



# Summer Solstice Issue Y.R. XLVIII

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### Volume 26 Issue 4

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#### Editor's Notes

And so begins the third year of the Druid Inquirer. What a long day it is indeed. From Belenos I give you the best wishes and hope that the strength of this day stays with you and invigorates your summer.

Deadline for the **Lugnasahd issue** is July 20, 2010. For Submissions of essays, poems, cartoons, reviews, conferences, events, grove news, articles of interest, etc: Send to [mikerdna@hotmail.com](mailto:mikerdna@hotmail.com)



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- Hebridean Journeys
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- An RDNA pilgrimage
- An Updated RDNA Welcome Pamphlet.
- Third Annual DANAC contest of the arts
- Planning a life-guide.



## **Sacred Groves**

# **News of the Groves**

A fuller list of the known active Reformed Druid groves is available at  
[www.rdna.info/wheretrove.html](http://www.rdna.info/wheretrove.html)  
<http://rdg.mithrilstar.org/grovelist.htm>

### **Carleton Grove: News from Minnesota**

Hi Mike, the Archdruid next year at Carleton is Beksahn Jang, I think jangb@carleton.edu. We have 65 people on our mailing list. Also, we finished our shrine! But we weren't able to consecrate it, because the area has been taken over by mosquitoes.

Avery

### **Rose Rock Grove: News from Oklahoma**

So much has happened since we last sent news. Crystal's grandfather, Melton McCreary, died April 29 after 5 1/2 years of hospice care. Those of us privileged to know him will miss him.

Crystal's friends Jessica and Brittany graduated from high school, May 22 and May 21. Congratulations, girls. We're so proud of you both.

Crystal's stepmother, Angel McCreary, died May 23. Our sympathies to her family.

Crystal is down to three subjects to graduate from home school, and plans on completing them before her next technical school semester, if not before her birthday.

Stacey had two heart attacks. The surgery was successful, and he and his wife have agreed in future to let his parents know when they can't afford his heart medicine. Delila is coming off the road, and there is still some debate over whether Stacey will continue truck driving, or find a different occupation.

Stacey's brain is slowly starting to work the way he wants it again after 1 week of not smoking. Kudos to our Druid no longer on the go.

A massive, grove wide job hunt is occurring. So far no luck.

A warm welcome to Crystal's new cat Buru.

Hope everyone is doing well.

Yours in the Mother,

Lydia Vandegrift and the rest of the gang from Rose Rock Grove, Moore, Oklahoma

### **Habitat Grove: News from Quebec**

Your editor has been quite busy, but is hoping to make a trip to Carleton in Northfield in the last half of July this summer. If you are going to be in the area too, let's coordinate. Summer is in full blast, and I've been attending several functions, festivals and such. One promising one is the Tam-Tam festival which is like a drum session every weekend on Mount Royal in the middle of the city. I also hope to make a visit to see Sebastien for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Weekend.

-Mike the Fool

## **Mists Protogrove: News from Arizona**

Tully Reill is still the leader, with three members  
[myrddynemrys@gmail.com](mailto:myrddynemrys@gmail.com)

With my best,

Tully Reill  
Founder, Order of the Mists RDNA Protogrove  
AODA Grand Almoner

## **Triple Horse Protogrove: News from Oregon**



This is the correct email to reach the Grove ([triplehorses@gmail.com](mailto:triplehorses@gmail.com)) and our Head Druidette is Wolfsong

2. Still active. Haven't missed a high day yet!

4. Approximately 12 members

5. website: <http://triplehorses.weebly.com/>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/Aigeann>

And I've attached a couple pics from our Beltane celebration to use or lose as you see fit for the next newsletter.

Blessings, Clan of the Triplehorses Grove

## **Hazelnut Mother Grove: News from California**

For Hazelnut MotherGrove Online Branch (look at all the puns!) this email ([tezra.reitan@gmail.com](mailto:tezra.reitan@gmail.com)) is fine, or you can email the AD at [abbotts\\_ibb@yahoo.com](mailto:abbotts_ibb@yahoo.com) Either will work. Send to both as I consult my emails more often than he does. We have ongoing plans to celebrate the High Days using the chat feature at PaganSpace.net We can also do ordinations from now until Samhain (Nov. 1st). Stephen W. Abbott is the AD. I, Tegwedd ShadowDancer, am the CoAD and Chronicler. We don't have a Preceptor as yet. We have 12 or 13 members. Our website is: [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/hazelnut\\_mothergrove](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/hazelnut_mothergrove) We also have a facebook listing but I don't at

present remember the number. Just go to Facebook and type in Hazelnut MotherGrove in the search box.

## **Desert Willow Protogrove: News from California**

We are still alive and well, supporting the Barstow and Fort Irwin California area. Morphing and developing to suit the environment we're in.

We are actively supporting the community, primarily the transient military, and Army civilian community involved with Fort Irwin CA. We've been invited to participate with the local Army

Chaplains and have the full support of the Fort Irwin Religious community. As with any group, the focus and activities change to meet the needs of the participants. In true RDNA fashion our Proto-Grove is inclusive and has attracted like minded folk who have varied and diverse backgrounds.

Saher de Wahull (Bruce O'Dell) is still the group leader.

At present we have about 10 people in our small group. We can never seem to all get together at the same time.

We've just begun to coordinate and keep in touch via our facebook account:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Earth-Spirit-NTC/112065562169255?ref=mf&v=wall>

The best permanent e-mail to contact for our group is: [NatureNTC@gmail.com](mailto:NatureNTC@gmail.com)

In service  
Bruce O'Dell

## **Nine Oaks Mystic Well Protogrove: News from Nevada**

We are still active with about 9 (up to 15) continuous members, but nine for sure.

This email is the active one. [nineoaksnmysticwell@gmail.com](mailto:nineoaksnmysticwell@gmail.com)

The current acting Archdruid is Finneagas, but sometimes the acting ArchDruid is the Maine Coon, especially in the feasting stages.

