



Think Abouts 05

**Condensed and annotated
by
Jackson Koller**



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Introduction

Welcome to this collection, one of several in a series. . .

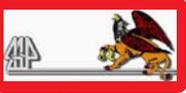
Mostly about life, and living, but some on Nursing, Religion, etc., no jokes here though. These again are mostly from the email circuit, passed around until their origins are lost in the paperless trail!

I hope that they may cause you to pause and consider them as they did for me.

If I feel strongly enough about any essay my comments will follow it!

In thoughts we live,

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Jackson Koller".



3 red marbles

To ponder...

During the waning years of the depression in a small south eastern Idaho community, I used to stop by Brother Miller's roadside stand for farm-fresh produce as the season made it available.

Food and money were still extremely scarce and bartering was used, extensively. One particular day Brother Miller was bagging some new potatoes for me. I noticed a small boy, delicate of bone and feature, ragged but clean, hungrily appraising a basket of freshly picked green peas.

I paid for my potatoes but was also drawn to the display of fresh green peas.

I am a pushover for creamed peas and new potatoes. Pondering the peas, I couldn't help overhearing the conversation between Brother Miller and the ragged boy next to me.

"Hello Barry, how are you today?"

"H'lo, Mr. Miller. Fine, thank ya. Jus' admirin' them peas.....sure look good."

"They are good, Barry. How's your Ma?"

"Fine. Gittin' stronger alla' time."

"Good. Anything I can help you with?"

"No, Sir. Jus' admirin' them peas."

"Would you like to take some home?"

"No, Sir. Got nuthin' to pay for 'em with."

"Well, what have you to trade me for some of those peas?"

"All I got's my prize marble here."

"Is that right? Let me see it."

"Here 'tis. She's a dandy."

"I can see that. Hmmmm, only thing is this one is blue and I sort of go for red. Do you have a red one like this at home?" "Not 'zackleybut, almost."

"Tell you what. Take this sack of peas home with you and next trip this way let me look at that red marble." "Sure will. Thanks, Mr. Miller."

Mrs. Miller, who had been standing nearby, came over to help me.

With a smile she said: "There are two other boys like him in our community, all three are in very poor circumstances. Jim just loves to bargain with them for peas, apples, tomatoes or whatever. When they come back with their red marbles, and they always do, he decides he doesn't like red after all and he sends them home with a bag of produce for a green marble or an orange one, perhaps."

I left the stand, smiling to myself, impressed with this man. A short time later I moved to Utah but I never forgot the story of this man, the boys and their bartering. Several years went by each more rapid than the previous one. Just recently I had occasion to visit some old friends in that Idaho community and while I was there learned that Brother Miller had died. They were having his viewing that evening and knowing my friends wanted to go, I agreed to accompany them. Upon our arrival at the mortuary we fell into line to meet the relatives of the deceased and to offer whatever words of comfort we could.



Ahead of us in line were three young men.

One was in an army uniform and the other two wore nice haircuts, dark suits and white shirts ... very professional looking.

They approached Mrs. Miller, standing smiling and composed, by her husband's casket. Each of the young men hugged her, kissed her on the cheek, spoke briefly with her and moved on to the casket. Her misty light blue eyes followed them as, one by one, each young man stopped briefly and placed his own warm hand over the cold pale hand in the casket. Each left the mortuary, awkwardly, wiping his eyes.

Our turn came to meet Mrs. Miller. I told her who I was and mentioned the story she had told me about the marbles. Eyes glistening she took my hand and led me to the casket. "Those three young men, that just left, were the boys I told you about. They just told me how they appreciated the things Jim 'traded' them. Now, at last, when Jim could not change his mind about color or size...they came to pay their debt."

"We've never had a great deal of the wealth of this world," she confided, "but, right now, Jim would consider himself the richest man in Idaho."

With loving gentleness she lifted the lifeless fingers of her deceased husband. Resting underneath were three, magnificently shiny, red marbles.

We will not be remembered by our words, but by our kind deeds.

It is not what we obtain or gain in this world that matters in the end, it all comes down to what we leave behind, did we do our best to leave a mark on the world.

It is not whether we are noticed while we are here, but whether we are noticed when we are gone that really matters...

What kind of mark are you making?

A CHINESE GOOD LUCK TANTRA TOTEM

ONE. Give people more than they expect and do it cheerfully.

TWO. Marry a man/woman you love to talk to. As you get older, their conversational skills will be as important as any other.

THREE. Don't believe all you hear, spend all you have or sleep all you want.

FOUR. When you say, "I love you", mean it.

FIVE. When you say, "I'm sorry", look the person in the eye.

SIX. Be engaged at least six months before you get married.

SEVEN. Believe in love at first sight.

EIGHT. Never laugh at anyone's dreams. People who don't have dreams don't have much.



NINE. Love deeply and passionately. You might get hurt but it's the only way to live life completely.

TEN. In disagreements, fight fairly. No name calling.

ELEVEN. Don't judge people by their relatives.

TWELVE. Talk slowly but think quickly.

THIRTEEN. When someone asks you a question you don't want to answer, smile and ask, "Why do you want to know?"

FOURTEEN. Remember that great love and great achievements involve great risk.

FIFTEEN. Say "bless you" when you hear someone sneeze.

SIXTEEN. When you lose, don't lose the lesson.

SEVENTEEN. Remember the three R's: Respect for self; Respect for others; Responsibility for all your actions.

EIGHTEEN. Don't let a little dispute injure a great friendship.

NINETEEN. When you realize you've made a mistake, take immediate steps to correct it.

TWENTY. Smile when picking up the phone. The caller will hear it in your voice.

TWENTY ONE. Spend some time alone.

A Poem of Friendship

DRINKING FROM MY SAUCER

I've never made a fortune and it's probably too late now.
But I don't worry about that much, I'm happy anyhow.

And as I go along life's way, I'm reaping better than I sowed.
I'm drinking from my saucer, 'Cause my cup has overflowed.

Haven't got a lot of riches, and sometimes the going's tough.
But I've got loving ones around me, and that makes me rich enough.

I thank God for his blessings, and the mercies He's bestowed.
I'm drinking from my saucer, 'cause my cup has overflowed.



O, Remember times when things went wrong, My faith wore somewhat thin.
But all at once the dark clouds broke, and sun peeped through again.

So Lord, help me not to gripe about the tough rows that I've hoed.
I'm drinking from my saucer, 'Cause my cup has overflowed.

If God gives me strength and courage, when the way grows steep and rough.

I'll not ask for other blessings, I'm already blessed enough.

And may I never be too busy, to help others bear their loads.
Then I'll keep drinking from my saucer, 'Cause my cup has overflowed.

ALL GOOD THINGS

He was in the first third grade class I taught at Saint Mary's School in Morris, Minn. All 34 of my students were dear to me, but Mark Eklund was one in a million. Very neat in appearance, but had that happy-to-be-alive attitude that made even his occasional mischievousness delightful, Mark talked incessantly. I had to remind him again and again that talking without permission was not acceptable. What impressed me so much, though, was his sincere response every time I had to correct him for misbehaving "Thank you for correcting me, Sister!"

I didn't know what to make of it at first, but before long I became accustomed to hearing it many times a day.

One morning my patience was growing thin when Mark talked once too often, and then I made a novice-teacher's mistake. I looked at Mark and said, "If you say one more word, I am going to tape your mouth shut!"

It wasn't ten seconds later when Chuck blurted out, "Mark is talking again."

I hadn't asked any of the students to help me watch Mark, but since I had stated the punishment in front of the class, I had to act on it.

I remember the scene as if it had occurred this morning. I walked to my desk, very deliberately opened my drawer and took out a roll of masking tape.

Without saying a word, I proceeded to Mark's desk, tore off two pieces of tape and made a big X with them over his mouth. I then returned to the front of the room.

As I glanced at Mark to see how he was doing, he winked at me. That did it!!

I started laughing. The class cheered as I walked back to Mark's desk, removed the tape, and shrugged my shoulders. His first words were, "Thank you for correcting me, Sister."

At the end of the year, I was asked to teach junior-high math. The years flew by, and before I knew it Mark was in my classroom again. He was more handsome than ever and just as polite. Since he had to listen carefully to my instruction in the "new math," he did not talk as much in ninth grade as he had in third. One Friday, things just didn't feel right.

We had worked hard on a new concept all week, and I sensed that the students were frowning, frustrated with themselves - and edgy with one another.



I had to stop this crankiness before it got out of hand. So I asked them to list the names of the other students in the room on two sheets of paper, leaving a space between each name. Then I told them to think of the nicest thing they could say about each of their classmates and write it down. It took the remainder of the class period to finish their assignment, and as the students left the room, each one handed me the papers. Charlie smiled.

Mark said, "Thank you for teaching me, Sister. Have a good weekend."

That Saturday, I wrote down the name of each student on a separate sheet of paper, and I listed what everyone else had said about that individual.

On Monday I gave each student his or her list. Before long, the entire class was smiling. "Really?" I heard whispered. "I never knew that meant anything to anyone!" "I didn't know others liked me so much." No one ever mentioned those papers in class again. I never knew if they discussed them after class or with their parents, but it didn't matter.

The exercise had accomplished its purpose. The students were happy with themselves and one another again.

That group of students moved on. Several years later, after I returned from vacation, my parents met me at the airport. As we were driving home, Mother asked me the usual questions about the trip - the weather, my experiences in general. There was a lull in the conversation.

Mother gave Dad a sideways glance and simply says, "Dad?" My father cleared his throat as he usually did before something important. "The Eklunds called last night," he began. "Really?" I said. "I haven't heard from them in years. I wonder how Mark is."

Dad responded quietly. "Mark was killed in Vietnam," he said. "The funeral is tomorrow, and his parents would like it if you could attend."

To this day I can still point to the exact spot on I-494 where Dad told me about Mark.

I had never seen a serviceman in a military coffin before. Mark looked so handsome, so mature. All I could think at that moment was, Mark I would give all the masking tape in the world if only you would talk to me.

The church was packed with Mark's friends. Chuck's sister sang "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." Why did it have to rain on the day of the funeral? It was difficult enough at the graveside. The pastor said the usual prayers, and the bugler played taps. One by one those who loved Mark took a last walk by the coffin and sprinkled it with holy water.

I was the last one to bless the coffin. As I stood there, one of the soldiers who acted as pallbearer came up to me. "Were you Mark's math teacher?" He asked. I nodded as I continued to stare at the coffin.

