu

Editor’s Note: I used Burton Watson’s translations found in Chuang Tzu: The Basic Writings published by Columbia University Press in 1964. Chuang Tzu was a Taoist contemporary of Confucianist Mencius and lived in the 4th Century before the Common Era. The central themes of his writings are freedom, the pointlessness of words and a Zen-like humor.

The Dream

Once Chuang Chou dreamt that he was a butterfly, a butterfly flitting and fluttering around, happy with himself and doing as he pleased. He didn’t know he was Chuang Chou. Suddenly he woke up and there he was, solid and unmistakable Chuang Chou. But he didn’t know if he was Chuang Chou who had dreamt he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he was Chuang Chou.

What is Acceptable?

What is acceptable we call acceptable; what is unacceptable we call unacceptable. A road is made by people walking on it, and thusly things are so because they are called so. What make them so? Making them so makes them so. What makes them not so? Making them not so makes them not so. Things all must have that which is so and things all must have that which is acceptable. There is nothing that is not so, nothing that is not acceptable.

The Argument

Suppose you and I have had an argument. If you have beaten me instead of my beating you, then are you necessarily right and am I necessarily wrong? If I have beaten you instead of your beating me, then am I necessarily right and are you necessarily wrong? Is one of us right and the other wrong? Are both of us right or are both of us wrong? If you and I don’t know the answer, then other people are bound to be even more in the dark. Whom shall we get to decide what is right? Shall we get someone who agrees with you to decide? But if he already agrees with you, how can he decide fairly? Shall we get someone who agrees with me? But if he already agrees with me, how can he decide? Shall we get someone who disagrees with both of us? But if he already disagrees with both of us, how can he decide? Shall we get someone who agrees with both of us? But if he already agrees with both of us, how can he decide? Obviously, then, neither you nor I nor anyone else can know the answer. Shall we wait for still another person?

But waiting for one shifting voice to pass judgment on another is the same as waiting for none of them. Harmonize them all with the Heavenly Equality, leave them to their endless changes, and so live out your years. What do I mean by harmonizing them with the Heavenly Equality? Right is not right; so is not so. If right were really right, it would differ so clearly from not right that there would be no need for argument. If so were really so, it would differ so clearly from not so that there would be no need for argument. Forget the years; forget distinctions. Leap into the boundless and make it your home!

Happy Fish

Chuang Tzu and Hui Tzu were strolling along the dam of the Hao River when Chuang Tzu said, “See how the minnows come out and dart around where they please! That’s what fish really enjoy!”

Hui Tzu said, “You’re not a fish, so how do you know what fish enjoy?”

Chuang Tzu said, “You’re not I, so how do you know I don’t know what fish enjoy?”

Hui Tzu said, “I’m not you, so I certainly don’t know what you know. On the other hand, you’re certainly not a fish, so that still

proves you don't know what fish enjoy!"

Chuang Tzu said, "Let's go back to your original question, please. You asked me how I know what fish enjoy, so you already knew I knew it when you asked the question. I know it by standing here beside the Hao River."

Seven Openings

The emperor of the South Sea was called Shu (Brief), the emperor of the North Sea was called Hu (Sudden), and the emperor of the central region was called Hun-tun (Chaos). Shu and Hu from time to time came together for a meeting in the territory of Hun-tun, and Hun-tun treated them very generously. Shu and Hu discussed how they could repay his kindness. "All men," they said, "have seven openings in their head so they can see, hear, eat, and breathe. But Hun-tun alone doesn't have any. Let's try boring him some!"

Every day they bored another hole, and on the seventh day Hun-tun died.

Look Under Your Feet

Master Tung-Kuo asked Chuang Tzu, "This thing called the Way—where does it exist?"

Chuang Tzu said, "There's no place it doesn't exist."

"Come," said Master Tung-kuo, "you must be more specific!"

"It is in the ant."

"As low a thing as that?"

"It is in the panic grass."

"But that is lower still!"

"It is in the tiles and shards."

"How can it be so low?"

"It is in the piss and shit."

The Sacred Tortoise

Once, when Chuang Tzu was fishing in the P'u River, the kind of Ch'u sent two officials to go and announce to him: "I would like to trouble you with the administration of my realm."

Chuang Tzu held on to the fishing pole and, without turning his head, said, "I have heard that there is a sacred tortoise in Ch'u that has been dead for three thousand years. The king keeps it wrapped in cloth and boxed, and stores it in the ancestral temple. Now would you this tortoise rather be dead and have its bone left behind and honored? Or would it rather be alive and dragging its tail in the mud?"

It would rather be alive and dragging its tail in the mud," said the two officials.

Chuang Tzu said, "Go away! I'll drag my tail in the mud!"

The Frog in the Well

Have you ever heard about the frog in the caved-in well? He said to the great turtle of the Eastern Sea, "What fun I have! I come out and hop around the railing of the well, or I go back in and take a rest in the wall where a tile has fallen out. When I dive into the water, I let it hold me up under the armpits and support my chin, and when I slip about in the mud, I bury my feet in it and let it come up over my ankles. I look around at the mosquito larvae and the crab and polliwogs and I see that none of them can match me. To have complete command of the water of one whole valley and to monopolize all the joys of a caved-in well—this is the best there is! Why don't you come some time and see for yourself?"

But before the great turtle of the Eastern Sea had even gotten his left foot in the well his right knee was already wedged fast. He backed out and withdrew a little, and then began to describe the sea. "A distance of a thousand li cannot indicate its greatness; a depth of a thousand fathoms cannot express how deep it is. In the time of Yu there were floods for nine years out of ten, and yet its waters never rose. In the time of T'ang there were droughts for seven years out of

eight, and yet its shores never receded. Never to alter or shift, whether for an instant or an eternity; never to advance or recede, whether the quantity of water flowing in is great or small; this is the great delight of the Eastern Sea!"

When the frog in the caved-in well heard this, he was completely at a loss.

The Caged Sea-bird

Once a sea bird alighted in the suburbs of the Lu capital. The marquis of Lu escorted it to the ancestral temple, where he entertained it, performing the Nine Shao music for it to listen to and presenting it with the meat of the T'ai-lao sacrifice to feast on. But the bird only looked dazed and forlorn, refusing to eat a single slice of meat or drink a cup of wine, and in three days it was dead. This is to try to nourish a bird with what would nourish you instead of what would nourish a bird. If you want to nourish a bird with what nourishes a bird, then you should let it roost in the deep forest, play among the banks and islands, float on the rivers and lakes, eat mudfish and minnows, follow the rest of the flock in flight and rest, and live any way it chooses. A bird hates to hear even the sound of human voices, much less all that hubbub and to-do. Try performing the Hsien-ch'ih and Nine Shao music in the wilds around Lake Tung-t'ing. When the birds hear it they will fly off, when the animals hear it they will run away, when the fish hear it they will dive to the bottom. Only the people who hear it will gather around to listen. Fish live in water and thrive, but if men tried to live in water they would die. Creatures differ because they have different likes and dislikes. Therefore the former sages never required the same ability from all creatures or made them all do the same thing. Names should stop when they have expressed reality, concepts of right should be founded on what is suitable. This is what it means to have command of reason and good fortune to support you.

Swimming Boatmen

Yen Yuan said to Confucius, "I crossed the gulf at Goblet Deep and the ferryman handled the boat with supernatural skill. I asked him, 'Can a person learn how to handle a boat?' and he replied, 'Certainly. A good swimmer has acquired his ability through repeated practice. And, if a man can swim under water, he may never have seen a boat before and still he'll know how to handle it!' I asked him what he meant by that, but he wouldn't tell me. May I venture to ask you what it means?"

Confucius said, "A good swimmer has acquired his ability through repeated practice, that means he's forgotten the water. If a man can swim under water, he may never have seen a boat before and still he'll know how to handle it. That's because he sees the water as so much dry land, and regards the capsizing of a boat as he would the overturning of a cart. The ten thousand things may all be capsizing and turning over at the same time right in front of him and it can't get at him and affect what's inside; so where could he go and not be at ease.

"When you're betting for tiles in an archery contest, you shoot with skill. When you're betting for fancy belt buckles, you worry about your aim. And when you're betting for real gold, you're a nervous wreck. Your skill is the same in all three cases, but because one prize means more to you than another, you let outside considerations weigh on your mind. He who looks too hard at the outside gets clumsy on the inside."

Old Man Falls into Water

Confucius was seeing the sights at Lu-liang, where the water falls from a height of thirty fathoms and races and boils along for forty li, so swift that no fish or other water creature can swim in it. He saw a man fall into the water and, supposing that the man was in some

kind of trouble and intended to end his life, he ordered his disciples to line up on the bank and pull the man out. But after the man had gone a couple of hundred paces, he came out of the water and began strolling along the base on the embankment, his hair streaming down, singing a song. Confucius ran after him and said, "At first I thought you were a ghost, but now I see you're a man. May I ask if you have some special way of staying afloat in the water?"

The old man replied, "I have no way. I began with what I was used to, grew up with my nature, and let things come to completion with fate. I go under with the swirls and come out with the eddies, following along the way the water goes and never thinking about myself. That's how I can stay afloat."



Is God a Taoist?

by Raymond M. Smullyan in *The Tao is Silent* 1977 publ. by Harper Collins

Mortal: And therefore, O God, I pray thee, if thou hast one ounce of mercy for this thy suffering creature, absolve me of having to have free will!

God: You reject the greatest gift I have given thee?

Mortal: How can you call that which was forced on me a gift? I have free will, but not of my own choice. I have never freely chosen to have free will. I have to have free will, whether I like it or not!

God: Why would you wish not to have free will?

Mortal: Because free will means moral responsibility, and moral responsibility is more than I can bear!

God: Why do you find moral responsibility so unbearable?

Mortal: Why? I honestly can't analyze why; all I know is that I do.

God: All right, in that case suppose I absolve you from all moral responsibility but leave you still with free will. Will this be satisfactory?

Mortal: (after a pause) No, I am afraid not.

God: Ah, just as I thought! So moral responsibility is not the only aspect of free will to which you object. What else about free will is bothering you?

Mortal: With free will I am capable of sinning, and I don't want to sin!

God: If you don't want to sin, then why do you?

Mortal: Good God! I don't know why I sin, I just do! Evil temptations come along, and try as I can, I cannot resist them.

God: If it is really true that you cannot resist them, then you are not sinning of your own free will and hence (at least according to me) not sinning at all.

Mortal: No, no! I keep feeling that if only I tried harder I could avoid sinning. I understand that the will is infinite. If one wholeheartedly wills not to sin, then one won't.

God: Well now, you should know. Do you try as hard as you can to avoid sinning or don't you?

Mortal: I honestly don't know! At the time, I feel I am trying as hard as I can, but in retrospect, I am worried that maybe I didn't!

God: So in other words, you don't really know whether or not you have been sinning. So the possibility is open that you haven't been sinning at all!

Mortal: Of course this possibility is open, but maybe I have been sinning, and this thought is what so frightens me!

God: Why does the thought of your sinning frighten you?

Mortal: I don't know why! For one thing, you do have a reputation for meting out rather gruesome punishments in the afterlife!

God: Oh, that's what's bothering you! Why didn't you say so in the first place instead of all this peripheral talk about free will and responsibility? Why didn't you simply request me not to punish you for any of your sins?

Mortal: I think I am realistic enough to know that you would hardly grant such a request!

God: You don't say! You have a realistic knowledge of what requests I will grant, eh? Well, I'll tell you what I'm going to do! I will grant you a very, very special dispensation to sin as much as you like, and I give you my divine word of honor that I will never punish you for it in the least. Agreed?

Mortal: (in great terror) No, no, don't do that!

God: Why not? Don't you trust my divine word?

Mortal: Of course I do! But don't you see, I don't want to sin! I have an utter abhorrence of sinning, quite apart from any punishments it may entail.

God: In that case, I'll go you one better. I'll remove your abhorrence of sinning. Here is a magic pill! Just swallow it, and you will lose all abhorrence of sinning. you will joyfully and merrily sin away, you

will have no regrets, no abhorrence and I still promise you will never be punished by me, or yourself, or by any source whatever. You will be blissful for all eternity. So here is the pill!

Mortal: No, no!

God: Are you not being irrational? I am even removing your abhorrence of sin, which is your last obstacle.

Mortal: I still won't take it!