Blessings to all, in the name of the Mother!

## **Three Stones Protogrove: News from Nevada**

I am DragonWillow, my mate Finneagas and I have 'branched off' and split the 'nine oaks n mystic well' into a new protogrove called Three Stones Protogrove, we chose to stay independent because we are now working other aspects of Druidry not just RDNA.

Please good sir, list us in the Las Vegas section of the 'wheresgroves' listing.

We have at present 5 members, Finneagas and I rotate the responsibility of the ArchDruid position.

Our active email is [three.stones.protogrove@gmail.com](mailto:three.stones.protogrove@gmail.com)

We welcome any and all contacts that are positive and in the service of the Mother.

Many thanks!  
DragonWillow (Cyn)

### **Cat-In-The-Corner Hermitage: News from Colorado**

Cat-in-the-corner is still active, as a hermitage. I'm moving this email over to Google, so the new contact email will be "MauKatt@gmail.com," although it still being a hermitage, there are no new members being accepted at present. (I've forgotten if I've asked you to remove the contact email or not... doesn't really matter, I suppose. If it's there, change it to the new gmail one.)

I'm still the Archdruid. I suppose my cat could be considered a member, too.... She has just one eye now, but that's more of a Norse thing than a Celtic thing. (The Norse didn't have Druids, did they?)

When I am able to get an outdoor space to hold proper services, the Hermitage will become an active Grove again, but in the meantime I do what I can with what I have.

Hope things are going well for you!

Yours in the Mother,  
-Alyx Griffen

### **ProtoGrove of Lake Sokokis: News from Maine**

As for what our grove does, we gather at the lake for the festivals and every weekend in the summer. Our particular focus of worship is on the Earth Mother, Taranis, and Soucanna (goddess of our lake). We also include some Catholic mysticism. We hope to meet every weekend and stay over night for worship services.

[jmgagnon77@yahoo.com](mailto:jmgagnon77@yahoo.com)

We have 5 members, but no webpage.

### **Tuatha De Danann Grove: News from California**

Well, howdy!

Tuatha De Danann Grove, N.R.D.N.A. is alive and well and living in Argenti...er, Hayward! We have 5 regular members, I, Jeffrey Sommer, am the current Archdruid, and we are doing at least eight rituals a year. The next one is upcoming, as you can guess.

No, we don't yet have a web page, but it's a good idea. And, yes, this is the proper e-mail address for the Grove. If anything changes, we'll be sure to let you know.

In the Mother,

Jeffrey Sommer, AD

Hayward, CA

[frpaleph861@yahoo.com](mailto:frpaleph861@yahoo.com)

### **Golden Aspen Protogrove:**

Hi Mike - this is a good email address, I'm still in the early stages of forming a grove, but should be one by the end of the year, I hope. It will be an AODA Study Grove and an RDNA Proto-Grove. I'm the

only member at this point, but we'll see how things go from here. I have a blog started for the grove, the web address is: <http://goldenaspengrove.blogspot.com/> but I don't have the design finished yet or any posts put up.

thanks!

Teresa

[panidaho@yahoo.com](mailto:panidaho@yahoo.com)

## Seattle MOCC Grove: News from Washington

Hello Mike,

My MOCC email address needs to be updated for the Seattle Washington site. While I am not actively running a grove, I would like to keep it active so that if anyone is interested in contacting me they can. Maybe I'll get enough contacts I might be able to restart the grove.

Daniel Hansen

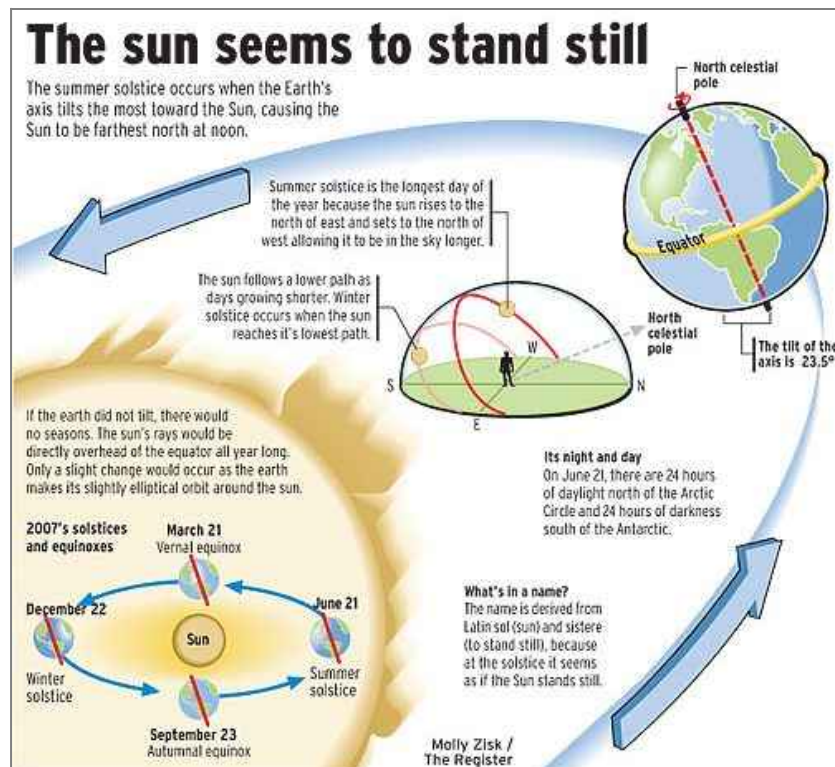
[hansen.59@hotmail.com](mailto:hansen.59@hotmail.com)

## Druids in the Media:

My favorite druid blog is the Archdruid Report. <http://thearchdruidreport.blogspot.com/> This is John Michael Greer's blog, btw.

