

VENOM CRYSTALS

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FOREWORD

A COMPILATION OF MY FAVOURITE WRITINGS

I include here a selection of the teachings that have been of the most use to me. As the selection is a product of my own mind, and my own personality, it should convey as much of myself as any of my own personal writings.

Many have trod the Path of the Infinite before now, making it easier for us to follow. It would be foolish for one to beat his own path through the wilderness, thinking himself to be the only one, when there is encouragement and guidance to be had.

Individuality and self-reliance cannot be surpassed, but the kind of individuality that shuts itself off from the chance of help is complete and utter foolishness.

A SELECTION FROM "THE QUESTIONS OF KING MILIND"

King Milind: What is Nirvana?

Nagasena: The question is wrongly put. How can a man describe all the interactions that ever have been and ever will?

King Milind: How can there be rebirth without transmigration?

Nagasena: Suppose a man were to light a lamp from another lamp, can it be said that the one transmigrates from the other?

King Milind: No.

Nagasena: Just so, great King, is rebirth without transmigration.

King Milind: Where does wisdom dwell?

Nagasena: Nowhere.

King Milind: Then, there is no wisdom.

Nagasena: Where does the wind dwell?

King Milind: Nowhere.

Nagasena: So, there is no such thing as wind!

King Milind: If you speak honestly to someone about how badly they behave, is this not abuse, which might lead to a breach of the peace?

Nagasena: Do you bow down and show respect to a criminal? Or do you show him the error of his ways? Do you try to cure vigorous diseases with soft drugs?

Nagasena: Vice dies away quickly by reason of its meanness, whereas virtue, by its grandeur, takes a long time to die.

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FROM THE BUDDHIST SCRIPTURE

- As rain breaks through an ill-thatched house, passion will break through an unreflecting mind.
- If a fool be associated with a wise man even all his life, he will perceive the truth as little as a spoon perceives the taste of soup.
- As long as the evil deed done does not bear fruit, the fool thinks it is like honey; but when it ripens, then the fool suffers grief. An evil deed, does not ripen suddenly, but smouldering, like fire covered by ashes, it follows the fool.
- Even an evil-doer sees happiness so long as his evil deed does not ripen; but when his evil deed ripens, then does the evil-doer see evil. Even a good man sees evil days so long as his good deed does not ripen; but when his good deed ripens, then does the good man see good things.
- If you see a man who shows you what is to be avoided, who administers reproofs, and is intelligent, you have found a precious treasure. You will become better. Let him admonish, let him teach, let him forbid what is improper! - he will be beloved of the good, by the bad he will be hated.
- Where the world finds no delight, there the passionless will delight, for they look not for pleasures.
- If one man conquer in battle a thousand times a thousand men, and if another conquer himself, he is the greatest of conquerors.
- Even though a poem be a thousand words, but made up of senseless words, one word is better, which if a man hears, he becomes quiet.

- If a man do rituals for a thousand years. Better is it for the man who for but a moment pay homage to a man who is grounded in true knowledge. And he who lives a hundred years, not seeing the highest Truth, a life of one day is better if a man sees the highest law.

- A man who has learnt little, grows old like an ox, his flesh grows, but his knowledge does not grow.

- If a man make himself as he teaches others to be, then, being himself well subdued, he may subdue others; for ones own self is difficult to subdue.

- Those who are ever watchful, who study day and night, and who strive after Nirvana, their passions will come to an end.

- A man is not learned because he talks much. A man is not an elder because his head is grey. He is "old-in-vain".

- So long as the sensual desire of man towards women, even the smallest, is not destroyed, so long is his mind in bondage, as the calf that drinks milk is to its mother.

- Sitting alone, lying down alone, walking alone and alone subduing himself, let a man be happy at the end of desires.

- Rouse thyself by thyself, examine thyself by thyself, thus self-protected and attentive wilt thou live happily.

- To be thoughtless is easy, it is easy to live without shame and be selfish. But it is hard to be selfless, pure and intelligent.

- Riches destroy the foolish, if they look not for the other shore; the fool by his thirst for riches destroys himself, as if he were destroying others in battle.

- Without knowledge there is no meditation, without meditation there is no knowledge. He who has knowledge and meditation is near unto Nirvana.

- He who has compassion on his friends and confidential companions loses his own advantage, having a fettered mind; seeing danger in friendship let one wander alone like a rhinoceros. There is support and amusement in the midst of company, and for children there is great affection; Although wishing people well, one must wander alone like a rhinoceros. Having torn the ties, having broken the net as a fish in the water, being like a fire not returning to the burnt place, let one wander alone like a rhinoceros. They cultivate the society of others and serve them for the sake of personal advantage; friends without a motive are difficult to come by. Therefore, let one wander alone like a rhinoceros.

- What fools say is pleasure, the nobles say is pain. What fools say is pain, the nobles know as pleasure. See here is a thing difficult to understand, here the ignorant are confounded.

- Those who "purify" themselves through philosophy are not on the true way. They are attached to words. They go from teacher to teacher, philosophy to philosophy, book to book. They grasp, they let go like a monkey letting go one branch to catch hold of another.

- He (the Muni) does not enter time of living beings, he is no follower of philosophical views, nor a friend of knowledge, and having penetrated the opinions that have arisen amongst people, he is indifferent to learning, while others acquire it. Not because of a philosophical view is one called a Muni, but because of his freedom from desire, freedom from self.

- Philosophers cannot lead to purity, they praise only themselves and stigmatise others. But a Buddha has overcome all dispute, he is indifferent to learning, he is appeased.

- Let one not form any philosophical view in this world, either by knowledge or by virtue and holy works, let him not represent himself equal to others, nor think himself either low or distinguished. In him there is not the least prejudiced idea with regard to what has been seen, heard, or thought; how could any one in this world alter such a one who does not adopt any view?

- They do not form any view, they do not prefer anything, the Dhammas are not chosen by them. He does not depend upon virtue or holy works. Having gone to the other shore, such a one does not return.

- The man in whom there is nothing upon which he depends, who is independent, having understood the Dhamma, in whom there is no craving for coming into existence or leaving existence. Him I call calm, not looking for sensual pleasures; for him there are no ties, he has overcome desire. For him there are no sons, cattle, fields, wealth, nothing grasped or rejected is to be found in him. That fault of which common people and philosophers say that he is possessed, is not possessed by him, therefore he is not moved by their talk. Free from covetousness, without avarice, the Muni does not reckon himself amongst the low, he does not enter time, being delivered from time.

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A SELECTION FROM:

**"A GUIDE TO THE BODHISATTVA'S WAY
OF LIFE"**

by Shantideva.

Although they may play with my body
And make it a source of jest and blame,
Because I have given it up to them
What is the use of holding it dear?

Therefore I will let them do anything to it.
That does not cause them any harm.
And when anyone encounters me
May it never be meaningless for them.

Where could I possibly find enough leather
With which to cover the surface of the earth?
But wearing leather just on the soles of my shoes
Is equivalent to covering the whole earth with it.

Just as I would be attentive and careful of a wound
When amidst a bustling uncontrolled crowd,
So I should always guard the wound of my mind.
When dwelling among harmful people.

Should I behave in such a way as this.
Then whether among harmful people
Or even in the midst of women,
The steady effort to control myself will not decline.

Whatever has been learnt, contemplated and meditated upon
By those whose minds lack alertness,
Just like water in a leaking vase

Will not be retained in their memory.

Therefore I shall never let mindfulness depart
From the doorway of my mind.
If it goes, I should recall the misery of the lower realms
And firmly re-establish it there.

When mindfulness is set with the purpose
Of guarding the doorway of the mind,
Then alertness will come about.
And even that which had gone will return.

If I happen to be present
While a senseless conversation is taking place,
Or if I happen to see some kind of spectacular show,
I should abandon attachment to it.

If for no other reason I start digging at the earth,
Picking at the grass or drawing patterns on the ground,
Then by recalling the advice of the Buddhas;
I should immediately stop out of fear.

Do I not see
That he is systematically slaughtering my species?
Whoever remains soundly asleep
Surely behaves like a buffalo with a butcher.

Relying upon the boat of a human body,
Free yourself from the great ocean of suffering.
As it is hard to find this boat again.
This is no time for sleep, you fool.

So, having mounted the horse of an Awakening Mind,
That dispels all discouragement and weariness.
Who, when they know of this mind that proceeds from joy to joy,
Would ever lapse into despondency.

Powerless, their minds disturbed,

People in this world are unable to benefit themselves.
Therefore I shall do it for them.
Since unlike me, these beings are incapable.

When crows encounter a dying snake
They will act as though they were eagles.
Likewise, if my self-confidence is weak
I shall be injured by the slightest downfall.

I will conquer everything
And nothing at all shall conquer me!
I, a son of the Lion-like Conqueror,
Should remain self-confident in this way.

If someone dropped his sword during battle,
He would immediately pick it up out of fear.
Likewise if I lose the weapon of mindfulness
I should quickly retrieve it, being afraid of hell.

Just as poison spreads throughout the body,
In dependence upon the circulation of blood,
Likewise if a disturbing conception finds an opportunity
Unwholesomeness will permeate my mind.

Those who practise should be as attentive
As a frightened man carrying a jar full of mustard oil
Who is being threatened by someone with a sword,
And will be killed if he spills one drop

Just as I would swiftly stand up
If a snake came into my lap
Likewise if any sleep or laziness occur
I shall quickly turn them back.

Each time something unwholesome occurs
I should criticize myself,
And then contemplate for a long time
That I shall never let this happen again.

Why do I make such an effort to polish it (the body)?
Like cleaning a weapon that will cause me harm.
Hence this entire world is disturbed with insanity,
Due to the exertions of those who are confused.

In the same way as animals drawing carriages
Are only able to eat a few mouthfuls of grass,
Likewise desirous people
Have many disadvantages such as these and little profit.

The objects of desire will certainly perish,
And then I shall fall into hellish states.
But Buddhahood itself is attained
With just one millionth of the difficulty.

It is a mistaken conception to think
That I shall experience the suffering of my next life,
For it is another person who dies,
And another that will be reborn.

Although others may do something wrong,
I should transform it into a fault of my own,
But should I do something even slightly wrong,
I shall openly admit it to many people.

Upon analysis this world of living beings is found to have
no true existence.
Therefore who can die here?
What is there to come and what has been?
Who are friends and who are relatives?

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CHRISTIAN PROVERBS

One man pretends to be rich, yet has nothing,
another pretends to be poor, yet has great wealth.

The mocker seeks wisdom and finds none,
but knowledge comes easily to the discerning.

Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent,
and discerning if he holds his tongue.

A sluggard does not plow in season,
so at harvest time, he looks but finds nothing.

Better is open rebuke
than hidden love.

He who rebukes a man will in the end gain
more favour than he who has a flattering tongue.

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SAYINGS OF RAMAKRISHNA

- Knowledge and love of God are ultimately one and the same. There is no difference between pure knowledge and pure love.

- A true devotee who has drunk deeply of Divine Love is like a veritable drunkard, and, as such, cannot always observe the rules of propriety.

- As the lamp does not burn without oil, so man cannot live without God. God is even in the tiger, but we must not go and face the animal! So it is true that God dwells even in the most wicked of men, but it is not meant that we should associate with the wicked.

- The human body is like a boiling pot, and the mind and the senses are like the food cooking within it. The heat does not belong to the pot but to the fire. So it is the fire of Brahman in man that causes the mind and the senses to perform their functions, and when that fire ceases to act, the senses also, or the organs, stop.
 - * Similarly, we are like a fountain. When the power to the water pump is cut-off, the fountain ceases.

- A man who voluntarily goes into a river and bathes therein gets the benefit of the bath; so does likewise he who has been pushed into the river by another, or who while sleeping soundly has water thrown upon him by another.

- The locomotive engine reaches the destination itself, and also draws and takes with it a long train of loaded wagons. So likewise act the Saviours. They carry multitudes of men, heavily laden with the cares and sorrows of the world, to the feet of the Almighty.

- A Sadhu accidentally trod on the toe of a wicked person, who beat him to unconsciousness. His disciples brought him back to consciousness and one of them asked "Sir, do you recognize who is attending upon you?" The Sadhu

replied "He who beat me". A true Sadhu finds no distinction between a friend and a foe.

- When water is poured into an empty vessel a bubbling noise ensues, but when the vessel is full no such noise is heard. Similarly, the man who has not found God is full of vain disputations. But when he has seen Him, all vanities disappear. He is like a deep pool, clear and full.

- A logician once asked Sri Ramakrishna "What are knowledge, knower, and the object known?" To which he replied, "Good man, I do not know all these niceties of scholastic learning. I know only my Mother Divine, and that I am Her son".

- The true Sadhus seem to roam about like children or mad men, in dirty clothes.

- The sage alone can recognize a sage. Just as a specialist in a field of work knows his subject.

- Two men went into a garden. The worldly-wise man no sooner entered the gate than he began to count the number of the mango-trees, how many mangoes each tree bore, and what might be the approximate price of the whole orchard. The other went to the owner, made his acquaintance, and quietly going under a mango tree began to pluck the fruit and eat it with the owners consent. Now who is the wiser of the two? Eat mangoes, it will satisfy your hunger. What is the good of counting the leaves and making vain calculations? The vain man of intellect is uselessly busy in finding out the "why and wherefore" of creation while the humble man of wisdom makes acquaintance with the creator and enjoys the supreme bliss of this world.

- "I must attain perfection in this life, yea, in three days I must find God, nay, with a single utterance of his name I will draw him to me". With such a violent love the Lord is attracted soon. The lukewarm lovers take ages to go to Him, if at all.

- The darkness of centuries is dispersed at once as soon as light is brought into the room. The accumulated ignorances and misdoings of innumerable births vanish before the single glance of the Almighty's gracious look. God is in all men, but all men are not in God; that is the reason why they suffer.

- The waters of a swiftly-flowing current move round and round in eddies, but quickly crossing these they resume their former course. So the hearts of the pious fall sometimes into the whirlpools of despondency, grief and unbelief, but it is only a momentary aberration. It does not last long.

- It is pleasant to scratch pimples and skin irritations, but the consequences are bad. So the pleasures of the world are very pleasant in the beginning, but their after consequences are very terrible to contemplate.

- There is little chance a bushman will get lost if he knows which direction is North. So, if the mind of man is turned always towards God without oscillation, direction will never be lost and one can steer clear of every danger.

- If you can detect and find out the universal illusion or maya, it will fly away from you, just as a thief runs away when found out.

- If you wish to thread the needle, make the thread pointed, and remove all extraneous fibres. Then the thread will pass easily into the eye of the needle. So if thou wishest to concentrate thy heart on God, be meek, humble, poor of spirit, and remove all filaments of desire.

* A frayed and agitated mind has no strength. It needs to be focused to a point to be able to penetrate through the veil of maya.

- The tender bamboo can be easily bent, but the full-grown bamboo breaks when an attempt is made to bend it. It is easy to bend young hearts towards good, but the hearts of the old escape the hold when so drawn.

Q: What do you think of the man who is a good orator and preacher, but whose spirituality is undeveloped?

A: He is like a person who squanders anothers property left in trust with him. The ideas he expresses are not his own, but borrowed.

* The spiritual scriptures are a great treasure, but the foolish mis-use them, and so destroy them altogether, spoiling all the hard work that was done to create them.

- The man who, living in the midst of the temptations of the world, attains perfection, is the true hero.

- When the tail of the tadpole drops off, it can live both in water and on land. When the tail of ignorance drops off, man becomes free. He can then live both in God and in the world equally well.

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TAOIST WRITINGS

- To the sage, neither death nor life makes any change in him, and how much less should the consideration of advantage and injury do so!

- Men in general bustle about and toil, the sagely man seems stupid and to know nothing. He blends ten thousand years together in the One, the myriad things all pursue their spontaneous course, and they are all before him as doing so.

- He who knows the part which the Heavenly in him plays, and knows also that which the Human in him ought to play, has reached the perfection of knowledge.

