



WANDERINGS

Now Is The Time

Now is the time to know
That all that you do is sacred.

Now, why not consider
A lasting truce with yourself and God.

Now is the time to understand
That all your ideas of right and wrong
Were just a child's training wheels
To be laid aside
When you can finally live
With veracity
And love.

Hafiz is a divine envoy
Whom the Beloved
Has written a message upon.

My dear, please tell me,
Why do you still
Throw sticks at your heart
And God?
What is it in that sweet voice inside
That incites you to fear?

Now is the time for the world to know
That every thought and action is sacred.

This is the time
For you to deeply compute the impossibility
That there is anything
But Grace.

Now is the season to know
That everything you do
Is sacred.

Hafiz

Much has been said *by David Whyte*

Much has been said about the eternal and untouchable nature of love, its tidal ungovernable forces and its emergence from beyond the ordinary, but love may find its fullest, most imagined and most courageous form when it leaves the abstractions and safety of the timeless, the eternal and the untouchable to make its promises amidst the fears, vulnerabilities and disappearances of our difficult, touchable and time bound world. To love and to witness love in the face of possible loss and to find the mystery of love's

promise in the shadow of that loss, in the shadow of the ordinary and in the shadow of our own inevitable disappearance may be where the eternal source of all of our origins stands in awe of the full consequences of everything it has set in motion.

Night Thoughts

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Evening Ferry Ride
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Beyond the conflict of inner forces *a Cherokee story*

An old Cherokee is teaching his grandson about life: "A fight is going on inside me," he said to the boy. "It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is evil - he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego." He continued, "The other is good - he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The same fight is going on inside you - and inside every other person, too." The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: "Which wolf will win?" You might heard the story ends like this: The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed." In the Cherokee world, however, the story

ends this way: The old Cherokee simply replied, "If you feed them right, they both win." and the story goes on: "You see, if I only choose to feed the white wolf, the black one will be hiding around every corner waiting for me to become distracted or weak and jump to get the attention he craves. He will always be angry and always fighting the white wolf. But if I acknowledge him, he is happy and the white wolf is happy and we all win. For the black wolf has many qualities - tenacity, courage, fearlessness, strong-willed and great strategic thinking - that I have need of at times and that the white wolf lacks. But the white wolf has compassion, caring, strength and the ability to recognize what is in the best interest of all. "You see, son, the white wolf needs the black wolf at

his side. To feed only one would starve the other and they will become uncontrollable. To feed and care for both means they will serve you well and do nothing that is not a part of something greater, something good, something of life. Feed them both and there will be no more internal struggle for your attention. And when there is no battle inside, you can listen to the voices of deeper knowing that will guide you in choosing what is right in every circumstance. Peace, my son, is the Cherokee mission in life. A man or a woman who has peace inside has everything. A man or a woman who is pulled apart by the war inside him or her has nothing. "How you choose to interact with the opposing forces within you will determine your life. Starve one or the other or guide them both."

On Religion *by Gibran Khalil Gibran*

Is not religion all deeds and all reflection,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The freest song comes not through bars and wires.

And he to whom worshipping is a



window, to open but also to shut, has not yet visited the house of his soul whose windows are from dawn to dawn.

Your daily life is your temple and your religion.

Whenever you enter into it take with you your all.

Take the plough and the forge and the mallet and the lute,

The things you have fashioned in necessity or for delight.

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

And take with you all men:

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

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

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

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

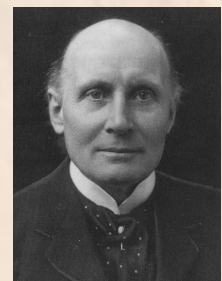
You shall see Him smiling in flowers, then rising and waving His hands in trees.

Dialogues *of Alfred North Whitehead*

"Religion carries two sorts of people in two entirely opposite directions: the mild and gentle people it carries towards mercy and justice; the persecuting people it carries into fiendish sadistic cruelty. Mind you, though this may seem to justify the eighteenth-century Age of Reason in its contention that religion is nothing but an organized, gigantic fraud and a

curse to the human race, nothing could be farther from the truth. It possesses these two aspects, the evil one of the two appealing to people capable of naïve hatred; but what is actually happening is that when you get natures stirred to their depths over questions which they feel to be overwhelmingly vital, you get the bad stirred up in them as well as the good;

the mud as well as the water. It doesn't seem to matter much which sect you have, for both types occur in all sects...."



The Fire Festival of Beltane

Beltane: (Bealtaine, May Eve, Valpur-gis) - April 30th/May 1st

This festival is also known as the Celtic May Day. It officially begins at moonrise on May Day Eve, and marks the beginning of the third quarter or second half of the ancient Celtic year. It is celebrated as an early pastoral festival accompanying the first turning of the herds out to wild pasture. The rituals were held to promote fertility. The cattle were driven between the Belfires to protect them from ills. Contact with the fire was interpreted as symbolic contact with the sun. In early Celtic times, the druids kindled the Beltane fires with specific incantations. Later the Christian church took over the Beltane observances, a service was held in the church, followed by a procession to the fields or hills, where the priest kindled the fire. The rowan branch is hung over the house fire on May Day to preserve the fire itself from bewitchment (the house fire being symbolic of the luck of the house).