"Mark talked about you a lot," he said.

After the funeral, most of Mark's former classmates headed to Chuck's farmhouse for lunch. Mark's mother and father were there, obviously waiting for me. "We want to show you something," his father said, taking a wallet out of his pocket. "They found this on Mark when he was killed. We thought you might recognize it."

Opening the billfold, he carefully removed two worn pieces of notebook paper that had obviously been taped, folded and refolded many times. I knew



without looking that the papers were the ones on which I had listed all the good things each of Mark's classmates had said about him.

"Thank you so much for doing that," Mark's mother said. "As you can see, Mark treasured it."

Mark's classmates started to gather around us. Charlie smiled rather sheepishly and said, "I still have my list. It's in the top drawer of my desk at home." Chuck's wife said, "Chuck asked me to put his in our wedding album."

"I have mine too," Marilyn said. "It's in my diary." Then Vicki, another classmate, reached into her pocketbook, took out her wallet and showed her worn and frazzled list to the group. "I carry this with me at all times," Vicki said without batting an eyelash. "I think we all saved our lists."

That's when I finally sat down and cried. I cried for Mark and for all his friends who would never see him again.

THE END

Written by: Sister Helen P. Mrosia

The purpose of this letter is to encourage everyone to compliment the people you love and care about. We often tend to forget the importance of showing our affections and love. Sometimes the smallest of things, could mean the most to another. I am asking you, to please send this letter around and spread the message and encouragement, to express your love and caring by complementing and being open with communication.

The density of people in society is so thick that we forget that life will end one day. And we don't know when that one day will be. So please, I beg of you, to tell the people you love and care for, that they are special and important. Tell them, before it is too late. If you do not send it, you will have, once again passed up the opportunity to do something loving and beautiful and continue the trend that gives you problems in your relationships.

If you've received this it is because someone cares for you and it means there is probably at least someone for whom you care. If you're too busy to take the few minutes that it would take right now to forward this to ten people, would it be the first time you didn't do that little thing that would make a difference in your relationships?

An Interesting Prayer

Thought you might enjoy this interesting prayer given in Kansas at the opening session of their Senate. It seems prayer still upsets some people.

When Minister Joe Wright was asked to open the new session of the Kansas Senate, everyone was expecting the usual generalities, but this is what they heard:

Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask your forgiveness and to seek your direction and guidance. We know Your Word says, "Woe to those who call evil good," but that is exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and reversed our values. We confess that:

We have ridiculed the absolute truth of Your Word and called it Pluralism.



We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery.

We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare.

We have killed our unborn and called it choice.

We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable.

We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self-esteem.

We have abused power and called it politics.

We have coveted our neighbor's possessions and called it ambition.

We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression.

We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightenment.

Search us, Oh, God, and know our hearts today; cleanse us from every sin and set us free.

Guide and bless these men and women who have been sent: to direct us to the center of Your will and to openly ask these things in the name of Your Son, the living Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen!

The response was immediate. A number of legislators walked out during the prayer in protest.

In 6 short weeks, Central Christian Church, where Rev. Wright is pastor, logged more than 5,000 phone calls with only 47 of those calls responding negatively. The church is now receiving international requests for copies of this prayer from India, Africa, and Korea.

Commentator Paul Harvey aired this prayer on his radio program, "The Rest of the Story," and received a larger response to this program than any other he has ever aired. With the Lord's help, may this prayer sweep over our nation and wholeheartedly become our desire so that we again can be called "one nation under God."

I have noticed one quality of "the truth," (the legislators walking out) the closer you get to the mark the more the guilty resent it.



AN IRISH FRIENDSHIP WISH

May there always be work for your hands to do;
 May your purse always hold a coin or two;
 May the sun always shine on your windowpane;
 May a rainbow be certain to follow each rain;
 May the hand of a friend always be near you;
 May God fill your heart with gladness to cheer you.

Angels thinking of you!

I found a penny today
 Just lying on the ground,
 But it's not just a penny
 This little coin I've found.

Found pennies come from heaven
 That's what my Grandpa told me,
 He said Angels toss them down
 Oh, how I loved that story.

He said when an Angel misses you
 They toss a penny down,
 Sometimes just to cheer you up
 To make a smile out of your frown

So don't pass by that penny
 When you're feeling blue,
 It may be a penny from heaven
 That an Angel's tossed to you.

Pass this on to the people who you care
 about and who you feel are angels to you.
 An angel is now watching over you.

Life is great, so SMILE

Appreciate this moment...

I know this has been around before, but I think we need to be reminded of how fragile every moment we have can be...

In memory of all those who perished this morning; the passengers and the pilots on the United Air and AA flights, the workers in the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and all the innocent bystanders.

Our prayers go out to the friends and families of the deceased.



IF I KNEW

If I knew it would be the last time that
I'd see you fall asleep,
I would tuck you in more tightly and
pray the Lord, your soul to keep.

If I knew it would be the last time that
I see you walk out the door, I
would give you a hug and kiss
and call you back for one more.

If I knew it would be the last time that
I'd hear your voice lifted up in praise,
I would video tape each action and word, so I
could play them back day after day.

If I knew it would be the last time that
I could spare an extra minute to stop
and say I love you, instead of assuming
you would KNOW I do.

If I knew it would be the last time that
I would be there to share your day,
Well I'm sure you'll have so many more, so I can let
just this one slip away.

For surely there's always tomorrow to make up for an
oversight, and we always get a second chance
to make everything just right.

There will always be another day to say,
I love you, and certainly
there's another chance to say
"Is there anything I can do?"

But just in case I might be wrong, and today is all I
get, I'd like to say how much I love you and I hope we never forget.
Tomorrow is not promised to anyone, young or old alike,
And today may be the
last chance you get to hold your loved one tight.

So if you're waiting for tomorrow, why not do it
today? For if tomorrow never comes, you'll surely regret the day, that you
didn't take that extra time for a smile, a hug, or a kiss and you were too
busy to grant someone, what turned out to be their one last wish. So hold
your loved ones close today, and whisper in their ear, tell them how much



you love them and that you'll always hold them dear.

Take time to say "I'm sorry," "Please forgive me" ,"
Thank you", "of course I have time for your today"
And if tomorrow never comes, you'll have no regrets
about today.

Have a wonderfully blessed day!

ASAP

Ever wonder about the abbreviation A.S.A.P.? Generally we think of it in terms of even more hurry and stress in our lives. Maybe if we think of this abbreviation in a different manner, we will begin to find a new way to deal with those rough days along the way.

A.S.A.P.

There's work to do, deadlines to meet;
You've got no time to spare,
But as you hurry and scurry—
ASAP...ALWAYS SAY A PRAYER.

In the midst of family chaos,
"Quality time" is rare.
Do your best, let God do the rest—
ASAP...ALWAYS SAY A PRAYER.

It may seem like your worries
Are more than you can bare.
Slow down and take a breather—
ASAP...ALWAYS SAY A PRAYER.

God knows how stressful life is;
He wants to ease our cares,
And he'll respond to all your needs—
ASAP...ALWAYS SAY A PRAYER.

Today I'm saying a little prayer
that God will smile on you and
send you all the special blessings
you deserve.

ASAP

ATTITUDE

The 92-year-old, petite, well-poised and proud lady, who is fully dressed each morning by eight o'clock, with her hair fashionably coifed and makeup perfectly applied, even though she is legally blind, moved to a nursing home today. Her husband of 70 years recently passed away, making the move necessary.

After many hours of waiting patiently in the lobby of the nursing home, she smiled sweetly when told her room was ready. As she maneuvered her walker to the elevator, I provided a visual description of her tiny room, including the eyelet sheets that had been hung on her window. "I love it," she stated with the enthusiasm of an eight-year-old having just been presented with a new puppy.

"Mrs. Jones, you haven't seen the room just wait."

"That doesn't have anything to do with it," she replied.

"Happiness is something you decide on ahead of time. Whether I like my room or not doesn't depend on how the furniture is arranged...it's how I arrange my mind. I already decided to love it ..."

"It's a decision I make every morning when I wake up. I have a choice; I can spend the day in bed recounting the difficulty I have with the parts of my body that no longer work, or get out of bed and be thankful for the ones that do. Each day is a gift, and as long as my eyes open I'll focus on the new day and all the happy memories I've stored away ... just for this time in my life. Old age is like a bank account ... you withdraw from what you've put in .. So, my advice to you would be to deposit a lot of happiness in the bank account of memories Thank you for your part in filling my Memory bank. I am still depositing.

Remember the five simple rules to be happy:

1. Free your heart from hatred.
2. Free your mind from worries.
3. Live simply.
4. Give more.
5. Expect less.

This is one of the most important steps to a happy life: no matter what is going on it is effected by YOUR Attitude!

The idiom "self-fulfilling prophecy" is a truism, "things" tend to work themselves out the way you think they will, good-or-bad, the more you think of the way it's going to be, the more likely that's the way they'll turn out!

FAMILY

Are you aware that if we died tomorrow, the company that we are working for could easily replace us in a matter of days. But the family we left behind will feel the loss for the rest of their lives.

And come to think of it, we pour ourselves more into work than into our own family, an unwise investment indeed, don't you think?

So what is behind the story?

Do you know what the word FAMILY means?

FAMILY = (F)ATHER (A)ND (M)OTHER (I) (L)OVE (Y)OU



If One Day...

If one day you feel like crying...Call me.
I don't promise that
I will make you laugh,
But I can cry with you.

If one day you want to run away-
Don't be afraid to call me.
I don't promise to ask you to stop...
But I can run with you.

If one day you don't want to
listen to anyone...Call me.
I promise to be there for you.
And I promise to be very quiet.

But if one day you call...
And there is no answer...
Come fast to see me.
Maybe I need you.

If I ever ignored you.
I'm Sorry...

If I ever made you feel bad or put you down.
I'm Sorry...

If I ever thought I was bigger or better than you.
I Luv You...

Don't ever forget that! Through bad times and good,
I'll always be here for you.

I am Sorry...
For everything wrong I've ever done.

I'm writing this because what if tomorrow
never comes?

What if i never get to say good-bye
or give u a BIG hug?

What if I never get to say I'm sorry
or I love you?

Because what if tomorrow never comes?

I LOVE YOU!