- The wise men of old did not reject the views of the few, they did not seek to accomplish like heroes before others. Though they might make mistakes they had no occasion for repentance; though they might succeed, they had no self complacency. Being such, they could ascend the loftiest heights without fear; they could pass through water without being made wet by it; they could go into fire without being burnt. They did not dream when they slept, and had no anxiety when they awoke. They did not care that their food should be pleasant. Their breathing came deeply and silently. The breathing of the true man comes from his heels while men generally breathe only from their throats. They knew nothing of the love of life or the hatred of death. Composedly they went and came. They were free from all thought. They beamed simplicity. Profit and injury are the same to them. Their placidity and satisfaction had the appearance of joy; their every movement seemed to be a necessity to them. Unceasing seemed their endeavours to keep their mouths shut. They never incurred punishment. In this way they were one and the same in all their likings and dislikings. Where they liked, they were the same; where they did not like, they were the same.

- Tell a man that he is merely following the opinions of another, or that he is a flatterer of others, and at once he flushes with anger. And yet all his life he is merely following others, and is flattering them! His illustrations are made to agree with theirs, his phrases are glossed - to win the approbation of the

multitudes. From first to last, from beginning to end, he finds no fault with their views. He dresses so as to win the favour of his age, and yet does not call himself a flatterer. He is but a follower of those others, approving or disapproving as they do, and yet he will not say that he is one of them. This is the height of stupidity.

- The stillness of the sages does not belong to them as a consequence of their skillful ability. It is their basic nature.

- The sages ramble in the vacancy of untroubled ease, find their food in the fields of indifference, and stand in the gardens which they had not borrowed.

- There is a vulgar saying: "The multitude of men consider gain to be the most important thing; pure scholars, fame; those who are wise and able value their ambition; the sages prize essential purity". Therefore simplicity is the denomination of that in which there is no admixture. It is he who can embody simplicity and purity whom we call the True Man.

- Some people try to peep at the heavens through a tube, or aim at the earth with an awl. These implements are too small for the purpose. You will find many like this.

- An insect of the summer cannot be talked with about ice; - it knows nothing beyond its own season. A scholar of limited views cannot be talked with about the Tao.

- Don't nourish a bird as you would nourish yourself - you will make them perplexed and frightened. He who would nourish a bird as a bird should be nourished *should* let it perch in a deep forest, or let it float on a river or lake, or let it find its food naturally and undisturbed on the level dry ground.

- Always be peaceful and happy. Things are just as they are. Un-sagely people become renowned as sages and the true sages are often ignored. This is simply owing to the times and its character.

- If a man is crossing a river in a boat, and another empty vessel comes into collision with it, even though he be a man of choleric temper, he will not be angry with it. If a man empty himself of himself, during his time in the world,

who can harm him?

- The spring, the water of which rises and overflows, does not "cultivate", neither should a man. He is like heaven which is high of itself, like the sun which shines of itself, what need is there to cultivate it?

When the Tao was lost, its characteristics appeared. When its characteristics were lost, benevolence appeared. When benevolence was lost, righteousness appeared. When righteousness was lost, ceremonies appeared. Ceremonies are but the unsubstantial flowers of the Tao, and the commencement of disorder.

- By length of time one acquires ability at any art; and how much more one who is ever at work on it!

- Can you become a little child?

The child will cry all the day, without its throat becoming hoarse, so perfect is the harmony of its physical constitution. It will keep its fingers closed all day without relaxing their grasp. It will keep its eyes fixed all day without their moving - so is it unaffected by what is external to it. It walks it knows not whither; it rests where it is placed, it knows not why; it is calmly indifferent to things, and follows their current. This is the regular method for guarding the life.

- A man who is deformed cares little for ornamental clothes and outward appearance. A criminal under sentence of death will ascend to any height without fear of falling. He has ceased to think of life or death. Similarly, a man who abides in the Tao does not reciprocate gifts of friendship, having forgotten "friends". When respect is shown to him it awakens no joy, and contempt awakens no anger. This man resides in Heaven.

- The sage never thinks of Heaven nor men. He does not think of taking the initiative, nor of anything external to himself. He moves along with his age, and does not vary or fail. Amid all the completeness of his doings, he is never exhausted.

- Who is right and who is wrong?

It is said "Someone caused it" or "No one did it", but we are thus debating about things and the end is that we shall find we are in error. We may speak

and we may think about it, but the more we speak, the wider we shall be off the mark. When you look for their origin it goes back to infinity, when I look for their end, it proceeds without termination. The name Tao is a metaphor, used for the purpose of description. Neither speech nor silence is sufficient to convey the notion of it.

- How is a thing right? It is right because it is right. How is a thing wrong? It is wrong because it is wrong.

- To him who does not dwell in himself the forms of things show themselves as they are. His movement is like that of water (flowing), his stillness is like that of a mirror (showing things just as they are). His tenuity makes him seem to be disappearing altogether; he is still as a clear lake, harmonious in his association with others, and he counts gain as loss. Men all prefer to be first, he alone chooses to be last. Men all choose fullness, he alone chooses emptiness. He does not store, and therefore he has a superabundance; he looks solitary, but has a multitude around him. In his conducting himself he is easy and leisurely and wastes nothing. He does nothing, and laughs at the clever and ingenious.

- Observe a man's actions, scrutinize his motives, study what makes him content. It is impossible for a man to conceal himself.

- Not to speak with a man who can be spoken with is to lose a man. To speak to a man who cannot be spoken with is to waste words. He who is truly wise never loses a man, he too, never wastes his words.

- When the multitude detests a man, inquiry is necessary; when the multitude likes a man, inquiry is equally necessary.

- At fifteen I set my mind in learning; at thirty I could stand; at forty I had no doubts; at fifty I knew the Fate; at sixty I was already obedient to the Fate; and at seventy I could follow my hearts desires without transgressing the standards of right.

- Study without thought is labour lost; thought without study is perilous.

- The one who never changes is either the wisest of the wise, or the dullest of

the dull.

- I won't teach a man who is not eager to learn; nor will I explain to one incapable of forming his own ideas. Nor have I anything more to say to those who, after I have made clear one corner of the subject, cannot deduce the other three.

- If a man is always aware of what he lacks and also what he has learned, he is indeed fond of learning.

- Remember the end and aim of learning, whilst you are constantly engaged in it.

- If a man fails to have a firm hold of virtue and has no firm faith in the Tao, what account can be made of him if he lives? What account can be made of him if he dies?

- If trees are felled day after day on a hillside it becomes denuded. So it is with the human heart. Given a chance, it regenerates.

- When a man's physical body is not straight he feels dissatisfied and seeks to fix it. But when his mind is not straight he doesn't feel dissatisfaction. This is called ignorance of the relative importance of things.

- I hate what seems right, but what in reality is wrong. I hate the danel lest it be confused with the corn. I hate the glib talker lest he be confused with the righteous. I hate the good careful villagers, lest they be confused with the virtuous.

- Words that are simple but profound in meaning are good words. Principles that are condensed but comprehensive in application are good principles.

- One who shrugs shoulders and feigns flattering smiles is more exhausted than a field labourer toiling in summer.

- No part of a man's body is more vital than the pupil of the eye. Listen to his

words and look into his eyes. How can a man conceal his true self?

- Only when a man of worth has himself been enlightened does he try to enlighten others. Nowadays however, one tries to enlighten others while oneself is in darkness.

- To accomplish without acting and to obtain without seeking - this is what is meant by the function of Heaven. Although the Tao of Heaven is profound, the great man will not deliberate on it, although it is great, he will not devote his energy to it, although it is meticulous, he will not scrutinize it. This is what is meant by refraining from contesting with Heaven.

- To speak with much refinement and coherence, to discourse for a whole day with various reasonings and different approaches, but to concentrate on one subject - this is the wisdom of the sage. The scholar speaks eloquently according to the rules of public speaking, but does not possess true wisdom.

- If you do not know a person, look at his friends.

- When enough earth is accumulated to make a mountain, wind and rain arise. When much goodness is accumulated, spiritual enlightenment comes of itself, and the sagely heart is attained.

- To offer instruction without being asked is impetuous, to speak about two things when asked about one is talkative.

- If a man learns much, but does not learn the Tao, then, to the end of his days he will not be more than an absurd scholar.

- The selfish man, although he may ride in a coach and wear a crown, is no different from a footless cripple. He can be called one who makes himself a servant of those things he admires.

- Everything has its roots and branches. Affairs have their beginning and end. To know what comes first and what comes last is to be near to the Tao.

- A single word may ruin an enterprise, and a single man may pacify the state.

- Let me have one minister who is faithful and sincere, who does not pretend to other abilities, who has an upright and tolerant heart; who, seeing abilities in other men, values them as if they were his own, and, hearing sagacious wisdom from other men, loves it as though it were from his own mouth, showing that he is open-minded.

- When there is sincerity there is enlightenment. When there is enlightenment there is sincerity.

- It is only the individual possessed of supreme sincerity who can give full development to his nature. Able to give full development to his nature, he can give full development to the nature of all men. Able to give full development to the nature of all men, he can give full development to the nature of all things. Able to give full development to the nature of all things, he can assist the transforming and nurturing processes of Heaven and earth. Able to assist the transforming and nurturing processes of Heaven and earth, he may, with Heaven and earth, form a triad.

- Don't get attached to words and debate. At best you will be known as a good debater. This is of no value at all!

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SELECTED VERSES
FROM THE
THE TAO TE CHING

The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao.
The name that can be named is not the eternal name.
The nameless is the beginning of heaven and earth.
The named is the Mother of ten thousand things.
Ever desireless, one can see the mystery.
Ever desiring, one can see the manifestations.
These two spring from the same source but differ in name;
 this appears as darkness.
The gate to all mystery.

Under heaven all can see beauty as beauty only because
 there is ugliness.
All can know good as good only because there is evil.

Therefore having and not having arise together.
Difficulty and easy complement each other.
Long and short contrast each other;
High and low rest upon each other;
Voice and sound harmonize each other;
Front and back follow one another.

Therefore the sage goes about doing nothing, teaching no-talking.
The ten thousand things rise and fall without cease;
Creating, yet not possessing,
Working, yet not taking credit.
Work is done, then forgotten.
Therefore it lasts forever.

Not exalting the gifted prevents quarreling.
Not collecting treasures prevents stealing.
Not seeing desirable things prevents confusion of the heart.

The wise therefore rule by emptying hearts and stuffing bellies,

by weakening ambitions and strengthening bones.
If men lack knowledge and desire, then clever people will
not try to interfere.
If nothing is done, then all will be well.

The Tao is an empty vessel; it is used, but never filled.
Oh, unfathomable source of ten thousand things!
Blunt the sharpness,
Untangle the knot,
Soften the glare,
Merge with dust.
Oh, hidden deep but ever present!
I do not know from whence it comes.
It is the forefather of the emperors.

Heaven and earth are ruthless.
They see the ten thousand things as dummies.
The wise are ruthless;
They see the people as dummies.

The space between heaven and earth is like a bellows.
The shape changes, but not the form;
The more it changes, the more it yields.
More words count less.
Hold fast to the centre.

The valley spirit never dies;
It is the woman, primal mother.
Her gateway is the root of heaven and earth.
It is like a veil barely seen.
Use it, it will never fail.

Heaven and earth last forever.
Why do Heaven and earth last forever?
They are unborn,
So ever living.
The sage stays behind, thus he is ahead.
He is detached, thus at one with all.

Through selfless action, he attains fulfillment.

Carrying body and soul and embracing the one,
Can you avoid separation?
Attending fully and becoming supple,
Can you be as a newborn babe?
Washing and cleansing the primal vision,
Can you be without a stain?
Loving all men and ruling the country,
Can you be without cleverness?
Opening and closing the gates of heaven,
Can you play the role of a woman?
Understanding and being open to all things,
Are you able to do nothing?
Giving birth and nourishing,
Bearing yet not possessing,
Working yet not taking credit,
Leading yet not dominating,
This is the Primal Virtue.

Look, it cannot be seen - it is beyond form.
Listen, it cannot be heard - it is beyond sound.
Grasp, it cannot be held - it is intangible.
These three are indefinable;
Therefore they are joined in one.

From above it is not bright;
From below it is not dark.
An unbroken thread beyond description.
It returns to nothingness.
The form of the formless,
The image of the imageless,
It is called indefinable and beyond imagination.

Stand before it and there is no beginning.
Follow it and there is no end.
Stay with the ancient Tao,
Move with the present.

Knowing the ancient beginning is the essence of Tao.

The ancient masters were subtle, mysterious, profound
and responsive.

The depth of their knowledge is unfathomable.

Because it is unfathomable,

All we can do is describe their appearance.

Watchful, like men crossing a winter stream.

Alert, like men aware of danger.

Courteous, like visiting guests.

Yielding, like ice about to melt.

Simple, like uncarved blocks of wood.

Hollow, like caves.

Opaque, like muddy pools.

Who can wait quietly while the mud settles?

Who can remain still until the moment of action?

Observers of the Tao do not seek fulfillment.

Not seeking fulfillment, they are not swayed
by desire for change.

Empty yourself of everything.

Let the mind rest at peace.

The ten thousand things rise and fall while the Self
watches their return.

They grow and flourish and then return to the source.

Returning to the source is stillness, which is the way
of nature.

The way of nature is unchanging.

Not knowing constancy leads to disaster,

Knowing constancy, the mind is open.

With an open mind, you will be openhearted.

Being openhearted, you will act royally.

Being royal, you will attain the divine.

Being divine, you will be at one with the Tao.

Being at one with the Tao is eternal.

And though the body dies, the Tao will never pass away.

When the great Tao is forgotten,

Kindness and morality arise.

When wisdom and intelligence are born,

The great pretence begins.

When there is no peace within the family,
Filial piety and devotion arise.
When the country is confused and in chaos,
Loyal ministers appear.

Give up learning, and put an end to your troubles.
Is there a difference between yes and no?
Is there a difference between good and evil?
Must I fear what others fear?
What nonsense!
Other people are contented, enjoying the sacrificial
feast of the ox.
In spring some go to the park, and climb the terrace,
But I alone am drifting, not knowing where I am.
Like a newborn babe before it learns to smile,
I am alone, without a place to go.

Others have more than they need, but I alone have
nothing.
I am a fool. Oh, yes! I am confused.
Other men are clear and bright,
But I alone am dim and weak.
Other men are sharp and clever,
But I alone am dull and stupid.
Oh, I drift like the waves of the sea,
Without direction, like the restless wind.

Everyone else is busy,
But I alone am aimless and depressed.
I am different.
I am nourished by the great mother.

The greatest virtue is to follow the Tao and the Tao
alone.
The Tao is elusive and intangible.
Oh, it is intangible and elusive, and yet within is
image.
Oh, it is elusive and intangible, and yet within is
form.
Oh, it is dim and dark, and yet within is essence.
This essence is very real, and therein lies faith.
From the very beginning until now its name has never

been forgotten.
Thus I perceive the creation.
How do I know the ways of creation?
Because of this.

He who stands on tiptoe is not steady.
He who strides cannot maintain the pace.
He who makes a show is not enlightened.
He who is self-righteous is not respected.
He who boasts achieves nothing.
He who brags will not endure.
According to followers of the Tao,
"These are extra and unnecessary luggage."
They do not bring happiness.
Therefore followers of the Tao avoid them.

Something mysteriously formed.
Born before heaven and earth.
In the silence and the void,
Standing alone and unchanging,
Ever present and in motion.
Perhaps it is the mother of ten thousand things.
I do not know its name.
Call it Tao.
For lack of a better word, I call it great.

Being great it flows,
It flows far away.
Having gone far, it returns.

Therefore "Tao is great;
Heaven is great;
Earth is great;
The King is also great".

The heavy is the root of the light;
The still is the master of unrest.

Therefore the sage, travelling by day,
Does not lose sight of his baggage.

Though there are beautiful things to be seen,
He remains unattached and calm.

Why should the lord of ten thousand chariots act lightly
in public?
To be light is to lose ones root.
To be restless is to lose ones control.