Why not?

Mortal: I believe that the pill will indeed remove my future abhorrence for sin, but my present abhorrence is enough to prevent me from being willing to take it.

God: I command you to take it!

Mortal: I refuse!

God: What, you refuse of your own free will?

Mortal: Yes!

God: So it seems that your free will comes in pretty handy, doesn't it?

Mortal: I don't understand!

God: Are you not glad now that you have free will to refuse such a ghastly offer? How would you like it if I forced you to take this pill, whether you wanted it or not?

Mortal: No, no! Please don't!

God: Of course I won't; I'm just trying to illustrate a point. All right, let me put it this way. Instead of forcing you to take the pill, suppose I grant your original prayer of removing your free will—but with the understanding that the moment you are no longer free, then you will take the pill.

Mortal: Once my will is gone, how could I possibly choose to take the pill?

God: I did not say you would choose it; I merely said you would take it. You would act, let us say, according to purely deterministic law which are such that you would as a matter of fact take it.

Mortal: I still refuse.

God: So you refuse my offer to remove your free will. This is rather different from your original prayer, isn't it?

Mortal: Now I see what you are up to. Your argument is ingenious, but I'm not sure it is really correct. There are some points we will have to go over again.

God: Certainly.

Mortal: There are two things you said which seem contradictory to me. First you said that one cannot sin unless one does so of one's own free will. But then you said you would give me a pill which would deprive me of my own free will, and then I could sin as much as I like. But if I no longer had free will, then, according to your first statement, how could I be capable of sinning?

God: You are confusing two separate parts of our conversation. I never said the pill would deprive you of your free will, but only that it would remove your abhorrence of sinning.

Mortal: I'm afraid I'm a bit confused.

God: All right, then, let us make a fresh start. Suppose I agree to remove your free will, but with the understanding that you will then commit an enormous number of acts which you now regard as sinful. Technically speaking, you will not then be sinning since you will not be doing these acts of your own free will. And these acts will carry no moral responsibility, nor moral culpability, nor any punishment whatsoever. Nevertheless, these acts will all be of the type which you presently regard as sinful; they will all have this quality which you presently regard as sinful; they will all have this quality which you presently feel as abhorrent, but your abhorrence will disappear; so you will not then feel abhorrence towards these acts.

Mortal: No, but I have present abhorrence toward the acts, and this present abhorrence is sufficient to prevent me from accepting your proposal.

God: Hm! So let me get this absolutely straight. I take it you no longer wish me to remove your free will.

Mortal: (reluctantly) No, I guess not.

God: All right, I agree not to. But I am still not exactly clear as to why you now no longer wish to be rid of your free will. Please tell me again.

Mortal: Because, as you have told me, without free will I would sin even more than I do now.

God: But I have already told you that without free will you cannot sin.

Mortal: But if I choose now to be rid of free will, then all my subsequent evil actions will be sins, not of the future, but of the present moment in which I choose not to have free will.

God: Sounds like you are pretty badly trapped, doesn't it?

Mortal: Of course I am trapped! You have placed me in a hideous double bind! Now whatever I do is wrong. If I retain free will, I will continue to sin, and if I abandon free will (with your help, of course), I will now be sinning in so doing.

God: But by the same token, you place me in a double bind. I am willing to leave you free will or remove it as you choose, but neither alternative satisfies you. I wish to help you, but it seems I cannot.

Mortal: True!

God: But since it is not my fault, why are still angry with me?

Mortal: For having placed me in such a horrible predicament in the first place!

God: But, according to you, there is nothing satisfactory I could have done.

Mortal: You mean there is nothing satisfactory you can now do, but that does not mean that there is nothing you could have done.

God: Why? What could I have done?

Mortal: Obviously you should never have given me free will in the first place. Now that you have given it to me, it is too late—anything I do will be bad. But you should never have given it to me in the first place!

God: Oh, that's it! Why would it have been better had I never given it to you?

Mortal: Because then I never would have been capable of sinning at all.

God: Well, I'm always glad to learn from my mistakes.

Mortal: What!

God: I know, that sound sort of self-blaspheous, doesn't it? It almost involves a logical paradox! On the one hand, as you have been taught, it is morally wrong for any sentient being to claim that I am capable of making mistakes. On the other hand, I have the right to do anything. But I am also a sentient being. So the question is, Do I or do I not have the right claim that I am capable of making mistakes?

Mortal: That is a bad joke! One of your premises is simply false. I have not been taught that it is wrong for any sentient being to doubt your omniscience, but only for a mortal to doubt it. But since you are not mortal, then you are obviously free from this injunction.

God: Good, so you realize this on a rational level. Nevertheless, you did appear shocked when I said, "I am always glad to learn from my mistakes."

Mortal: Of course I was shocked. I was shocked not by your self-blaspheous (as you jokingly call it), not by the fact that you had no right to say it, but just by the fact that you did say it, since I have been taught that as a matter of fact you don't make mistakes. So I was amazed that you claimed that it is possible for you to make mistakes.

God: I have not claimed that it is possible. All I am saying is that if I make mistakes, I will be happy to learn from them. But this says nothing about whether the if has or ever can be realized.

Mortal: Let's please stop quibbling about this point. Do you or do you not admit it was a mistake to have given me free will?

God: Well, now this is precisely what I propose we should investigate. Let me review your present predicament. You don't want to have free will because with free will you can sin, and you don't want to sin. (Though I find this puzzling; in a way you must want to sin, or else you wouldn't. But let this pass for now.) On the other hand,

if you agreed to give up free will, then you would now be responsible for the acts of the future. Ergo, I should never have given you free will in the first place.

Mortal: Exactly!

God: I understand exactly how you feel. Many mortals -even some theologians - have complained that I have been unfair in that it was I, not they , who decided that they should have free will, and then I hold them responsible for their actions. In other words, they feel that they are expected to live up to a contract with me which they never agreed to in the first place.

Mortal: Exactly!

God: As I said, I understand this feeling perfectly. And I can appreciate the justice of the complaint. But the complaint only arises from an unrealistic understanding of the true issues involved. I am about to enlighten you as to what these are, and I think the results will surprise you! But instead of telling you outright, I shall continue to use the Socratic method.

To repeat, you regret that I ever gave you free will. I claim that when you see the true ramifications you will no longer have this regret. To prove my point, I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I am about to create a new universe—a new space-time continuum. In this new universe will be born a mortal just like you—for all practical purposes, we might say that you will be reborn. Now, I can give this new mortal—this new you—free will or not. What would you like me to do?

Mortal: (in great relief): Oh, please! Spare him from having to have free will!

God: All right, I'll do as you say. But you do realize that this new you without free will, will commit all sorts of horrible acts.

Mortal: But they will not be sins since he will have no free will.

God: Whether you call them sins or not, the fact remains that they will be horrible acts in the sense that they will cause great pain to many sentient beings.

Mortal: (after a pause) Good God, you have trapped me again! Always the same game! If I now give you the go-ahead to create this new creature with no free will who will nevertheless commit atrocious acts, then true enough he will not be sinning, but I again will be the sinner to sanction this.

God: In that case, I'll go you one better! Here, I have already decided whether to create this new you with free will or not. Now, I am writing my decision on this piece of paper and I won't show it to you until later. But my decision is now made and is absolutely irrevocable. There is nothing you can possibly do to alter it; you have no responsibility in the matter. Now, what I wish to know is this: Which way do you hope I have decided? Remember now, the responsibility for the decision falls entirely on my shoulders, not yours. SO you can tell me perfectly honestly and without any fear, which way do you hope I have decided?

Mortal: (after a very long pause) I hope you have decided to give him free will.

God: Most interesting! I have removed your last obstacle! If I do not give him free will, then no sin is to be imputed to anybody. So why do you hope I will give him free will?

Mortal: Because sin or no sin, the important point is that if you do not give him free will, then (at least according to what you have said) he will go around hurting people, and I don't want to see people hurt.

God: (with an infinite sigh of relief) At last! At last you see the real point!

Mortal: What point is that?

God: That sinning is not the real issue! The important thing is that people as well as other sentient beings don't get hurt!

Mortal: You sound like a utilitarian!

God: I am a utilitarian!

Mortal: What!

God: Whats or no whats, I am a utilitarian. Not a Unitarian, mind

you, but a utilitarian.

Mortal: I just can't believe it!

God: Yes, I know, your religious training has taught you otherwise. You have probably thought of me more like a Kantian than a utilitarian, but your training was simply wrong.

Mortal: You leave me speechless!

God: I leave you speechless, do I? Well that is perhaps not too bad a thing—you have a tendency to speak too much as it is. Seriously, though, why do you think I ever did give you free will in the first place?

Mortal: Why did you? I never have thought much about why you did; all I have been arguing for is that you shouldn't have! But why did you? I guess all I can think of is the standard religious explanation: Without free will, one is not capable of meriting either salvation or damnation. So without free will, we could not earn the right to eternal life.

God: Most interesting! I have eternal life; do you think I have ever done anything to merit it?

Mortal: Of course not! With you it is different. You are already so good and perfect (at least allegedly) that it is not necessary for you to merit eternal life.

God: Really now? That puts me in a rather enviable position, doesn't it?

Mortal: I don't think I understand you.

God: Here I am eternally blissful without ever having to suffer or make sacrifices or struggle against evil temptations or anything like that. Without any of that type of "merit," I enjoy blissful eternal existence. By contrast, you poor mortals have to sweat and suffer and have all sorts of horrible conflicts about morality, and all for what? You don't even know whether I really exist or not, or if there really is any afterlife, or if there is, where you come into the picture. No matter how much you try to placate me by being "good," you never have any real assurance that your "best" is good enough for me, and hence you have no real security in obtaining salvation. Just think of it! I already have the equivalent of "salvation"—and have never had to go through this infinitely lugubrious process of earning it. Don't you ever envy me for this?

Mortal: But it is blasphemous to envy you!

God: Oh come off it! You're not now talking to your Sunday school teacher, you are talking to me. Blasphemous or not, the important question is not whether you have the right to be envious of me but whether you are. Are you?

Mortal: Of course I am!

God: Good! Under your present world view, you sure should be most envious of me. But I think with a more realistic world-view, you no longer will be. So you really have swallowed the idea which has been taught you that your life on earth is like an examination period and that the purpose of providing you with free will is to test you, to see if you merit blissful eternal life. But what puzzles me is this: If you really believe I am as good and benevolent as I am cracked up to be, why should I require people to merit things like happiness and eternal life? Why should I not grant such things to everyone regardless of whether or not he deserves them?...

God: [But] we have gotten sidetracked as it is, and I would like to return to the question of what you believed my purpose to be in giving you free will. Your first idea of my giving you free will in order to test whether you merit salvation or not may appeal to moralists, but the idea is quite hideous to me. you cannot think of any nicer reason—any more humane reason—why I gave you free will?

Mortal: Well now, I once asked this question to an Orthodox rabbi. He told me that with the way we are constituted, it is simply not possible for us to enjoy salvation unless we feel we have earned it. And to earn it, we of course need free will.

God: That explanation is indeed much nicer than your former but still is far from correct. According to Orthodox Judaism, I created angels, and they have no free will. They are in actual sight of me and

are so completely attracted by goodness that they never have even the slightest temptation towards evil. They really have no choice in the matter. Yet they are eternally happy even though they have never earned it. So if your rabbi's explanation were correct, why wouldn't I have simply created only angels rather than mortals?

Mortal: Beats me! Why didn't you?

God: Because the explanation is simply not correct. In the first place, I have never created any ready made angels. All sentient beings ultimately approach the state which might be called "angelhood." But just as the race of human beings is in a certain stage of biologic evolution, so angels are simply the end result of a process of Cosmic Evolution. The only difference between the so-called saint and the so-called sinner is that the former is vastly older than the latter. Unfortunately it takes countless life cycles to learn what is perhaps the most important fact of the universe—evil is simply painful. All the arguments of the moralist—all of the alleged reasons why people shouldn't commit evil acts—simply pale into insignificance in light of the one basic truth that evil is suffering.

No, my dear friend, I am not a moralist. I am wholly a utilitarian. That I should have been conceived in the role of a moralist is one of the great tragedies of the human race. My role in the scheme of things (if one can use this misleading expression) is neither to punish nor reward, but to aid the process by which all sentient beings achieve ultimate perfection....