Bad American

**I Am Your Worst Nightmare. I am a BAD American.
I am George Carlin.**

I believe the money I make belongs to me and my family, not some mid-level governmental functionary with a bad comb-over who wants to give it away to crack addicts squirting out babies.

I think owning a gun doesn't make you a killer.

I believe it's called the Boy Scouts for a reason.

I don't think being a minority makes you noble or victimized.

I believe that if you are selling me a Big Mac, you'd better do it in English.

I don't use the excuse "it's for the children" as a shield for unpopular opinions or actions.

I think fireworks should be legal on the 4th of July.

I think that being a student doesn't give you any more enlightenment than working at Blockbuster. In fact, if your parents are footing the bill to put you through 4-7 years of college, you haven't begun to be enlightened.

I believe everyone has a right to pray to his or her God.

My heroes are John Wayne, the Simpsons, and whoever canceled Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman.

I don't hate the rich. I don't pity the poor.

I know wrestling is fake and I don't waste my time arguing about it.

I think global warming is a big lie. Where are all those experts now, when I am freezing my ass through a long winter?

I've never owned a slave, or was a slave, I didn't wander forty years in the desert after getting chased out of Egypt, I haven't burned any witches or been persecuted by the Turks and neither have you, so shut-up already.

I want to know which church is it exactly where the Reverend Jesse Jackson preaches. And where does he get his money. And why is he always part of the problem and not the solution.

I think the cops have every right to shoot your sorry ass if you're running from them.



I also think they have the right to pull you over if you are breaking the law, regardless of what color you are.

I think if you are too stupid to know how a ballot works, I don't want you deciding who should be running the most powerful nation the world for the next four years.

I hate those guys standing in the intersections trying to sell me crap or trying to guilt me into making 'donations' to their cause. These people should be targets.

I think if you are in the passing lane, and not passing, your license should be revoked, and you should be forced to ride the bus until you promise to never delay the rest of us again.

I think beef jerky could quite possibly be the perfect food.

I believe that it doesn't take a village to raise a child, it takes two parents.

I think tattoos and piercing are fine if you want them, but please don't pretend they are a political statement.

I think Dr. Seuss was a genius.

I'm neither angry nor disenfranchised, no matter how desperately the mainstream media would like the world to believe otherwise.

If that makes me a BAD American, then yes, I'm a BAD American.

If you too are a BAD American please forward this to everyone you know.

We need our country back!

Alright, George is a comedian, some of these could be part of his routine and (sadly) would get laughs from the audience.

Some are very hard-line, but sometimes that's the way you have to be to be heard. And some I don't necessarily agree with, but, I do agree with the main sentiment of: if you have a chip on your shoulder and I didn't put it there, please kindly remove it and quit treating me as though I did put it there!

There is one woman at work that I call very well-balanced...because she has a chip on both shoulders!

Get over it, put your chips aside and get on with living not wallowing in the past. They're not attractive, and make you the true Ugly American!



Baking A Cake

A little boy is telling his Grandma how “everything” is going wrong: School, family problems, severe health problems, etc.

Meanwhile, Grandma is baking a cake.

She asks her grandson if he would like a snack, which, of course, he does.

“Here, have some cooking oil.” *”Yuck” says the boy.

“How about a couple raw eggs? “ “Gross, Grandma!”

“Would you like some flour then? Or maybe baking soda?” “Grandma, those are all yucky!”

To which Grandma replies: “Yes, all those things seem bad all by themselves. But when they are put together in the right way, they make a wonderfully delicious cake! God works the same way. Many times we wonder why he would let us go through such bad and difficult times. But God knows that when He puts these things all in His order, they always work for good! We just have to trust Him and, eventually, they will all make something wonderful!” God is Crazy About You. He sends you flowers every spring and a sunrise every morning. Whenever you want to talk, He’ll listen. He can live anywhere in the universe, and He chose your heart.

And that’s the way life is! Bad things happen to good people, it’s what you do with the bad things that makes or breaks your cake.

Beautiful

This was written by the C.E.O. of Coca-Cola, Brian G. Dyson. It was used as Georgia Tech’s Commencement Address.

Imagine life as a game in which you are juggling some five balls in the air. You name them: Work - Family - Health - Friends - Spirit, and you’re keeping all of these in the air. You will soon understand that work is a rubber ball. If you drop it, it will bounce back. But, the other four balls - family, health, friends, and spirit - are made of glass. If you drop one of these, they will be irrevocably scuffed, marked, nicked, damaged or even shattered. They will never be the same. You must understand that and strive for balance in your life. How?

1. Don’t undermine your worth by comparing yourself with others. It is because we are different that each of us is special.
2. Don’t set your goals by what other people deem important. Only know what is best for you.
3. Don’t take for granted the things closest to your heart. Cling to them as you would your life, for without them, life is meaningless.
4. Don’t let your life slip through your fingers by living in the past or for the future. By living your life one day at a time, you live ALL the days of your life.
5. Don’t give up when you still have something to give. Nothing is really over until the moment you stop trying.
6. Don’t be afraid to admit that you are less than perfect. It is this fragile thread that binds us together.



7. Don't be afraid to encounter risks. It is by taking chances that we learn how to be brave.
8. Don't shut love out of your life by saying it's impossible to find. The quickest way to receive love is to give; the fastest way to lose love is to hold it too tightly; and the best way to keep love is to give it wings.
9. Don't run through life so fast that you forget not only where you've been, but also where you are going.
10. Don't forget that a person's greatest emotional need is to feel appreciated.
11. Don't be afraid to learn. Knowledge is weightless, a treasure you can always carry easily.
12. Don't use time or words carelessly. Neither can be retrieved.

Life is not a race, but a journey to be savored each step of the way.

Beautiful is woman.....

The following was written by Audrey Hepburn regarding "Beauty Tips".

For attractive lips,
Speak words of kindness.

For lovely eyes,
Seek out the good in people.

For beautiful hair,
Let a child run his or her fingers through it once a day.

For poise,
Walk with the knowledge you'll never walk alone.

The beauty of a woman is not in the clothes she wears,
The figure that she carries, or the way she combs her hair.

The beauty of a woman must be seen from in her eyes,
Because that is the doorway to her heart, the place where love resides.

The beauty of a woman is not in a facial mole,
But true beauty in a woman is reflected in her soul.

It is the caring that she lovingly gives, the passion that she shows,
And the beauty of a woman with passing years-only grows!

Ditto, ditto, ditto...



When God decides to deliver a message to humanity, He WILL NOT use, as His messenger, a person on cable TV with a bad hairdo.

Before it's too late

I went into my classroom
Ready for another year at school.
I didn't want the work,
Just wanted to hang and be cool.

I had on new clothes,
New sneakers on my feet.
I was there for class on time
Went to the back and took my seat.

Yeah, I'm moving up.

I'm already grown.
Soon I'll be graduating
And out on my own.

I talked to some of my friends.
We were all having fun.
Said some things I shouldn't have said,
Did stuff I shouldn't have done.

I knew I was different.
I felt God touch my heart.
I knew I should set a standard,
But then I'd be set apart.

Walking to the bus,
I was not looking for strength.
I heard the car tires screeching,
But now it's too late.

I'm standing in this room
And I can see the heavenly gate.
Oh no! I never prayed.
I thought I had time to get it straight.

An angel walked to me.
He had a book in his hand.
I knew it was the Book of Life.
When would this dream end?

I told him my name
And he began to look.



Then he looked at me sadly and said
Your name is not in this book.

Angel, this is a dream.
No, I can't be dead!
He closed the book and turned away.
He whispered - You cannot proceed ahead.

No...no this can't be real.
Angel, you can't turn me away.
Let me talk to God.
Maybe He'll let me stay.

He led me to the gate.
Jesus came to me,
He did not let me in but said,
Beloved what is your need?

Jesus, I cried, please
Don't cast me away from you.
Tears ran down His face as He said,
You knew what you needed to do.

Lord, please I'm young.
I never thought I would die.
I thought I'd have plenty of time.
Death caught me by surprise.

Lord, I went to church.
Please Jesus, I believe.
He said you would not accept me.
My love you would not receive.

Lord, there were too many hypocrites.
They weren't being true.
He took a step back and asked
What does that have to do with you?

Lord, my family claimed to be saved,
They weren't real. You know.
He said, I died for you.
Now I have to go.

I fell to my knees crying to Him.
Lord, I planned to be real tomorrow.
I couldn't, make Him understand.
I had never-felt such sorrow.



Then it hit me hard, I said
 Lord, where will I go?
 He looked into my eyes and said,
 My child you already know.

Please Jesus, I begged
 The place is so hot.
 It seemed to trouble and grieve Him.
 He whispered, DEPART FROM ME, I KNOW YOU NOT.

Lord, you're supposed to be love.
 How can you send me to damnation?
 He replied, With your mouth you said you loved me.
 But each day you rejected my salvation.

With that in an instant,
 Day turned into night.
 I never knew such torture could be.
 Now too late, I know the Bible is right.

If I can tell you anything,
 Hell has no age.
 It is a place of torture,
 Separated from God and full of rage.

You know I thought it was funny-a joke,
 But this one thing is true.
 If you never accept Jesus Christ...
 You will never see Heaven.

So please ask Him into your heart.
 Please Send this to everyone you love.
 (((which should be everybody)))

Believe...

I believe-
 that our background and circumstances
 may have influenced who we are,
 but we are responsible for who we become.

I believe-
 that no matter how good a friend is,
 they're going to hurt you every once in a
 while and you must forgive them for that.

I believe-
 that just because someone doesn't love
 you the way you want them to doesn't
 mean they don't love you with all they have.



**I believe-
that true friendship continues to grow,
even over the longest distance.**

Same goes for true love.

**I believe-
that it's taking me a long time
to become the person I want to be.**

**I believe-
that you should always leave loved ones
with loving words. It may be the last
time you see them.**

**I believe-
that you can keep going, long after you can't.**

**I believe-
that we are responsible for what we do,
no matter how we feel.**

**I believe-
that either you control your attitude
or it controls you.**

**I believe-
that heroes are the people who do what has to be done
when it needs to be done,
regardless of the consequences.**

**I believe-
that money is a lousy way of keeping score.**

**I believe-
that my best friend and I can do anything
or nothing and have the best time.**

**I believe-
that sometimes the people you expect
to kick you when you're down,
will be the ones to help you get back up.**

**I believe-
that sometimes when I'm angry
I have the right to be angry,
but that doesn't give me the right to be cruel.**

**I believe-
that maturity has more to do with
what types of experiences you've had
and what you've learned from them
and less to do with how many
birthdays you've celebrated.**

**I believe-
that it isn't always enough to be
forgiven by others. Sometimes you
have to learn to forgive yourself.**

**I believe-
that no matter how bad your heart is broken**



the world doesn't stop for your grief.