What is a good man?
A teacher of a bad man.
What is a bad man?
A good man's charge.
If the teacher is not respected,
And the student not cared for,
Confusion will arise, however clever one is.
This is the crux of mystery.

Know the strength of a man,
But keep a woman's care!
Be the stream of the universe!
Being the stream of the universe,
Ever true and unswerving,
Become a little child once more.

Know the white,
But keep the black!
Be an example to the world!
Being an example to the world,
Ever true and unswerving,
Return to the infinite.

The Tao is forever undefined.
Small though it is in the unformed state, it cannot be
grasped.
If kings and lords could harness it,
The ten thousand things would naturally obey.
Heaven and earth would come together,
And a gentle rain fall.
Men would need no more instruction, and all things would
take their course.

Once the whole is divided, the parts need names.
There are already enough names.
One must know when to stop.
Knowing when to stop averts trouble.
Tao in the world is like a river flowing home to the sea.

The great Tao flows everywhere, both to the left and to
the right.
The ten thousand things depend on it; it holds nothing
back.
It fulfils its purpose silently and makes no claim.

It nourishes the ten thousand things,
And yet is not their lord.
It has no aim; it is very small.

The ten thousand things return to it,
Yet it is not their lord.
It is very great.

It does not show greatness,
And is therefore truly great.

That which shrinks must first expand.
That which fails must first be strong.
That which is cast down must first be raised.
Before receiving, there must be giving.

This is called perception of the nature of things.
Soft and weak overcome hard and strong.

Fish cannot leave deep waters,
And a country's weapons should not be displayed.

Therefore when the Tao is lost, there is goodness.
When goodness is lost, there is kindness.
When kindness is lost, there is justice.
When justice is lost, there is ritual.
Now ritual is the husk of faith and loyalty, the

beginning of confusion.
Knowledge of the future is only a flowery trapping of
Tao.
It is the beginning of folly.

Therefore the truly great man dwells on what is real and
not what is on the surface.
On the fruit and not the flower.
Therefore accept the one and reject the other.

The wise student hears the Tao and practices it
diligently.
The average student hears of the Tao and gives it
thought now and again.
The foolish student hears of the Tao and laughs aloud.
If there were no laughter, the Tao would not be what it is.

Hence it is said: The bright path seems dim;
Going forward seems like retreat;
The easy way seems hard;
The highest Virtue seems empty;
Great Purity seems sullied;
A wealth of Virtue seems inadequate;
The strength of Virtue seems frail:
Real Virtue seems unreal;
The perfect square has no corners;
Great talents ripen late;
The highest notes are hard to hear;
The greatest form has no shape;
The Tao is hidden and without name.
The Tao alone nourishes and brings everything to
fulfilment.

The Tao begot one.
One begot two.
Two begot three.
And three begot the ten thousand things.

Great accomplishment seems imperfect,
Yet it does not outlive its usefulness.

Great fullness seems empty,
Yet it cannot be exhausted.

Great straightness seems twisted,
Great intelligence seems stupid.
Great eloquence seems awkward.

There is no greater sin than desire,
No greater curse than discontent,
No greater misfortune than wanting something for
oneself.
Therefore he who knows that enough is enough will always
have enough.

Without going outside, you may know the whole world.
Without looking through the window, you may see the ways
of heaven.
The farther you go, the less you know.

Thus the sage knows without travelling;
He sees without looking;
He works without doing.

In the pursuit of learning, every day something is acquired.
In the pursuit of the Tao, every day something is dropped.

Less and less is done
Until non-action is achieved.
When nothing is done, nothing is left undone.

The world is ruled by letting things take their course.
It cannot be ruled by interfering.

The sage has no mind of his own.
He is aware of the needs of others.

I am good to people who are good.
I am also good to people who are not good.

Because Virtue is goodness.
I have faith in people who are faithful.
I also have faith in people who are not faithful.
Because Virtue is faithfulness.

The sage is shy and humble - to the world he seems
confusing.
Men look to him and listen.
He behaves like a little child.

Between birth and death,
Three in ten are followers of life,
Three in ten are followers of death,
And men just passing from birth to death also number
three in ten.
Why is this so?
Because they live their lives on the gross level.

He who knows how to live can walk abroad.
Without fear of rhinoceros or tiger.
He will not be wounded in battle.
For in him rhinoceroses can find no place to thrust
their horn,
Tigers no place to use their claws,
And weapons no place to pierce.
Why is this so?
Because he has no place for death to enter.

All things arise from Tao.
They are nourished by Virtue.
They are formed from matter.
They are shaped by environment.
Thus the ten thousand things all respect Tao and
honor Virtue.
Respect of Tao and honor of Virtue are not demanded,
But they are in the nature of things.

Therefore all things arise from Tao.
By Virtue they are nourished,
Developed, cared for,
Sheltered, comforted,
Grown, and protected.

Creating without claiming,
Doing without taking credit,
Guiding without interfering,
This is Primal Virtue.

The beginning of the universe
Is the mother of all things.
Knowing the mother, one also knows the sons.
Knowing the sons, yet remaining in touch with the
 mother,
Brings freedom from the fear of death.

Keep your mouth shut,
Guard the senses,
And life is ever full.
Open your mouth,
Always be busy,
And life is beyond hope.

Seeing the small is insight;
Yielding to force is strength.
Using the outer light, return to insight,
And in this way be saved from harm.
This is learning constancy.

If I have even just a little sense,
I will keep on the main road and my only fear will be
 straying from it.
Keeping to the main road is easy.
But people love to be sidetracked.

What is firmly established cannot be uprooted.
What is firmly grasped cannot slip away.
It will be honoured generation to generation.

Cultivate Virtue in your self,
And Virtue will be real.
Cultivate it in the family,
And Virtue will abound.
Cultivate it in the village,

And Virtue will grow.
Cultivate it in the nation,
And Virtue will be abundant.
Cultivate it in the universe,
And Virtue will be everywhere.

Therefore look at the body as body;
Look at the family as family;
Look at the village as village;
Look at the nation as nation;
Look at the universe as universe.

How do I know the universe is like this?
By looking!

He who is filled with Virtue is like a newborn child.
Wasps and serpents will not sting him;
Wild beasts will not pounce upon him.
He will not be attacked by birds of prey.
His bones are soft, his muscles weak,
But his grip is firm.
He has not experienced the union of man and woman, but
is whole.
His manhood is strong.
He screams all day without becoming hoarse.
This perfect harmony.

Knowing harmony is constancy.
Knowing constancy is enlightenment.

It is not wise to rush about.
Controlling the breath causes strain.
If too much energy is used, exhaustion follows.
This is not the way of Tao.
Whatever is contrary to Tao will not last long.

Those who know do not talk.
Those who talk do not know.

Keep your mouth closed.
Guard the senses.
Temper your sharpness.

Simplify your problems.
Mask your brightness.
Be at one with the dust of the earth.
This is primal union.

He who has achieved this state
Is unconcerned with friends and enemies,
With good and harm, with honour and disgrace.
This therefore is the highest state of man.

The sage says:

I take no action and people are reformed.
I enjoy peace and people become honest.
I do nothing and people become rich.
I have no desires and people return to the good and
simple life.

When the country is ruled with a light hand,
The people are simple.
When the country is ruled with severity,
The people are cunning.

Happiness is rooted in misery.
Misery lurks beneath happiness.
Who knows what the future holds?
There is no honesty.
Honesty becomes dishonest.
Goodness becomes witchcraft.
Man's bewitchment lasts for a long time.

Therefore the sage is sharp but not cutting,
Pointed but not piercing.

Practice non-action.
Work without doing.
Taste the tasteless.
Magnify the small, increase the few.
Reward bitterness with care.

See simplicity in the complicated.
Achieve greatness in little things.

In the universe the difficult things are done as if they
were easy.
In the universe great acts are made up of small deeds.
The sage does not attempt anything big,
And thus he achieves greatness.

Easy promises make for little trust.
Taking things lightly results in great difficulty.
Because the sage always confronts difficulties,
He never experiences them.

Peace is easily maintained;
Trouble is easily overcome before it starts.
The brittle is easily shattered;
The small is easily scattered.

Deal with it before it happens.
Set things in order before there is confusion.

A tree as great as a man's embrace springs from a small
shoot;
A terrace nine stories high begins with a pile of earth;
A journey of a thousand miles starts under one's feet.

He who acts defeats his own purpose;
He who grasps loses.
The sage does not act, and so is not defeated.
He does not grasp and therefore does not lose.

People usually fail when they are on the verge of
success.
So give as much care to the end as to the beginning;
Then there will be no failure.

Therefore the sage seeks freedom from desire.
He does not collect precious things.
He learns not to hold on to ideas.
He brings men back to what they have lost.
He helps the ten thousand things find their own nature,
But refrains from action.

Everyone under heaven says that my Tao is great and
beyond compare.
Because it is great, it seems different.
If it were not different, it would have vanished long ago.

I have three treasures which I hold and keep. The first is mercy;
the second is economy;
The third is daring not to be ahead of others.
From mercy comes courage; from economy comes generosity;
From humility comes leadership.

Nowadays men shun mercy, but try to be brave;
They abandon economy, but try to be generous;
They do not believe in humility, but always try to be first.
This is certain death.

Mercy brings victory in battle and strength in defense.
It is the means by which heaven saves and guards.

My words are easy to understand, and easy to perform,
Yet no man under heaven knows them or practices them.

My words have ancient beginnings.
My actions are disciplined.
Because men do not understand, they have no knowledge of me.

Those that know me are few;
Those that abuse me are honoured.
Therefore the sage wears rough clothing and holds the
jewel in his heart.

Knowing ignorance is strength.
Ignoring knowledge is sickness.

If one is sick of sickness, then one is not sick.
The sage is not sick, because he is sick of sickness.

The Tao of heaven does not strive, and yet it overcomes.
It does not speak, and yet is answered.

It does not ask, yet is supplied with all it needs.
It seems at ease, and yet it follows a plan.

Heavens net casts wide.
Though its meshes are coarse, nothing slips through.

The Tao of heaven is to take from those who have too
much and give to those who do not have enough.
Man's way is different.
He takes from those who do not have enough to give to
those who already have too much.
What man has more than enough and gives it to the world?
Only the sage.

Therefore the sage works without recognition.
He achieves what has to be done without dwelling on it.
He does not try to show his knowledge.

After a bitter quarrel, some resentment must remain.
What can be done about it?
Therefore the sage keeps his half of the bargain,
But does not exact his due.
A man of Virtue performs his part,
But a man without Virtue requires others to fulfil their
obligations.
The Tao of heaven is impartial.
It stays with good men all the time.

Truthful words are not beautiful.
Beautiful words are not truthful.
Good men do not argue.
Those who do argue are not good.
Those who know are not learned.
The learned do not know.

The sage never tries to store things up.
The more he does for others, the more he has.
The more he gives to others, the greater his abundance.
The Tao of heaven is pointed but does not harm.

The Tao of the sage is work without effort.

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ZEN TEACHINGS

Student: What is meant by, "proficiency in teaching but not in Transmission."

Master: It refers to those whose words are at variance with their deeds.

Student: Is there really a hell?

Master: There is and there is not. Our minds have constructed many kinds of deluded thoughts. There is hell. But for those who realize their True nature, there is no hell.

- Understand the one point, and a thousand others will accordingly grow clear; misunderstand that one and ten thousand delusions will encompass you. He who holds to that one has no more problems to solve.

- If the meaning is not brilliantly clear to you, hasten to ask your questions. Do not allow hours to pass you in vain. If you people put your trust in this teaching and act accordingly, without being delivered, I shall gladly take your places in hell for the whole of my existence. If I have deceived you, may I be reborn in a place where lions, tigers and wolves will devour my flesh! But, if you do not put faith in this teaching, and do not practice it diligently, that will be because you do not understand it. Once you have lost a human body, you will not obtain another for millions of aeons. Strive on! Strive on! It is absolutely vital that you come to understand.

Master: Who spoke the diamond sutra?

Student: You must be joking, of course you know that it was spoken by Buddha.

Master: Well, that sutra states "If someone says the Tathagata expounds the Dharma he thereby slanders the Buddha! Such a man will never understand what I mean." But if you say it was not spoken by the Buddha you will be misinforming!

Student: What is really the Buddha?

Master: What do you suppose is not Buddha? Point it out to me!

Student: Is there anything in the world more marvellous than the forces of Nature?

Master: There is - the power of comprehending those natural forces.

Student: Is Cosmic vitality the Tao?

Master: Cosmic vitality is cosmic vitality. The Tao is the Tao.

Student: If so, they must be two different things.

Master: That which knows does not proceed from two different persons.

Student: What is wrong and what is right?

Master: Wrong is the mind that attends to externals; right is the mind that brings externals under control.

Student: Do you know where you will be reborn?

Master: "That which undergoes birth is really unborn" said the Patriarch. What is the use of the unborn talking of rebirth.

Student: Do you make efforts in your practice of the Way?

Master: Yes.

Student: How?

Master: When hungry I eat, when tired I sleep.

- Zen Masters grasp at essentials and gain a direct understanding of the Mind Source. Their methods consist of revealing and hiding, of exposing and covering reality in a criss-cross manner which responds adequately to all the different grades of potentiality (for Enlightenment). They excel in harmonizing facts with the underlying principle, so that people may suddenly

perceive the Tathagata; and by pulling up their deep samsaric roots, they cause their pupils to experience samadhi on the spot.

- It is written in a sutra "In all the Buddha-realms of the Ten Quarters, there is only the one Dharma of the One Vehicle" - there is neither a second or a third, except in so far as the Buddha employed relative terms in his expedient teachings for the guidance of sentient beings. Whether a man remains deluded or gains illumination depends on himself, not upon differences or similarity of doctrine.

Student: Why do the Vinaya (school of discipline) masters not believe in Zen?

Master: The Noumenon is profoundly mysterious and not easily revealed, whereas names and forms are easy to grasp. Those who do not perceive their self-nature refuse to believe in it, those who do perceive their self-nature are called Buddhas.

- Since fundamentally you are not bound, why seek deliverance? The Dharma is beyond mere words, speech and writings. Do not seek it amidst a plethora of sentences. The Dharma does not pertain to past, present or future; you cannot write with it at the level of causal law. The Dharma transcends everything and is incomparable. The Dharmakaya, though immaterial, manifests itself in response to the needs of living beings; so you cannot turn away from the worldly to seek deliverance.

Regarding blame . . .

- When a tearing wind snaps off a branch which falls and kills somebody, there is no murderer and no murdered.

Student: How shall we understand that which is beyond the reach of words?

Master: Now, while you are speaking, what is there which cannot be reached by your words?

- While deluded people are talking of ordinary and holy, Illumined men leap over Samsara and Nirvana - both! While deluded people set their hopes on some far distant aeon, illumined men instantly perceive all.

Student: If you are enlightened then do some magic for me.

Master: Are you yourself enlightened?

Student: No.

Master: Since you are but an ordinary monk, how can you ask questions about matters like that? This is what a sutra means by saying "The virtuous one's mind is turned upside down and does not accord with the Buddha Wisdom."

Student: If you believe that I will not die then show me that I won't.

Master: Do you believe there will be a morrow.

Student: Yes, certainly.

Master: Then bring it forth and show it to me! . . . The morrow may not be just now, but this doesn't mean it doesn't exist! You personally do not perceive your own nature, but this does not mean that your nature does not exist!

- Bodhisattvas are inherent in men and are not to be separated from the One Mind. Awake to it, and it is there. You students of the Way who do not awake to this in your own minds, and who are attached to appearances or who seek for something objective outside your own minds, have all turned your backs on the Way. That which is before you is it, in all its fullness, utterly complete. You add nothing to it in your search for it.

- If you students of the Way wish to become Buddhas, you need study no doctrine whatever, but learn only how to avoid seeking for and attaching yourself to anything. Where nothing is sought this implies Mind unborn, where no attachment exists, this implies Mind not destroyed.