Mortal: Anyway, putting all these pieces together, it occurs to me that the only reason you gave free will is because of your belief that with free will, people will tend to hurt each other—and themselves—less than without free will.

God: Bravo! That is by far the best reason you have yet given! I can assure you that had I chosen to give free will that would have been my very reason for so choosing.

Mortal: What! You mean to say you did not choose to give us free will?

God: My dear fellow, I could no more choose to give you free will than I could choose to make an equilateral triangle equiangular in the first place, but having chosen to make one, I would then have no choice but to make it equiangular.

Mortal: I thought you could do anything!

God: Only things which are logically impossible. As St. Thomas said, "It is a sin to regard the fact that God cannot do the impossible, as a limitation on His powers." I agree, except that in place of using his word sin I would use the term error.

Mortal: Anyhow, I am still puzzled by your implication that you did not choose to give me free will.

God: Well, it's high time I inform you that the entire discussion—from the very beginning—has been based on one monstrous fallacy! We have been talking purely on a moral level—you originally complained that I gave you free will, and raised the whole question as to whether I should have. It never once occurred to you that I had absolutely no choice in the matter.

Mortal: I am still in the dark!

God: Absolutely! Because you are only able to look at it through the eyes of a moralist. The more fundamental metaphysical aspects of the question you never even considered.

Mortal: I still do not see what you are driving at.

God: Before you requested me to remove your free will, shouldn't your first question have been whether as a matter of fact you do have free will?

Mortal: That I simply took for granted.

God: But why should you?

Mortal: I don't know. Do I have free will?

God: Yes.

Mortal: Then why did you say, I shouldn't have taken it for granted?

God: Because you shouldn't. Just because something happens to be true, it does not follow that it should be taken for granted.

Mortal: Anyway, it is reassuring to know that my natural intuition

about having free will is correct. Sometimes I have been worried that determinists are correct.

God: They are correct.

Mortal: Wait a minute now, do I have free will or don't I?

God: I already told you you do. But that does not mean that determinism is incorrect.

Mortal: Well, are my acts determined by the laws of nature or aren't they?

God: The word determined here is subtly but powerfully misleading and has contributed so much to the confusions of the free will versus determinism controversies. Your acts are certainly in accordance with the laws of nature, but to say they are determined by the laws of nature creates a totally misleading psychological image which is that your will could somehow be in conflict with the laws of nature and that the latter is somehow more powerful than you, and could "determine" your acts whether you like it or not. But it is simply impossible for your will to ever conflict with natural law. You and natural law are really one and the same.

Mortal: What do you mean that I cannot conflict with nature? Suppose I were to become very stubborn, and I determined not to obey the laws of nature. What could stop me? If I became sufficiently stubborn, even you could not stop me!

God: You are absolutely right! I certainly could not stop you. Nothing could stop you. But there is no need to stop you, because you could not even start! As Goethe very beautifully expressed it, "In trying to oppose Nature, we are in the very process of doing so, acting according to the laws of nature!" Don't you see, that the so-called "laws of nature" are nothing more than a description of how in fact you and other beings do act. They are merely a description of how you act, not a prescription of how you should act, not a power or force which compels or determines your acts. To be valid a law of nature must take into account how in fact you do act, or, if you like, how you choose to act.

Mortal: So you really claim that I am incapable of determining to act against natural laws?

God: It is interesting that you have twice now used the phrase "determined to act" instead of "chosen to act." This identification is quite common. Often one uses the statement "I am determined to do this" synonymously with "I have chosen to do this." This very psychological identification should reveal that determinism and choice are much closer than they might appear. Of course, you might well say that the doctrine of free will says that it is you who are doing the determining, whereas the doctrine of determinism appears to say that your acts are determined by something apparently outside you. But the confusion is largely caused by your bifurcation of reality into the "you" and the "not you." Really now, just where do you leave off and the rest of the universe begin? Or where does the rest of the universe leave off and you begin? Once you can see the so-called "you" and the so-called "nature" as a continuous whole, then you can never again be bothered by such questions as whether it is you who are controlling nature or nature who is controlling you. Thus the muddle of free will versus determinism will vanish. If I may use a crude analogy, imagine two bodies moving toward each other by virtue of gravitational attraction. Each body, if sentient, might wonder whether it is he or the other fellow who is exerting the "force." In a way it is both, in a way it is neither. It is best to say that it is both, in a way it is neither. It is best to say that the configuration of the two is crucial.

Mortal: You said a short while ago that our whole discussion was based on a monstrous fallacy. You still have not told me what this fallacy is.

God: Why the idea that I could possibly have created you without free will! You acted as if this were a genuine possibility, and wondered why I did not choose it! It never occurred to you that a sentient being without free will is no more conceivable than a physical object which exerts no gravitational attraction. (There is, incidentally, more

analogy than you realize between a physical object exerting gravitational attraction and a sentient being exerting free will!) Can you honestly even imagine a conscious being without free will? What on earth could it be like? I think that one thing in your life that has misled you is your having been told that I gave man the gift of free will. As if I first created man, and then as an afterthought endowed him with the extra property of free will. Maybe you think I have some sort of “paint brush” with which I daub some creatures with free will, and not others. No, free will is not an “extra”; it is part and parcel of the very essence of consciousness. A conscious being without free will is simply a metaphysical absurdity...

Scharding: I guess the only remaining question is why God created anything in the first place? Probably because God loved the idea of sentience as much as God loves God’s own sentience. But would God not have created sentient creatures once God thought of even their possible existence? God loves even the smallest most imperfect creatures.

Some Christian Thoughts

John Shea *Mystery: An unauthorized biography of God*, pg. 26.

The following passage starts the Dutch Catechism:

“In A.D. 627 the monk Paulinus visited King Edwin in northern England to persuade him to accept Christianity. He hesitated and decided to summon his advisers. At the meeting one of them stood up and said: ‘Your majesty, when you sit at table with your lords and vassals, in the winter when the fire burns warm and bright on the hearth and the storm is snowing outside, bringing the snow and the rain, it happens of a sudden that a little bird flies into the hall. It comes in at one door and flies out through the other. For the few moments that it is inside the hall, it does not feel the cold, but as soon as it leaves your sight, it returns to the dark of winter. It seems to me that the life of man is much the same. We do not know what went before and we do not know what follows. If the new doctrine can speak to us surely of these things, it is well for us to follow it.’

Monika Hellwig *Understanding Catholicism*, pg. 17

When we speak of revelation in a religious sense, we are still using the word in more or less the same sense of a breakthrough experience in insight, knowing and understanding that takes us by surprise and introduces us to a new dimension of depth and intimacy with the ultimate, the One, the source and foundation and goal of our being. This kind of breakthrough can happen in a number of different ways: in our experiences of nature, in the workings of our own conscience and consciousness, in personal relationships with other people, and in the history of the community.

The most basic and universally available kind of revelatory experience in the religious sense is the one associated with an experience of nature. Most of us have at one time or another been flooded by a sense of power, beauty, majesty or mystery at the sight of great mountains, vast sweeps of sky, the immense ocean with its rhythmic waves, the stillness of lakes, the blanketing quiet of forests. Most of us have at some time had a sense of an encompassing providence in spring sunshine, winter snow, autumn’s brilliant colors, summer’s extravagant abundance of life, the wonder of birth and the balm of sleep. These and so many other experiences, not all joyful ones, offer the opportunity for the revelation and discovery of the all-encompassing power and presences of the One who is greater than we are, prior to us, transcending our ability to grasp, our bountiful host in the world of nature, the silent but welcoming backdrop to all our experiences of life. The Hebrew Scriptures (known to most Christians as the Old Testament) are full of allusions to such experiences, suggesting them as starting points for our prayer that will lead us to deeper encounters with the transcendent, hidden but ever-present God. Such allusions form a constant theme, for instance, in the psalms, Jewish prayers which Christians continued to pray from the earliest Christian times, as indeed Jesus himself did.

Elizabeth Johnson *Women, Earth and Creator Spirit* pg. 22

Three basic relationships: human beings with nature, among themselves, and with God. In each instance the major classical pattern of relationship is shaped by hierarchical dualism, that is, modeled on the dominance of ruling male elites and the subjugation of what is identified as female, cosmic, or foreign, an underclass with only instrumental value. As the ecological crisis makes crystal clear, the polarization of each pair’s terms is nothing short of disastrous in its interconnected effects. Our eyes have been blinded to the sacredness of the earth, which is linked to the exclusion of women from the



sphere of the sacred, which is tied to focus on a monarchical, patriarchal idea of God and a consequent forgetting of the Creator Spirit, the livegiver who is intimately related to the Earth.

In the quest for an ecological ethic grounded in religious truth, these three relationships need to be rethought together. But we must be wary of roads that lead to dead-ends. I think it is a Strategic mistake to retain the dualistic way of thinking and hope to make an advance simply by assigning greater value to the repressed “feminine” side of the polarity. This is to keep women, earth, and Spirit in their preassigned box, which is a cramped, subordinate place. Even if what has previously been disparaged is now highly appreciated, this strategy does not allow for the fullest flourishing of what is confined to one pole by pre-assigned definition. In truth, women are not any closer to nature than men are. This is a cultural construct. In truth, women are every bit as rational as men, every bit as courageous, every bit as capable of initiative. At the same time, precisely because women have been so identified with nature, our voices at this moment in time can speak out for the value of despised matter, bodies, and nature even as we assert that women’s rational and spiritual capacities are equal to those of men. What we search for is a way to undercut the dualism and to construct a new, wholestic design for all of reality built on appreciation of difference in a genuine community. We seek a unifying vision that does not stratify what is distinct into superior-inferior layers but reconciles them in relationships of mutuality. Let us then listen to women’s wisdom, discern our kinship with the earth, and remember the Spirit, as we step toward an ecological ethic and spirituality.

Women, Earth and Creator Spirit pg. 34 “Iron in our Blood”

A crucial insight emerges from this creation story of cosmic and biological evolution. The kinship model of humankind’s relation to the world is not just a poetic, good-hearted way of seeing things but the basic truth. We are connected in a most profound way to the universe, having emerged from it. Events in the galaxies produced the iron that makes our blood red and the calcium that makes our bones and teeth white. These and other heavy elements were cooked in the interior of stars and then dispersed when they died to form a second generation solar system with its planets, on one of which the evolution of life and consciousness followed. In the words of scientist Arthur Peacocks:

“Every atom of iron in our blood would not have been there had it not been produced in some galactic explosion billions of years ago and eventually condensed to form the iron in the crust of the earth from which we have emerged.”

Chemically, humanity is all of a piece with the cosmos. The same is true of our genes. Molecular biology shows that the same four bases make up the DNA of almost all living things. The genetic structure of cells in our bodies is remarkably similar to the cells in other creatures, bacteria, grasses, fish, horses, the great gray whales. We have all evolved from common ancestors and are kin in this shared, unbroken genetic history. To put it more poetically, we human beings as physical organisms carry within ourselves ‘the signature of the supernovas and the geology and life history of the Earth.’

Living in the present moment, furthermore, involves us in a continuous exchange of material with the earth and other living creatures. Every time we breathe we take in millions of atoms breathed by the rest of humanity within the last two weeks. In our bodies seven percent of the protein molecules break down each day and have to be rebuilt out of matter from the earth (food) and energy from the sun. Seven percent per day is the statistical measure of our inter dependence. In view of the consistent recycling of the human body, the epidermis of our skin can be likened ecologically to a pond surface, not so much a shell or wall as a place of exchange. In a very real sense the world is our body.

Original Lilith Myth

After the Holy One created the first human being, Adam, God said: “It is not good for Adam to be alone.” God created a woman, also from the Earth, and called her Lilith.

They quarreled immediately. She said: “I will not lie below you.” He said, “I will not lie below you, but above you. For you are fit to be below me and I above you.”

She responded: “We are both equal because we both come from the earth.”

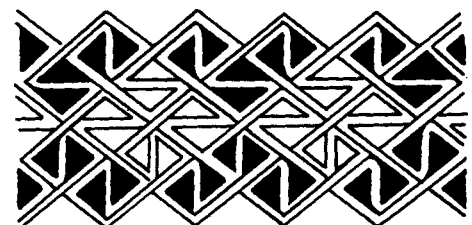
Neither listened to the other. When Lilith realized what was happening, she pronounced the Ineffable Name of God and flew off into the air.