I believe-

that just because two people argue,
it doesn't mean they don't love each other

And just because they don't argue,
it doesn't mean they do.

I believe-

that you shouldn't be so eager to find out a secret.

It could change your life forever.

I believe-

that two people can look at the exact
same thing and see something totally different.

I believe-

that your life can be changed in a matter of
hours by people who don't even know you.

I believe-

that even when you think you have no more
to give, when a friend cries out to you
you will find the strength to help.

I believe-

that credentials on the wall
do not make you a decent human being.

I believe-

that the people you care about most in life
are taken from you too soon.

ATTITUDE ... We become what we give ourselves the power to be.

Center of the Bible...

Thought this was very interesting.

This is pretty strange or odd how it worked out this way. Even if you are not religious you should read this.

What is the shortest chapter in the Bible? Answer -Psalms 117

What is the longest chapter in the Bible? Answer -Psalms 119

Which chapter is in the center of the Bible? Answer - Psalms 118

Fact: There are 594 chapters before Psalms 118. And There are 594 chapters after Psalms 118. Add these numbers up and you get 1188

What is the center verse in the Bible? Answer -Psalms 118:8

Does this verse say something significant about God's perfect will for our lives? The next time someone says they would like to find God's perfect will for their lives and that they want to be in the center of His will, just send them to the center of His Word!

Psalms 118:8 (NKJV)

"It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man."

Now isn't that odd how this worked out (or was God in the center of it)?



Microscopic

The electron microscope has led us to look at the sub atomic universe. Did you know that one single snowflake in a snowstorm with millions of other snowflakes is the equivalent of twenty billion electrons? Scientists have learned that the tiny world of one single cell is as wondrous as the man himself.

We can learn a great deal about God just by looking at nature around us. He has clearly spoken through His universe, leaving men without any excuse to not believe. The Psalmist says in Psalm 14:1, "The fool hath said in his heart 'There is no God.'"

I pray that the beauty of God's creation speaks to our hearts and confirms His presence.

Shorts

"All I have seen teaches me to trust the Creator for all I have not seen." - Emerson

What is the order of the priorities in your life? My pastor gave us a quick way to remember: J - O - Y

J - Jesus

O - Others

Y - Yourself

"Put others before yourself, and you can become a leader among men." - Unknown

"If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done. Be sure to stay busy and plant a variety of crops, for you never know which will grow - perhaps they all will." Ecclesiastes 11:4,6

"No matter what your lot in life, build something on it." - Unknown

"You can't build your reputation on what you're GOING to do." - Henry Ford

"Wisdom is a tree of life to those who embrace her; happy are those who hold her tightly." Proverbs 3:18

"Happiness is inward, and not outward; and so, it does not depend on what we have, but on what we are." - Henry Van Dyke

"Never miss an opportunity to make others happy; even if you have to leave them alone in order to do it." - Unknown

"Nothing ruins the truth like stretching it."



“When a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark, you don’t throw away the ticket and jump off. You sit still and trust the engineer.” - Corrie Ten Boom

A child writes:

Dear God:

I didn’t think orange went with purple until I saw the sunset you made on Tuesday. That was cool! - Eugene

Dear God:

Did you mean for the giraffe to look like that or was it an accident? - Norma

Dear God:

**We read Thomas Edison made light. But in Sunday school, we learned that you did it. So I bet he stole your idea.
Sincerely, Courtney**

No wonder God loves little children!

Shorts

Learn to enjoy little things; there are so many of them.

“He has honor if he holds himself to an ideal of conduct though it is inconvenient, unprofitable, or dangerous to do so.” - Walter Lippman

“Live today and everyday like a man of honor.” - Charles Eliot

The world says that all we need to do is be decent, respectable, and reasonable people. True, that is all one needs to do to be a member of the “Great Society,” but to be a member of the Kingdom of God, there must be an inner change.

A Communist in Hyde Park, London, pointed to a tramp and said, Communism will put a new suit on that man.”

A Christian standing nearby said, “Yes, but Christ will put a new man in that suit.”

Thank you, Lord, for the change that happened within us when we accepted you. Help us to lead others to You so that they too can be changed.

TEN LITTLE CHRISTIANS:

10 Little Christians standing in line

1 disliked the preacher, then there were 9

9 little Christians stayed up very late



1 overslept Sunday, then there were 8

8 little Christians on their way to Heaven
1 took the low road and then there were 7

7 little Christians chirping like chicks
1 disliked music, then there were 6

6 little Christians seemed very much alive
but one lost his interest then there was 5

5 little Christians pulling for Heaven's Shore
but one stopped to rest, then there were 4

4 little Christians each busy as a bee
1 got his feelings hurt, then there were 3

3 little Christians knew not what to do
1 joined the sporty crowd, then there were 2

2 little Christians, our rhyme is nearly done
differed with each other, then there was 1

1 little Christian can't do much 'tis true
brought his friend to Bible study, then there were 2

2 earnest Christians, each won one more
that doubled the number, then there were 4

4 sincere Christians worked early and late
Each won another then there were 8

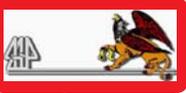
8 splendid Christians if they doubled as before
In just so many Sundays, we'd have 1,024

Shorts

In this little jingle, there is a lesson true,
You belong either to the building or to the wrecking crew!
- Author Unknown

"A bell is not rung until you ring it;
A song is not a song until you sing it;
Love in your heart is not put there to stay;
Love is not love until you give it away."
- Oscar Hammerstein

"Be kind to unkind people - they need it the most."
- Unknown



Big Rocks

One day an expert in time management was speaking to a group of business students and, to drive home a point, used an illustration those students will never forget. As he stood in front of the group of high-powered over-achievers he said, “Okay, time for a quiz.” Then he pulled out a one-gallon, wide mouth Mason jar and set it on the table in front of him.

Then he produced about a dozen fist-sized rocks and carefully placed them, one at a time, into the jar. When the jar was filled to the top and no more rocks would fit inside, he asked, “Is this jar full?”

Everyone in the class said, “Yes.”

Then he said, “Really?” He reached under the table and pulled out a bucket of gravel. Then he dumped some gravel in and shook the jar causing pieces of gravel to work themselves down into the space between the big rocks.

Then he asked the group once more, “Is the jar full?”

By this time the class was on to him. “Probably not,” one of them answered.

“Good!” He replied. He reached under the table and brought out a bucket of sand. He started dumping the sand in the jar and it went into all of the spaces left between the rocks and the gravel. Once more he asked the question, “Is this jar full?” “No!” The class shouted. Once again he said, “Good.”

Then he grabbed a pitcher of water and began to pour it in until the jar was filled to the brim. Then he looked at the class and asked, “What is the point of this illustration?”

One eager beaver raised his hand and said, “The point is, no matter how full your schedule is, if you try really hard you can always fit some more things in it!”

“No,” the speaker replied, “that’s not the point. The truth this illustration teaches us is: If you don’t put the big rocks in first, you’ll never get them in at all.”

What are the ‘big rocks’ in your life?

Time with your loved ones?

Your faith, your education, your dreams?

A worthy cause?



Teaching or mentoring others?

Remember to put these **BIG ROCKS** in first or you'll never get them in at all.

Bill of No Rights

The following was written by State Representative Mitchell Kaye from GA.

We, the sensible people of the United States, in an attempt to help everyone get along, restore some semblance of justice, avoid any more riots, keep our nation safe, promote positive behavior, and secure the blessings of debt free liberty to ourselves and our great-great-great-grandchildren, hereby try one more time to ordain and establish some common sense guidelines for the terminally whiny, guilt ridden, delusional, and other liberal bedwetters. We hold these truths to be self-evident: that a whole lot of people are confused by the Bill of Rights and are so dim that they require a Bill of No Rights.

ARTICLE I:

You do not have the right to a new car, big screen TV or any other form of wealth. More power to you if you can legally acquire them, but no one is guaranteeing anything.

ARTICLE II:

You do not have the right to never be offended. This country is based on freedom, and that means freedom for everyone-not just you! You may leave the room, turn the channel, express a different opinion, etc., but the world is full of idiots, and probably always will be.

ARTICLE III:

You do not have the right to be free from harm. If you stick a screwdriver in your eye, learn to be more careful, do not expect the manufacturer to make you and all your relatives independently wealthy.

ARTICLE IV:

You do not have the right to free food and housing. Americans are the most charitable people to be found, and will gladly help anyone in need, but we are quickly growing weary of subsidizing generation after generation of professional couch potatoes who achieve nothing more than the creation of another generation of professional couch potatoes.

ARTICLE V:

You do not have the right to free health care. That



would be nice, but from the looks of public housing, we're just not interested in public health care.

ARTICLE VI:

You do not have the right to physically harm other people. If you kidnap, rape, intentionally maim, or kill someone, don't be surprised if the rest of us want to see you fry in the electric chair.

ARTICLE VII:

You do not have the right to the possessions of others. If you rob, cheat or coerce away the goods or services of other citizens, don't be surprised if the rest of us get together and lock you away in a place where you still won't have the right to a big screen color TV or a life of leisure.

ARTICLE VIII:

You don't have the right to demand that our children risk their lives in foreign wars to soothe your aching conscience. We hate oppressive governments and won't lift a finger to stop you from going to fight if you'd like. However, we do not enjoy parenting the entire world and do not want to spend so much of our time battling each and every little tyrant with a military uniform and a funny hat.

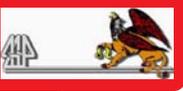
ARTICLE IX:

You don't have the right to a job. All of us sure want all of you to have one, and will gladly help you along in hard times, but we expect you to take advantage of the opportunities of education and vocational training laid before you to make yourself useful.

ARTICLE X:

You do not have the right to happiness. Being an American means that you have the right to pursue happiness - which, by the way, is a lot easier if unencumbered by laws created by those of you who were confused by the Bill of Rights.