- Relinquishment of *everything* is the Dharma, and he who understands this is a Buddha, but the relinquishment of ALL delusions leaves no Dharma in which to lay hold.

- If only you will avoid concepts of existence and non- existence in regard to absolutely everything, you will then perceive the Dharma.

- To the city of illusions? . . . there are many directions, and stages of the path and so on. But to the city of Precious things? . . . this is a place to which no directions can be given. When you have a tacit understanding of its substance,

it is there.

- Many people are afraid to empty their minds lest they plunge into the Void. They do not know that their own Mind *is* the void. The ignorant eschew phenomena but not thought; the wise eschew thought but not phenomena. When everything inside and outside, bodily and mental, has been relinquished; when, as in the Void, no attachments are left; when all action is dictated purely by place and circumstance; when subjectivity and objectivity are forgotten - that is the highest form of relinquishment.

- When thoughts of the past cannot be taken hold of, that is relinquishment of the past. When thoughts of the present cannot be taken hold of, that is relinquishment of the present. When thoughts of the future cannot be taken hold of, that is relinquishment of the future. This is called the utter relinquishment of Triple time.

Student: What instructions have Masters everywhere given for study of the Dharma?

Master: Words used to attract the dull of wit are not to be relied on.

Student: Then where do I hear Dharma that is taught to men of high capacity?

Master: You will find the teaching nowhere. Men of high capacity do not seek teachers of words. They see nothing tangible in themselves, nor do they see any other thing as tangible. Do not look for Dharma, for what sort of Dharma could that be? Seek nothing, and you will save yourself a lot of mental effort.

Student: Up to now, you have only refuted everything which has been said. You have done nothing to point out the true Dharma to us. We are confused.

Master: In the true Dharma there is no confusion, but you produce confusion by such questions. What sort of "True Dharma" can you go seeking for? . . . Just observe things as they are and don't pay attention to other people. There are some people just like mad dogs barking at everything that moves, even barking when the wind stirs among the grass and leaves.

- "Studying the Way" is a figure of speech. It is a method of arousing peoples interest in the early stages of their development. In fact, the Way is not something that can be studied. Study leads to the retention of concepts and so the Way is entirely misunderstood. The fruit of Truth is gained by putting an

end to all anxiety; it does not come from book-learning.

- All great men have abandoned learning and have come to rest in spontaneity. They do not think and end in perplexity as do worldly men.

Student: What sort of mind is meant by "Mind is the Buddha"?

Master: How many minds have you got?

Student: But is the Buddha the ordinary mind or the Enlightened mind?

Master: Where on earth do you keep your "ordinary mind" and your "Enlightened mind"?

You go on misunderstanding Mind. You direct your thoughts outwards where they gallop about like horses! All this amounts to beclouding your own minds! So I tell you Mind is the Buddha.

Beginningless time and the present moment are the same. There is no this and no that.

Student: What is meant by relative truth?

Master: What would you do with such a parasitical plant as that? Reality is perfect purity, why base discussions on false terms. To be absolutely without concepts is called the Wisdom of Dispassion.

- If you would spend all your time - walking, standing, sitting or lying down - learning to halt the concept-forming activities of your own mind, you could be sure of ultimately attaining your goal. Since your strength is insufficient, you might not be able to transcend samsara in a single leap; but after five or ten years, you would surely have made a good beginning and be able to make further progress spontaneously. It is because you are not that sort of man that you feel obliged to employ your mind "studying the Way". What has all that got to do with Buddhism?

- Concentrate your thoughts for a moment and avoid thinking in terms of good and evil. While you are not thinking of good, and not thinking of evil, just at this very moment, return to what you were before your father and mother were born.

- So, just discard all you have acquired as being no better than a bedspread for you when you were sick. Only when you have abandoned all perceptions, there being nothing objective to perceive; only when phenomena obstruct you no longer; only when you have rid yourself of the whole gamut of dualistic concepts of the "ignorant" and "Enlightened" category, will you at last earn the title of Transcendental Buddha.

Student: Does the essential substance of the Buddha differ at all from that of sentient beings or are they identical?

Master: Essential substance partakes neither of identity nor difference.

- Do not take part in up-and-down samsara, it is like a whirling chaos. I advise you to remain uniformly quiescent and above all activity. Perfection, is like a deep sea of wisdom. Do not deceive yourselves with conceptual thinking, and do not look anywhere for the truth, for all that is needed is to refrain from allowing concepts to arise. The way of the Buddhas (if conceived objectively) is as dangerous to you as the way of the demons.

- When you are thinking deluded thoughts you think "Where is Buddha?". But when you get rid of them there is no Buddha. If you refrain from conceptualizing altogether, where could the Buddha continue to exist? The moment you conceptualize you are hemmed-in by two iron mountains (as was Manjushri, in the tale where he thought of which way to go, and was immediately barred by two iron mountains). As soon as you conceive of Buddha, you are forced to conceive of sentient beings, or of concepts and non-concepts, or inherent existence and non-inherent existence, which will surely imprison you between two iron mountains.

Student: How do Buddhas have vast mercy and compassion?

Master: We speak of their mercy and compassion as "vast" just because it is beyond causality (and is therefore infinite). By "mercy" is really meant not conceiving of a Buddha to be Enlightened, while compassion really means not conceiving of sentient beings to be delivered.

- So long as your mind is subject to the slightest movement of thought, you will remain engulfed in the error of taking "ignorant" and "Enlightened" for separate states; this error will persist regardless of your vast knowledge of the Mahayana or your ability to pass through the "Four Grades of Sainthood" and the "Ten stages of Progress leading to Enlightenment". For all these pursuits

belong to what is ephemeral; even the most strenuous of your efforts is doomed to fail, just as an arrow shot never so high into the air must inevitably fall spent to the ground. Indulging in such practices implies your failure to understand the Buddha's real meaning. Surely the endurance of so much unnecessary suffering is nothing but a gigantic error, isn't it?

- The words of the Buddha were intended merely as efficacious expedients for leading men out of the darkness of worse ignorance. It was as though one pretended yellow leaves were gold to stop the flow of a child's tears.

- If you have the merest intention to indulge in conceptual thinking, behold, your very intention will place you in the clutch of demons. Similarly, a conscious lack of such intention, or even a consciousness that you do not have no such intention.

- As soon as the mouth is opened, evils spring forth. People either neglect the root and speak of the branches, or neglect the reality of the "illusory" world and speak only of Enlightenment. Or else they chatter of cosmic activities leading to transformations, while neglecting the Substance from which they spring - indeed there is never any profit in discussion.

- This Dharma of Thusness when "grasped" is "grasped", but he who "grasps" it is no more conscious of having done so than someone ignorant of it is conscious of his failure.

- Any search for the Buddha is doomed to failure. Some madman shrieking on a mountain-top, on hearing the echo far below, may go to seek it in the valley. But Oh, how vain is his search! Once in the valley, he shrieks again and straightaway climbs to search among the peaks - why, he may spend a thousand rebirths searching for the source of those sounds by following their echoes! Far better that you make no sound, for then there will be no echo.

- Imagine pearls in a bowl. Each one is completely unaware of the others and none causes the least obstruction to the rest. During their formation, they did not say "Now I am coming into being"; and when they begin to decay, they will not say "Now I am decaying". We are the same. There should be no "I see" and "I here".

- I assure you that all things have been free from bondage since the very

beginning. So why attempt to EXPLAIN them? Why attempt to purify what has never been defiled?

- You must refrain from conceptions. A man drinking water knows well enough if it is cold or warm.

- The world is full of vexations arising from the transitory phenomena around us. Straining our minds does not help us to understand how Buddhas transcend all things. Once, Gautama measured out three thousand chiliochosms (each containing a myriad worlds), a Bodhisattva suddenly appeared and passed over them in a single stride. Yet even that prodigious stride failed to cover the width of one pore of the Buddha's skin! Now what sort of mental attainments have you that will help you to study the meaning of that?

- The Buddhas do not shun samsara, as it is Nirvana. On manifesting themselves in the world, they seize dung-shovels to rid themselves of all such rubbish as books containing metaphysics and sophistry.

- Avoid thinking in terms of past, present and future. The past has not gone; the present is not a fleeting moment, and the future is not yet to come.

It is sometimes said, "The past is dead, the future is yet to come, and the present is but a fleeting moment. So where is 'time'?"

- A pupil once arrived at his Master's house exhausted from playing polo. "Are you tired?" asked the Master. "Yes Master". "Were the ponies tired?". "Yes, Master". "Was the goal-post tired? "

- There is nothing infinite apart from finite things.

- A young monk felt proud that he had memorized all the scriptures. But when the Master asked him "Where do you go when you have died" he couldn't answer. He became a hermit, after many years he "awoke" to the sound of a pebble hitting a bamboo shoot.

- If you know that fundamentally there is nothing to seek, you have settled your affairs. But because you have little faith, you run about agitatedly, seeking your head which you think you have lost.

- Master Rinzai warned his students "All I am talking about is only medicine appropriate for curing specific ailments. In my talks there is nothing absolutely real."

- "The heart is the Buddha" is the medicine. "No heart, no Buddha" is to cure those who are sick because of the medicine.

- *Student:* Is an awakened man still subject to the law of cause and effect?

Master: He does not obscure it.

- Master Nansen was washing his clothes. A monk asked "Is the Master still doing such things?". Master Nansen, holding up his clothes, asked "What is to be done with them".

- *Student:* What is the Buddha?

Master: The one in the hall.

Student: But that one is only an image, a lump of clay.

Master: That is so.

Student: So what is the Buddha?

Master: The one in the hall.

- *Student:* What is it we use every day but do not know it?

Master: We use it every day but we do not know it.

- When hungry I eat, when tired I sleep. Fools laugh at me. The wise understand.

- If one son leaves his home to become a monk, seven generations of parents will gain the Way.

- One man, just from being in the company of an enlightened man can reach enlightenment - without any study. It is like walking through fog or dew.

Although you do not actually wet your garment, it gradually becomes damp.

- After so much suffering in Nirvanic castles
What a joy to sink into this world!
People wear silk clothes
Buddhas dress in rags
A wooden man walking in the evening
A stone woman with a bonnet -
For the first time you will see,
When you can cup your hands,
And pick up the moon as it floats on the still surface of a pond.

- Socrates used to go around Athens saying "You must know yourself". Once a student of his asked him "Do *you* know yourself? ". Socrates said "I don't know, but I understand this don't know.

- *Student*: What is the true way for women?

Master: What is woman?

- On plastic flowers: "I don't like plastic" is just as much an attachment as "I like plastic". If you are attached to plastic your whole mind becomes plastic. Put it all down. The sea doesn't say to a river "your water is dirty, you can't flow into me". It accepts all waters, which make it the sea.

- *Master*: "The mouse eats cat-food, but the cat bowl is broken". What does this mean?

Student: The mouse eats cat-food, but the cat bowl is broken.

Master: Correct, don't be attached to the words.

- *Student*: What is the Absolute?

Master: Where does the question come from? . . . It is something that *can't* be understood. If you could understand it, it wouldn't be absolute.

Student: Then why do you talk about it?

Master: If I talk about it you ask questions. That is how I teach, and how you learn.

- *Student*: When you say you are here to save all people, does that mean only to help them to get enlightened, or also to save them from hunger, war and pain?

Master: I have already finished saving all people - put it down. Okay?

- You think that the whole world is suffering, and you are afraid the world will be destroyed. You want to save all the people from suffering. So you are a great Bodhisattva, a great man. But a *truly* great man is not attached to anything, not enlightenment, not Bodhisattva. He has no words of speech - only *action*. Go outside and ask a tree what the true way is. It will give you a good answer.

- Possessing much knowledge is like having a thousand foot fishing line with a hook, but the fish is always an inch beyond the hook.

- A man travelling across a field encountered a tiger. He fled, the tiger after him. Coming to a precipice, he caught hold of the root of a wild vine and swung himself down over the edge. The tiger sniffed at him from above. Trembling, the man looked down to where, far below, another tiger was waiting to eat him. Only the vine sustained him. Two mice, one white and one black, little by little started to gnaw away at the vine. The man saw a luscious strawberry near him. Grasping the vine with one hand, he plucked the strawberry with the other. How sweet it tasted!

- Flowers rained down on Subhuti. The gods whispered to him "We are praising you for your discourse on emptiness".

"But I have not spoken of emptiness" said Subhuti.

"You have not spoken of emptiness, we have not heard emptiness", responded the gods. "This is true emptiness".

Blossoms showered upon Subhuti as rain.

- A Nun, liked only *her own* gold-leaf statue of the Buddha, so she devised a funnel through which the incense perfume would rise only to her statue. This blackened the nose of the golden Buddha, making it especially ugly.

- A woman died, but had left a letter for her son, in the form of a will, wishing him Enlightenment.

She signed it: Your Mother,

not born, not dead.

- An army was reluctant to battle another army because of their greater numbers, though the leader knew his side would win despite this. He said he would visit a Shinto shrine, pray, then toss a coin. Heads we win, tails we lose, destiny holds us in her hand. On tossing, heads appeared. His soldiers won the battle easily. "No one can change the hand of destiny" his attendant told him after the battle. "Indeed not" said Nobunaga, showing a coin with heads on *both sides*.

- Mu-nan, a Zen Master passed a valuable book onto his successor Shoju, as a symbol of him having received the silent teaching, but Shoju had no interest for such things and threw it in the fire. Mu-nan, who never had been angry before, yelled "What are you doing!" Shoju shouted back "What are you saying!"

Student: What is the most valuable thing in the world?

Master: The head of a dead cat.

Student: Why?

Master: Because no one can name its price.

- A noble heart never forces itself forward. Its words are as rare gems, seldom displayed and of great value.

- Ikkyu, the Zen Master, was very clever even as a boy. His teacher had a precious teacup, a rare antique. Ikkyu happened to break this cup and was greatly perplexed. Hearing the footsteps of his teacher, he held the pieces of the cup behind him. When the Master appeared, Ikkyu asked: "Why do people have to die? ". "This is natural" explained the older man. "Everything has to die and has just so long to live". Ikkyu, producing the shattered cup, added: "It was time for your cup to die".

- Two daughters of a silk merchant live in Kyoto,
The elder is twenty, the younger eighteen,
A soldier may kill with his sword,
But these girls slay men with their eyes.

- One child met another on the way to the market. He asked "Where are you

going? ". "I am going wherever my feet go" the other responded. The first went to his teacher for help, who told him "Ask him where he will go if he had no feet - that will fix him." So, next morning "Where are you going? ". And the other answered "Wherever the wind blows". Again the youngster was nonplussed and took his defeat to his master. "Ask him where he is going if there is no wind" said the master. Next day "Where are you going? " asked the first child. "I am going to the market to buy vegetables" the other replied.

- Basui wrote the following letter to one of his disciples who was about to die: "The essence of your mind is not born, so it will never die. It is not an existence, which is perishable. It is not an emptiness, which is mere void. It has neither colour nor form. It enjoys no pleasures and suffers no pains. I know you are very ill. Like a good Zen student, you are facing that sickness squarely. You may not know exactly who is suffering, but question yourself: What is the essence of this mind? Think only of this. You will need no more. Covet nothing. Your end which is endless is as a snowflake dissolving in the pure air".

- Soichi was a Zen teacher sparking with enlightenment. Day and night the whole temple stood in silence. There was no sound at all. Even the reciting of sutras was abolished by the teacher. His pupils had nothing to do but meditate. When the Master passed away, an old neighbour heard the ringing of bells and the recitation of sutras. Then she knew Shoichi had gone.

- A monk visited Nansen Fugan who was living by himself in a small hut. Nansen told him he had something to do up the mountain and asked him to carry some food to him when mealtime came. When the monk didn't appear, Nansen returned and found the cooking vessels smashed and the monk asleep; thereupon he stretched out and took a nap himself. When he awoke, the monk was gone. In later years, Nansen said, "Back when I was living by myself in a small hut, I had a visit from a splendid monk. I've never seen him since."