I also have an on-going druid blog at: <http://panidahosgrove.blogspot.com/> It's partly for working on my own musings and partly as documentation for my AODA work. Not a whole lot of posts, but I am adding more to it as I get things formatted. I should have a few more posts up this week.

Teresa (PanIdaho)







## Dr. Druid

A column for medical questions, concerns and confusions  
with answers from Dr. Druid.

Submit your questions to:  
Doc.Druid (at) Gmail (dot) com.

*He hasn't quit, just waiting for you to write him!*

Please keep sending the questions and controversies to him.

### Reflections of a Physicians Apprentice, Part 2

Irony Sade  
May, 2010

I've been putting down roots during this past month. It is strange to say that now, having lived here for three years already. Now that I work as well as live in Auburn I am meeting new people, new neighbors daily. The surgical Physicians Assistant I work with in the afternoons grew up on the farm just down the road. One of the family practice partners bought the house my wife and I had looked at just before we moved here. Patients are starting to tell me where to buy the best pasture-raised beef, and suggesting I work at the clinic on the Onondaga Reservation. I am starting to learn who has kids in which schools, who hunts, who sells organic chicken eggs. Even more rarely for me, I am starting to remember their names.

I have also been putting down literal roots. In an unusual display of geographic commitment my wife and I have begun planting an orchard. Nothing except the blueberries is expected to bear fruit this year or next, but the inescapable implication is that we expect to be here when they do. On the surface they are bare twigs ringed round with patient stones with only the faintest glimmers of a leaf showing. Underneath their roots are spreading quietly toward the most nourishing pockets, anchoring them against the west wind off the cornfield, and giving them a solid foundation on which to grow. In much the same way, I, a medical student with nothing much to show for my work, am establishing relationships and learning the local traditions in a place I may well work some years hence.

It is possible, of course, that I have plated myself too soon. There is no guarantee I will match for residency in Syracuse, or that I will find employment in Auburn if I do. It may be that all the relationships I am cultivating now will serve me no better than the roots of the tomato seedlings we planted the night before the Mother's Day blizzard.

In a prosaic sense this has been a busy month. I finished my radiology rotation, underwent two weeks of anesthesia training, and am now one week into general surgery. I am still working at the family practice daily, in the emergency department each Monday night, and put in another two weekend shifts at the Urgent Care center. If only I was getting paid for it, things couldn't be better.

It is becoming obvious that most of my preceptors here are not used to working with students. In some ways that is good: things happen much faster in a working hospital where the focus is on treating patients rather than educating students. It is better preparation for the life of a physician, and I appreciate it. On the other hand, I have seen examples of physician behavior that would never be tolerated in an institution aimed at training young doctors. In the first a radiologist who shall remain nameless was pulling up interesting radiographs he had saved through the morning because he knew I was coming in. Mixed in with the dissecting aneurisms and congenitally absent clavicles he pulled up a normal looking lateral chest x-ray.



“This is obviously a normal chest,” he told me, “but you can’t tell that on the posterior-anterior view because the woman’s breasts interfere with the image. Hers are enormous! She’s actually a stripper I know pretty well. Here- let me show you something else.” He then proceeded to tell me woman’s stage name and pulled up a You-Tube video of the patient smashing beer cans with said breasts.

I didn’t know where to put myself. Here was an attending radiologist responsible for teaching me the ways of behaving as a doctor violating every kind of confidentiality to show me soft porn on a hospital computer. In hindsight I can think of a number of ways I could have addressed the situation, possibly without getting myself kicked out of radiology. At the time I was too surprised to say anything. No one else in the room even blinked, and the radiologist went on to evaluating other scans as if nothing had happened. In two similar episodes, an urologist introduced me to his circulating nurse using her given name, and then added “but you can call her ‘Lips’.” A different surgeon spanked a patient (who was also a nurse) on her draped bottom after giving her a rectal Botox injection and remarked that she had a nice butt.

I had hoped, in some combination of naivety, chivalry and drilled in professionalism that this sexual dynamic between doctors and nurses went out with the Korean War. It was disappointing and unsettling to see it still in action. None of these doctors were grizzled, pre-feminist veterans who might be too old to know better. They were all within a few decades of my own age- people who had training not unlike my own.

Is this a part of rural medicine? When your patient is also your co-worker, your neighbor, and your kid’s softball coach, does familiarity blur the lines of professionalism? Was ‘Lips’ a running joke between those two that went back decades? Was the spank part of a dynamic that had been established back when they attended high-school together? Was there more to both stories that made the interactions innocuous, while still appearing sexist, exploitive and unprofessional to me? Neither nurse appeared to take offence at the comments. The one even replied “Oh, you just made my whole day!”

It has been ten years since I decided to make medicine my profession, seven since I decided to become a doctor. For the last six I was sure I would go into emergency medicine. Now that it is high time to decide on a residency I find myself doubtful. The things I liked in the ER as a nurse are not what I experience as a doctor. Too frequently I feel like we can’t really help most of the people who get brought in. Mortal wounds- sure. Chronic diseases we can forestall for a few days, but really helping them would take months and years of primary care. Psychosocial trauma is possibly what we are worst at treating in the ER. For most of the people who come in I feel like the best we can do is say: “Here’s your diagnosis- go follow up with someone else,” or often: “I’ve no idea why your belly hurts, but we don’t think it’s going to kill you. Come back if it gets worse.”

In surgery I find more ownership of the patients, but less time spent with them. One of the things I like about medicine is meeting people and learning their stories. At present in surgery I am mostly assisting with operations, and all the patients I meet are deeply unconscious. My preceptor keeps me busy in the OR, and his PA is the one in charge of intake and follow-up, so I rarely find out how our patients do once they leave operating theater. Of course, this is rural medicine. My neighbor came over to discuss gardening and told me about her friend who had a colostomy reversal. Last Tuesday afternoon. While I was working. Her friend was my patient- and Friday she pulled out a staple from her incision and was greeted with a fountain of pus. Neither surgeon nor PA said anything to me about her, and it shook my faith that she was receiving proper follow up. The answer, of course, is to follow her myself- in my copious amounts of free time.