If you agree, we strongly urge you to forward this to as many people as you can. No, you don't have to, and nothing tragic will befall you should you not forward it. We just think it is about time common sense is allowed to flourish - call it the age of reason revisited. **Yes, some of these are pretty harsh, but the way the country has gone we need a little harshness and firm (not affirmative) action to get back on track.**



Birdcage

There once was a man named George Thomas, pastor in a small New England town. One Easter Sunday morning he came to the Church carrying a rusty, bent, old bird cage, and set it by the pulpit.

Eyebrows were raised and, as if in response, Pastor Thomas began to speak...

“I was walking through town yesterday when I saw a young boy coming toward me swinging this bird cage. On the bottom of the cage were three little wild birds, shivering with cold and fright. I stopped the lad and asked, “What you got there, son?”

“Just some old birds,” came the reply.

“What are you gonna do with them?” I asked.

“Take ‘em home and have fun with ‘em,” he answered. “I’m gonna tease ‘em and pull out their feathers to make ‘em fight. I’m gonna have a real good time.”

“But you’ll get tired of those birds sooner or later. What will you do?”

“Oh, I got some cats,” said the little boy. “They like birds. I’ll take ‘em to them.”

The pastor was silent for a moment. “How much do you want for those birds, son?”

“Huh?? Why, you don’t want them birds, mister. They’re just plain old field birds. They don’t sing. They ain’t even pretty!”

“How much?” The pastor asked again.

The boy sized up the pastor as if he were crazy and said, “\$10?” The pastor reached in his pocket and took out a ten dollar bill. He placed it in the boy’s hand. In a flash, the boy was gone. The pastor picked up the cage and gently carried it to the end of the alley where there was a tree and a grassy spot. Setting the cage down, he opened the door, and by softly tapping the bars persuaded the birds out, setting them free. Well, that explained the empty bird cage on the pulpit, and then the pastor began to tell this story.

One day Satan and Jesus were having a conversation. Satan had just come from the Garden of Eden, and he was gloating and boasting. “Yes, sir, I just caught the world full of people down there. Set Me a trap, used bait I knew they couldn’t resist. Got ‘em all!”



“What are you going to do with them?” Jesus asked.

Satan replied, “Oh, I’m gonna have fun! I’m gonna teach them how to marry and divorce each other, how to hate and abuse each other, how to drink and smoke and curse. I’m gonna teach them how to invent guns and bombs and kill each other. I’m really gonna have fun!”

“And what will you do when you get done with them?” Jesus asked.

“Oh, I’ll kill ‘em,” Satan glared proudly.

“How much do you want for them?” Jesus asked.

“Oh, you don’t want those people. They ain’t no good. Why, you’ll take them and they’ll just hate you. They’ll spit on you, curse you and kill you. You don’t want those people!!”

“How much? He asked again.

Satan looked at Jesus and sneered, “All your blood, tears and your life.”

Jesus said, “DONE!” Then He paid the price.

The pastor picked up the cage he opened the door and he walked from the pulpit.

Notes: Isn’t it funny how simple it is for people to trash God and then wonder why the world’s going to hell.

Isn’t it funny how someone can say “I believe in God” but still follow Satan (who, by the way, also “believes” in God).

Isn’t it funny how you can send a thousand jokes through e-mail and they spread like wildfire, but when you start sending messages regarding the Lord, people think twice about sharing.

Isn’t it funny how when you go to forward this message, you will not send it to many on your address list because you’re not sure what they believe, or what they will think of you for sending it to them.

Isn’t it funny how I can be more worried about what other people think of me than what God thinks of me.

I pray, for everyone who sends this to their entire address book, they will be blessed by God in a way special for them.



Butterfly Blessings

Good story...and true A man found a cocoon of a butterfly. One day a small opening appeared. He sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through that little hole. Then it seemed to stop making any progress. It appeared as if it had gotten as far as it could, and it could go no further. So the man decided to help the butterfly.

He took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon.

The butterfly then emerged easily. But it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings. The man continued to watch the butterfly because he expected that, at any moment, the wings would enlarge and expand to be able to support the body, which would contract in time.

Neither happened! In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shriveled wings. It never was able to fly. What the man, in his kindness and haste, did not understand was that the restricting cocoon and the struggle required for the butterfly to get through the tiny opening were God's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings so that it would be ready for flight once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon.

Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our lives. If God allowed us to go through our lives without any obstacles, it would cripple us. We would not be as strong as what we could have been. We could never fly!

I asked for Strength.....
 And God gave me
 Difficulties to make me strong.
 I asked for Wisdom.....
 And God gave me
 Problems to solve.
 I asked for Prosperity.....
 And God gave me
 brain and brawn to work.
 I asked for Courage.....
 And God gave me
 Danger to overcome.
 I asked for Love.....
 And God gave me Troubled people to help.
 I asked for Favors.....
 And God gave me
 Opportunities.
 I received nothing I wanted.....
 I received everything I needed!

Knowledge needs to temper good intentions.

Boldness

Wow. Great boldness by a principal!

This is a statement that was read over the PA system at the football game at Roane County High School, Kingston, Tennessee by school Principal Jody McLoud, on September 1, 2000.

It has always been the custom at Roane County High School football games to say a prayer and play the National Anthem to honor God and Country.

Due to a recent ruling by the Supreme Court, I am told that saying a prayer is a violation of Federal Case Law.

As I understand the law at this time, I can use this public facility to approve of sexual perversion and call it an alternate life-style, and if someone is offended, that's OK.

I can use it to condone sexual promiscuity by dispensing condoms and calling it safe sex. If someone is offended, that's OK.

I can even use this public facility to present the merits of killing an unborn baby as a viable means of birth control. If someone is offended, no problem.

I can designate a school day as earth day and involve students in activities to religiously worship and praise the goddess, mother earth, and call it ecology.

I can use literature, videos and presentations in the classroom that depict people with strong, traditional, Christian convictions as simple minded and ignorant and call it enlightenment.

However, if anyone uses this facility to honor God and asks Him to bless this event with safety and good sportsmanship, Federal Case Law is violated.

This appears to be at best, inconsistent and at worst, diabolical.

Apparently, we are to be tolerant of everything and anyone except God and His Commandments.

Nevertheless, as a school principal, I frequently ask staff and students to abide by rules which they do not necessarily agree. For me to do otherwise would be at best, inconsistent and at worst, hypocritical.

I suffer from that affliction enough unintentionally. I certainly do not need to add an intentional transgression.

For this reason, I shall, "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's," and refrain from praying at this time. However, if you feel inspired to honor, praise and thank God, and ask Him in the name of Jesus to bless this event, please feel free to do so. As far as I know, that's not against the law-yet.

Even if you don't believe, or calling him by a different name: praying at an event is only appealing to a higher power for guidance and wishing for safe play.

Acknowledging your being able to play and hoping to have a good game.

I think what we may end up doing is calling for moments of silence allowing people to "do" whatever they wish.



Brain Food

The first couple to be shown in bed together on prime time television was Fred and Wilma Flintstone.

Coca-Cola was originally green.

Every day more money is printed for Monopoly than the US Treasury.

Hawaiian alphabet has 12 letters.

Men can read smaller print than women; women can hear better.

City with the most Rolls Royce's per capita: Hong Kong

State with the highest percentage of people who walk to work: Alaska

Percentage of Africa that is wilderness: 28%

Percentage of North America that is wilderness: 38%

Barbie's measurements if she were life size: 39-23-33

Cost of raising a medium-size dog to the age of eleven: \$6,400

Average number of people airborne over the US any given hour: 61,000.

Intelligent people have more zinc and copper in their hair.

The world's youngest parents were 8 and 9 and lived in China in 1910.

The youngest pope was 11 years old.

First novel ever written on a typewriter: Tom Sawyer.

The San Francisco Cable cars are the only mobile National Monuments

Each king in a deck of playing cards represents a great king from history.

Spades - King David,
Clubs - Alexander the Great,
Hearts - Charlemagne,
Diamonds - Julius Caesar.

If a statue in the park of a person on a horse has both front legs in the air, the person died in battle; if the horse has one front leg in the air, the person died as a result of wounds received in battle; if the horse has all four legs on the ground, the person died of natural causes.





Only two people signed the Declaration of Independence on July 4th, John Hancock and Charles Thomson. Most of the rest signed on August 2, but the last signature wasn't added until 5 years later.

"I am." Is the shortest complete sentence in the English language.

The term **"the whole 9 yards"** came from W.W.II fighter pilots in the South Pacific. When arming their airplanes on the ground, the .50 caliber machine gun ammo belts measured exactly 27 feet, before being loaded into the fuselage. If the pilots fired all their ammo at a target, it got **"the whole 9 yards."**

Hershey's Kisses are called that because the machine that makes them looks like it's kissing the conveyor belt.

The phrase **"rule of thumb"** is derived from an old English law which stated that you couldn't beat your wife with anything wider than your thumb.

The Eisenhower interstate system requires that one mile in every five must be straight. These straight sections are usable as airstrips in times of war or other emergencies.

The name Jeep came from the abbreviation used in the army for the **"General Purpose"** vehicle, G.P.

The cruise liner, Queen Elizabeth II, moves only six inches for each gallon of diesel that it burns.

No NFL team which plays its home games in a domed stadium has ever won a Superbowl.

The only two days of the year in which there are no professional sports games (MLB, NBA, NHL, or NFL) are the day before and the day after the Major League all-stars Game.

How about this....

The nursery rhyme Ring Around the Rosey is a rhyme about the plague.

Infected people with the plague would get red circular sores (**"Ring around the rosey..."**), these sores would smell very badly so common folks would put flowers on their bodies somewhere (inconspicuously), so that it would cover the smell of the sores (**"...a pocket full of posies..."**), People who died from the plague would be burned so as to reduce the possible spread of the disease (**"...ashes, ashes, we all fall down!"**)



Brain teaser

Two men, both billionaires.

One develops relatively cheap software and gives hundreds of millions of dollars to charity.

The other sponsors terrorism.

That being the case, why is it that the US government has spent more money chasing down Bill Gates over the past ten years than Osama bin Laden?