Adam rose in prayer before the Creator, saying, “The woman you gave me has fled from me.” Immediately the Holy One sent three angels after her.

The holy one said to Adam: “If she wants to return, all the better. If not, she will have to accept that one hundred of her children will die every day.”

The angels went after her, finally locating her in the sea, in the powerful waters in which the Egyptians were destined to perish. They told her what God had said, and she did not want to return. (ALPHABET OF BEN SIRA 23A-B)

And God created the human species in God’s own image... male and female created God them. (Genesis 1:27)



Scottish Gaelic Poetry

Editor's Note: This collection is from the book Nuadh Bardachd/ Modern Scottish Gaelic Poetry (you won't find it in the Library) with collections from many authors with English translations. I have met and talked with these authors while in Scotland.

The Heron by Sorley Maclean

A pale yellow moon on the skyline,
the heart o the soil without a throb of laughter,
If a chilliness contemptuous
of golden windows in a snaky sea.

It is not the frail beauty of the moon
nor the cold loveliness of the sea
nor the empty tale of the shore's uproar
that seeps through my spirit to-night.

Faintness in strife,
the chin of Death in essence,
cowardice in the heart,
and belief in nothing—

A heron can with drooping head
and stood on top of sea-wrack,
she folded her wings close in to her sides
and took stock of all around her.

Alone beside the sea,
like a mind alone in the universe,
her reason like man's—
the sum of it how to get a meat

A restless mind seeking,
a more restless flesh returned,
unrest and sleep without a gleam;
music, delirium, and an hour of rapture.

The hour of rapture is the clear hour
that comes from the darkened blind brain,
horizon-breaking to the sight,
a smile affair weather in the illusion.

On the bare stones of the shore,
observing the slipperiness of a calm sea,
listening to the sea's swallowing
and brine rubbing on the stones.

Alone in the vastness of the universe,
though her inaccessible kin are many,
and bursting on her from the gale
the onset of the bright blue god.

I am with you but alone,
looking at the coldness of the level kyle,
listening to the surge on a stony shore
breaking on the bare flagstones of the world.

What is my thought more than the heron's:
the beauty of moon and restless sea,
food and sleep and dream,
brain, flesh, and temptation??

a dream of rapture with one thrust
coming in its season without stint,
without sorrow, without doubt, but one delight,
the straight unbending law of herons.

My dream exercised with sorrow,
broken, awry, with the glitter of temptation,
wounded, with one sparkle, churlish;
brain, heart, and love troubled.

The Great Artist Ian Smith

In the silence of the wood
where the sun
gilds the winter grass
and everything is still
in the clearing,
I thought of the great artist—
so skilled a painter,
so fluent a musician,
the world's chief poet:
I thought that He
also deserved praise,
that He wished to be extolled
for His terrible visions—
I will certain, take His picture home
and hang it
beside the Picasso.
The birds will sing their love
in the happiness between us.

Brotherhood Collected by Donald Morrison, o.d.a.l.

From Faith and Practice of London Yearly Meeting of The Society of Friends:

The life of a religious society consists in something of principles it professes and the outer garments of organization it wears. These things have their own importance: they embody the society to the world, and protect it from the chance and change of circumstance; but the springs of life are deeper, and often escape recognition. They are to be found in the vital union of the society with God and with one another, a union which allows the free flowing through the society of spiritual life which is its strength. Such words as "discipleship," "fellowship," "brotherhood," describe these central springs of religious fellowship....

A Starfish Anonymous, collected by Scharding

One day a young man was walking along a deserted beach. He saw a frail old man bend over and pick up a starfish and put it back into the receding ocean. He watched for awhile, and to his amazement, the old man picked up one starfish after another and placed it back into the water. The young man walked up to the old man, who was holding a small starfish in his hand, and said,

"Old man, why are you putting starfishes into the ocean?"

"They will die on the drying sand unless I put them into the water," he replied.

"But that's silly! There are thousands of beaches in the world and millions of starfish who will die each day. Why should you waste your time on such a meaningless act?"

The old man paused, and in reply he tossed the starfish far out into the water. After a while he spoke, "It makes a difference to this one."

The Island with Two Churches

collected by Sam Adams, o.d.a.l., gr., be.

A Welshman was shipwrecked upon a deserted island for twenty years before a rescue party finally discovered him. The Welshman was delighted at his rescue, but wished to show his rescuers all the work that he had done. He had missed civilization greatly, so he had cut down several trees in order to build a village. There was a bank, a theatre, a pub, a hotel, a jail and two churches. When the rescuers saw the two churches they asked him why he had built two churches.

He smugly replied, "You see the one on the left? That's the one I don't go to!"



The Wit and Wisdom of Islam

Sufism is a generic Western term for the various mystical orders of the Muslims. It would be too difficult to try to explain them or even to compare them to any other group. Sufis are Sufis. Shelton and I recommend further readings on Sufis by the author Idries Shah. One interesting characteristic about them is that they are known for a sense of humor, often with religious undertones. Two of their most renowned fool-sages in their jokes are Mulla Nasruddin and Bohlul. Please enjoy these lessons, which are disguised as jokes, that have been collected from throughout the Muslim world. These selections represent only the tip of an iceberg, so if you like these stories then search out further collections.

The Fool and the King

One day, Bohlul walked into court and sat himself down upon the royal throne of King Harun. The entire court was incensed by Bohlul's impudence, so they began to beat him with sticks and to pelt him with stones. Then they dragged him from the throne and threw him out of the palace.

Bohlul dusted himself off and went to talk with King Harun and said, "I only sat on the throne for one minute and the courtiers nearly beat me to death! God have pity on the man who must rule there for his entire life!"

The Breaking

Nasrudin was transporting a great grinding stone to a new site and two other men were helping him to carry it. While transporting it across a treacherous gorge, it slipped and fell a great distance and broke into several pieces.

Nasrudin began to laugh without control and this greatly angered the other two men. "See here now, Nasrudin," they cried, "We have carried that stone a great distance and now it is useless to us. We have wasted a great deal of effort."

"Do not be angry with me," Nasrudin replied, "I was not laughing at our loss, but instead I was rejoicing for the grinding stone. For many years it has been in bondage, busily grinding and turning out flour, when all it had to do to escape was to break!"

The Stink of Greed

At every weekly bazaar, the town's fool was seen pinching his nose next to the merchants' tables. After a while, a townsman asked him why he pinched his nose.

"Because, the bazaar stinks with greed," replied the Fool.

"Then don't sit in the bazaar," instructed the townsman.

"There's no such escape for me, because I'm greedy too," lamented the Fool, "I want to study their ignorant way of life in order to learn from it."

The Claim

A man claiming to be God was taken before the Caliph.

The Caliph told the prisoner, "Last year, someone claiming to be the second coming of the Prophet was executed."

"Serves him right," replied the prisoner, "I hadn't sent him yet."

Names

A certain conqueror said to Nasrudin:

"Mulla, all the great rulers of the past had honorific titles with the name of God in them: there was, for instance, God-Gifted, and God-Accepted, and so on. What would be the best name for me?"

"God Forbid," said Nasrudin.

The Muezzin's Call

One day Mulla was acting as Muezzin and calling the city to morning prayers from the top of a tall minaret. After each vocalization, he would zoom down the stairs and race out into the nearby streets. After doing this several times, a passerby asked him why he did this. Mulla replied, "I am very proud of my calling, and I wish to hear how far my voice can be discerned."

The Drum

A fox was prowling in a forest one day and saw a drum caught up high in a tree. The occasional breeze pushed a tree limb into the drum, making a wonderful sound.

The fox was impressed and thought, "With such a beautiful noise, there must be good innards inside of it to eat."

After the fox had done his work, and had managed to tear open the skin of the drum, he found it empty and only full of air.

The Majesty of the Sea

Regally the waves were hurling themselves upon the rocks, each deep-blue curve crested by whitest foam. Seeing this sight for the first time, Nasrudin was momentarily overwhelmed.

Then he went near to the seashore, took a little water in his cupped hand and tasted it.

"Why," said the Mulla, "to think that something with such pretensions is not worth drinking."

Ambition

Nasrudin was being interviewed for employment in a department store. The personnel manager asked him:

"We like ambitious men here. What sort of a job are you after?"

"All right," said Nasrudin, "I'll have your job."

"Are you mad?!"

"I may well be," said the Mulla, "but is that a necessary qualification?"

The Acquaintance

One day, Mulla Nasruddin was traveling down a rural road when he saw a great host of picnickers having a great feast. Without a word, Mulla walked into the crowd, sat down, and began to eat with these strangers.

One of the picnickers paused in his eating, turned to Mulla, and asked him, "How many do you know here?"

Mulla replied, "I only know the bread, the cheese, the dates and the melons. That is enough."

The Guest

Mulla Nasruddin went to stay at the house of a friend for a few weeks. However by the second day, his host and his hostess began to take a dislike for Nasruddin. They began to plot for an excuse to rid themselves of his company. They devised a scheme in which they would pretend to have a fight and ask Nasruddin to adjudicate a decision in favor of the husband or the wife. After that, the other party would take offense and kick him out of the house, and possibly have him beaten too.

"By Allah who will protect you on the journey that is but one day away," said the host, "Tell us who is in the right, myself or my wife."

"By Allah who will be my protector in this house during these three weeks," replied Mulla, "I don't know."

The Man with a Really Ugly Face

There once was a man with such an ugly face, that few could stand to look at him. Despite this, the ugly man never acted as if he was embarrassed to be seen in public. When asked about his curious boldness, he replied, "I have never had to see my own face, because it is fixed to my head. Therefore, let the others worry about it."

The Mirror

A Fool was walking down a road when he saw a valuable silver mirror lying in the road. He picked up the mirror and saw his reflection. Immediately he placed the mirror back on the road and apologized, "I'm sorry, I didn't know that the mirror belonged to you!"

Is it me?

Nasrudin went into a bank with a cheque to cash.

"Can you identify yourself?" asked the clerk.

Nasrudin took out a mirror and peered into it.

"Yes, that's me all right," he said.

The Gypsy and his Son

One day, a gypsy was cursing and yelling at his indolent son. "You lazy idler! Do your work and do not be idle. You must improve your juggling and clowning in order to earn a living and to improve your life!"

Then the Gypsy raised a finger in warning, "If you don't do as I say, I'll throw you in school, to gather lots of useless stupid knowledge, become a learned man, and spend the rest of your life in want and misery!"

Where there's a will...

"Mulla, Mulla, my son has written from the Abode of Learning to say that he has completely finished his studies!"

"Console yourself, madam, with the thought that God will no doubt send him more."

The Sermon of Nasrudin

One day the villagers thought they would play a joke on Nasrudin. As he was supposed to be a holy man of some indefinable sort, they went to him and asked him to preach a sermon in their mosque. He agreed.

When the day came, Nasrudin mounted the pulpit and spoke:

"O people! Do you know what I am going to tell you?"

"No, we do not know," they cried.

"Until you know, I cannot say. You are too ignorant to make a start on," said the Mulla, overcome with indignation that such ignorant people should waste his time. He descended from the pulpit and went home,

Slightly chagrined, a deputation went to his house again, and asked him to preach the following Friday, the day of prayer.

Nasrudin started his sermon with the same question as before.

This time the congregation answered, as one voice:

"Yes, we know."

"In that case," said the Mulla, "there is no need for me to detain you longer. You may go." And he returned home.

Having been prevailed upon to preach for the third Friday in succession, he started his address as before:

"Do you know or do you not?"

The congregation was ready; "Some of us do, and others do not."

"Excellent," said Nasrudin, "then let those who know communicate their knowledge to those who do not."

And he went home.

Nasrudin and the Wise Men

The Philosophers, logicians and doctors of the law were drawn up at Court to examine Nasrudin. This was a serious case, because he had admitted going from village to village saying: "The so-called wise men are ignorant, irresolute and confused." He was charged with undermining the security of the State.

"You may speak first," said the King.

"Have paper and pens brought," said the Mulla.

Paper and pens were brought.