The problem is I enjoy surgery. I like the quiet, the teamwork, the careful planning, the manual dexterity- the fact that we are working with our hands. I like how every body is different, and that we get to see inside them. I liked looking at a healthy gall-bladder after seeing a string of sick ones. I was astonished how clearly different the color was: a robin’s egg blue instead of the bilious green I’d gotten used to. I like the surprise of starting a laparoscopy and finding something completely unexpected, and watching it evolve slowly into an open surgery while the surgeon does everything in his power to keep the patient safe. On the other hand, it hurts my body. At the end of four hours standing still retracting

my back and leg hurt worse than after a long day moving rocks. I asked the surgeon I work with if there were exercises he uses to protect his back. "It's too late for me," he replied.

And family care? I like it. It feels valuable. The doctors and patients think I'm good at it. It doesn't pay. Ten years ago that would not have bothered me. Now I have a family to support, hundreds of thousands of debt dollars, and am ten years behind my peers in earning potential. I am ashamed to say that the money does matter. Now that I'm in the community I've met several family doctors who gave up their practice because they could not make ends meet. Even the ones working now say if the Medicare cuts ever go through they won't be able to keep the lights on. My preceptor runs the most efficient and streamlined family practice I've seen, and even he earns no money off it.

I keep hearing that there is no such thing as a poor doctor, that everyone finds a way to make it work, that regardless of specialty one can erode even mountains of debt. Should I take ER and be perpetually frustrated that we aren't doing enough to help? Should I take surgery and watch my body crumble? Can I subject my family to family practice?

Whichever I choose, like the fruit trees I am in for the long haul. I just hope I don't wind up like the tomatoes, withered in the late spring snow.

### Quiet on the Farm

Kitty on the parsley, lying in the shade  
Crumpling the work my trowel has made  
Ogling the Bluebird resting on the fence  
Thinking he should eat it- making me tense.

Peas by the trellis are beginning to rise  
Tendrils questing hungry for the skies  
Loki dog sleeping, tail in the dirt  
Took me days to move it; hands still hurt.

Rocks ring the seedlings putting down roots  
Toes cool in the wind freed from boots  
Check that the horses haven't come to harm  
Night comes slowly: Quiet on the farm.

To be continued...

Disclaimer: Irony Sade or "Doctor Druid" is not a doctor- yet. He is a medical student at Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, NY. Previously he worked for five years as a nurse, and as a rural health worker before that. The medical and scientific information in this column is accurate to the best of his knowledge, and he will pester wiser minds than his if your question stumps him. Medicine is a highly individualized field. People may respond very differently to the same disease or treatment. For serious concerns, consult your own doctor.



## BOOK REVIEW: **Druid's Isle**

Written by Ellen Evert Hopman

Released April 1, 2010

Reviewed Here by **Mike the Fool**

[http://www.amazon.com/Druid-Isle-Ellen-Evert-Hopman/dp/0738719560/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1277092884&sr=8-1](http://www.amazon.com/Druid-Isle-Ellen-Evert-Hopman/dp/0738719560/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1277092884&sr=8-1)

### **About the Author:**

As you know, I have been a long-time fan of Ellen's prolific

publications since the early 1990s when I first picked up her Tree Medicine book. The author is probably one of the five best known practicing Druids in the publishing field (the others being Phillip Carr Gomm, Isaac Bonewits, John Michael Greer, and the most regrettable Douglas Monroe). She doesn't just write about Druids and herb-lore, she lives it; and that enthusiasm and her attempts to infuse Celtic Reconstructionism (a mixture of reasonably good research, a tendency towards tradition and actual daily life practice) give her works a vibrancy that is sometimes missing in the other authors.



She is highly decorated in the field of Druidism, with a long list of titles, having had roles in most branches of Modern Druidism, and recently receiving "Golden Oak" awards from the Druid Academic Nomination Award Committee (DANAC) for her first novel, and her other accomplishments.

Her web-page is [www.elleneverthopman.com](http://www.elleneverthopman.com) and she is based in Massachusetts.

### **The Book Itself**

This is the sequel to Priestess of the Forest: A Sacred Journey (which I reviewed in the Druid Missalany for Spring Equinox 2008 [www.rdna.info/newmissal60.doc](http://www.rdna.info/newmissal60.doc)) and I must admit I was surprised by its existence. I had thought "Priestess" was a one work book, so the first one ended on a rather gloomy note, and I was rather depressed to see a few ends unexplored. Thus my joy when a pre-release version was sent to me for a review!

### **Minor Spoilers If You Haven't Read the First Book**

The first book ended with the Druids self-exiling themselves to the woods to protect and nurture their faith in secret as the new High King fully embraced a rather aggressive form of Roman Christianity. Ethne, the protagonist of the first book, had had her baby stolen, by a bishop and secreted away overseas to be raised Christian and used against her, but the ship had foundered and all were believed lost.

### **Druid's Isle's Story**

Jump forward 18 years. These hedge Druids are doing relatively well, but Ireland is suffering from a spiritual and ecological disequilibrium in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century during this transition period. The lost child has

grown up in a fierce isolated monastery, not far from the Gaulish coast where the old ways are still practiced amidst a mixture of Roman Mithraism and Christian variants; while Roman culture under military occupation grows stronger and stronger. Naturally, the boy, Lucius breaks out, learns about other forms of spirituality, and wishes to find out his mysterious origins, thus a great journey within and across the islands begins.

As that story thread unwinds, another is that Ethne's adopted daughter, Aife, has grown up in a deeply nurturing Druidic framework, and is being groomed to take on the leadership of the Druids. However, it is necessary for her to leave the woods and make a journey to the titular "Druid's Isle", very much like the island of Iona off the coast of what is now Scotland, to go through a sort of Druidical boot camp or finishing school.