Buddha is Unnamable

Give a definite name to Deity, He would be no more than what the name implies. The Deity under the name of Brahman necessarily differs from the Being under the appellation of Jehovah, just as the Hindu differs from the Jew. In like manner the Being designated by God necessarily differs from One named Amitabha or from Him entitled Allah. To give a name to the Deity is to give Him tradition, nationality, limitation, and fixity, and it never brings us nearer to Him. Zen's object of worship cannot be named and determined as God, or Brahman, or Amitabha, or Creator, or Nature, or Reality, or Substance, or the like. Neither Chinese nor Japanese masters of Zen tried to give a definite name to their object of adoration. They now called Him That One, now This One, now Mind, now Buddha, now Tathagata, now Certain Thing, now the True, now Dharma-nature, now Buddha-nature, and so forth. Tüing Shan[1] (To-zan) on a certain occasion declared it to be "A Certain Thing that pillars heaven above and supports the earth below; dark as lacquer and undefinable; manifesting itself through its activities, yet not wholly comprisable within them."

So-kei[2] expressed it in the same wise: "There exists a Certain Thing, bright as a mirror, spiritual as a mind, not subjected to growth nor to decay." Hüen Sha (Gen-sha) comparing it with a gem says: "There exists a bright gem illuminating through the worlds in ten directions by its light." [3]

This certain thing or being is too sublime to be named after a traditional or a national deity, too spiritual to be symbolized by human art, too full of life to be formulated in terms of mechanical science, too free to be rationalized by intellectual philosophy, too universal to be perceived by bodily senses; but everybody can feel its irresistible power, see its invisible presence, and touch its heart and soul within himself. "This mysterious Mind," says Kwei Fung Kei-ho), "is higher than the highest, deeper than the deepest, limitless in all directions. There is no centre in it. No distinction of east and west, and above and below. Is it empty? Yes, but not empty like space. Has it a form? Yes, but has no form dependent on another for its existence. Is it intelligent? Yes, but not intelligent like your mind. Is it non-intelligent? Yes, but not non-intelligent like trees and stone.

[1. Tüing Shan Luh (To-zan-roku, 'Sayings and Doings of Ta-zan') is one of the best Zen books.



2. So-kei, a Korean Zenist, whose work entitled Zen-ke-ki-kwan is worthy of our note as a representation of Korean Zen.

3 Sho-bo-gen-zo.]

Is it conscious? Yes, but not conscious like you when waking.

Is it bright? Yes, but not bright like the sun or the moon.” To the question, “What and who is Buddha?” Yuen Wu (En-go) replied: “Hold your tongue: the mouth is the gate of evils!” while Pao Fuh (Ho-fuku) answered to the same question: “No skill of art can picture Him.” Thus Buddha is unnamable, indescribable, and indefinable, but we provisionally call Him Buddha.

4. Buddha, the Universal Life.—Zen conceives Buddha as a Being, who moves, stirs, inspires, enlivens, and vitalizes everything. Accordingly, we may call Him the Universal Life in the sense that He is the source of all lives in the universe. This Universal Life, according to Zen, pillars the heaven, supports the earth, glorifies the sun and moon, gives voice to thunder, tinges clouds, adorns the pasture with flowers, enriches the field with harvest, gives animals beauty and strength. Therefore, Zen declares even a dead clod of earth to be imbued with the divine life, just as Lowell expresses a similar idea when he says: “Every clod feels a stir of might, An instinct within it that reaches and towers, and groping blindly above it for light, Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers.”

One of our contemporary Zenists wittily observed that ‘vegetables are the children of earth, that animals which feed on vegetables are the grandchildren of earth, and that men who subsist on animals are the great-grand-children of earth.’ If there be no life in earth, how could life come out of it? If there be no life, the same as the animal’s life in the vegetables, how could animals sustain their lives feeding on vegetables? If there be no life similar to ours in animals, how could we sustain our life by subsisting on them? The poet must be in the right, not only in his esthetic, but in his scientific point of view, in saying-

“I must Confess that I am only dust.

But once a rose within me grew;
Its rootlets shot, its flowerets flew;
And all rose’s sweetness rolled
Throughout the texture of my mould;
And so it is that I impart
Perfume to them, whoever thou art.”

As we men live and act, so do our arteries; so does blood; so do corpuscles. As cells and protoplasm live and act, so do elements, molecules, and atoms. As elements and atoms live and act, so do clouds; so does the earth; so does the ocean, the Milky Way, and the Solar System. What is this life which pervades the grandest as well as the minutest works of Nature, and which may fitly be said ‘greater than the greatest and smaller than the smallest?’ It cannot be defined.

It cannot be subjected to exact analysis. But it is directly experienced and recognized within us, just as the beauty of the rose is to be perceived and enjoyed, but not reduced to exact analysis. At any rate, it is something stirring, moving, acting and reacting continually. This something which can be experienced and felt and enjoyed directly by every one of us. This life of living principle in the microcosmos is identical with that of the macrocosmos, and the



Universal Life of the macrocosmos is the common source of all lives.

Therefore, the Mahaparinirvana-sutra says:

“Tathagata (another name for Buddha) gives life to all beings, just as the lake Anavatapta gives rise to the four great rivers.” “Tathagata,” says the same sutra, “divides his own body into innumerable bodies, and also restores an infinite number of bodies to one body. Now he becomes cities, villages, houses, mountains, rivers, and trees; now he has a large body; now he has a small body; now he becomes men, women, boys, and girls.”

5. Life and Change.—A peculiar phase of life is change which appears in the form of growth and decay. Nobody can deny the transitoriness of life. One of our friends humorously observed: “Everything in the world may be doubtful to you, but it can never be doubted that you will die.”

Life is like a burning lamp.

Every minute its flame dies out and is renewed.

Life is like a running stream.

Every moment it pushes onward.

If there be anything constant in this world of change, it should be change itself. Is it not just one step from rosy childhood to snowy age? Is it not just one moment from the nuptial song to the funeral-dirge? Who can live the same moment twice?

In comparison with an organism, inorganic matter appears to be constant and changeless; but, in fact, it is equally subjected to ceaseless alteration. Every morning, looking into the mirror, you will find your visage reflected in it just as it was on the preceding day; so also every morning, looking at the sun and the earth, you will find them reflected in your retina just as they were on the previous morning; but the sun and the earth are no less changeless than you. Why do the sun and the earth seem changeless and constant to you? Only because you yourself undergo change more quickly than they. When you look at the clouds sweeping across the face of the moon, they seem to be at rest, and the moon in rapid motion; but, in fact, the clouds, as well as the moon, incessantly move on.

Science might maintain the quantitative constancy of matter, but the so-called matter is mere abstraction. To say matter is changeless is as much as to say 2 is always 2, changeless and constant, because the arithmetical number is not more abstract than the physiological matter. The moon appears standing still when you look at her only a few moments. In like manner she seems to be free from change when you look at her in your short span of life. Astronomers, nevertheless, can tell you how she saw her better days, and is now in her wrinkles and white hair.

6. Pessimistic View of the Ancient Hindus.—In addition to this, the new theory of matter has entirely overthrown the old conception of the unchanging atoms, and they are now regarded to be composed of magnetic forces, ions, and corpuscles in incessant motion. Therefore we have no inert matter in the concrete, no unchanging thing in the sphere of experience, no constant organism in the transient universe. These considerations often led many thinkers, ancient and modern, to the pessimistic view of life. What is the use of your exertion, they would say, in accumulating wealth, which is doomed to melt away in the twinkling of an eye? What is the use of your striving after power,



which is more short-lived than a bubble? What is the use of your endeavor in the reformation of society, which does not endure any longer than the castle in the air? How do kings differ from beggars in the eye of Transience? How do the rich differ from the poor, how the beautiful from the ugly, how the young from the old, how the good from the evil, how the lucky from the unlucky, how the wise from the unwise, in the court of Death? Vain is ambition. Vain is fame. Vain is pleasure.

Vain are struggles and efforts. All is in vain. An ancient Hindu thinker [1] says: “O saint, what is the use of the enjoyment of pleasures in this offensive, pith less body—a mere mass of bones, skins, sinews, marrow, and flesh? What is the use of the enjoyment of pleasures in this body, which is assailed by lust, hatred, greed, delusion, fear, anguish, jealousy, separation from what is loved, union with what is not loved, hunger, old age, death, illness, grief, and other evils? In such a world as this, what is the use of the enjoyment of pleasures, if he who has fed on them is to return to this world again and again? In this world I am like a frog in a dry well.”

[1. Maitrayana Upanisad.]

It is this consideration on the transitoriness of life that led some Taoist in China to prefer death to life, as expressed in Chwang Tsz (Su-shi):[1] “When Kwang-zze went to Khu, he saw an empty skull, bleached indeed, but still retaining its shape. Tapping it with his horse-switch, he asked it saying: ‘Did you, sir, in your greed of life, fail in the lessons of reason and come to this?’

Or did you do so, in the service of a perishing state, by the punishment of an axe? Or was it through your evil conduct, reflecting disgrace on your parents and on your wife and children? Or was it through your hard endurance of cold and hunger? Or was it that you had completed your term of life?’

“Having given expression to these questions, he took up the skull and made a pillow of it, and went to sleep. At midnight the skull appeared to him in a dream, and said: ‘What you said to me was after the fashion of an orator. All your words were about the entanglements of men in their lifetime. There are none of those things after death. Would you like to hear me, sir, tell you about death?’ ‘I should,’ said Kwang-zze, and the skull resumed: ‘In death there are not (the distinctions of) ruler above minister below. There are none of the phenomena of the four seasons. Tranquil and at ease, our years are those of heaven and earth. No king in his court has greater enjoyment than we have.’

Kwang-zze did not believe it, and said: ‘If I could get the Ruler of our Destiny to restore your body to life with its bones and flesh and skin, and to give you back your father and mother, your wife and children, and all your village acquaintances, would you wish me to do so?’ The skull stared fixedly at him, and knitted its brows and said:

[1. ‘Chwang Tsz,’ vol. vi., p. 23.]

‘How should I cast away the enjoyment of my royal court, and undertake again the toils of life among mankind?’”

7. Hinayanism and its Doctrine.—The doctrine of Transience was the first entrance gate of Hinayanism. Transience never fails to deprive us of what is dear and near to us. It disappoints us in our expectation and hope. It brings out grief, fear, anguish, and lamentation. It spreads terror and destruction among families, communities, nations, mankind. It threatens with perdition the



whole earth, the whole universe. Therefore it follows that life is full of disappointment, sufferings, and miseries, and that man is like 'a frog in a dry well.' This is the doctrine called by the Hinayanists the Holy Truth of Suffering.