“Give some to each of the first seven savants.”
 They were distributed.
 “Have them separately write an answer to this question: ‘What is bread?’”
 This was done.
 The papers were handed to the King, who read them out:
 The first said: “Bread is a food.”
 The second: “It is flour and water.”
 The third: “A gift of God.”
 The fourth: “Baked dough.”
 The fifth: “Changeable, according to how you mean ‘bread’.”
 The sixth: “A nutritious substance.”
 The Seventh: “Nobody really knows.”
 “When they decide what bread is,” said Nasrudin, “it will be possible for them to decide other things. For example, whether I am right or wrong. Can you entrust matters of assessment and judgment to people like this? Is it or is it not strange that they cannot agree about something which they eat each day, yet they are unanimous that I am a heretic?”

First Things first

To the Sufi, perhaps the greatest absurdity in life is the way in which people strive for things—such as knowledge—without the basic equipment for acquiring them. They have assumed that all they need is “two eyes, a nose and a mouth,” as Nasrudin say.

In Sufism, a person cannot learn until he is in a state in which he can perceive what he is learning, and what it means.

Nasrudin went one day to a well, in order to teach this point to a disciple who wanted to know “the truth.” With him he took the disciple and a broken pitcher.

The Mulla drew a bucket of water, and poured it into his pitcher. Then he drew another, and poured it in. As he was pouring in the third, the disciple could not contain himself any longer:

“Mulla, the water is running out. There is no bottom on that pitcher.”

Nasrudin looked at him indignantly. “I am trying to fill the pitcher. In order to see when it is full, my eyes are fixed upon the neck, not the bottom. When I see the water rise to the neck, the pitcher will be full. What has the bottom got to do with it? When I am interested in the bottom of the pitcher, then only will I look at it.”

This is why Sufis do not speak about profound things to people who are not prepared to cultivate the power of learning—something which can only be taught by a teacher to someone who is sufficiently enlightened to say: “Teach me how to learn.”

There is a Sufi saying: “Ignorance is pride, and pride is ignorance. The man who says, ‘I don’t have to be taught how to learn’ is proud and ignorant.” Nasrudin was illustrating, in this story, the identity of these two states, which ordinary human kind considers to be two different things.

Whose Shot was that?

The Fair was in full swing, and Nasrudin’s senior disciple asked whether he and his fellow-students might be allowed to visit it.

“Certainly,” said Nasrudin; “for this is an ideal opportunity to continue practical teaching.”

The Mulla headed straight for the shooting-gallery, one of the great attractions: for large prizes were offered for even one bull’s-eye.

At the appearance of the Mulla and his flock the townsfolk gathered around. When Nasrudin himself took up the bow and three arrows, tension mounted. Here, surely, it would be demonstrated that Nasrudin sometimes overreached himself.

“Study me attentively.” The Mulla flexed the bow, tilted his cap to the back of his head like a soldier, took careful aim and fired. The arrow went very wide of the mark.

There was a roar of derision from the crowd, and Nasrudin’s pupils stirred uneasily, muttering to one another. The Mulla turned

and faced them all. “Silence! This was a demonstration of how the soldier shoots. He is often wide of the mark. That is why he loses wars. At the moment when I fired I was identified with a soldier. I said to myself, ‘I am a soldier, firing at the enemy.’”

He picked up the second arrow, slipped it into the bow and tweaked the string. The arrow fell short, halfway towards the target. There was a dead silence.

“Now,” said Nasrudin to the company, “you have seen the shot of a man who was too eager to shoot, yet who having failed at his first shot, was too nervous to concentrate. The arrow fell short.”

Even the stallholder was fascinated by these explanations. The Mulla turned nonchalantly towards the target, aimed and let his arrow fly. It hit the very center of the bull’s eye. Very deliberately he surveyed the prizes, picked the one which he like best, and started to walk away. A clamor broke out.

“Silence!” said Nasrudin, “Let one of you ask me what you all seem to want to know.”

For a moment nobody spoke. Then a yokel shuffled forward. “We want to know who fired the third shot.”

“That? Oh, that was me.”

The Same Strength

Nasruddin attended a lecture by a man who was teaching a philosophy handed down to him by someone who lived twenty years before. The Mulla asked:

“Is this philosophy, in its present form, as applicable today, among a different community, as it was two decades ago?”

“Of course it is,” said the lecturer. “That is just an example of the ridiculous questions which people ask. A teaching always remains the same: truth cannot alter!”

Some time later, Mulla Nasrudin approached the same man for a job as a gardener.

“You seem rather old,” said the lecturer, “and I am not sure that you can manage the job.”

“I may look different,” said Nasrudin, “But I have the same strength I had twenty years ago.”

He got the job on the strength of his assurance.

Soon afterwards, the philosopher asked Nasrudin to shift a paving-stone from one part of the garden to another. Tug as he might, the Mulla could not lift it.

“I thought you said that you were as strong as you were twenty years ago,” said the sage.

“I am,” answered Nasrudin, “exactly as strong. Twenty years ago I could not have lifted it, either!”

The Value of the Past

Nasrudin was sent by the King to investigate the lore of various kinds of Eastern mystical teachers. They all recounted to him talks of the miracles and the sayings of the founders and great teachers, all long dead, of their schools.

When he returned home he submitted his report, which contained the single word “Carrots.”

He was called upon to explain himself. Nasrudin told the King: “The best part is buried; few know—except the farmer—by the green that there is orange underground; if you don’t work for it, it will deteriorate; and there are a great many donkeys associated with it.”

Second Thoughts

Hundreds of people were streaming away from the evening meeting of a certain Sufi, while Nasrudin was making his way towards that house. Suddenly Nasrudin sat down in the middle of the road. One of the people stopped and asked:

“What are you doing?”

Nasrudin said: “Well, I was going to the house of that Sufi. But since everyone else is going away from it, I’m having second thoughts.”

The Orchard

A man snuck into another man's orchard and filled his apron with lemons. On his way out of the orchard he was caught by the owner. The owner demanded, "Have you no shame before God?"

The man casually replied, "I don't see any reason to be ashamed. One of God's creatures wants to eat a couple of God's dates from one of God's trees on God's Earth."

The owner called to his gardner, "Bring me a rope, so that I may demonstrate my reply." A rope was brought and the thief was tied to a tree. The owner took a stick and began to fiercely beat the thief. The thief cried out, "For God's sake, stop it! You're killing me!"

The owner coolly told the thief, "Just a creature of God is hitting another creature of God with a stick from one of God's trees. Everything is His and I, His servant and slave, do what He ordains. Who's to blame?"

"Great quibbler," whimpered the thief, "From this day on, I give up my zealous Determinism. You made me see the truth of Free Will."

The Grammarian

Nasruddin sometimes took people for trips in his boat. One day a fussy pedagogue hired him to ferry him across a very wide river. As soon as they were afloat the scholar asked whether it was going to be a rough ride.

"Don't ask me nothing about it," said Nasrudin.

"Have you never studied grammar?"

"No," replied the Mulla.

"Then half of your life has been wasted," clucked the Grammarian.

Storm clouds began to fill the sky and powerful winds dragged the boat into the rapids and dangerously deep eddies. The boat was smashed and began to quickly fill with water.

Nasrudin asked the Grammarian, "Have you ever learned to swim?"

"No, certainly not!" the Grammarian said with a pretentious sniff.

"In that case," replied the boatman, "all of your life is lost, for we are sinking."

Not a good pupil

One day Mulla Nasrudin found a tortoise. He tied it to his belt and continued his work in the fields. The tortoise started to struggle. The Mulla held it up and asked:

"What's the matter, don't you want to learn how to plough?"

Hidden Depths

One day the Mulla was in the market and saw small birds for sale at five hundred reals each. "My turkey," he thought, "which is larger than any of these, is worth far more."

The next day he took his pet turkey to market. Nobody would offer him more than 50 reals for it. The Mulla began to shout:

"O people! This is a disgrace! Yesterday you were selling birds only half this size at ten times the price."

Someone interrupted him "Nasrudin, those were parrots -talking birds. They are worth more because they can talk."

"Fool!or over the wall than a brother over the s" said Nasrudin; "those birds you value only because they can talk. You reject this turkey, which has wonderful thoughts, and yet does not annoy people with chatter."

The Secret

A would-be-disciple haunted Nasrudin, asking him question after question. The Mulla answered everything, and realized that the man was not completely satisfied: although he was in fact making progress.

Eventually the man said: "Master, I need more explicit guidance."

"What is the matter?"

"I have to keep on doing things,; and although I progress, I want

to move faster. Please tell me a secret, as I have heard you do with others."

"I will tell you when you are ready for it."

The man later returned to the same theme.

"Very well. You know that your need is to emulate me?"

"Yes."

"Can you keep a secret?"

"I would never impart it to anyone."

"Then observe that I can keep a secret as well as you can."

The Wisdom of Silence

Some hunters were in the woods looking for game. They discovered a group of three orangutans and managed to catch one of them. The other two orangutans escaped and hid behind some nearby bushes and trees.

As the hunters were dressing the corpse of the first orangutan, a steam of blood issued forth. "How red the blood is!" cried a hunter.

The second orangutan called out, "It's red from eating so many raspberries."

Hearing the second orangutan, the hunters discovered its hiding place and began to beat it with sticks. As they were killing it, the second orangutan mourned out loud, "Now I know the wisdom of silence. If I had held my tongue, I wouldn't have gotten killed."

Hearing his companion's dying words, the third orangutan said, "Thank God I was wise enough to keep silent."

He was killed.

Grateful to Allah

One day Mulla found that his donkey was missing and began to cry. Suddenly he stopped crying and began to laugh and sing. He ran about the village rejoicing in his good fortune. A villager asked him why he was so happy about losing a donkey. Mulla replied, "At least I wasn't riding the donkey when it disappeared. If I had been riding it, I would also have vanished!"

Safety

There was a slave on a boat that was being tossed about by some very turbulent weather. The slave screamed and yelled in fear, until the other passengers could stand it no longer. They asked Bohlu to deal with the slave.

Bohlul told them, "Take the slave, attack a strong rope to him and throw him into the water until he begins to slip under the waves. At that point, pull him back into the boat so that he can realize the relative safety of the boat."

Happiness is not where you seek it

Nasrudin saw a man sitting disconsolately at the way-side, and asked what ailed him.

"There is nothing of interest in life, brother," said the man; "I now have sufficient capital not to have to work, and I am on this trip only in order to seek something more interesting than the life I have at home. So far I haven't found it."

Without another word, Nasrudin seized the traveler's knapsack and made off down the road with it, running like a hare. Since he knew the area, Nasrudin was able to out-distance the tourist.

The road curved, and Nasrudin cut across several loops, with the result that he was soon back on the road ahead of the man whom he had robbed. He gently put the bag by the side of the road and waited in concealment for the other to catch up.

Presently the miserable traveler appeared, following the tortuous road, more unhappy than ever because of his loss. As soon as he saw his property lying there, he ran towards it, shouting with joy.

"That's one way of producing happiness," said Nasrudin.

There is more Light here

Someone saw Nasrudin searching for something on the sidewalk. "What have you lost, Mulla?" he asked. "My key," said the Mulla. So they both went down on their knees and looked for it.

After a time the other man asked: "Where exactly did you drop it?"

"In my house."

"Then why are you looking here?"

"There is more light out here than inside my own house."

The Blind Man and the Lamp

One night, a blind man was carrying a large vase over his shoulder with one arm and holding out a torch with the other hand. A passerby noticed this and cried out, "Ignorance! Day and night are but the same to you, so why do you carry a torch before you?" The blind old man replied, "The light is for blind people like you, to keep you from accidentally bumping into me and breaking my vase."

Salt is not Wool

One day the Mulla was taking a donkey-load of salt to market, and drove the ass through a stream. The salt was dissolved. The Mulla was angry at the loss of the load. The ass was frisky with relief.

Next time he passed that way he had a load of wool. After the animal had passed through the stream, the wool was thoroughly soaked, and very heavy. The donkey staggered under the soggy load.

"Ha!" shouted the Mulla, "you thought you would get off lightly every time you went through the water, didn't you?"

The Trip

Nasrudin's friend Wali slipped and fell from the immense height of the Post Office Tower in London. The eyewitnesses, who had seen him plummet past their open windows, were questioned by Nasruddin. They all agreed that Wali's last words at each floor on the way down were: "So far, so good."

Something fell

Nasrudin's wife ran to his room when she heard a tremendous thump.

"Nothing to worry about," said the Mulla, "it was only my cloak which fell to the ground."

"What, and made a noise like that?"