Meanwhile, the third strand of the book is Ethne and Ruadh's political struggles with the High King Cadla, who is a bit incompetent, but definitely under Bishop Germanus' thumb and influence. There is contention over high court ceremonials, tradition's role in the kingdom and the way to integrate the new faiths. When Aife and Lucius threads weave back into the court, events come to a head in a flurry of legal maneuvers, passion, politics and strategy; with again, a most un-expected ending.

### **Uses of the Book**

As I said, before; there is much fodder here for the Reformed Druid or any pagan book club to happily munch upon. This is more than a fantasy novel, as the author admits in the introduction; it is also a form of instruction. The book is sprinkled with poems, chants, rites, herbal remedies, anecdotes, triads and little lessons given by various Druids to students, courtiers and kings. Naturally, all the seasons pop up and play their own role in the series of wars, disasters and festivals.

The book is only 288 pages long, about 70 pages shorter than the first one, but with 47 chapters again (and I wish it had gone on longer in some sections), and is a comfortable read over a weekend or taken a little at a time over a month. Novices may no doubt demand a second reading to re-experience the underlying parade of seasonal events and arguments by the various contenders. You may find all the Irish terms a bit difficult to remember, and have to flip to the glossary in the front, presumably because of the difficulty of precise translation with an English term, not because she is trying to show off her vocabulary (no, really!). The inclusion of a map in the beginning was quite welcome, as the world was very different back then.

At \$18.95 in paperback (\$13.65 on Amazon), it is again another book that belongs on ever Druid's shelf, and one that you should give new-coming Druids during their first year or two of study; providing a welcome story-world respite from the often dry and dull archeological works that one bases the factual understanding of the Celtic world and the bizarre collection of Celtic mythology. In a sense, it blends fact with myth, enriching both streams of research.

As a final request, I ask that you leave a review on Amazon after you read the book to better encourage others to read this book too. Now I wonder if there will be a third book in the series or not....

You can see her Amazon page with her other 8 books (most are still very timely, and cover quite a few fields of research) at:

[http://www.amazon.com/Ellen-Evert-Hopman/e/B001JPAB2W/ref=sr\\_ntt\\_srch\\_lnk\\_1?\\_encoding=UTF8&qid=1277093513&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Ellen-Evert-Hopman/e/B001JPAB2W/ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_1?_encoding=UTF8&qid=1277093513&sr=1-1)



# Green Book Gems: Quotes & Stories On Education

Being a Reformed Druid, means learning how to learn again. We are a very scholarly group, even if we are not a literalist/traditional group. In particular, we often examine the biases and assumptions that underlie religion and philosophy, so that we may more openly participate in our diverse religious paths, with great

Awareness and insight.

Eight pages of material on "Education" drawn from the various five Green Books of the ARDA, a collection of non-authoritative stories, quotes, and tales that encourage reflection and interest in World religions, available at [www.rdna.info/arda.html](http://www.rdna.info/arda.html)

Collected by Mike the Fool

## GREEN BOOK 1

### (On learning and education)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## GREEN BOOK 2

### Proverbs of the Modern Gaels

#### Education and Experience

A knowledgeable man frowns more often than a simpleton.

No use having the book without the learning.

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

A wise man doesn't know his master's mistakes.

Learning is a light burden.

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

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

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

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

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

An old broom knows the dirty corners best.

The wearer knows best where the boot pinches.

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

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

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

# Wisdom of the Native Americans

## The Power of Paper

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

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

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

-Four Guns, Oglala Sioux

## GREEN BOOK 3

## Thoughts from Confucius

The Master, on hearing of this, said, "The asking of questions is in itself the correct rite." (III:15)

The Master said, "You can tell those who are above average about the best, but not those who are below average." (VI:21)

The Master said, "I never enlighten anyone who has not been driven to distraction by trying to understand a difficulty or who has not got into a frenzy trying to put his ideas into words. When I have pointed out one corner of a square to anyone and he does not come back with the other three, I will not point it out to him a second time." (VII:8)

The Master said, "The gentleman agrees with others without being an echo. The small man echoes without being in agreement." (XIII:23)

The Master said, "Men of antiquity studied to improve themselves; men today study to impress others." (XIV:24)

The Master said, "It is not the failure of others to appreciate your abilities that should trouble you, but rather your own lack of them." (XIV:30)

The Master said, "To fail to speak to a man who is capable of being benefited is to let a man go to waste. To speak to a man who is incapable of being benefited is to let one's words go to waste. A wise man let neither men nor words go to waste." (XV:8)

The Master said, "What the gentleman seeks, he seeks within himself; what the small man seeks, he seeks in others." (XV:21)

The Master said, "The gentleman is conscious of his own superiority without being contentious, and comes together with other gentlemen without forming cliques." (XV:22)

Confucius said, "Those who are born with knowledge are the highest. Next come those who attain knowledge through study. Next again come those who turn to study after having been vexed by difficulties. The common people, in so far as they make no effort to study even after having been vexed by difficulties, are the lowest." (XVI:9)

The Master said, "Yu, have you heard about the six qualities and the six attendant faults?" "No." "Be seated and I shall tell you. To love benevolence without loving learning is liable to lead to foolishness. To love cleverness without loving learning is liable to lead to deviation from the right path. To love trustworthiness in word without loving learning is liable to lead to harmful behaviour. To love forthrightness without loving learning is liable to lead to intolerance. To love courage without loving learning is liable to lead to insubordination. To love unbending strength without loving learning is liable to lead to indiscipline." (XVII:8)

Tzu-hsia said, "A Man can, indeed, be said to be eager to learn who is conscious, in the course of a day, of what he lacks and who never forgets, in the course of a month, what he has mastered." (XIX:5)

## The Butterflies of Chuang Tzu

## The Argument

Suppose you and I have had an argument. If you have beaten me instead of my beating you, then are you necessarily right and am I necessarily wrong? If I have beaten you instead of your beating me, then am I necessarily right and are you necessarily wrong? Is one of us right and the other wrong? Are both of us right or are both of us wrong? If you and I don't know the answer, then other people are bound to be even more in the dark. Whom shall we get to decide what is right? Shall we get someone who agrees with you to decide? But if he already agrees with you, how can he decide fairly? Shall we get someone who agrees with me? But if he already agrees with me, how can he decide? Shall we get someone who disagrees with both of us? But if he already disagrees with both of us, how can he decide? Shall we get someone who agrees with both of us? But if he already agrees with both of us, how can he decide? Obviously, then, neither you nor I nor anyone else can know the answer. Shall we wait for still another person?