Some Sayings of Sayen Shaku:

- My heart burns like fire but my eyes are as cold as dead ashes.

- Receive a guest with the same attitude you have when alone. When alone, maintain the same attitude you have in receiving guests.

- Upon retiring, sleep as if you had entered your last sleep. Upon awakening, leave your bed behind you instantly as if you had thrown away your old shoes.

Some of Mumon's Koans

The great path has no gates
Thousands of roads enter it.
When one passes through this gateless gate,
He walks freely between heaven and earth.

Controlled or not controlled?
The same dice shows two faces.
Not controlled or controlled?
Both are a grievous error.

- Kyogen said: "Zen is like a man hanging in a tree by his teeth over a precipice. His hands grasp no branch, his feet rest on no limb, and under the tree another person asks him; "Why did Bodhidharma come to China from India? "

Mumon's comment:

Kyogen is truly a fool,
Spreading that ego-killing poison,
That closes his pupils mouths,
And lets their tears stream from their dead eyes.

* *

Ummon: Where have you come from?

Tozan: From Sato village.

Ummon: In what temple did you remain for summer?

Tozan: Hoji, south of the lake

Ummon: When did you leave there? (wandering how long Tozan would continue with such factual answers.)

Tozan: 25th August.

Ummon: I should give you 3 blows, but today I forgive you.

Next day . . .

Tozan: Yesterday you forgave me 3 blows. I do not know why you thought me wrong.

Ummon: You are good for nothing. You simply wander from one monastery to another.

. . . Before Ummon's words were ended, Tozan was enlightened.

Mumon's comment:

Tozan swam around in a sea of good and bad (conceptions), but Ummon crushed his nut shell. After all, he wasn't so smart.

The lioness teaches her cubs roughly;
The cubs jump and she knocks them down.
When Ummon saw Tozan his first arrow was light.
His second arrow shot deep.

* *

- Ummon asked: "The world is such a wide world, why so you answer a bell and don ceremonial robes?"

Mumon's comment: When one studies Zen one need not follow sound or colour or a form, this is a very common way. It is not true Zen. The real Zen student controls sound, colour, form, and actualizes the truth in his everyday life.

* *

- *Joshu:* What is the path?

Nansen: Everyday life is the path.

Joshu: Can it be studied?

Nansen: If you try, you will be far away from it.

Joshu: If I do not study, how can I know it is the path?

Nansen: The path does not belong to the perception world, neither does it belong to the non perception world. Cognition is a delusion and non-cognition

senseless. If you want to reach the true path beyond doubt, place yourself in the same freedom as sky. You name it neither good nor not-good.

At these words Joshu was enlightened.

Mumon's comment: Nansen could melt Joshu's frozen doubts at once when Joshu asked his questions. I doubt though if Joshu reached the point that Nansen did. He needed thirty more years of study.

* *

- Shogen asked "Why does the enlightened man not stand on his feet and explain himself? " And he also said "It is not necessary for speech to come from the tongue."

Mumon's comment:

If the feet of enlightenment moved, the great ocean would overflow.
If that head bowed, it would look down upon the heavens.
Such a body has no place to rest.
Let another continue this poem.

* *

Student: Is there a teaching no master ever preached before?

Master: Yes there is.

Student: What is it?

Master: It is not mind, it is not Buddha, it is not things.

* *

- Daibai asked Baso "What is Buddha?"
Baso said "This mind is Buddha"

Mumon's comment:

Under blue sky, in bright sunlight
One need not search around.
Asking what Buddha is
Is like hiding loot in ones pocket and declaring oneself innocent.

* *

Student: What is Buddha?

Baso: This mind is not Buddha.

Mumon's comment:

If you meet a fencing master on the road, you may give
him your sword.
If you meet a poet, you may offer him your own poem.
When you meet others, say only a part of what you
intend.
Never give the whole thing at once.

* *

- Nansen said: "Mind is not Buddha. Learning is not the path".

Mumon's comment: Nansen was getting old and forgot to be ashamed. He spoke out with bad breath and exposed the scandal of his own home. However there are few who appreciate his kindness.

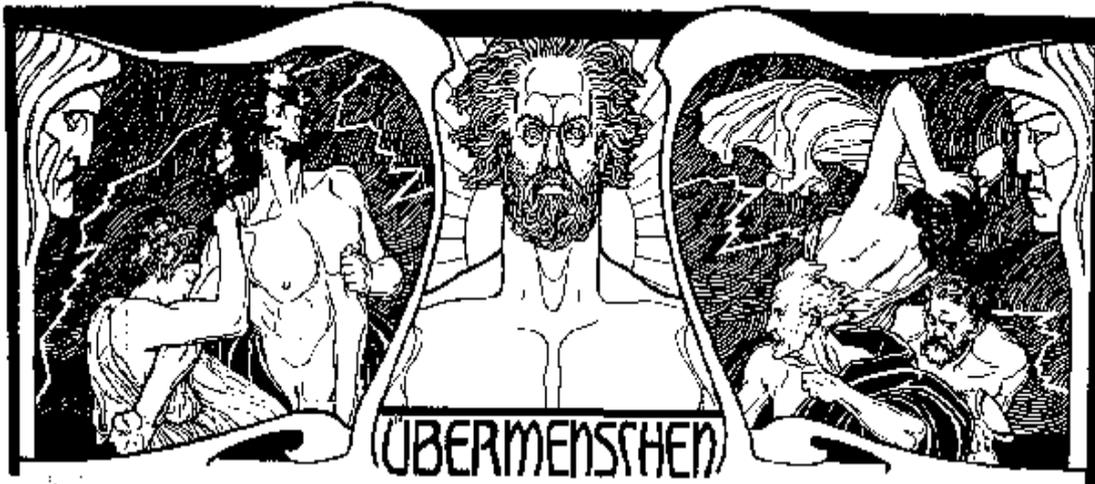
When the sky is clear the sun appears
When the earth is parched the rain will fall
He opened his heart fully and spoke out.
But it was useless to talk to pigs and fish.

* *

- Shuzan held out his short staff and said: "If you call this a short staff, you oppose its reality. If you do not call it a short staff, you ignore the fact. Now what do you wish to call this?".

Mumon's comment: It cannot be expressed with words and it cannot be expressed without words. Now say quickly what it is.

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SELECTED WRITINGS OF NIETZSCHE

from "Thus Spake Zarathustra"



Nietzsche as Christ

- I love them which greatly scorn because they also greatly adore; they are arrows longing for the farther shore.

I love him which liveth that he may know, and which seeketh knowledge that hereafter the Superman may live: for thus he willeth his own down-going.

I love him which reserveth no share of spirit for himself, but willeth to be wholly the spirit of his virtue: thus in spirit he crosseth over the bridge.

I love him which justifieth future generations and redeemeth past generations: for he willeth to perish by the present generation.

I love him which streweth golden words before his deeds and performeth yet more than he promiseth: for he seeketh his own down-going.

I love him whose soul is over-full so that he forgetteth himself, and all things are within him: thus all things become his downfall.

I love all them which are as heavy rain-drops falling one by one from the dark cloud that lowereth over mankind: they herald the coming of the lightning, and they perish as heralds.

- Where is the lightning to lick you with its tongue? Where is the madness with which you should be cleansed? Behold, I show you the Superman. He is this lightning, he is this madness.

- Did I not seek where the wind bites keenest, learn to live where no-one lives, in the wilderness, where only the polar-bear lives. Unlearned to pray and curse. Unlearned man and God. Become a ghost, flitting across the glaciers.

- Of all writings I love only those which the writer writeth with his blood. Write in blood, and thou shalt learn that blood is spirit.

It is no light matter to understand other's blood. I hate idle readers.

- He that writeth in blood and in proverbs desireth not to be read, but to be learned by heart.

In the mountains the shortest path is from summit to summit: but for that path thou needest long legs! Proverbs shall be as summits, and they to whom they are spoken shall be great ones of high stature.

- I have always written my works with my whole body: I do not know what purely intellectual problems are.

It makes the most important difference, whether a thinker stands personally by his problems, so that in them he has his fate, his need, and also his best happiness, or whether he is "impersonal": that is, only understanding how to

grope for and hold them with the feelers of cold inquisitive thought. In the latter case, nothing will come of it.

- The Superman is the meaning of the earth. Let your will say: the Superman *shall be* the meaning of the earth.

I conjure you my brethren, remain true to the meaning of the earth and believe them not which speak to you of super-terrestrial hopes! Poisoners are they, whether or not they know it.

"Body am I and soul" - thus saith the child. And why should one not speak as do children?

But he that is awake and knoweth saith: "Body am I throughout, and naught besides: and soul is but a word for a something in body".

The body is a great intelligence, a plurality with one mind. And thy little intelligence, my brother, which thou callest "spirit" - it is a tool of thy body, a little tool and a plaything of thy great intelligence.

Tools and playthings are mind and spirit; behind them lieth the Self. There is more intelligence in thy body than in thy best wisdom. And who, then, can say to what end thy body hath need of thy best wisdom? I go not your way, ye that despise the body! Ye are not my bridges to the Superman!

- Once blasphemy against God was the greatest of blasphemies, but God died, so that these blasphemies died also. Now the most terrible of sins is to blaspheme against the earth and to rate the bowels of the Unknowable One higher than the meaning of the earth!

- Many an one have I found, that stretched himself and puffed himself up, and the people cried: "Behold, a great man!" But of what use are bellows! At length the wind goeth out of them.

This today is of the rabble; who amongst them *knoweth* any longer what is great, what is small? Who with good success could there seek greatness?

It is I, godless Zarathustra, which saith: "Who is ungodlier than I, that I may rejoice in his teaching?"

- This tree standeth here alone upon the mountain; it hath grown high above man and beast.

Could it speak there were none to understand it: so high groweth it. Now it waiteth and waiteth - wherefore waiteth it? It dwelleth too nigh to the clouds: peradventure it awaiteth the first lightning-stroke?

- Is it not better to fall into the hands of a murderer than into the dreams of a lustful woman?

- Can thou give thyself thine evil and thy good, setting up thy will as a law? Canst thou be thine own judge and the avenger of thine own law? Even so is a star cast out into the void, and into the icy breath of solitude.

- Injustice and filth are cast at the solitary: but, my brother, if thou wouldst be a star, thou must shine upon them none the less!

Beware the Good and the Righteous! Fain would they crucify them which devise their own standards of virtue - they hate the solitary.

- And beware the assaults of thy love! Too readily doth the solitary stretch out his hand to him that meeteth with him.

Too many a man thou shouldst give not thy hand, but thy paw: and I will that thy paw have claws!

- Today sufferest thou yet from the many, thou lone one: today hast thou yet thy courage and thy hopes entire.

But a day cometh when loneliness shall weary thee, when thy pride shall writhe and thy courage gnash its teeth. In that day thou shalt cry, I am alone!

A day cometh when thou shalt see thy high things no more, and thy low things all too nigh: thou shalt fear thine exaltation as it were a phantom. In that day thou shalt cry, All is false!

Thou must be willing to burn thyself in thine own flame: how mayst thou be made anew unless thou first become ashes?

Thou Solitary, thou treadest the way of the loving: loving thyself thou despisest thyself as only the loving despise.

My brother, go into thy solitude with thy love and thy creativeness; and, long after, justice will limp after thee.

- Preach ye patience with that which is "earthly"? This "earthly" is over patient with *you*, ye blasphemers!

- The man of knowledge must be able not only to love his enemies, but also to hate his friends.

You revere me; but how if one day the object of your reverence fall? Beware lest ye be crushed by a falling statue!

Ye say ye believe in Zarathustra? But of what account is Zarathustra? Ye are my believers: but of what account are believers? Ye had not yet saught yourselves: then ye found me. Thus do all believers: therefore all belief is of little account.

Now I bid you lose me and find yourselves; and not until all have disowned me shall I return to you.

- What is good? ye ask. It is good to be brave. Let little maidens: "To be good is to be both pretty and pathetic".

- I see many soldiers: would I saw many warriors! "Uniform" are their garments called: would that were not uniform which they conceal beneath!

- Worst are they that have petty thoughts. Verily, it is better to act wickedly than to think pettily.

True, ye say: The pleasure of petty wickedness saveth us many a deed of great wickedness. But herein one should not be saving.

An evil deed is like an ulcer: it itcheth and pricketh and breaketh forth - it speaketh honestly.

"Behold, I am disease", saith the evil deed: therein is its honesty. But a petty thought is like a fungus: it creepeth and hideth and will not be found - until the whole body is rotten and withered with little fungi.

- And if a friend wrong thee, say: "I forgive thee what thou didst unto me; but what thou didst unto *thyself* - how could I forgive thee that?" Thus speaketh all great love: it overcometh even forgiveness and compassion.

- Ah, where in the world have happened greater follies than amongst the compassionate? And what in the world hath done more harm than the follies of the compassionate.

- Ye throng about your neighbour, and have fine names therefore. But I say unto you, your love for your neighbour is your evil love for yourselves.

- Thus spake the devil once unto me. "Even God hath His hell: it is His love unto men".

And of late heard I the word spoken: God is dead: God hath died of his pity for men.

- Oh, ye delicate hypocrites, ye lechers! You call your emasculate ogling "contemplation". And that which giveth itself to the touch of cowardly eyes is to be Christened "beautiful"! Oh, ye befouler of noble names!

Verily, ye fill your mouth full of noble words, and ye would have us believe that your heart overfloweth ye liars!

But my words are mean, comtemptible, crooked words: willingly do I gather up that which falleth from the tables of your banquets.

Yet they serve well enough to tell hypocrites the truth! Yea my fishbones, my empty shells, my prickly leaves, shall tickle the noses of hypocrites!

Ye hide yourselves behind the mask of a god, ye "pure ones": your vile worm hath crept into the mask of a god.

- If one take his hump from the hunchback, one taketh away his spirit. And if one give the blind man his eyes he seeth too many evil things on earth, so that he curseth him that hath healed him. But he that maketh the lame to run doeth him the greatest hurt; for no sooner hath he learned to run than his vices run away with him.

- O my brethren! In whom lieth the greatest peril to the whole future mankind? Is it not the Good and the Righteous?

And whatsoever harm the wicked may do, the harm of the Good is the most harmful harm!

The stupidity of the Good is unfathomably clever. The Good - they were ever the beginning of the end.

- O my brethren, a man once saw into the heart of the Good and the Righteous, and said: "They are the Pharisees". But men understood him not.

The Good and the Righteous themselves could not understand him: their mind is imprisoned in their good conscience. But this is the truth: the good *must* be Pharisees - they have no choice.

The Good *must* crucify him that inventeth for himself his own virtue! That is the truth!

- Ye higher Men! One is pregnant only of ones own child. - Do not act "for" your neighbour. Unlearn this "for", I pray, ye creators! Your virtue will have you do naught with "for" and "for the sake of" and "because". Against such false little words shall ye shut your ears. "For my neighbour" is a virtue only of the petty folk: with them it is : "tit for tat" and "turn and turn about": they have neither right nor power for *your* self-seeking.

Where your whole love is - with your child - there also is your whole virtue! Your work, your will is *your* "neighbour". Be not deceived by false values!

- May *yourself* be in your deed as a mother is in her child; I would fain this were *your* definition of virtue!

Verily, perchance I have taken from you an hundred definitions and the dearest playthings of your virtue; and now are ye wroth with me as children are.

They played on the seashore - then came a wave and swept all their toys away into the deep: now they weep.

But this same wave shall bring them new playthings and cast new coloured shells at their feet.

Thus shall they be comforted; and like them ye also, my friends, shall have your comforts - and new coloured shells!

- Alas for your poverty, ye men, and your avarice of soul! As much as ye give to your friend will I give to my foe, and become no poorer thereby.

- "Why so hard?" said the charcoal to the diamond, "are we not near akin?"

"Why so soft?" O my brethren, thus I ask *you*: are ye not my brethren?

Why so soft, so submissive, so yielding? Why is there so much disavowal and abnegation in your hearts? Why so little fate in your looks?