This is a holiday of Union-- both between the Goddess and the God and between man and woman. Handfastings (Pagan marriages) are traditional at this time. It is a time of fertility and harvest, the time for reaping the wealth from the seeds that we have sown. Celebrations include braiding of one's hair (to honour the union of man and woman and Goddess and God), circling the Maypole for fertility and jumping the Beltane fire for luck. Beltane is one of the Major Sabbats of the Wiccan religion. They celebrate sexuality (something we see as holy and intrinsic to everyone as holy beings), we celebrate life and the unity which fosters it. The myths of Beltane state that the young God has blossomed into manhood, and the Goddess takes him on as her lover. Together, they learn the secrets of the sexual and the sensual, and through their union, all life begins.

Beltane is the season of maturing life and deep found love. This is the time



of vows, handfastings and commitment. The Lord and his Lady, having reached maturity, come together in Perfect Love and Perfect Trust to celebrate the joy of their union. This is a time to celebrate the coming together of the masculine and feminine creative energies. Beltane marks the emergence of the young God into manhood. Stirred by the energies at work in nature, he desired the Goddess. They fall in love, lie among the grasses and blossoms and unite.

The flowers and greenery symbolize the Goddess and the Maypole represents the God. Beltane marks the return of vitality and passion of summer. Another common focal point of the Beltane rituals is the cauldron, which represents the Goddess. The Welsh goddess Creiddylad is connected with Beltane, often called the May Queen, she was a Goddess of summer flowers and love.

From the Editor's Ipad



Through tears rolling his cheeks, my fourteen-- year old son asked me the one question that I dreaded most: What is my purpose in life? What and how can one answer such query? Aren't we all always wondering about our places, the meaning of our existence? So many reli-

gions, philosophies, thoughts attempt to answer this deeply entrenched quest of the human being. In so many ways, it invites us to behold what the world offers to us while delving deep into our own selves to discover our potential and gifts. Of course, we can always hide under a cover

and wait for life to smile at us and pull us from underneath the sheets to the light of Truth. Sooner or later, throughout the different episodes of our lifetime, we are invited to answer that question so as to be present fully to ourselves and the world.

Katia Hage

The Buddha

According to tradition, the historical Buddha lived from 563 to 483 B.C., although scholars postulate that he may have lived as much as a century later. He was born to the rulers of the Shakya clan, hence his appellation Shakyamuni, which means "sage of the Shakya clan." The legends that grew up around him hold that both his conception and birth were miraculous. His mother, Maya, conceived him when she dreamed that a white elephant entered her right side (The Dream of Queen Maya, 1976.402). She gave birth to him in a standing position while grasping a tree in a garden (Birth of the Buddha, 1987.417.1). The child emerged from Maya's right side fully formed and proceeded to take seven steps. Once back in the palace, he was presented to an astrologer who predicted that he would become either a great king or a great religious teacher and he was given the name Siddhartha ("He who achieves His Goal"). His father, evidently thinking that any contact with unpleasantness might prompt Siddhartha to seek a life of renunciation as a religious teacher, and not wanting to lose his son to such a future, protected him

from the realities of life.

The ravages of poverty, disease, and even old age were therefore unknown to Siddhartha, who grew up surrounded by every comfort in a sumptuous palace. At age twenty-nine, he made three successive chariot rides outside the palace grounds and saw an old person, a sick person, and a corpse, all for the first time. On the fourth trip, he saw a wandering holy man whose asceticism inspired Siddhartha to follow a similar path in search of freedom from the suffering caused by the infinite cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. Because he knew his father would try to stop him, Siddhartha secretly left the palace in the middle of the night (The Great Departure and the Temptation of the Buddha, 28.105) and sent all his belongings and jewelry back with his servant and horse. Completely abandoning his luxurious existence, he spent six years as an ascetic (Fasting Siddhartha, 1987.218.5), attempting to conquer the innate appetites for food, sex, and comfort by engaging in



various yogic disciplines. Eventually near death from his vigilant fasting, he accepted a bowl of rice from a young girl. Once he had eaten, he had a realization that physical

austerities were not the means to achieve spiritual liberation. At a place now known as Bodh Gaya ("enlightenment place"), he sat and meditated all night beneath a pipal tree. After defeating the forces of the demon Mara, Siddhartha reached enlightenment (Plaque with scenes from the life of the Buddha, 1982.233) and became a Buddha ("enlightened one") at the age of thirty-five.

The Buddha continued to sit after his enlightenment, meditating beneath the tree and then standing beside it for a number of weeks. During the fifth or sixth week, he was beset by heavy rains while meditating but was protected by the hood of the serpent king Muchilinda (Buddha sheltered by a naga, 1987.424.19ab). Seven weeks after his enlightenment, he left his seat under the tree and decided to teach others what he had learned, encouraging people to follow a path he called "The Middle Way," which is one of balance rather than extremism. He gave his first sermon (Buddha's First Sermon at Sarnath, 1980.527.4) in a deer park in Sarnath, on the outskirts of the city of Benares. He soon had many disciples and spent the next forty-five years walking around northeastern India spreading his teachings. Although the Buddha presented himself only as a teacher and not as a god or object of worship, he is said to have performed many miracles during his lifetime (Bookcover with scenes from the life of the Buddha, 1979.511). Traditional accounts relate that he died at the age of eighty (The Death of the Buddha, L.1993.69.4) in Kushinagara, after ingesting a tainted piece of either mushroom or pork. His body was cremated and the remains distributed among groups of his followers. These holy relics were enshrined in large hemispherical burial mounds (stupa, 1985.387), a number of which became important pilgrimage sites.

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Whatever happens
In our life,
Great fullness
Heals and nurtures
Everything.

Helga Vroom