But waiting for one shifting voice to pass judgment on another is the same as waiting for none of them. Harmonize them all with the Heavenly Equality, leave them to their endless changes, and so live out your years. What do I mean by harmonizing them with the Heavenly Equality? Right is not right; so is not so. If right were really right, it would differ so clearly from not right that there would be no need for argument. If so were really so, it would differ so clearly from not so that there would be no need for argument. Forget the years; forget distinctions. Leap into the boundless and make it your home!

## Wit and Wisdom of Islam

## The Grammarian

Nasruddin sometimes took people for trips in his boat. One day a fussy pedagogue hired him to ferry him across a very wide river. As soon as they were afloat the scholar asked whether it was going to be a rough ride.

"Don't ask me nothing about it," said Nasruddin.

"Have you never studied grammar?"

"No," replied the Mulla.

"Then half of your life has been wasted." clucked the Grammarian.

Storm clouds began to fill the sky and powerful winds dragged the boat into the rapids and dangerously deep eddies. The boat was smashed and began to quickly fill with water.

Nasrudin asked the Grammarian, "Have you ever learned to swim?"

"No, certainly not!" the Grammarian said with a pretentious sniff.

"In that case," replied the boatman, "all of your life is lost, for we are sinking."

## Not a Good pupil

One day Mulla Nasrudin found a tortoise. He tied it to his belt and continued his work in the fields. The tortoise started to struggle. The Mulla held it up and asked:

"What's the matter, don't you want to learn how to plough?"

## Various Other Quotes

### Education and Learning

Let not thy heart be great because of thy knowledge, but converse with the ignorant as with the learned. -Ancient Egyptian

I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand. - Chinese

Thou dost not practice what thou knowest; why, then, dost thou seek what thou knowest not? -Muslim

He who learns well defends himself well. -Argentine

First learn, then form opinions. -Talmud

Knowledge that can be stolen is not worth having. -Al-Ghazdi

The men who deserted thee will teach thee knowledge. -Talmud

By searching the old, learn the new. -Japanese

We learn from history that we learn nothing from history. - George Bernard Shaw

Awareness means suspending judgment for a moment..., then seeing, feeling, experiencing what this condition in front of you is all about. -Stephen Altschuler

If knowledge does not liberate the self from the self, then ignorance is better than such knowledge. - Sinai

With great doubts comes great understanding; with little doubts comes little understanding. -Chinese

God protect us from him who has read but one book. -German

The world is a fine book but of little use to him who knows not how to read. -Italian

Better unlearned than ill-learned. -Norwegian

Ask people's advice, but decide for yourself. -Ukrainian

A good listener makes a good teacher. -Polish

To inquire is neither a disaster nor a disgrace. -Bulgarian

If you would know the future, behold the past. -Portuguese

Cultivate your own garden. -Dutch

So great is the confusion of the world that comes from coveting knowledge! -Chuang Tzu

Teaching is a long way, example is a short one. -German

Knowledge too hastily acquired is not on guard. -Latin

Doors are not opened without keys. -Maltese

Discussion is an exchange of knowledge; argument an exchange of ignorance. -Robert Quillen

The man who strikes first admits that his ideas have given out. - Chinese

Nothing is so firmly believed as that which is least known. - Michel de Montaigne

Too much knowledge never makes for simple decisions. - Ghanima Atreides, *DUNE*

An intellectual is someone whose mind watches itself. -Albert Camus

A book is a mirror. When a monkey looks in, no apostle can look out. -George Lichtenberg

Many complain of their looks, but none complain of their brains. -Yiddish

There is nobody so irritating as somebody with less intelligence and more sense than we have. -Don Herold

One learns from books and reads only that certain things can be done. Actual learning requires that you do those things. -Farad'n Corrino (Harq al-Ada), *DUNE*

Most men, when they think they are thinking are merely rearranging their prejudices. -Knut Rockne

There's a difference between a philosophy and a bumper sticker. -Charles M. Schulz

I can evade questions without help; what I need is answers. - John F Kennedy

I often quote myself. It adds spice to my conversation. -George Bernard Shaw

The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery. -Mark Van Doren

For every person wishing to teach there are thirty not wanting to be taught. -W.C. Sellar

You can teach a student a lesson for a day; but if you can teach him to learn by creating curiosity, he will continue the learning process as long as he live. -Clay Bedford

Learn to reason forward and backward on both sides of a question. -Thomas Blandi

Form your opinion of a man from his questions rather than from his answers. -French

At the moment you are most in awe of all there is about life that you don't understand, you are closer to understanding it all than at any other time. -Jane Wagner.

Agnosticism simply means that a man shall not say he knows or believes that for which he has no grounds for professing to believe. -Thomas Huxley

The road to ignorance is paved with good editions. -George Bernard Shaw

Criticism comes easier than craftsmanship. -Zeuxis (400 BCE)

No writer or teacher or artist can escape the responsibility of influencing others, whether he intends to or not, whether he is conscious of it or not. -Arthur Koestler

Students achieving oneness will often move ahead to twoness. -Woody Allen

History is mostly guessing; the rest is prejudice. -Will and Ariel Durant

One part of knowledge consists in being ignorant of such things as are not worthy to be known. -Crates (4th cent BCE)

Education is a method by which one acquires a higher grade of prejudices. -Laurence Peter

Scratch an intellectual and you find a would-be aristocrat who loathes the sight, the sound and the smell of common folk. -Eric Hoffer, *First Things & Last things*.