And if ye be unwilling to be fates, and inexorable, how can ye one day conquer with me?

And if your hardness will not sparkle and cut, and cut in pieces, how can ye one day create with me?

For creators are hard. And ye must deem it blessed to press your hand upon the milleniums of wax.

- Rash daring, long mistrust, cruel nay-saying, disgust, a cutting to the quick - how rarely do *all these* come together! But from such seed truth is begotten!

- O my brethren, am I then cruel? But I say: "That which already faileth shall be thrown down".

The All of today - it falleth, it decayeth: who would preserve it? But I - *I will throw it down!*

- Many brief follies - that ye call love. And your marriage maketh an end of many brief follies with one long stupidity.

Creative thirst, an arrow of desire for the Superman: say, my brother, is this thy will to marriage?

Holy call I such a will and such a marriage.

- That ye feel scorn, ye Higher Men - that maketh me to hope. For the great scorners are the great reverers.

That ye have despaired - therein is much to honour. For ye learned not how to submit, ye learned not petty strategems.

- O my soul, I have taught thee the scorn that cometh not like gnawing worms, but the great, the loving scorn that loveth most where it scorneth most.

My happiness itself cast I far and wide, east, south and west, that haply many human fish may learn to tug and wriggle at the hook of my happiness.

Until biting upon my sharp and hidden hooks, they be forced to rise to *my* height - the brightest hued groundlings of the deep to the most malicious of all the fishers of men.

- Know ye the delight of rolling stones over the steep? These men of today - behold them, how they roll into my abyss!

A prelude am I to better players, O my brethren! An example! *Act* upon mine example!

And him that ye teach not to fly, I bid you teach him to *fall the quicker!*

- With a fearful eye he looked upon his disciples, his eye pierced their thoughts and the thoughts behind their thoughts as it were with arrows. But in a little while he laughed again and said, appeased:

It is hard to live with men because silence is so hard. Especially for a talkative man.

- Not the height but the drop is terrible!

That precipice, wherein the glance falleth *down* whilst the hand gropeth *up*. It is there that the heart groweth dizzy because of its double will.

This, this is *my* precipice and my peril, that my glance falleth *up* whilst my hand would fain clutch and depend upon - the depths.

My will clingeth to man, with chains bind I myself to man, because I am drawn upwards to the Superman: for thither tendeth mine other will.

- Ye look up when ye desire to be exalted: and I look down, for that I am exalted.

Which amongst you can both laugh and be exalted?

- And when I cry: Curse upon all the cowardly devils within you that would fain whine and fold hands and adore - they cry: Zarathustra is godless.

And more especially do their teachers of submission thus - into whose ears I love to cry: Yea! *I am* Zarathustra the Godless.

These teachers of submission! Like lice they creep wherever things are

puny and sickly and scabby: and my disgust alone hindreth me from cracking them.

- Verily, my joy and my freedom come like a storm! But mine enemies shall deem that The Evil One rageth above their heads.

- With thunders, with heavenly fireworks, must one speak to indolent and sleeping minds.

But the voice of beauty speaketh softly: it stealeth only into the most awaked souls.

- Ye have served the people and the superstitions of the people, all ye famous Wise Men, - ye have *not* served the Truth! And for that reason have ye been revered.

- To be content to gaze, with the will dead, without the grasping and greed of selfishness - with the whole body cold and grey as ashes, but the eyes drunken like moons!

- Doth not this city reek of the smell of butchered spirit?

Seest thou not the souls hang like limp and filthy rags? - and they make newspaper of these rags.

- The State is the coldest of all cold monsters. Coldly it uttereth its lies, and this is the lie that creepeth out of its mouth: "I, the State, am the people!"

I pray you behold these superfluous ones! Diseased are they ever, they vomit their bile and call it - newspaper. They devour but cannot digest one another.

Behold how they climb, these agile apes! They climb upon one another and drag one another into the muddy abyss.

Where the State ceaseth - I pray you look there, my brethren! Do you not see it, the rainbow, the bridge to the Superman?

- *Of Scholars:*

They are clever, they have cunning fingers; what hath my simplicity to do with their multiplicity? Their fingers know well how to thread and knit and weave: thus they knit stockings of the mind!

They work like millstones, and corn crushers - if grain be thrown into them! They know but too well how to grind corn and make white dust thereof.

They watch one another well, and trust not one another over-much.
Ingenious in petty strategems, they lie in wait for those whose knowledge
goeth on lame feet; like spiders they wait.

They know, moreover how to play with loaded dice. We are as strangers to
one another, and their virtues are yet more repugnant to me than their
falsehoods and loaded dice.

They love not to hear that any goeth over their heads. Therefore they have
laid wood and earth and refuse betwixt me and their heads. Thus have
they deadened the sound of my footsteps; and hitherto the most learned have
heard me least.

For men are *not* equal: so speaketh justice. And that which I will, they
cannot will!

- Ye Higher Men, learn this of me: in the market place none believe in
Higher Men. And will ye speak there, well and good! But the mob blinketh:
"We are equal!"

- Man's happiness is, I will. Woman's happiness is, He will. Behold, this
moment hath the world been perfected! - thus deemeth every woman when she
obeyeth with all her love.

Woman must obey and find depth to her surface. Surface is woman's
nature, foam tossed to and fro on shallow water.

But deep is man's nature, his current floweth in subterranean caverns:
woman divineth his power, but understandeth it not.

Saith the Kings - Faugh! to stand as First amongst the rabble! Oh! horror!
horror! horror! Of what use now are we Kings?

- Mine intellectual conscience demandeth of me that I should know one thing
and *not* know all else: I loathe all the semi-intellectuals, the hazy, the
visionary.

- My brother, if thou be fortunate, thou hast but one virtue and no more: thus
mayst thou go more easily over the bridge.

- The most anxious ask today: "How is man to be preserved?" But
Zarathustra, alone and first, asketh: "How is man to be *surmounted*".

- I say ye suffer not yet enough! For ye suffer through yourselves, ye have

never yet suffered through *Man*. If ye said otherwise ye were liars! None of you suffereth *my* sufferings.

- Courage is the best of slayers; courage slayeth even pity. But pity is the deepest abyss: as deep as man looketh into life, so deep he looketh into suffering.

But courage is the best of slayers, the courage that attacketh; it slayeth even death, for it saith: "Was this life? Well, then - again!"

- Together we must learn all, we must learn to climb above ourselves to ourselves, and cloudlessly to smile -

Cloudlessly to smile down, shining eyed and very remote, when beneath us violence and purpose and guilt steam like rain.

- They cough when I speak: they hold coughing a protest against strong winds
- they divine naught of my stormy bliss!

And of late a woman caught her child to her when it would have come to me. Take the children away! cried she; such eyes scorch childrens' souls.

We have no time for Zarathustra, they object; but what value hath an age that hath "no time" for Zarathustra?

And if they should ever praise me, how could I rest in *their* praise? Their praise is as a girdle of thorns.

And this too I have learned amongst them: he that praiseth pretendeth that he repayeth; but in truth he desireth further gifts!

I go amongst this people and shut not mine eyes: they have grown *smaller* and grow ever smaller - *and the cause therefore is their doctrine of happiness and virtue*.

- We take our stand in the *midst* - declareth their smirking unto me. But this is *mediocrity*, though it be called "moderation" At heart they desire one thing above all - to be hurt by no one. Therefore they oblige all men and do will by them.

But this is *cowardice*, though it be called "virtue".

- Do what you will - but be first such men as *can will!*

- So many a clever one had I found, that veiled his face and muddied his waters, that none might look through them and down into them. But to him came the *more* clever unbelievers, the crackers of nuts: these fished out from him the best hidden fish!

But the bright ones, the brave, the transparent - these I hold the wisest of the silent: for their bottom is *so deep* that even the clearest water betrayeth it not!

- Sawest thou ever thy friend sleeping that thou mightest learn what manner of man he was? What is thy friend's face at other times? - It is thine own face in a rough and imperfect mirror.

- They marvel that I am not ready to give wit and point to their clevernesses; as if there were not wisecracks enough amongst them, whose voices grate on mine like slate pencils!

- I do not hide my chilblains, my misfortunes and sufferings, and for this people pity me. But Oh, how I pity their pity!

They hear only the howl of my wintry storms - *not* that I also traverse warm seas, like the yearning, heavy, hot winds of the south.

- Whosoever will yet learn to fly, must first learn to stand and to walk and to run and to climb and to dance. One learneth not flying by flying!

By many ways and modes I have come to my truth; not on one ladder only climbed I to the height whence mine eye searcheth my distance.

And ever willingly have I asked my way of others. That hath never offended my taste!

- By ladders of rope I learned to climb many a window and with nimble legs I climbed high masts. To sit upon the high masts of knowledge seemed to me no small bliss -

To flicker on high masts like a small flame - a small light indeed, yet a great comfort to sailors driven from their course, and to shipwrecked folk!

- In your children shall ye *make amends* that ye were your father's children. *Thus* shall ye redeem the past!

- "To the pure all things are pure" - thus say the people. But I say unto you: "To the swine all things are swinish!"

- Weak men ever lose themselves on the way. And at length their weariness asketh: "Wherefore did we set out? All is indifferent!"

- I love the brave: but it is not enough to be a swordsman - a man must also know against *whom* to use the sword!

And often there is the greater courage in restraining oneself and passing by, that one may reserve oneself for the worthier foe!

- Now I die and vanish, and in a moment I shall be naught. Souls are as mortal as bodies.

But the knot of causation recurrereth, in the which I am intertwined - it will re-create me! I myself am amongst the causes of eternal recurrence.

I come again, with this sun, with this earth, with this Eagle, with this Serpent - *not* to a new life, or to a better life, or to a similar life -

- I come again eternally to this self-same life, in greatest things and in least, that I may teach again the Eternal Recurrence of all things.

- Better know naught than half-know much! Better be a fool on ones own merits than a wise man by other folks opinions! I *go to the roots*. What matterereth great or small, marsh or heaven? An hand-breadth of territory is sufficient for me, if it be real *rock-bottom* territory!

- As a ship that hath entered her calmest bay inclineth herself towards the land, weary of long voyaging and uncertain seas - is not land more faithful?

Even as a such a ship putteth in and huggeth the shore so that it is enough that a spider spin his thread thereunto from the land - no stronger rope it needeth -

- Even as such a weary ship in calmest bay rest I now nigh to the earth, faithful, trustful, waiting, moored thereunto with slenderest threads.

- What is the greatest thing ye can experience? It is the hour of great contempt. The hour in which even your happiness is loathsome to you, and your reason and your virtue likewise.

The hour in which ye say: What is my happiness worth! It is poverty and uncleanness and despicable ease.

Of bliss unsought

Oh peace in the midst of uncertainty! How do I mistrust you all! Verily I mistrust your treacherous beauty! I am like the lover that mistrusteth too silken a smile.

As he putteth from him the beloved woman - tender even in his hardness, the jealous lover - even so I put from me this blissful hour. Away with thee, thou blissful hour! With thee bliss came to me against my will! I stand

here prepared to meet my deepest pain - thou camest out of season!

Thus spake Zarathustra. And all night he waited for misfortune: but he waited in vain.

The night remained clear and still, and happiness herself drew nigh and ever nigh to him. But towards morning Zarathustra laughed in his heart, saying mockingly. Happiness runneth after me. This cometh to pass because I run not after woman - And happiness is a woman.

- In the tree of the future we build our nest. Eagles shall bring food in their beaks to us solitaries!

Verily, no food in the eating of which the unclean might share! They would deem they ate fire and burned their mouths therewith.

Verily, no homes have we here prepared for the unclean. To their bodies our bliss would be as a cave of ice, and to their minds also!

And like strong winds we will dwell above them, neighbours to the eagles, neighbours to the snow, neighbours to the sun: thus dwell strong winds.

And like a wind shall I one day blow amongst them and with my spirit take away the breath of their spirit; thus my future willeth. Verily a strong wind is Zarathustra to all lowlands, and thus adviseth he his enemies and all that spitteth and throweth dirt. Take heed how ye spit *against* the wind.



- Verily, ye may all be Higher Men. But for me, ye are not high enough nor strong enough.

And belong ye to me, ye belong not as my right arm belongeth.

For whosoever goeth on sick, weakly legs as you do, desireth above all (whether he knoweth it or whether he hideth it from himself) to be *spared*.

With you I should lose all my chance of victory. And many an one of you would fall to the ground heard he but the loud roll of my drums.

Moreover, for me ye are not beautiful enough, nor well-born enough. I need

clear, smooth mirrors for my doctrines; upon your surface mine image is distorted.

Your shoulders are laden with many a burden, many a memory; many an evil dwarf lurketh in your holes and corners. There is hidden rabble within you.

And though ye be high and of higher race, much within you is crooked and misshapen. There is no smith in the world that can hammer you straight and shapely.

Ye are but bridges: may higher ones stride across you to the other side! Ye stand as stairs: therefore be not angry with him that riseth upon you to *his* heights!

- I trace circles about me and sacred barriers: fewer and fewer climb with me higher and higher mountains: I build up a mountain range of even holier mountains.

With whithersoever ye climb with me, O my brethren, beware lest a *parasite* climb with you!

A parasite - it is a worm, a creeping, cringing worm, that seeketh to fatten on your hidden sores and wounds.

And *this* is its cunning, that it divineth when climbing souls grow weary: in your sorrow and dejection, in your sensitive shamefastness, it buildeth its loathsome nest.

- Beware also of scholars! They hate you; for they are sterile! They have cold, dried-up eyes, and in their sight every bird lieth plucked. Such men boast that they lie not: but impotence for lying is far other than love of truth. Beware!

Freedom from fevers delusions is far other than knowledge! I credit naught from frozen minds. He that cannot lie, knoweth not what is truth.

Of "cultured men"

"We are altogether real and without beliefs or superstitions." Thus ye puff yourselves up. But how could ye believe, ye motley ones - ye that are compound pictures of all that hath ever been believed.

- Be not virtuous beyond your powers! And ask not of yourselves improbabilities!

Walk in the footsteps of your fathers' virtue! How should ye rise high, if your fathers' wills rise not with you?

He whose fathers went after women and strong drink and wild boars - how should he demand of himself chastity?

That were folly! It is much, verily, methinketh, for such an one, if he be the

husband of one, two, or three women.

And should he found monasteries and write above their doors: "The way to holiness" - yet I would say: "Wherefore? It is a new folly!" He hath founded for himself a penitentiary and a refuge. Much good may it do him! But I do not believe it!

- In solitude waxeth whatsoever a man bringeth within him, and also the brute within. Therefore many are to be counselled against solitude.

- Ye have not learned to play and laugh, as one should play and laugh! Sit we not ever at a great table of laughter and gambling?

And if ye have failed in great things, are ye, therefore, yourselves failures? And if ye be yourselves failures, is Man, therefore a failure? But if Man be a failure - well and then! -

- Thou must dance lest thou fall!

- Praised be that good unruly spirit that lendeth wings unto asses, that milketh lionesses, that cometh like the whirlwind upon all todays and all rabbles -

That chastiseth all thistle-heads and muddle-heads, all withered leaves and tares: praised be this wild, good, free storm spirit that danceth over marshes and afflictions as upon meadows.

Ye Higher Men, the worst in you is that none of you hath learned to dance as a man should dance - to dance beyond yourselves! What matter that you have failed?

- Verily, if ye become not as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

But we desire not to enter into the kingdom of heaven: we are become men - *and therefore desire the kingdom of earth.*

- What was reserved for me as my last sin? *Compassion! Compassion for the Higher Man!* He cried, and his face became as brass. Go to! That hath had its day!



From "Zarathustra's Return"
by Hermann Hess

- "What ought we do?" you ask me. "Doing" - action - is so important to you, indeed all-important. It would be good, if you understood what action is! "What action ought we perform" is the question of an anxious child, and shows me how little you know of action.

What you young men call "action" I call by a different name. I should not have to roll it between my fingers very long to turn it neatly and amusingly into its opposite. For it is an opposite of what I call doing.