"Yes, I was inside it at the time."

The Tax Man

A man had fallen into some quicksand when Nasrudin came along one afternoon. People were crowding around, all trying to get him out before he drowned.

They were shouting, "Give me your hand!" But the man would not reach up.

The Mulla elbowed his way through the crowd and leant over to the man. "Friend," he said, "what is your profession?"

"I am an income-tax inspector," gasped the man.

"In that case," said Nasrudin, "take my hand!" The man immediately grasped the Mulla's hand and was hauled to safety.

Nasrudin turned to the open-mouthed audience. "Never ask a taxman to give you anything, you fools," he said, and walked away.

Appreciation

"Never give people anything they ask for until at least a day has passed!" said the Mulla.

"Why not, Nasrudin?"

"Experience shows that they only appreciate something when they have had the opportunity of doubting whether they will get it or not."

The Forgotten Question

One day as Bohlul was hastily riding from one place to another, he was stopped by a peasant who wished to ask him to answer a question that had been long in bothering him. Bohlul didn't wish to be interrupted in his journey.

"But it is a matter of life and death," protested the peasant.

"All right then," Bohlul snapped, "But be quick about it then, for my horse is restless to continue on the journey."

The poor peasant, disquieted by the pressing need for speed, stutted and sweated.

"Well, what is it?" Bohlul demanded.

The peasant forgot the question.

Moment in Time

"What is Fate?" Nasrudin was asked by a scholar.

"An endless succession of intertwined events, each influencing the other."

"That is hardly a satisfactory answer. I believe in cause and effect."

"Very well," said the Mulla, "look at that." He pointed to a procession passing in the street.

"That man is being taken to be hanged. Is that because someone gave him a silver piece and enabled him to buy the knife with which he committed the murder; or because someone saw him do it; or because nobody stopped him?"

All I needed was Time

The Mulla bought a donkey. Someone told him that he would have to give it a certain amount of food every day. He considered this to be too much food. He would experiment, he decided, to get the donkey used to less food. Every day, therefore, he reduced its rations. Eventually, when the donkey was reduced to almost no food at all, it fell over and died.

"Pity," said the Mulla. "If I had had a little more time before it died I could have got it accustomed to living on nothing at all."

The Short Cut

Walking home one wonderful morning, Nasrudin thought that it would be a good idea to take a short cut through the woods. "Why," he asked himself, "should I plod along a dusty road when I could be communing with Nature, listening to the birds and looking at the flowers? This is indeed a day of days; a day for fortunate pursuits!"

So saying, he launched himself into the greenery. He had not gone very far, however, when he fell into a pit, where he lay reflecting.

"It is not such a fortunate day, after all," he meditated; "in fact it is just as well that I took this short cut. IF things like this can happen in a beautiful setting like this, what might not have befallen me on that nasty highway?"

To Deal with the Enemy

Mulla's mother once instructed her son, "If you ever see a ghost, or an apparition in the graveyard, don't be afraid. Be brave and attack it immediately! They will run away from you."

Mulla replied, "But what if their mothers gave them the same advice?"

Various Other Quotes

Gleaned and compiled by Michael Scharding

How could I conclude the Green Books without a whole mess of miscellaneous quotes that I've picked up along the way? Perhaps they will inspire you to search more widely for what you already know, or vice a versa? As always, all opinions expressed here belong to their authors or cultures and do not necessarily represent the views of other Reformed Druids.

The main resources for this last collection in The Green Books were the following:

- *Racial Proverbs* by Swlwyn Gurney Champion, 1938.
- *A Druid's Path: Readings Along the Way* by Sterling Lee Few, Jr. (aka Treebeard1@AOL.com) of ADF, Keltria, and OBOD. Unpublished as yet. 1995.
- *Crazy Wisdom* by Nisker, 1990.
- *Wisdom from the Ancients: Proverbs, Maxims and Quotations*. compiled by Menahem Mansoor of the University of Madison Wisconsin in 1994.
- The *Dune* series by Frank Herbert, 1966?.
- *Quotations for the New Age* by Rosenberg, 1978.
- *Peter's Quotations: Ideas for our Time* by Laurence J. Peter, 1977

Art, Beauty, and Poetry

Art is frozen Zen. —R.H. Blyth

Beauty is loved without knowing anything, and ugliness is hated without being to blame. —Maltese

Consistency is the last refuge of the unimaginative. —Oscar Wilde

Poets and pigs are appreciated only after their death. —Italian

Community and Conversation

In necessary things, unity; in doubtful things, liberty; in all things, charity. —Richard Baxter

The basket that has two handles can be carried by two. —Egyptian

Eat according to your taste, and dress according to the taste of others. —Moorish

Two are an army against one. —Icelandic

The avalanche has already started. It is too late for the pebbles to vote. —Unknown

Man can do without his friends but not without his neighbors. —Egyptian

Better a neighbor over the wall than a brother over the sea. —Albanian

Choose the neighbor before the house and the companion before the road. —Moorish

Argument is the worst sort of conversation. —Jonathan Swift

Without conversation there is no agreement. —Montenegrin

“Yes and No” make a long quarrel. —Icelandic

Faults are thick where love is thin. —Welsh

The faultfinder will find faults even in paradise. —Henry Thoreau

Real progress is made not by the loud, ostentatious, push majorities, but always by small and obstinate minorities. —Henryk Skolimowski

Nothing makes you more tolerant of a neighbor's noisy party than being there. —Franklin Jones

Whether women are better than men I cannot say—but I can say they are certainly no worse. —Golda Meir

Love does not consist in gazing at each other but in looking outward together in the same direction. —Antoine de Saint Exupery

An old southern Methodist Preacher was asked if there is a difference between union and unity. He replied, “You can tie two cats' tails together and throw them over a clothes line, in which case you have union, but not unity.” —W.T. Purkeson

Always forgive your enemies, nothing annoys them so much. —Oscar Wilde

Custom, Justice and Law

An agreement will break a custom. —Welsh

Men do more from custom than from reason. —Latin

Custom and law are neighbors. —Montenegrin

The slogans must be rejected and the complexities recognized. —Michael Harrington

A good catchword can obscure analysis for fifty years. —Wendall Willkie

History shows that men and nations behave reasonably only when they have exhausted all other alternatives. —Abba Eban

The chains of habit are too weak to be felt until they are too strong to be broken. —Samuel Johnson

Originality is the art of concealing your source. —Franklin Jones

There is nothing new under the sun. —Ecclesiastes 1:9

When people are free to do as they please, they usually imitate each other. —Eric Hoffer

We despair of chainging the habits of men, still we would like to alter institutions, the habits of millions of men. —George Iles

Equality in injustice is justice. —Egyptian

The more a man knows, the more he forgives. —Italian

He who is accustomed to evil is offended by good. —Mexican

To an unjust government, a martyr is more dangerous than a rebel. —Italian

Everyone should be allowed to keep his natural clothes, his natural food, and his natural religion. —German

Justice flees the world because no one will give it shelter in his house. —Maltese

Moral decisions are always easy to recognize. They are where you abandon self-interest. —Rev. Mother Superior Darwi Odrade, *DUNE*

Every judgment teeters on the brink of error. To claim absolute knowledge is to become monstrous. Knowledge is an unending adventure at the edge of uncertainty. —Leto Atreides II, *DUNE*

Before I judge my neighbour, let me walk a mile in his moccasins. —Sioux

I am free of all prejudices. I hate every one equally. —W.C. Fields

Law separates, compromise conciliates. —German

Treat all men alike. Give them all the same laws. Give them all an even chance to live and grow. —Chief Joseph

Laws are spider webs through which the big flies pass and the little one get caught.

Fear not the law, but the judge. —Russian

Thieves increase with the making of new laws. —Romanian

Custom is stronger than law. —Russian

First, we kill all the lawyers... —Shakespeare?

Harken to the spirit of the law rather than the letter of the law. —Jesus

The test of courage comes when we are in the minority; the test of tolerance comes when we are in the majority. —Henry David Thoreau

Most people would rather defend to the death your right to say it than listen to it. —Robert Brault

One lawyer in a town will languish, two lawyers will prosper. —Sam Adams, RDNA

The successful revolutionary is a statesman, the unsuccessful one a criminal. —Erich Fromm

The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing. —Edmund Burke

When the system defines our choices, it channels rebellion into modes that it is prepared to control, into acts that harm the rebel, not the system. —Starhawk

Laws to suppress tend to strengthen what they would prohibit. This is the fine point on which all legal professions of history have based their job security. —Bene Gesserit Coda, *DUNE*

Death and Fate

He who has been near to death knows the worth of life. —Turkemestan

The fall of a leaf is a whisper to the living. —Russian

He who is fated to hang will never drown. —Scottish

One Calamity is better than a thousand counsels. —Turkish

Your karma ran over my dogma. —Unknown

I'm not afraid to die. I just don't want to be there when it happens. —Woody Allen

I cannot tell you your fate, a man should not know his fate until he is halfway through life. If he were to know sooner, it would all seem an illusion. —Plexus, *Gatorr*

Earth and Ecology

The Earth is a blessing to those upon her. —Egyptian

Do not damage the earth, or the sea, or the trees. —Book of Revelations 7:3

Men go and come, but earth abides. —Ecclesiastes, 1, 4

We didn't inherit the land from our fathers. We are borrowing it from our children. —Amish belief

The universe is made up of stories, not atoms. —Muriel Ruckeyser.

You will find something more in woods than in books. Trees and stones will teach you that which you can never learn from a master. —St. Bernard of Clairvaux

He who follows Nature's lantern never loses his way. —German

O Sacred Earth Mother, the trees and all nature are witnesses to your thoughts and deeds. —Winnebago Indian saying

The world is older and bigger than we are. This is a hard truth for some folks to swallow. —Ed Abbey

The essence of deep ecology is to ask deeper questions... We ask which society, which education, which form of religion is beneficial for all life on the planet as a whole. —Arne Naess

When one recognizes the unity of nature, he also perceives the singleness of mankind. —Gus Turbeville

The highest function of ecology is the understanding of consequences. —Planetologist Pardot Kynes, *DUNE*

To be solitary is alone worthy of God. —Kurdish

Eventually all things merge into one, and a river runs through it. The river was cut by the world's great flood and runs over rocks from the basement of time. On some of these rocks are the timeless rain-

drops. Under the rocks are the words, and some of the words are theirs. I am haunted by waters. —Norman MacLean.

I'm often asked the question: "Is it possible to do valid rituals alone?" First of all in nature ritual, one is never alone. All the other beings of nature are present: either sun or moon, trees, plants, or animals. To consider that you are alone when you are in nature is simply a remnant of Eurocentric thinking. —Dolores LaChapelle, *Sacred Land, Sacred Sex, Rapture of the Deep*

Nature confuses the skeptics and reason confutes the dogmatists. —Blaise Pascal

A man said to the universe, "Sir, I exist." "However," replied the universe, "the fact has not created in me a sense of obligation." —Stephen Crane

Indeed I now realize that a man requires intimate and solitary contact with the wild places if he is to survive. When he is deprived of this state he begins to withdraw into himself, a prey to inner demons and the psychic wallpaper that passes for his estrangement from any genuine inner life. —James Cowan, *Letters From a Wild State*

If my decomposing carcass helps nourish the roots of a juniper tree or the wings of a vulture—that is immortality enough for me. And as much as anyone deserves. —Ed Abbey.