An educated man is not necessarily a learned man or a university man, but a man with certain subtle spiritual qualities which make him calm in adversity, happy when alone, just in his dealings, and sane in all the affairs of life. -Ramsay Macdonald, statesman

Many philosophers build castles in the mind, but live in doghouses. -Arne Naess

## GREEN BOOK 4

### Native American Proverbs

Knowledge that is not used is abused. -Cree

The smarter a man is the more he needs God to protect him from thinking he knows everything. -Pima

Our first teacher is our own heart. -Cheyenne

Teaching should come from within instead of without. -Hopi

### Aphoristic Advice

#### Education and Knowledge

Solomon made a book of proverbs, but a book of proverbs never made a Solomon. -Anon

From the moment I picked your book up, to the moment I laid it down, I was convulsed with laughter; some day I intend to read it. -Goucho Marx

The Skeptics that affirmed they knew nothing, even in that opinion confused themselves and thought they knew more than all the world beside. -Sir Thomas Browne

I dislike arguments of any kind. They are always vulgar and often convincing. -Oscar Wilde

It now costs more to amuse a child than it once did to educate his father. -Vaughan Monroe

The eagle never lost so much time as when he submitted to learn of the crow. -William Blake

Stand firm in your refusal to remain conscious during algebra. In real life, I assure you there is no such thing as algebra. -Fran Lebowitz

How is it possible to expect that mankind will take advice when they will not so much as take warning. -Johnathan Swift

He does not believe that does not live according to his belief. -Thomas Fuller

The Earth is an oasis in the heart which will never be reached by the caravan of thinking. -Kahlil Gibran

Faith: is belief without evidence to what is told by he who speaks without knowledge of things without parallel. -Ambrose Bierce

Real books should be offspring not of daylight and casual talk but of darkness and silence. -Marcel Proust

A book is a mirror; if an ass peers into it you can't expect an apostle to peer out. -George Christoph Lichtenberg

It is better to speak wisdom foolishly like the saints than to speak folly wisely like the deans. -G.K. Chesterton

The more intelligent one is, the more men of originality one finds. Ordinary people find no difference between men. -Blaise Pascal

Neither Christ nor Buddha nor Socrates wrote a book, for to do that is to exchange life for a logical process. -William Butler Yeats

To expect a man to retain everything that he has ever read is like expecting him to carry about in his body everything he has ever eaten. -Arthur Schopenhauer

All that we are is the result of what we have thought. The mind is everything. What we think, we become. -Buddha

The chief knowledge that a man gets from reading books is the knowledge that very few of them are worth reading. -H.L. Mencken

When they come downstairs from their Ivory Tower, idealists are apt to walk straight into the gutter. -Logan Pearsall Smith

A man is not necessarily intelligent because he has plenty of ideas any more than he is a good general because he has plenty of soldiers. -Nicolas Chamfort.

Nothing is more dangerous than an idea when it's the only one we have. -Alain

A little learning is a dangerous thing. -Alexander Pope

If a little knowledge is dangerous, where is the man who has so much as to be out of danger? -Thomas Henry Huxley

I pay the schoolmaster but tis the schoolboys that educate my son. -Ralph Waldo Emerson

The learned fool writes his nonsense in better language than the unlearned, but it is still nonsense. -Benjamin Franklin

Originality does not consist in saying what no one ever said before, but in saying exactly what you think yourself. -J.F. Stephen

Know thyself? If I knew myself, I'd run away. -Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Just as philosophy is the study of other people's misconceptions, so history is the study of other people's mistakes. -Phillip Guedalla

Enlightenment is the movement of man out of his minority state, which was brought about by his own fault. The minority state means the incapacity to make use of one's understanding without the guidance of another... Have the encouragement to make use



of your own understanding is thus the motto of Enlightenment. - Immanuel Kant

Sometimes men come by the name of genius in the same way that certain insects come by the name of centipede- not because they have a hundred feet, but because most people can't count above fourteen. -George Lichtenberg

A definition is the enclosing of a wilderness of ideas within a wall of words. -Samuel Butler

Read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest. -The Book of Common Prayer

The more faithfully you listen to the voice within you, the better you will hear what is sounding outside. -Dag Hammarskjold

Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart... and ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house. -Deuteronomy 11,18

A good word is like a good tree whose root is firmly fixed, and whose top is in the sky; which produces its edible fruit every season. -Koran 14, 30

If I were to teach the Doctrine, and other did not understand it, it would be a weariness to me, a vexation... Then Brahma, knowing the deliberation of my mind... said, 'May the reverend Lord teach the Doctrine.' -Majjihima Nikaya, i, 240

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things." "The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master - that's all." -Lewis Carroll

Everywhere is nowhere. When a person spends all his life in foreign travel, he ends by having many acquaintances, but no friends. -Seneca

## **Wit and Wisdom of Women**

### **Education**

Having been unpopular in high school is not just cause for book publication. -Fran Lebowitz

Pay attention to what they tell you to forget. -Muriel Ruckeyser

I think the one lesson I have learned is that there is no substitute for paying attention. -Diane Sawyer

Readers, after all, are making the world with you. You give them the materials, but it's the readers who build that world in their own minds. -Ursula K. LeGuin

The true order of learning should be: first, what is necessary; second, what is useful; and third, what is ornamental. To reverse this arrangement is like beginning to build at the top of the edifice. -Lydia H. Sigourney

Prejudices, it is well known, are most difficult to eradicate from the heart whose soil has never been loosened or fertilized by education; they grow there, firm as weeds among stones. -Charlotte Bronte