Again, when Transience once gets hold of our imagination, we can easily foresee ruins and disasters in the very midst of prosperity and happiness, and also old age and ugliness in the prime and youth of beauty. It gives rise quite naturally to the thought that body is a bag full of pus and blood, a mere heap of rotten flesh and broken pieces of bone, a decaying corpse inhabited by innumerable maggots. This is the doctrine called by the Hinayanists the Holy Truth of Impurity.[1]

And, again, Transience holds its tyrannical sway not only over the material but over the spiritual world. At its touch Atman, or soul, is brought to nothing. By its call Devas, or celestial beings, are made to succumb to death. It follows, therefore, that to believe in Atman, eternal and unchanging, would be a whim of the ignorant. This is the doctrine called by the Hinayanists the Holy Truth of No-atman.

[1. Mahasaptipatthana Suttanta, 7, runs as follows: "And, moreover, bhikkhu, a brother, just as if he had been a body abandoned in the charnel-field, dead for one, two, or three days, swollen, turning black and blue, and decomposed, apply that perception to this very body (of his own), reflecting: 'This body, too, is even so constituted, is of such a nature, has not got beyond that (fate).'"]

If, as said, there could be nothing free from Transience, Constancy should be a gross mistake of the ignorant; if even gods have to die, Eternity should be no more than a stupid dream of the vulgar; if all phenomena be flowing and changing, there could be no constant noumena underlying them. It therefore follows that all things in the universe are empty and unreal. This is the doctrine called by the Hinayanists the Holy Truth of Unreality. Thus Hinayana Buddhism, starting from the doctrine of Transience, arrived at the pessimistic view of life in its extreme form.

8. Change as seen by Zen.—Zen, like Hinayanism., does not deny the doctrine of Transience, but it has come to a view diametrically opposite to that of the Hindus. Transience for Zen simply means change. It is a form in which life manifests itself. Where there is life there is change or Transience. Where there is more change there is more vital activity. Suppose an absolutely changeless body: it must be absolutely lifeless. An eternally changeless life is equivalent to an eternally changeless death. Why do we value the morning glory, which fades in a few hours, more than an artificial glass flower, which endures hundreds of years? Why do we prefer an animal life, which passes away in a few scores of years, to a vegetable life, which can exist thousands of years? Why do we prize changing organism more than inorganic matter, unchanging and constant? If there be no change in the bright hues of a flower, it is as worthless as a stone. If there be no change in the song of a bird, it is as valueless as a whistling wind. If there be no change in trees and grass, they are utterly unsuitable to be planted in a garden. Now, then, what is the use of our life, if it stand still? As the water of a running stream is always fresh and wholesome because it does not stop for a moment, so life is ever fresh and new because it does not stand still, but rapidly moves on from parents to children, from chil-



dren to grandchildren, from grandchildren to great-grandchildren, and flows on through generation after generation, renewing itself ceaselessly.

We can never deny the existence of old age and death—nay, death is of capital importance for a continuation of life, because death carries away all the decaying organism in the way of life. But for it life would be choked up with organic rubbish. The only way of life's pushing itself onward or its renewing itself is its producing of the young and getting rid of the old. If there be no old age nor death, life is not life, but death.

9. Life and Change.—Transformation and change are the essential features of life; life is not transformation nor change itself, as Bergson seems to assume.

It is something which comes under our observation through transformation and change. There are, among Buddhists as well as Christians, not a few who covet constancy and fixity of life, being allured by such smooth names as eternal life, everlasting joy, permanent peace, and what not. They have forgotten that their souls can never rest content with things monotonous. If there be everlasting joy for their souls, it must be presented to them through incessant change. So also if there be eternal life granted for their souls, it must be given through ceaseless alteration. What is the difference between eternal life, fixed and constant, and eternal death? What is the difference between everlasting bliss, changeless and monotonous, and everlasting suffering? If constancy, instead of change, govern life, then hope or pleasure is absolutely impossible. Fortunately, however, life is not constant. It changes and becomes.

Pleasure arises through change itself. Mere change of food or clothes is often pleasing to us, while the appearance of the same thing twice or thrice, however pleasing it may be, causes us little 'pleasure. It will become disgusting and tire us down, if it be presented repeatedly from time to time.

An important element in the pleasure we derive from social meetings, from travels, from sight-seeings, etc., is nothing but change. Even intellectual pleasure consists mainly of change. A dead, unchanging abstract truth, 2 and 2 make 4, excites no interest; while a changeable, concrete truth, such as the Darwinian theory of evolution, excites a keen interest.

10. Life, Change, and Hope.—The doctrine of Transcience never drives us to the pessimistic view of life. On the contrary, it gives us an inexhaustible source of pleasure and hope. Let us ask you: Are you satisfied with the present state of things? Do you not sympathize with poverty-stricken millions living side by side with millionaires saturated with wealth? Do you not shed tears over those hunger-bitten children who cower in the dark lanes of a great city? Do you not wish to put down the stupendous oppressor—Might-is-right? Do you not want to do away with the so-called armored peace among nations? Do you not need to mitigate the struggle for existence more sanguine than the war of weapons?

Life changes and is changeable; consequently, has its future. Hope is therefore possible. Individual development, social betterment, international peace, reformation of mankind in general, can be hoped. Our ideal, however unpractical it may seem at the first sight, can be realized. Moreover, the world itself, too, is changing and changeable. It reveals new phases from time to time, and can be molded to sub serve our purpose. We must not take life or the world as



completed and doomed as it is now. No fact verifies the belief that the world was ever created by some other power and predestined to be as it is now. It lives, acts, and changes. It is transforming itself continually, just as we are changing and becoming. Thus the doctrine of Transience supplies us with an inexhaustible source of hope and comfort, leads us into the living universe, and introduces us to the presence of Universal Life or Buddha.

The reader may easily understand how Zen conceives Buddha as the living principle from the following dialogues: “Is it true, sir,” asked a monk of Teu tsz (To-shi), “that all the voices of Nature are those of Buddha?” “Yes, certainly,” replied Teu tsz. “What is, reverend sir,” asked a man of Chao Cheu (Jo-shu), “the holy temple (of Buddha)?” “An innocent girl,” replied the teacher. “Who is the master of the temple?” Asked the other again. “A baby in her womb,” was the answer. “What is, sir,” asked a monk to Yen Kwan (Yen-kan), “the original body of Buddha Vairocana?”[1] “Fetch me a pitcher with water,” said the teacher. The monk did as he was ordered. “Put it back in its place,” said Yen Kwan again.[2]

11. Everything is Living according to Zen.—Everything alive has a strong innate tendency to preserve itself, to assert itself, to push itself forward, and to act on its environment, consciously or unconsciously. The innate, strong tendency of the living is an undeveloped, but fundamental, nature of Spirit or Mind. It shows itself first in inert matter as impenetrability, or affinity, or mechanical force. Rock has a powerful tendency to preserve itself. And it is hard to crush it. Diamond has a robust tendency to assert itself. And it permits nothing to destroy it. Salt has the same strong tendency, for its particles act and react by themselves, and never cease till its crystals are formed. Steam, too, should have the same, because it pushes aside everything in its way and goes where it will.

[1. Literally, All Illuminating Buddha, the highest of the Trikayas. See Eitel, p. 192.

2 Zen-rin-rui-shu.]

In the eye of simple folks of old, mountains, rivers, trees, serpents, oxen, and eagles were equally full of life; hence the deification of them. No doubt it is irrational to believe in nymphs, fairies, elves, and the like, yet still we may say that mountains stand of their own accord, rivers run as they will, just as we say that trees and grass turn their leaves towards the sun of their own accord. Neither is it a mere figure of speech to say that thunder speaks and hills respond, nor to describe birds as singing and flowers as smiling, nor to narrate winds as moaning and rain as weeping, nor to state lovers as looking at the moon, the moon as looking at them, when we observe spiritual element in activities of all this. Haeckel says, not without reason: “I cannot imagine the simple chemical and physical forces without attributing the movement of material particles to conscious sensation.” The same author says again: “We may ascribe the feeling of pleasure and pain to all atoms, and so explain the electric affinity in chemistry.”

12. The Creative Force of Nature and Humanity.—The innate tendency of self-preservation, which manifests itself as mechanical force or chemical affinity in the inorganic nature, unfolds itself as the desire of the preservation of species in the vegetables and animals. See how vegetables fertilize them-



selves in a complicated way, and how they spread their seeds far and wide in a most mysterious manner. A far more developed form of the same desire is seen in the sexual attachment and parental love of animals. Who does not know that even the smallest birds defend their young against every enemy with self-sacrificing courage, and that they bring food whilst they themselves often starve and grow lean? In human beings we can observe the various transformations of the selfsame desire. For instance, sorrow or despair is experienced when it is impossible; anger, when it is hindered by others; joy, when it is fulfilled; fear, when it is threatened; pleasure, when it is facilitated. Although it manifests itself as the sexual attachment and parental love in lower animals, yet its developed forms, such as sympathy, loyalty, benevolence, mercy, humanity, are observed in human beings.

Again, the creative force in inorganic nature, in order to assert itself and act more effectively, creates the germ of organic nature, and gradually ascending the scale of evolution, develops the sense organs and the nervous system; hence intellectual powers, such as sensation, perception, imagination, memory, unfold themselves. Thus the creative force, exerting itself gradually, widens its sphere of action, and necessitates the union of individuals into families, clans, tribes, communities, and nations. For the sake of this union and cooperation they established customs, enacted laws, and instituted political and educational systems. Furthermore, to reinforce itself, it gave birth to languages and sciences; and to enrich itself, morality and religion.

13. Universal Life is Universal Spirit.—These considerations naturally lead us to see that Universal Life is not a blind vital force, but Creative Spirit, or Mind, or Consciousness, which unfolds itself in myriads of ways. Everything in the universe, according to Zen, lives and acts, and at the same time discloses its spirit. To be alive is identically the same as to be spiritual. As the poet has his song, so does the nightingale, so does the cricket, so does the rivulet.

As we are pleased or offended, so are horses, so are dogs, so are sparrows, ants, earthworms, and mushrooms. Simpler the body, simpler its spirit; more complicated the body, more complicated its spirit. ‘Mind slumbers in the pebble, dreams in the plant, gathers energy in the animal, and awakens to self-conscious discovery in the soul of man.’