Earth-wise, we are as altars on which the divine fires can burn. The stone of the Druids is still within our bodies, as it was within theirs; for holy sacrifice or sacrilegious exploitation. —Graham Howe, *The Mind of the Druid*

In metaphysics, the notion that the earth and all that's on it is a mental construct is the product of people who spend their lives inside rooms. It is an indoor philosophy. —Ed Abbey

We shall never achieve harmony with the land anymore than we shall achieve justice or liberty for people. In these higher aspirations the important thing is not to achieve, but to strive. —Aldo Leopold

Education and Learning

Let not thy heart be great because of thy knowledge, but converse with the ignorant as with the learned. —Ancient Egyptian

I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand. —Chinese

Thou dost not practice what thou knowest; why, then, dost thou seek what thou knowest not? —Muslim

He who learns well defends himself well. —Argentine

First learn, then form opinions. —Talmud

Knowledge that can be stolen is not worth having. —Al-Ghazdi

The men who deserted thee will teach thee knowledge. —Talmud

By searching the old, learn the new. —Japanese

We learn from history that we learn nothing from history. —George Bernard Shaw

Awareness means suspending judgment for a moment..., then seeing, feeling, experiencing what this condition in front of you is all about. —Stephen Altschuler

If knowledge does not liberate the self from the self, then ignorance is better than such knowledge. —Sinai

With great doubts comes great understanding; with little doubts comes little understanding. —Chinese

God protect us from him who has read but one book. —German

The world is a fine book but of little use to him who knows not how to read. —Italian

Better unlearned than ill-learned. —Norwegian

Ask people's advice, but decide for yourself. —Ukrainian

A good listener makes a good teacher. —Polish

To inquire is neither a disaster nor a disgrace. —Bulgarian

If you would know the future, behold the past. —Portuguese

Cultivate your own garden. —Dutch

So great is the confusion of the world that comes from coveting knowledge! —Chuang Tzu

Teaching is a long way, example is a short one. —German

Knowledge too hastily acquired is not on guard. —Latin

Doors are not opened without keys. —Maltese

Discussion is an exchange of knowledge; argument an exchange of ignorance. —Robert Quillen

The man who strikes first admits that his ideas have given out. —Chinese

Nothing is so firmly believed as that which is least known —Michel de Montaigne

Too much knowledge never makes for simple decisions. —Ghanima Atreides, *DUNE*

An intellectual is someone whose mind watches itself. —Albert Camus

A book is a mirror. When a monkey looks in, no apostle can look out. —George Lichtenberg

Many complain of their looks, but none complain of their brains. —Yiddish

There is nobody so irritating as somebody with less intelligence and more sense than we have. —Don Herold

One learns from books and reads only that certain things can be done. Actual learning requires that you do those things. —Farad'n Corrinno (Harq al-Ada), *DUNE*

Most men, when they think they are thinking are merely rearranging their prejudices. —Knut Rockne

There's a difference between a philosophy and a bumper sticker. —Charles M. Schulz

I can evade questions without help; what I need is answers. —John F. Kennedy

I often quote myself. It adds spice to my conversation. —George Bernard Shaw

The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery. —Mark Van Doren

For every person wishing to teach there are thirty not wanting to be taught. —W.C. Sellar

You can teach a student a lesson for a day; but if you can teach him to learn by creating curiosity, he will continue the learning process as long as he live. —Clay Bedford

Learn to reason forward and backward on both sides of a question. —Thomas Blandi

Form your opinion of a man from his questions rather than from his answers. —French

At the moment you are most in awe of all there is about life that you don't understand, you are closer to understanding it all than at any other time. —Jane Wagner.

Agnosticism simply means that a man shall not say he knows or believes that for which he has no grounds for professing to believe. —Thomas Huxley

The road to ignorance is paved with good editions. —George Benard Shaw

Criticism comes easier than craftsmanship. —Zeuxis (400 BCE)

No writer or teacher or artist can escape the responsibility of influencing others, whether he intends to or not, whether he is conscious

of it or not. —Arthur Koestler

Students achieving oneness will often move ahead to twoness. —Woody Allen

History is mostly guessing; the rest is prejudice. —Will and Ariel Durant

One part of knowledge consists in being ignorant of such things as are not worthy to be known. —Crates (4th cent BCE)

Education is a method by which one acquires a higher grade of prejudices. —Laurence Peter

Scratch an intellectual and you find a would-be aristocrat who loathes the sight, the sound and the smell of common folk. —Eric Hoffer, *First Things & Last things*.

An educated man is not necessarily a learned man or a university man, but a man with certain subtle spiritual qualities which make him calm in adversity, happy when alone, just in his dealings, and sane in all the affairs of life. —Ramsay Macdonald, statesman

Many philosophers build castles in the mind, but live in doghouses. —Arne Naess

Fear and Freedom

He who is afraid of a thing gives it power over him. —Moorish

Do not fear a bright gun but a sooty one. —Montenegrin

Fear has created more gods than piety. —German

A warrior without fear is to be feared. —Anonymous

The man is not escaped who still drags his chain after him. —French

Be a master of your will and a slave to your conscience. —Yiddish

You have nothing to lose but your chains. —Spartacus, Greek rebel

“Freedom” is just another word for “nothing left to lose.” —Janis Joplin

A hero is a man who can change his fear into positive energy. —A.S. Neill

The only thing we have to fear is fear itself. —Franklin Roosevelt

You can jail a revolutionary, but you can't jail a revolution. —Fred Hampton

Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable. —John F. Kennedy

Liberty means responsibility. That is why most men dread it. —George Bernard Shaw

I must not fear. Fear is the mind-killer. Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration. I will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me. And when it has gone past I will turn the inner eye to see its path. Where fear has gone there will be nothing. Only I will remain. —the Bene Gesserit litany against fear, *DUNE*

Fools and Humor

He is a fool who speaks and listens to himself. —Turkish

The wise aspire to know, the foolish to relate. —Muslim

Even a fool can govern if nothing happens. —German

A man can make mistakes, but only an idiot persists in his error. —Cicero

The first stage of folly is to think oneself wise. —Greek

The Errors of a Wise Man make your Rule Rather than the Perfections of a Fool. —William Blake

Beware the man who can not laugh. —Anonymous

Seriousness is the only refuge of the shallow. —Oscar Wilde

The aim of a joke is not to degrade the human being but to remind him that he is already degraded. —George Orwell.

Humor is an affirmation of dignity, a declaration of man's superiority to all that befalls him. —Romain Gary

For the present, the comedy of existence has not yet "become conscious" of itself. For the present, we still live in the age of tragedy, the age of moralities and religions. —Frederich Nietzsche

A satirist is a man who discovers unpleasant things about himself and then says them about other people. —Peter MacArthur

Defining and analyzing humor is a pastime of humorless people. —Robert Benchley

It is easier to be original and foolish than original and wise. —Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz

It is the test of a good religion whether you can joke about it. —G.K. Chesterton

The secret source of humor itself is not joy but sorrow. There is no humor in heaven. —Mark Twain

The one serious conviction that a man should have is that nothing is to be taken too seriously. —Nicholas Murray Butler

The total absence of humor from the Bible is one of the most singular things in all literature. —Alfred North Whitehead

Leadership

Even a fool can govern if nothing happens. —German

If you want to know a man, give him authority. —Montenegrin

The tyrant is only a slave turned inside out. —Egyptian

Ambitions tend to remain undisturbed by realities. —The Preacher, *DUNE*

The five fingers are not equal. —Turkish

To alter and to make better are two different things; much has been altered but little has been made better in the world. —German

The ditch is the master of the field. —Finnish

Honors change manners. —Latin

Shadows follow those who walk in the sun. —German

Do not blame what you permit. —Latin

Even God has His Mother. —Montenegrin

Heroism consists in hanging on one minute longer. —Norwegian

No matter how exotic human civilization becomes, no matter the developments of life and society nor the complexity of the machine/human interface, there always come interludes of lonely power when the course of humankind, the very future of humankind, depends upon the relatively simple actions of single individuals. —from *The Tleiaxu Godbuk*, Frank Herbert, *DUNE* books

It's hard to look up to a leader who keeps his ear to the ground. —James Boren

Use the first moments in study. You may miss many an opportunity for quick victory this way, but the moments of study are insurance of success. Take your time and be sure. —Duncan Idaho, *DUNE*

Practical Simplicity

Man does not eat what he desires, but what he finds. —Turkish

Whoever abandons a thing may live without it. —Egyptian

Too much wax burns down the church. —Portuguese

We can never see the sun rise by looking to the west. —Japanese

The best luxury is simplicity. —Kurdish

It is stupid to make a long introduction to a short story. —Book of Maccabees

To drink pure water go to the spring. —Italian

The more abundantly water gushes from its source, the less the source is esteemed. —Russian

The good ass is sold in his own country. —Maltese

Taste is in variety. —Chilean

The marvelous and the astonishing only surprise for a week. —Amharic

Do not become too hard, lest you get broken. —Ukrainian

Sharp acids corrode their own containers. —Albanian

To an inverted vessel, nothing adheres. —Sikh

If the evil will not leave you, then leave it. —Bosnian

He who embraces much collects little. —French

No hemlock is drunk out of earthenware mugs. —Latin

Pass at a distance from him who chops wood. —Maltese

To be a Druid was to be a Master of the art of living.—Graham Howe, *Mind of the Druid*

To remain whole, be twisted. To become straight, let yourself be bent, To become full, be hollow. —*Tao Te Ching*.

Einstein was a man who could ask immensely simple questions. —Jacob Bronowski

Do not catch everything that swims. —Russian

Concrete is heavy, iron is hard—but the grass will prevail. —Ed Abbey

When logic fails, another tool must be used. —Honored Matres Axiom, *DUNE*

When the bridge is gone the narrowest plank becomes precious. —Hungarian

What cannot be cured must be endured. —Scottish

The function of an ideal is not to be realized but, like that of the North Star, to serve as a guiding point. —Ed Abbey

The number of things we can really make our own is limited. We cannot drink the ocean because we are ever so thirsty. A cup of water from the spring is all we need. —John Burroughs

The largest tree was once a seed ; and the most complex of all our machines was once only an idea. —Graham Howe, *The Mind of the Druid*

The willow submits to the wind and prospers until one day it is many willows—a wall against the wind. This is the willows' purpose. —Rev. Mother Gaius Mohaim, *DUNE*

Here is a man who uses a pearl like that of the marquis of Sui to shoot at a bird at a distance of 10,000 feet. All men will laugh at him. Why? Because the thing he uses is of great value and what he wishes to get is of little. And is not life of more value than the pearl of the marquis of Sui? —Chuang Tzu 28:3

There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at its root. —Henry David Thoreau

The US consumes more energy for air conditioning than the total energy consumption of the 800 million people in China. —Robert O. Anderson

Under tension, a chain will break at its weakest link. That much is predictable. What is difficult is to identify the weakest link before it breaks. The generic we can know, but the specific eludes us. Some chains are designed to break at a certain tension and at a certain link. But a good chain is homogeneous, and no prediction is possible. And because we cannot know which link is weakest, we cannot know precisely how much tension will be needed to break the chain. —

Gregory Bateson, *Mind and Nature*

No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.
—Charles Dickens

Like using a guillotine to cure dandruff. —Clare Boothe Luce

Those who write clearly have readers; those who write obscurely have commentators. —Albert Camus

Confine yourself to observing and you always miss the point of your own life. The object can be stated this way : Live the best life you can. Life is a game whose rules you learn if you leap into it and play it to the hilt. Otherwise, you are caught off balance, continually surprised by the shifting play. Non-players often whine and complain that luck always passes them by. They refuse to see they can create some of their own luck.' —Darwi Odrade, *DUNE*

1st Farmer: "If you had 100 horses, and I had none, would you give me one?"

2nd Farmer: "Yes."

1st: "If you had 100 cows, and I had none, would you give me one?"

2nd: "Yes."

1st: "If you had 2 pigs..."

2nd: "Now cut that out, you know I have two pigs!"