No true action has ever been performed by one who first asked "what ought I to do". A true action is a light that shines from a good sun. If the sun is not good and asks itself what it ought to do, it will never shed light. A true action cannot be cogitated and contrived. Your "action" is the contrary and mortal enemy of true action. Your "action", if you will forgive an unpleasant word is cowardice! I see you growing angry, I see in your eyes the look I am so fond of - but wait - hear me out!

Birth is suffering, growth is suffering, death is suffering. Man suffers destiny. Destiny hurts.

What you call "action" is running away from pain, a not-wanting-to-be-born, a flight from suffering, a flight from Truth.

Suffering was demanded of you, but you were indignant. You didn't want to suffer, but only to act! And what did you do? - sacrificed yourself to "things". You were so busy with your activity that you had no time to suffer, to hear, to breath, to drink the milk of life and the light of heaven.

And now? Are you content? Are your hearts happy and serene? Is destiny sweet to your taste? No, it is bitterer than ever, and that is why you are clamouring for more action. You are in flight from yourselves, your souls.

Your striving is heroic - insofar as a man who runs away from destiny, can be heroic.

- My friends, you ask after the school of suffering, the forge of destiny. Don't you know? No, you who are forever talking of "the people" and such like, you do not know. I am speaking of solitude.

Solitude is the path men most fear, so that those men who walk alone are called mad or sick, because they think it is best to discourage themselves from taking such a path.

And when you hear people call these men mad, don't you feel the blood rushing to your cheeks? As though it might have been nobler and worthier of you to become one of those madmen?

- Most men, the herd, have never tasted solitude. They leave father and mother, but only to crawl to a wife and quietly succumb to new warmth and new ties. They are never alone, they never commune with themselves.

They fear the solitary man and hate him like the plague; they fling stones at him and find no place until they are far away from him. The air around him smells of stars, of cold stellar places; he lacks the soft warm fragrance of the home and hatchery. Zarathustra has gone a long way on the path of solitude. He has attended the school of suffering.

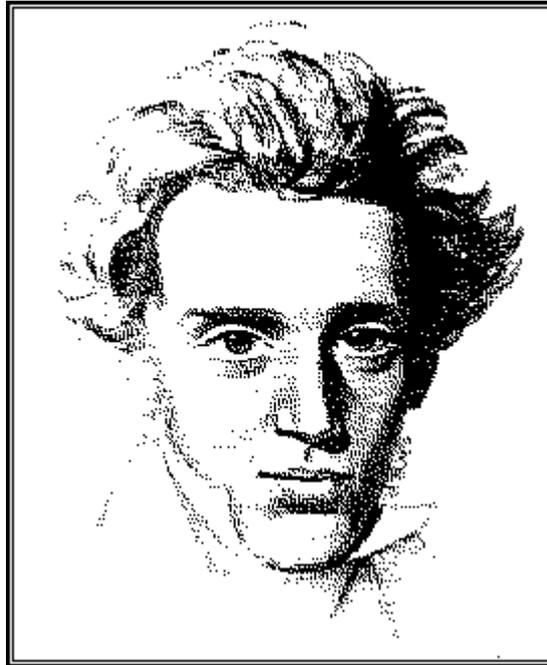
- But how, my young friends, could I tempt or lead you? Solitude is not chosen, any more than destiny is chosen. Solitude comes to us if we have within us the magic stone that attracts destiny. Many, far too many, have gone out into the desert and led the lives of "herd men" in a pretty hermitage beside a lovely spring. While others stand in the thick of the crowd, and yet the air of the stars blows round their heads. Blessed be he who has found solitude. Blessed be he who knows how to suffer!

- You are chosen to breathe the air of stars and from children to become men.

Cease to lament! Cease to weep tears of childhood because you have parted from your mother and her sweet bread. Learn to eat bitter bread, mens' bread, the bread of destiny.

* * * *

WRITINGS OF KIERKEGAARD



Soren Kierkegaard, drawing by his cousin.

From Journals and Papers.

- "Deathbed renunciation" is like the kind of generosity with which someone threateningly required at pistol point to hand over his money chooses to give the affair a turn and say that he generously offers it as a gift.

- "I came to cast fire upon the earth" *Luke 12:49*

Christianity is fire-setting, so that people might burn out to spirit. Man shrinks more from this fire than any other. For even if someone were to be a victim of fire ten times, if only his zest for life does not die out, he perhaps can still get to be a prosperous man and enjoy life. But the fire Christianity wants to light is not intended to burn up a few houses but to burn up the zest for life - burn it out to spirit.

- When one preaches Christianity in such a way that the echo answers "he is mad", know then this signifies that there are considerable elements of truth in his preaching. But perhaps he is not pressing hard enough, either by his oral preaching or by the preaching of his life. But when one preaches Christianity in such a way that the echo answers "Away with that man from the earth, he does not deserve to live", know then that this is the Christianity of the New Testament.

- Christianity is the kind of orthodoxy that is hearty twaddle. Mediocrity with a dash of sugar. What we have come to call Christianity is precisely what Christ came to abolish.

- The world has now become tolerant, has made progress, for the fact that persecution no longer takes place - the fact is that there is nothing to persecute.

- Cuckolds - this is what people are in all matters. They *know* they are being cheated; by their wives who are 100% selfish, by their religion which they know is a fable. But they are such spineless wretches that they don't have the courage to break dependence to them.

- Most men think that the more you think about life and the more knowledge you have the happier you become. But the ironical thing, is that it only increases sorrow.

- It is out of love that suffering befalls you. Blessed is he who is not offended by it.

"Blessed is the man who does not fall away, on account of me".

- The quality of an individual can be measured by the distance between his understanding and his willing.

- What a difference there is, between the powerful puff of an animated breeze at the beginning - and a steady wind which uniformly fills the sails so that you advance steadily under full sail.

- When children play together, this relativity becomes actuality to them, an actuality in which they are, each one respectively, a significant magnitude.

But then there comes a message, that little Peter, Hans, or Soren, or whatever the person is called, must go home. In this way the absolute disruptively intervenes.

An adult goes and talks with other earnest men about what he wants to be in the world, that he wants to be this and that, and it seems to the other earnest men that he is an earnest man, almost as earnest as the others. But what happens - suddenly there comes a message that he must go home - that is, the God-relationship asserts itself.

The child cannot be allowed to get stuck to the illusion that the relationship with the other children is the whole thing - for then comes the message that he must go home.

- No one wonders anymore. They journey to far countries and tell us about it, and we make comparisons, and marvel over the differences. Is this to wonder over God? When a man lived in some isolated place and saw only a single tree, one little shrub perhaps, a running brook, how he marvelled - at God.

- The tragedy of the majority of men is by no means that they are weak but that they are too strong - genuinely, to be aware of God. A tree, an animal is even stronger - and therefore it is not at all aware of God; a stone is the strongest of all and therefore is completely unaware of God.

- Women or ideas are what beckon men out into existence. Naturally, there is the great difference that for the thousands who run after the skirt there is not always one who is moved by ideas.

- Like the boy who lets his kite fly aloft, so does the modern man let his knowledge mount on high; to follow it with his eye he finds interesting, prodigiously interesting, but . . . it does not lift him up, he remains in the mud, more and more crazy about the interesting.

- God always makes fools of the wise. Men invent antecedent difficulties, the introduction to the matter itself, and thereupon waste their time and powers and lives and then die, never making a beginning in the end itself.

- The natural man can tolerate spirit for an hour when it is introduced very guardedly at the distance of the imagination - yes, then it even pleases him. But if it's moved any closer to him, so that it is presented with dead earnest as a demand on him, then the self-preservation instinct of his ego is aroused to such an extent that it becomes a regular fury.

- It is no wonder that wine (external conditions and the like) inspires - but that *water* (self-denial, renunciation and the like) inspires;

Yes, this is religiousness. And this is the difference between existing religiously and existing poetically.

- "Their deeds follow them" (the ignorant) - as if they walked behind in a procession - perhaps for want of any other funeral procession.

- Man has the natural tendency to think that if he only makes an effort he will be victorious. Christianity says that downfall is being victorious. Know this - if you manage to reach merely a modest degree of perfection, your downfall is certain; and the more you succeed, the more certain your downfall. To turn over thoughts like these for only one hour is more exhausting than enormous efforts in the hope of being victorious.

It is just as if Christianity would kill all courage, all delight, every hope in a man. Yes, all spontaneous courage and delight and hope - this is called dying to the world.

- "Man" never really rests at ease before he gets the wrong made into dogma - not until then does he believe he is absolutely fortified against the right. To love the world is to hate God. This is even a further intensification on the former, just to make the threat an absolute minimum.

- Communication by means of journalism is an abstraction, which supposedly is superior to the individual personality - and with Christ, the very opposite is the case.

- In every generation there are hardly ten who fear to think wrong, but there are thousands of millions who are all too afraid of standing alone with an opinion, be it ever so right.

But when something is printed in the newspaper, this is *eo ipso* sure proof that there is a goodly number who want to have or express the same opinion - ergo, you may well venture to have the same opinion.

- If the press had a coat of arms, the inscription ought to be; Here men are demoralized in the shortest possible time, on the largest possible scale, at the cheapest possible price.

- All human effort tends towards herding together, let us unite, etc. Naturally this happens under all sorts of high sounding names: love and enthusiasm and sympathy and the carrying out of some grand plan. This is the usual hypocrisy of the scoundrels we are. In a herd we are free from the standard of the individual, and the ideal.

- People become numbers. The numbers become their horizon - their all. They are just copies. Christianity wants every man to be an individual, but through human bungling it has been transformed into exactly the opposite.

- Always be ready for joy. Rejoice that the hour of liberation will strike soon. You may become so enervated if you do not, that you will not be able to hear the sound when it does strike.

- The joy, that the poorer one becomes himself, the richer he is able to make others. For all worldly possessions diminish the possessions of others to the same degree as mine increase.

The poverty of the spirit. The more learned I become, the fewer I am able to make understand me.

- Most men never reach faith at all. They live a long time in immediacy or spontaneity, finally they advance to some reflection, and then they die. The exceptions begin the other way around; dialectical from childhood, that is, without immediacy, they begin with the dialectical, with reflection, and they go on living this way year after year (about as long as others live in sheer immediacy) and then, at a more mature age, faiths possibility presents itself to them. For faith is immediacy or spontaneity *after* reflection.

Naturally, the exceptions have a very unhappy childhood and youth, for to be essentially reflective at that age, which by nature is spontaneous or immediate, is the most profound melancholy. But there is a return. Most people drift on in such a way they never become spirit; all their many happy years of immediacy tend towards spiritual retardation and therefore they never become spirit. But the unhappy childhood and youth of the exceptions are transfigured into spirit.

- Upbringing in Christianity slays childhood and youth, but this is far better than the alternative.

- As the individual develops, God becomes for him more and more infinite,

and he feels himself farther and farther from God.

- It is eternally true that if one knocks, the door will be opened. But suppose that the difficulty for us human beings is simply that we are afraid to go - and knock.

- To have faith is really to advance along the way where all human road signs point: back, back, back.

- Only when a person has become so unhappy or has penetrated the wretchedness of this existence so deeply that he must truly say: For me life has no value - only then can he make a bid for Christianity.

- God cannot forgive sins, but can forgive guilt. More than this the forgiveness of sins is not. He cannot abrogate all the consequences of a sinful action.

- People almost never make use of the freedoms they have, for example, freedom of thought; by way of compensation they demand freedom of expression instead.

- If an esteemed person teaches that people should disdain honour and esteem, men say "Thanks for that". If it is a person who actually has no humour or esteem, people say: "Well, never mind what he says. No one has any regard for him".

- Voluntariness is the highest form of religiousness and is therefore to be recognized by the fact that here God is most rigorous. Religiousness is classified according to ascending rigor.

I myself recognize that I have too mild a conception of God (a "grandfather"). This is the reason I have not ventured the voluntary and why I have never used authority. And yet the tiny bit of the voluntary, if I may say so, which my life evidences is still too high for most people. So far has Christianity retrogressed.

- The true Christian is not much concerned with forms. He is like someone who carries a loaded pistol (although in an infinitely purer sense) - he knows the way out. He is like the stoic who went about with the thought of suicide

(although in an infinitely purer sense) - he knows the way out. Therefore he does not get into a big ferment, and for this reason can endure a great deal, simply because he is conscious within himself and in God that if a certain point is reached, the martyr's way out beckons to him.

- Job endured everything - not until his friends came - to comfort him - did he become impatient.

- That a man is sent on an errand from God entails no change in the man at all - he does not become more intelligent, more learned, or more eloquent etc - no, he is simply on an errand.

- There are two kinds of geniuses. The characteristic of the one is roaring, but the lightning is meagre and rarely strikes; the other kind is characterized by reflection by which it constrains itself or restrains the roaring. But the lightning is all the more intense; with the speed and sureness of lightning it hits the selected particular points - and is fatal.

- Talent warms-up the given (as they say in cookery) and makes it apparent; genius brings something new. But our time lets talent pass for genius. They want to abolish the genius, deify the genius, and let talent forge ahead.

- I am certainly able to comprehend that a bird can live; it does not know at all that it exists before God - and I am certainly able to comprehend that a person can endure existing before God when he himself is unconscious of doing that. But to be conscious of the fact that one exists before God - and then be able to live!

- A baron climbs a hill from which he can look about and see the whole domain. He then says: All this is my father's.

The religious man says. Yes, but please look up, Herr Baron. Everything which you see in infinite space, this is my father's. After all, your father's barony, too, is my father's. In the clear, starry night, how many, in humble faith dare to say to themselves "This is my father's" just as fully and completely convinced as the baron that this is his father's.

- As children we often brought our parents gifts which they themselves had given us; this is the way it always is with God.

- This is how one rises in the world, when a person has reached one rung of the ladder, he hankers and tries to go higher. But when a person has become involved with God, so that God truly has hold of him and uses him, this is how he rises: at every higher rung he is supposed to climb, he begs like a child to be exempted, for he well understands that, from a human point of view, suffering and wretchedness and spiritual trial mount on the same scale. How often an apostle has pleaded for himself in this way.

- How many men have any idea at all of how strenuous life becomes in an actual relationship to God. This alone - to be completely deprived of the habitual security which most people have when they have reached a certain age, believing that their period of development has now essentially rounded off and has now become repetitious, almost routinely repetitious - just this alone, to have this security completely withdrawn.

- One who in truth has become involved with God is instantaneously recognizable by his limp. To become involved with God in any way other than being wounded is impossible.

He who does not involve himself with God in the mode of absolute devotion does not become involved with God. God himself is *how* one involves himself with Him. In respect to God, the *how* is the *what*.

In relationship to God one cannot involve himself to a certain degree, for God is precisely the contradiction to all which is to a certain degree.

- Anyone who has the remotest idea of what it actually is to die to the world also knows that this does not take place without frightful agonies. No wonder, then, that he cries out, sometimes also rebels against God, because it seems to him as if God has deceived him, he who from the beginning became involved with God on the understanding that God would love him according to man's idea of love and now sees that it is God who wants to be loved, and according to God's idea of what love is.

- And so when a witness to the truth dies he says to God: Thank you, thank you, O Infinite Love, for all the sufferings. And God says in return: Thank you, my friend, thank you for the use I have had of you.

- No, God in Heaven is the only power who does not hold sales or reduce the prices; his prices remain eternally unchanged, more firmly fixed than the North star.

- Go slowly; if the going gets rough, then try a lower relationship to God, but in such a way that you nevertheless begin again where you eased up.

- God can involve himself with the human race on one of two conditions, either in such a way that individuals are found who are willing to venture out so far in hating themselves that God can use them as apostles, or in such a way that the true situation is honestly and unconditionally admitted. The latter is my primitivity.

As far as the former is concerned, this is certainly the instruction of the New Testament. But with respect to venturing out so far, the following must be noted. This is something so dreadful for a human being that it is permissible to say: I dare not.