It is this Creative, Universal Spirit that sends forth Aurora to illuminate the sky, that makes Diana shed her benign rays and Æolus play on his harp, wreathes spring with flowers, that clothes autumn with gold, that induces plants to put forth blossoms, that incites animals to be energetic, and that awakens consciousness in man. The author of Mahavaipulya-purnabuddha-sutra expressly states our idea when he says: “Mountains, rivers, skies, the earth: all these are embraced in the True Spirit, enlightened and mysterious.” Rin-zai also says:

“Spirit is formless, but it penetrates through the world in the ten directions.”[1] The Sixth Patriarch expresses the same idea more explicitly:

“What creates the phenomena is Mind; what transcends all the phenomena is Buddha.”[2]

14. Poetical Intuition and Zen.—Since Universal Life or Spirit permeates the universe, the poetical intuition of man never fails to find it, and to delight in everything typical of that Spirit. “The leaves of the plantain,” says a Zen poet,



“unfold themselves, hearing the voice of thunder. The flowers of the hollyhock turn towards the sun, looking at it all day long.” Jesus could see in the lily the Unseen Being who clothed it so lovely. Wordsworth found the most profound thing in all the world to be the universal spiritual life, which manifests itself most directly in nature, clothed in its own proper dignity and peace. “Through every star,” says Carlyle, “through every grass blade, most through every soul, the glory of present God still beams.”

[1. Rin-zai-roku.

2. Roku-so-dan-kyo.]

It is not only grandeur and sublimity that indicate Universal Life, but smallness and commonplace do the same. A sage of old awakened to the faith[1] when he heard a bell ring; another, when he looked at the peach blossom; another, when he heard the frogs croaking; and another, when he saw his own form reflected in a river. The minutest particles of dust form a world. The meanest grain of sand under our foot proclaims a divine law. Therefore Teu Tsz Jo-shi), pointing to a stone in front of his temple, said: “ All the Buddhas of the past, the present, and the future are living therein.”[2]

15. Enlightened Consciousness.—In addition to these considerations, which mainly depend on indirect experience, we can have direct experience of life within us. In the first place, we experience that our life is not a bare mechanical motion or change, but is a spiritual, purposive, and self-directing force. In the second place, we directly experience that it knows, feels, and wills. In the third place, we experience that there exists some power unifying the intellectual, emotional, and volitional activities so as to make life uniform and rational. Lastly, we experience that there lies deeply rooted within us Enlightened Consciousness, which neither psychologists treat of nor philosophers believe in, but which Zen teachers expound with strong conviction.

Enlightened Consciousness is, according to Zen, the centre of spiritual life. It is the mind of minds, and the consciousness of consciousness. It is the Universal Spirit awakened in the human mind. It is not the mind that feels joy or sorrow; nor is it the mind that reasons and infers; nor is it the mind that fancies and dreams; nor is it the mind that hopes and fears; nor is it the mind that distinguishes good

[1. Both the Chinese and the Japanese history of Zen are full of such incidents.

2 Zen-rin-rui-shu and To-shi-go-roku.]

from evil. It is Enlightened Consciousness that holds communion with Universal Spirit or Buddha, and realizes that individual lives are inseparably united, and of one and the same nature with Universal Life. It is always bright as a burnished mirror, and cannot be dimmed by doubt and ignorance. It is ever pure as a lotus flower, and cannot be polluted by the mud of evil and folly. Although all sentient beings are endowed with this Enlightened Consciousness, they are not aware of its existence, excepting men who can discover it by the practice of Meditation. Enlightened consciousness is often called Buddha-nature, as it is the real nature of Universal Spirit. Zen teachers compare it with a precious stone ever fresh and pure, even if it be buried in the heaps of dust. Its divine light can never be extinguished by doubt or fear, just as the sunlight cannot be destroyed by mist and cloud. Let us quote a Chinese Zen



poet to see how Zen treats of it:[1]

“I have an image of Buddha,
The worldly people know it not.
It is not made of clay or cloth,
Nor is it carved out of wood,
Nor is it molded of earth nor of ashes.
No artist can paint it;
No robber can steal it.
There it exists from dawn of time.
It’s clean, although not swept and wiped.
Although it is but one,
Divides itself to a hundred thousand million forms.”

16. Buddha Dwelling in the Individual Mind.—Enlightened Consciousness in the individual mind acquires for its possessor, not a relative knowledge of things as his intellect does, but the profoundest insight in reference to universal brotherhood of all beings, and enables him to understand the absolute holiness of their nature, and the highest goal for which all of them are making.

[1. See Zen-gaku-ho-ten.]

Enlightened Consciousness once awakened within us serves as a guiding principle, and leads us to hope, bliss, and life; consequently, it is called the Master[1] of both mind and body. Sometimes it is called the Original[2] Mind, as it is the mind of minds. It is Buddha dwelling in individuals. You might call it God in man, if you like. The following dialogues all point to this single idea:

On one occasion a butcher, who was used to killing one thousand sheep a day, came to Gotama, and, throwing down his butcher-knife, said “I am one of the thousand Buddhas.” “Yes, really,” replied Gotama. A monk, Hwui Chao (E-cha) by name, asked Pao Yen (Ho-gen): “What is Buddha?” “You are Hwui Chao,” replied the master. The same question was put to Sheu Shan (Shu-zan), Chi Man (Chi-mon), and Teu Tsz (To-shi), the first of whom answered: “A bride mounts on a donkey and her mother-in-law drives it;” and the second: “He goes barefooted, his sandals being worn out;” while the third rose from his chair and stood still without saying a word. Chwen Hih (Fu-kiu) explains this point in unequivocal terms:

“Night after night I sleep with Buddha, and every morning I get up with Him. He accompanies me wherever I go. When I stand or sit, when I speak or be mute, when I am out or in, He never leaves me, even as a shadow accompanies body. Would you know where He is? Listen to that voice and word.”[3]

17. Enlightened Consciousness is not an Intellectual Insight.—Enlightened Consciousness is not a bare intellectual insight, for it is full of beautiful emotions. It loves, caresses, embraces, and at the same time esteems all beings, being ever merciful to them. It has no enemies to conquer, no evil to fight with, but constantly finds friends to help, good to promote. Its warm heart beats in harmony with those of all fellow beings. The author of Brahmajala-sutra fully expresses this idea as he says: “All women are our mothers; all men our fathers; all earth and water our bodies in the past existences; all fire and air our essence.”

1. It is often called the Lord or Master of mind.



2. Another name for Buddha is the Original Mind” (Kechi-myaku-ron).

3 For such dialogues, see Sho-yo-roku, Mu-mon-kan, Heki-gan-shu. Fuki-kiu’s words are repeatedly quoted by Zen masters.]

Thus relying on our inner experience, which is the only direct way of knowing Buddha, we conceive Him as a Being with profound wisdom and boundless mercy, who loves all beings as His children, whom He is fostering, bringing up, guiding, and teaching. “These three worlds are His, and all beings living in them are His children.”[1] “The Blessed One is the mother of all sentient beings, and gives them all the milk of mercy.”[2] Some people named Him Absolute, as He is all light, all hope, all mercy, and all wisdom; some, Heaven, as He is high and enlightened; some, God, as He is sacred and mysterious; some, Truth, as He is true to Himself; some, Buddha, as He is free from illusion; some, Creator, as He is the creative force immanent in the universe; some, Path, as He is the Way we must follow; some, Unknowable, as He is beyond relative knowledge; some, Self, as He is the Self of individual selves. All these names are applied to one Being, whom we designate by the name of Universal Life or Spirit.

18. Our Conception of Buddha is not Final.—Has, then, the divine nature of Universal Spirit been completely and exhaustively revealed in our Enlightened Consciousness? To this question we should answer negatively, for, so far as our limited experience is concerned, Universal Spirit reveals itself as a Being with profound wisdom and boundless mercy; this, nevertheless, does not imply that the conception is the only possible and complete one. We should always bear in mind that the world is alive, and changing, and moving. It goes on to disclose a new phase, or to add a new truth. The subtlest logic of old is a mere quibble of nowadays. The miracles of yesterday are the commonplaces of today. Now theories are formed, new discoveries are made, only to give their places to newer theories and discoveries. New ideals realized or new desires satisfied are sure to awaken newer and stronger desires. Not an instant life remains immutable, but it rushes on, amplifying and enriching itself from the dawn of time to the end of eternity.

1. Saddharma-pundarika-sutra.

2 Mahaparinirvana-sutra.]

Therefore Universal Life may in the future possibly unfold its new spiritual content, yet unknown to us because it has refined, lifted up, and developed living beings from the amoeba to man, increasing the intelligence and range of individuals, until highly civilized man emerge into the plane of consciousness-consciousness of divine light in him. Thus to believe in Buddha is to be content and thankful for the grace of His, and to hope for the infinite unfoldment of His glories in man.

19. How to Worship Buddha.—The author of Vimalakirti-nirdeça-sutra well explains our attitude towards Buddha when he says: “We ask Buddha for nothing.

We ask Dharma for nothing. We ask Samgha for nothing.” Nothing we ask of Buddha. No worldly success, no rewards in the future life, no special blessing. Hwang Pah (O-baku) said: “I simply worship Buddha. I ask Buddha for nothing. I ask Dharma for nothing., I ask Samgha for nothing.” Then a prince[1] questioned him:



“You ask Buddha for nothing. You ask Dharma for nothing. You ask Samgha for nothing. What, then, is the use of your worship?”

1. Afterwards the Emperor Suen Tsung (Sen-so), of the Tang dynasty.]

The Prince earned a slap as an answer to his utilitarian question.[1] This incident well illustrates that worship, as understood by Zen masters, is a pure act of thanksgiving, or the opening of the grateful heart; in other words, the disclosing of Enlightened Consciousness. We are living the very life of Buddha, enjoying His blessing, and holding communion with Him through speech, thought, and action. The earth is not ‘the vale of tears,’ but the glorious creation of Universal Spirit; nor man ‘the poor miserable sinner’ but the living altar of Buddha Himself. Whatever we do, we do with grateful heart and pure joy sanctioned by Enlightened Consciousness; eating, drinking, talking, walking, and every other work of our daily life are the worship and devotion. We agree with Margaret Fuller when she says: “Reverence the highest; have patience with the lowest; let this day’s performance of the meanest duty be thy religion. Are the stars too distant? Pick up the pebble that lies at thy feet, and from it learn all.”

[1. For the details, see Heki-gan-shu.]

That should be enough to think about for now, see ya in the next volume...