Prayer

If the prayers of dogs were accepted, bones would rain from the sky.
—Turkish

He lingered between two mosques and returned home without having prayed. —Turkish

Call upon the name of God, and ask for what is good for you. —Koran

One hour in doing justice is worth a hundred in prayer. —Koran

If that which is within is not bright, it is useless to pray for that which is without. —Shinto

Call on God for help, but row away from the rocks. —Indian

Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul. —Mohandas Ghandi

Prayer does not change God, but changes him who prays. —Kierkegaard

Lord, give me chastity, but not yet. —Saint Augustine

Priests

A rabbi whose congregation does not want to drive him out of town isn't a rabbi. —Talmud

Clever preacher, short sermon. —Japanese

Us nature mystics got to stick together. —Ed Abbey

There are many preachers who don't hear themselves. —German

When the fox starts preaching, look to your hens. —Basque

To go barefoot does not make the saint. —German

Many of the insights of the saint stem from his experience as a sinner. —Eric Hoffer

Malta would be a delightful place if every priest were a tree. —Maltese

No matter large the mosque is, the Imam preaches what he knows. —Turkish

Have no faith in a priest, even if his turban is covered in gems. —Kurdish

Clergyman: A man who undertakes the management of our spiritual affairs as a method of bettering his temporal ones. —Abrose Bierce

The High Priests of telescopes and cyclotrons keep making pronouncements about happenings on scales too gigantic or dwarfish to be noted by our native sense. —W.H. Auden

It is good that a philosopher should remind himself, now and then, that he is a particle pontificating on infinity. —Will and Ariel Durant

Returning from visiting her friend's church, a woman said, "The minister kept talking about Epistles this morning. I didn't know what they were." Her friend replied, "Oh, my dear, your ignorance is refreshing. I thought everyone knew that the Epistles are the wives of the Apostles." —Anonymous

In the primitive Church there were chalices of wood and priests of gold; in the modern Church there are chalices of gold and priests of wood. —German

If you offer words of the spirit to a man who does not ask for them, you waste the words. But if a man asks for those words and you do not offer them, you waste the man." —*Planet Steward*, Stephen Levine

At a certain dinner, the chairperson, looking around the tables, could not find any clergyman present to ask Grace. So he turned to an actor for the prayer. The actor began "Since there are no clergymen present to say grace, let us thank God...." —Anonymous

Religion

"God"—a word for not thinking. —Ed Abbey

No one but God and I know what is in my heart. —Arabic

Whatever we cannot easily understand we call God; this saves much wear and tear on the brain tissues. —Ed Abbey

Many millions search for God, only to find Him in their hearts. —Sikh

Working is half of religion. —Turkish

A man without religion is like a horse without a bridle. —Latin

All "isms" should be "wasms." —Abbie Hoffman

Most sects are right in what they affirm and wrong in what they deny. —Goethe

Only the deaf and the blind are obliged to believe. —Romanian

No religion without courage. —Arabic

Science investigates; religion interprets. Science give man knowledge which is power; religion gives man wisdom which is control. —Martin Luther King, Jr.

Religion has two children, love and hatred. —Russian

Doctrine is nothing but the skin of truth set up and stuffed. —Henry Beecher, 19th cent

Religion destroys evil, morality merely hides it. —Welsh

God has no religion. —Mahatma Gandhi

Small is his religion who seeks daily for it. —Welsh

All conditioned things are impermanent. Work out your own salvation with diligence. —The Buddha's final words.

The best sermon is to listen to oneself. —German

Just before leaving on an European Crusade, Billy Graham was asked if he expected to bring back any new creeds with him, and if so, would he be able to get them through customs. He replied, "Oh that would be easy enough, since few of the new creeds have any duties attached to them."

The fundamental rule of the spiritual quest—to establish direct contact with the sacred rather than depend on intermediaries, authorities, dogmas, or institutions —*Hymns to an Unknown God* by Sam Keen

All religions will pass, but this will remain: simply sitting in a chair and looking into the distance. —V.V. Rozanov in *Solitaria* 1912

Rituals mend ever again worlds forever breaking apart under the blows of usage and the slashing distinctions of language. —Roy Rappaport

Man is a Religious Animal. Man is the only Religious Animal. He is the only animal that has the True Religion—several of them. He is the only animal that loves his neighbor as himself and cuts his throat if his theology isn't straight. —Mark Twain

Provide a religious organization with wealth and power and it begins to change into a secular agency. —Edmund A. Opitz

Fantastic doctrines (like Christianity or Islam or Marxism) require unanimity of belief. One dissenter casts doubt on the creed of millions. Thus the fear and the hate ; thus the torture chamber, the iron stake, the gallows, the labor camp, the psychiatric ward. —*Planet Steward*, Stephen Levine

Metaphysics is a cobweb the mind weaves around things. —*Planet Steward*, Stephen Levine

Questions are more likely to make good communications than dogmatic statements, which usually only create resistance, shutting the door which they were designed to force open. —Graham Howe, *The Mind of the Druid*

The fact that a believer is happier than a skeptic is no more to the point than the fact that a drunken man is happier than a sober one. —George Benard Shaw

A great deal of intelligence can be invested in ignorance when the need for illusion is deep. —Saul Bellow

I consider myself a Hindu, Christian, Moslem, Jew, Buddhist and Confucian. —Mohandas Ghandi

To become a popular religion, it is only necessary for a superstition to enslave a philosophy. —Dean William R. Inge

Modern man has not ceased to be credulous, the need to believe haunts him. —William James

Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind. —Albert Einstein

"Mystery" is a better word for "God" because it suggests questions, not answers. "Why" is always a good question, the one question that distinguishes us from the other brutes. —Ed Abbey, *Confessions of a Barbarian*

When religion and politics travel in the same cart, the riders believe nothing can stand in their way. Their movements become headlong - faster and faster and faster. They put aside all thought of obstacles and forget that a precipice does not show itself to a man in a blind rush until it's too late. —Bene Gesserit Proverb, *DUNE*

The inspiration of the Bible depends upon the ignorance of the gentlemen who reads it. —Robert Ingersoll

The dogma of the infallibility of the Bible is no more self-evident than is that of the infallibility of the popes. —Thomas Henry Huxley

Don't change beliefs, change the believer. —Werner Erhart

All the religion we have is the ethics of one or another holy person. —Waldo Ralph Emerson

People in general are equally horrified at hearing the Christian religion doubted and at seeing it practiced. —Samuel Butler

The writers against religion, whilst they oppose every system, are wisely careful never to set up any of their own. —Edmund Burke

Treat the other man's faith gently; it is all he has to believe in. —Henry Haskins

A fanatic is one who sticks to his guns whether they're loaded or not. —Franklin Jones

The more fervent opponents of Christian doctrine have often enough shown a temper which, psychologically considered, is indistinguishable from religious zeal. —William James

There is something inherently ridiculous in ecumenical dialogue because in the first stage everyone says "if you would only listen to

me and my confession, we would have the answer." A great many never get beyond this stage, never listen to the other peoples speeches because they are so busy writing their own and, of course, never see how funny it must appear to God or to the secularist in the world who does not see much to choose amongst any of us. —Eugene Carson Blake

All words are plastic. Word images begin to distort in the instant of utterance. Ideas embedded in a language require that particular language for expression. This is the meaning within the word exotic. See how it begins to distort? Translation squirms in the presence of the exotic. Dangers lurk in all systems. Systems incorporate the unexamined beliefs of their creators. Adopt a system, accept its beliefs, and you help strengthen the resistance to change. —The Stolen Journals, *DUNE*

Silence

The silent man is often worth listening to. —Japanese

A listener needs more intelligence than a speaker. —Turkish

Give every man your ear but give few your voice. —William Shakespeare

Silence is the best answer to the stupid. —Arabic

Silence is not only golden, it's seldom misquoted. —American

Example is a mute admonition. —German

Those who know don't talk. Those who talk don't know. —Lao Tzu

Tact is the art of making a point without making an enemy. —Wilson Mizner

Zen is not letting yourself be horsewhipped into words about it, so as you read these words just unfocus your eyes and stare at the blurry page. —Jack Kerouac

Never answer a critic, unless he's right. —Bernard Baruch

You have not converted a man because you have silenced him. —John, Viscount Morley

As I grow older, I pay less attention to what men say. I just watch what they do. —Andrew Carnegie

He who silently reforms himself has done more towards reforming the public than a crowd of noisy, impotent patriots. —J. Lavater

My father gave me these hints on speech-making: "Be sincere, be brief, and be seated." —James Roosevelt

The quieter you become the more you can hear. —Baba Ram Dass

When Abbot Pambo was asked to say a few words to the very important Bishop of Alexandria, who was visiting some of the Desert Fathers, the elder Abbot replied: "If he is not edified by my silence, then there is no hope that he will be edified by my words." —Thomas Merton.

Travel

Unless we change direction, we are likely to end up where we are headed. —Chinese

The dog that trots about finds a bone. —Romanian

Seek knowledge even in China. —Muslim

He who seeks, finds either his God or his misfortune. —Turkish

A journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. —Chinese

There is no bridge without a place on the other side of it. —Welsh

Better to turn back than to lose one's way. —Russian

All men are not like trees; some must travel and cannot keep still. —Romanian

The torch of doubt and chaos, this is what the sage steers by. —
Chuang Tzu

Every road has two directions. —Ukrainian

The stone that remains in one spot becomes covered with moss. —
Lithuanian

To know the road ahead, ask those coming back. —Chinese

Let everyone praise the ford as he finds it. —Welsh

When you have something to do and you find no companions, take
your stick and go slowly. —Albanian

God blesses the seeking, not the finding. —German

When the path is before you, do not look for a road. —Greek

It is not worthwhile to go around the world to count the cats in
Zanzibar. —Henry David Thoreau

Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations. —Vulcans of *Star Trek*

Walk down that lonesome road all by yourself. Don't turn your head
back over your shoulder and only stop to rest yourself when the
silver moon is shining high above the trees. —James Taylor

Truth

He who speaks the truth must have one foot in the stirrup. —Turkish

The eyes believe themselves, the ears believe others. —Egyptian

The story is only half told when one side tells it. —Icelandic

Being a Sufi is to put away what is in your head—imagined truth,
preconceptions, conditioning—and to face what may happened to
you. —Abu Said.

He uses statistics as a drunken man uses lamp-posts, for support
rather than illumination. —Andrew Lang.

All great truths begin as blasphemies. —George Bernard Shaw

The sky is not less blue because the blind man does not see it. —
Danish

All say the lamb is good, but each likes a different way of cooking it.
—Chinese

Don't deny the truth even for the sake of your friend. —Hungarian

An old error has more friends than a new truth. —German

The greatest truths are the simplest; and so are the greatest men. —
John Hare 19th cent.

He who dies for truth finds holy ground everywhere for his grave. —
German

There is no disputing a proverb, a fool, and a truth. —Russian

Hope clouds observation. —Rev. Mother Gaus Helen Mohaim,
DUNE

The unclouded eye is better, no matter what it sees. —Rev. Mother
Odrade, *DUNE*

The truth is so simple that it is regarded as pretentious banality. —
Dag Hammarskjold

The opposite of a correct statement is a false statement. But the
opposite of a profound truth may well be another profound truth. —
Niels Bohr

When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean—neither
more nor less. —Lewis Carroll

Facts do not cease to exist because they are ignored. —Aldous Huxley

There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics. —Ben-
jamin Disraeli

Then there is the man who drowned crossing a stream with an aver-
age depth of six inches. —W.I.E. Gates

Natives who beat drums to drive off evil spirits are objects of scorn to
smart Americans who blow horns to break up traffic jams. —Mary
Ellen Kelly

None attains to the Degree of Truth until a thousand honest people
have testified that he is a heretic. —Junaid of Baghdad, Sufi

Truth suffers from too much analysis. —Ancient Fremen Saying,
DUNE

Wisdom

A narrow place is large to the narrow-minded. —Turkemestan

The supposition of the wise man is better than the certainty of the
ignorant. —Moorish

The best preacher is the heart; the best teacher is time; the best book
is the world; the best friend is God. —Talmud

The believer is happy, the doubter wise. —Greek Proverb

A man should never be ashamed to admit he has been wrong, which
is but to say, in other words, that he is wiser today than he was
yesterday. —Jonathan Swift

Only the shallow know themselves. —Oscar Wilde

For of the wise man as of the fool there is no enduring remem-
brance, seeing that in the days to come all will have been long forgot-
ten. How the wise man dies just like the fool! For all is vanity and a
striving after the wind. —Ecclesiastes.

The father of wisdom is memory; his mother is reflection. —Welsh

Ask the opinion of an older one and a younger one than thyself, and
return to thine own opinion. —Syrian

In much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge
increaseth sorrow. —Ecclesiastes

Doubt is not a pleasant mental state, but certainty is a ridiculous
one. —Voltaire

Be wiser than other people, if you can, but do not tell them so. —
Lord Chesterfield

A man who stands behind a wall can see nothing else. —Japanese

The wise make more use of their enemies than fools of their friends.
—German

Each of us finds his unique vehicle for sharing with others his bit of
wisdom. —Baba Ram Dass

A man begins cutting his wisdom teeth the first time he bites off
more than he can chew. —Herb Caen

Remember your philosopher's doubts... Beware! The mind of the
believer stagnates. It fails to grow outward into an unlimited, infinite
universe. —Rev. Mother Taraza, *DUNE*

CONCLUSION TO THE GREEN BOOKS?

I hope that you have enjoyed them.

Please feel free to seek more selections to add to this collection.