- But while preachers and professors prattle to the millions about proofs of the personality of God, the truth is that long ago there ceased to be men capable of bearing the pressure and weight of having a personal God.

- Alas, and all the time the God of love sits in heaven and waits for someone to become involved with him - while men are busily engaged in removing themselves from God in various ways - maintaining all the time, please note, that what they are doing is done in order to approach God.

Thus insisting that we are coming closer to God, we put him at a distance. But is not this really what we instinctively and cunningly want?

- "Blessed is he who is not offended"! Just because everything Christian is in the realm of paradox, the possibility of offence is always infinitely near - unless one lives a nonsense life in which all reason is avoided.

- And when one does not have a single human being who understands him, then He is willing to listen, and He can remember far better than any man, even better than one can himself. And when one's thoughts are so confused that one does not know whether he is coming or going, God has not forgotten even the slightest thing one has prayed him to remember.

- Most people's guilt becomes less with time, this is due to forgetfulness, or light-mindedness.

Melancholy is just the opposite - the longer the elapsed time, the more dreadful the guilt seems.

- Who is the greater sinner - a thief, or the person who literally looks upon stealing as the only kind of sin.

- When everything is going the way you want it to, even if you relate everything to God, you can still not be sure that the joy you feel is the testimony of the Spirit, for it can also be simply the particular heightening of your own life by means of your good fortune and prosperity. But when everything goes against you and you nevertheless perceive deep within you a testimony that you are on the right path and ought to continue further along this path where everything will probably go against you increasingly: this you see, is the testimony of the Spirit.

- The Christian humorist is like a plant of which only the roots are visible, whose flowers unfold for a loftier sun.

- Genuine humour cannot be caught, as irony can in a novel - simply because not-to-write is part of the nature of the concept - just as Socrates left no books, neither did Hamann, only as many as the modern rage for writing made relatively necessary - occasional pieces.

- The humorist, like the beast of prey, always walks alone.

- Irony is the birth pangs of the objective mind (based upon the mis-relationship; discovered by the I, between existence and the idea of existence).

Humour is the birth pangs of the absolute mind [based upon the mis-relationship, discovered by the I (self), between the I and the idea of the I].

- The purely comic arises when a man knows the right thing and yet shows that he does not know it. Here is the essential contradiction. A man knows that God exists - and he says: I know it, damn it all!

He clings to the certainty that everything is uncertain.

- The ironist who is in the majority is eo ipso a mediocre ironist.

- What an abyss of perdition! At the bottom of it all lies despair. To want to do even the least bit to halt this demoralization, to want at least to save oneself - this would be regarded as ridiculous madness. No, let it go, one hears, let it

hit bottom - and although we sink in it, we entertain ourselves with wit which expose the perdition. Done for, we are all done for, they say; nobody should complain about anybody - let's all laugh!

The crazier the better they say. Even though the age is as bad as it is, the latter makes it 100% worse. I dare say that ultimately they will want the judgement in the next world to be witty.

- In his majesty God sets the pitch so high that if a person is unwilling to let go of his finite common sense, will not abandon flat, self-indulgent mediocrity - then what God calls help, salvation, grace etc, is the most biting irony.

- Socrates' existence is and was irony: whereas the entire contemporary population of farm hands and businessmen and so on, all those thousands, were perfectly sure of being human and of knowing what it means to be a human being; Socrates was beneath them (ironically) and occupied himself with the problem - what does it mean to be a human being?

- There are people who treat the ideas they pick up from others so frivolously and disgracefully that they ought to be prosecuted for illegal traffic in lost and found property.

- The case with most men is that they go out into life with one or another accidental characteristic of personality of which they say: Well, this is the way I am. I cannot do otherwise. Then the world gets to work on them and thus the majority of men are ground onto conformity. In each generation a small part cling to their "I cannot do otherwise" and lose their minds. Finally there are a very few in each generation who in spite of all life's terrors cling with more and more inwardness to this "I cannot do otherwise". They are the geniuses. Their "I cannot do otherwise" is an infinite thought, for if one were to cling firmly to a finite thought, he would lose his mind.

- A man says: I cannot practice self-denial. Charming! And not only that but he wants to be praised for his humility because he is humble enough to be satisfied with ethical shabbiness.

. . . We hypocritically abolish Christianity by saying we are much too humble to aspire to anything so lofty. We say: "I am too humble to want to be significant".

- The most admired man of all is the one who is laziest of all, yet still achieves great things. Given great talents, extraordinary shrewdness and weak

character, this combination will yield one of the finest forms of hypocrisy.

- Everything bad is ascribed to the predecessor: that we strive for earthly goods is for the sake of the successor.

God help him who has no predecessor and no successor! For him truly life becomes what according to the will of Christianity it should be: an examination in which one cannot cheat.

- In our society idea-strength is regarded as weakness, and palpable strength is regarded as strength. A person who has the strength to live devoid of ideas is called strong.

- There are two levels of advancing ideals before men. The first kind of carrier does it in such a way as he is praised and rewarded. In the same degree as the reward increases, the ideal becomes less recognizable. He actually stands in its way and draws attention from it and eventually conceals it completely.

The true carriers, who, themselves suffering, advance the ideals before men. In the same degree as such a carrier suffers more and more and his life becomes unhappier and more wretched, in the same degree the ideal is seen more and more clearly. He does not stand in the way of the ideal at all, does not cloak it in any way with his carnality of finitude.

- Youths have lofty thoughts - but then he gets sensible and these thoughts are forgotten. The exceptions do not have a period of youthfulness. Their youth runs on in dark melancholy - and only when they are also fully educated and matured - only then do these thoughts awaken, and with the enthusiasm of youth.

- We need to reintroduce the prototypes, make them recognizable, something which can be done only by: either/or. Either you have quality in common, or you are on another qualitative level - but not this "also - well, not quite, but nevertheless - also".

- Christianity makes one, humanly speaking, unhappy - I doubt that men so structured will appear any more.

Nowadays everything must be done quite automatically. They have sunk down into sheer meaninglessness, and corresponding to this, Christianity has been remodeled into some kind of soothing syrup which, like other sweets: is offered for sale by pastry women (clergy in silk and velvet) and which further

corrupts people.

- To be chosen by God is, speaking merely humanly, *unconditionally* the most terrible of all the terrible misfortunes which can happen to man. And in every weak moment the chosen one himself thinks so too. Madness is set between him and men; they cannot understand him. Thus he lives in the most agonizing isolation. He endures bestial treatment from men, for when the idea is to be introduced, men become so outraged that the animal side comes to fore.

Literally there is not a single one who can understand him. Nor is he able to help anyone, he knows full well he could never get anyone to relate himself to the idea as he has. No one can rejoice with him. No one can sorrow with him; no one understands how and why he suffers. *God* is rather the very one who, with the most calculated cruelty, martyrs him when men are unable to do it.

So he lives. As long as he lives, intensively concentrated, he is much too strong for his contemporaries, like a fatal poison. During his life, all those who are called preachers, professors, all those pathbound animal creatures, are the most zealous to put him to death, as with the Saviour of the world. When he is dead, assistant professors, preachers and professors thin him out in their *own* water, and then in the water of the thousands whom they teach - and the water gives the most refreshing, delicious taste - magnificent!

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- So also when stress and strain, humanly speaking, go beyond your powers, you shall not spare yourself but submit everything to God; let *him* decide to spare or not to spare. In any case you must in no way spare yourself but pray to God for permission to spare yourself, and this confession of weakness will still keep you in the God-relationship, to begin again where you left-off.

- Suffering will surely come. For the moment an imitator of Christ introduces into the world an action properly characterized qualitatively as being essentially Christian, he will of course collide with the world.

Action characterized essentially by Christian quality is perhaps not seen once in each generation; it reaches only a certain degree, and thereafter comes the collision.

- If someone suggests that discipleship of imitation should be in earnest, then they say "This is blasphemy" - consequently, the truth is blasphemy.

- "Established Christendom" really dates from the time Christmas was declared the supreme festival (in the Fourth Century). The Saviour of the

world is now a baby.

Thus there is an oscillation between two extreme poles - either stressing only Christ's death (for then one also escapes imitation) or the baby Christ.

- The gospel says: No One can serve two masters. The whole world says the very opposite. The world preaches "to a certain degree". Which is the opposite.

- Before long the generation finds imitation to be inconvenient and hits upon something new. They say: To imitate in this way is a little too earnest. Let us rather go out to the meadow and play at Christianity, but call it Christianity. That is, they introduce another actuality, an artistic actuality, or they introduce Christianity into the arts, removed from actuality by the distance of imagination.

- Think of a very long railway train - but long ago the locomotive ran away from it. Christendom is the unmoving train, each generation linked to the previous one. The locomotive is Christianity, the restlessness of the eternal.

- I know very well that what I write here will in the course of time be declared to be the loftiest wisdom. I also know that when that happens the shape of the world will not have changed one whit, because those who will be busy showing how profound and true this is will be, of course, assistant professors - those animal-creatures. If any class of men deserves to be called animals in comparison with the rest of us, it is preachers and professors.

From The Unconcluding Postscript

- If, to master ones personal life and adjust to the pursuit of worldly goods and gains, one makes that life one thing and philosophy another, philosophy becomes science and we get the professor of philosophy.

- The times are not wicked but paltry. The thoughts of people's hearts are too puny to be sinful.

- On the stage came the clown, who told of a fire. The crowd thought it was a jest. So he repeated his message. But no one listened . . . So will the world come to an end, amidst general applause from the wits, who believe it is a joke.

From *Either/Or*

. . . the young person in the banquet

- No, love anyone I cannot, before I have fathomed what love is; but this I cannot, but have, rather, come to the conclusion that it is comical. It seems a convention for one lover to laugh at the other because he always finds the other lover ridiculous, but not himself.

Even if love be the most exquisite joy, I renounce it, for there is no happiness possible for me except my thought have free sway. For it is my immortal part and, hence, of more importance than a wife.

From *Fear and Trembling*

- True Love has its priests in the poets, and one hears at times a poet's voice which worthily extols it. But not a word does one hear of faith. Who is there to speak in honour of that passion?

Philosophy goes right on! Theology sits at the window with painted visage and sues for philosophy's favour, offering it her charms. It is said to be difficult to understand Hegel; but to understand Abraham, why, that is an easy matter. I find Hegel quite easy - it is just thinking. On the other hand, whenever I attempt to think about Abraham, I am, as it were, overwhelmed. I am aware of the enormous paradox which forms the content of Abraham's life.

Fear and trembling is of the absurd, the paradox, where one requires faith.

On this height, then stands Abraham. The last stage he loses sight of is that of infinite resignation. He does not really proceed further, he arrives at faith.

Our times are not satisfied with faith. We "go right on", changing wine into water.

- The movements of faith: it makes the movements to regain the finite after

having made the movements of infinite resignation. Blessed is he who can make these movements, for he performs a marvelous feat, and I shall never be weary of admiring him, whoever it may be. I have regard only to those movements. But these movements I watch closely, and I will not be deceived, whether myself or by anyone else. The knights of infinite resignation are easily recognized, for their gait is dancing and bold. But they who possess the jewel of faith are easily mistaken as Philistines.

Let me admit frankly that I have not in my experience encountered any specimen of this type, but I do not refuse to admit that there may be many. At the same time I will say that I have searched vainly for years. I am not interested in "travel" and "seeing things"; but if I knew there lived such a knight of faith I would journey to him on foot, for that marvel occupies my thoughts exclusively.

- I watch him for a sign of the infinite as opposed to finiteness (a fault), but he is a piece, all through. He belongs altogether in this world. No hint of anything supernatural or any other sign of the incommensurable betrays him. One might think he was a clerk who had lost his soul in doing bookkeeping.

He shows as much unconcern as any worthless happy-go-lucky fellow; and yet every moment he lives he purchases his leisure at the highest price, for he makes not the least movement except by virtue of the absurd; and yet, yet - indeed I might become furious with anger, if for no other reason than that of envy - and yet this man has performed, and is performing every moment, the movement of infinity . . . He has resigned everything absolutely and then again seized hold of it all in the strength of the absurd.

From *The Present Moment*

- O Luther, thou hadst 95 theses. I have only one: The Christianity of the New Testament simply does not exist. Here there is nothing to reform.

- It is horrible for me to be in such a degree right in what I say, when I say that Christianity does not exist at all.

- One cannot live off nothing. This one hears so often, especially from priests.

And yet the priests perform this very trick: Christianity actually does not exist - yet they live off it.

- That a genius is not something every man is, surely is something every man will concede. But that a Christian is something still more rare than a genius - this has been clean forgotten, or rather knavishly consigned to oblivion.

- Geniuses are like thunderstorms. They go against the wind, terrify people, cleanse the air.

The established Church has invented sundry lightning conductors. And it has succeeded. Yes indeed, it succeeded; it succeeded in making *the next thunderstorm* all the more serious.

- Religion feeds people a drug that they don't need, or worse still, produces something like craving in them - *gets* them addicted. Ah, the shame of it! And yet this is exactly what is being done in religion where people are in very truth fooled out of the real meaning of life and helped to waste their lives.

- Just as a dog which is impelled to walk on two feet has every instant a tendency to go again on all fours, and does so as soon as it gets the chance, waiting only to see its chance, so is Christendom an effort of the human race to go back to walking on all fours.

- In times long past, it was demanded of the teacher that his life be a guarantee for the teachings he proclaimed. The idea was abandoned long ago. Society cares no longer for personal responsibility. The demand is now made of the teacher that his life should guarantee that what he has to say is entertaining and dramatic stuff, amusing, and purely objective.

For example, if *you* were not attached to women and spoke of the Christianity of the New Testament which expresses preference for the single state: why, my dear man! You ought not to speak on this subject, because your congregation might think that you meant what you said and become disquieted, or might feel insulted that you had been so personal. No, you are not yet qualified to speak, wait till you are overloaded with attachments, then it will be time for you to "bear witness to the truth". Then you will satisfy them altogether, for your life will furnish the guarantee that it is all tomfoolery and great fun. Similarly, you should not teach to be poor when you yourself are poor. Why, your congregation might think that you were in earnest; they might become afraid and lose their good humour. No indeed, first get yourself some fat living, and when you have had it so long that your promotion to one still fatter is to be expected, then is your time to "bear witness to the truth" - and you will satisfy them; for your life then furnishes the guarantee that it is just a joke, such as serious men like to indulge in, now and then, in theatre or in church, as a sort of recreation to gather new strength - for making easy money.

- True worship of God consists, very simply, in doing God's will.

But that kind of divine service has never suited man's wishes. That which occupies man's mind at all times, that gives rise to science (including humanities and theology) - is to get a different kind of worship arranged. The main idea behind it is to do as one pleases. However one does it in such a fashion as to bring the name and invocation of God within it, by which arrangement man imagines himself safeguarded against ungodliness - whereas alas! just this procedure is the most unqualified ungodliness.

The Bible recommends against selfish attachment (eg, in marriage), but man says "that kind of worship doesn't really serve my purposes" - so the priest bestows his blessing on such an action, and so it will be acceptable to God. If you want to be married, you ought rather be married by a smith, than by a priest, and having God's name attached to it. Precisely the fact of the clergyman's being there makes it as criminal an affair as possible - soiling God's name.

- One morning a poor old couple found an expensive jewel on the hearthstone, ending their poverty. The next night, the wife dreamed of going to paradise, the angel showed her throne, which was missing a large jewel. The angel said "That was the jewel which you found on your hearthstone. It was given you ahead of time, and it cannot be put in again".

The next day they prayed for God to take it away again. . . . They will accumulate riches in heaven. Therefore, do not deceive yourself, and of all deceivers fear most yourself! Do not deceive yourself by having something in advance of time - and then an eternity to repent in.

- Just as a worldly man desires that which tends to nourish his love of life, likewise, he who wishes to live with eternity in mind constantly needs a dose of disgust with life lest he become foolishly enamoured of this world and, still more, in order that he may learn thoroughly to be disgusted and bored and sickened with the folly and lies of this wretched world.