A good teacher can save you ten years. You can't teach creativity, you can't infuse people with psychic energy, and you certainly can't give them a good ear, which is a gift of God, but you can teach people critical distance, how to look at their own work objectively as if it had been written by somebody else. -Carolyn Kizer

I didn't miss a beat turning down a scholarship at a Catholic college where I had been assured I would get more "individual

attention." Who wanted individual attention? I wanted to be left alone to lose my soul. -Patricia Hampl

The final lesson a writer learns is that everything can nourish the writer. The dictionary, a new word, a voyage, an encounter, a talk on the street, a book, a phrase learned. -Anais Nin

Men writers aren't thought of as "men writers;" they are thought of as great writers. It would be fine if the men writers would be called "men writers." It just never comes up - "Updike or Bellow, he's a really great man writer." But we frequently hear, "Margaret Atwood is a really incredible woman writer." I say what a crock of shit. -Anne Lamont

When we take an author seriously, we prefer to believe that her vision derives from her individual and subjective and neurotic, tortured soul - we like artists to have tortured souls - not from the world she is looking at. -Margaret Atwood

When I couldn't find the poems to express the things I was feeling, I started writing poetry. -Audre Lorde

He knows so little and knows it so fluently. -Ellen Glasgow

Interpretation is the revenge of the intellectual upon art. -Susan Sontag

The most moving form of praise I receive from readers can be summed up in three words: I never knew. Meaning, I see these people (call them Indians, Filipinos, Koreans, Chinese) all around me all the time and I never knew they had an inner life. -Bharati Mukherjee

The misery of seeing the horrible chaos that actually precedes the creation of really first-rate work is so unnerving that most teachers of workshops would rather see the neat imitative poems. -Diane Wakoski

I think the battle that one always has is the battle between inspiration and form. -Deena Metzger

Nighttime is really the best time to work. All the ideas are there to be yours because everyone is asleep. -Catherine O'Hara

A gossip is someone who talks to you about others, a bore is one who talks to you about himself, and a brilliant conversationalist is one who talks to you about yourself. -Lisa Kirk

## **Way of the Sufis**

### **Scholars and Recluses**

Give money to the scholars, so that they can study more.  
Give nothing to the recluses, that they may remain recluses.

## **The Gardens**

Once upon a time, when the science and art of gardening was not yet well established among men, there was a master-gardener. In addition to knowing all the qualities of plants, their nutritious, medicinal and aesthetic values, he had been granted a knowledge of the Herb of Longevity, and he lived for many hundreds of years.

In successive generations, he visited gardens and cultivated places throughout the world. In one place he planted a wonderful garden, and instructed the people in its upkeep and even in the theory of gardening. But, becoming accustomed to seeing some of the plants come up and flower every year, they soon forgot that others had to have their seeds collected, that some were propagated from cuttings, that some needed extra watering, and so on. The result was that the garden eventually

became wild, and people started to regard this as the best garden that there could be.

After giving these people many chances to learn, the gardener expelled them and recruited another whole band of workers. He warned them that if they did not keep the garden in order, and study his methods, they would suffer for it. They, in turn, forgot - and, since they were lazy, tended only those fruits and flowers which were easily reared and allowed the others to die. Some of the first trainees came back to them from time to time, saying: 'You should do this and that,' but they drove them away, shouting: 'You are the ones who are departing from truth in this matter.'

But the master-gardener persisted. He made other gardens, wherever he could, and yet none was ever perfect except the one which he himself tended with his chief assistants. As it became known that there were many gardens and even many methods of gardening, people from one garden would visit those of another, to approve, to criticize, or to argue. Books were written, assemblies of gardeners were held, gardeners arranged themselves in grades according to what they thought to be the right order of precedence.

As is the way of men the difficulty of the gardeners remains that they are too easily attracted by the superficial. They say: 'I like this flower,' and they want everyone else to like it as well. It may, in spite of its attraction or abundance, be a weed which is choking other plants which could provide medicines or food which the people and the garden need for their sustenance and permanency.

Among these gardeners are those who prefer plants of one single colour. These they may describe as 'good.' There are others who will only tend the plants, while refusing to care about the paths or the gates, or even the fences.

When, at length, the ancient gardener died, he left as his endowment the whole knowledge of gardening, distributing it among the people who would understand in accordance with their capacities. So the science as well as the art of gardening remained as a scattered heritage in many gardens and also in some records of them.

People who are brought up in one garden or another generally have been so powerfully instructed as to the merits or demerits of how the inhabitants see things that they are almost incapable - though they make the effort - of realizing that they have to return to the concept of 'garden.' At the best, they generally only accept, reject, suspend judgment or look what they imagine are the common factors.

From time to time true gardeners do arise. Such is the abundance of semi-gardens that when they hear of real ones people say: 'Oh, yes. You are talking about a garden such as we already have, or we imagine.' What they have and what they imagine are both defective.

The real experts, who cannot reason with the quasi-gardeners, associate for the most part among themselves, putting into this or that garden something from the total stock which will enable it to maintain its vitality to some extent.

They are often forced to masquerade, because the people who want to learn from them seldom know about the fact of gardening as an art or science underlying everything that they have heard before. So they ask questions like: 'How can I get a more beautiful flower on these onions?'

The real gardeners may work with them because true gardeners can sometimes be brought into being, for the benefit of all mankind. They do not last long, but it is only through them that the knowledge can be truly learnt and people can come to see what a garden really is.

## Continuity

A group of Sufis, sent by their preceptor to a certain district, settled themselves in a house.

In order to avoid undesirable attention, only the man in charge - the Chief Deputy - taught in public. The rest of the community assumed the supposed functions of the servants of his household.

When this teacher died, the community rearranged their functions, revealing themselves as advanced mystics.

But the inhabitants of the country not only shunned them as imitators, but actually said: 'For shame! See how they have usurped and shared out the patrimony of the Great Teacher. Why, these miserable servants now even behave as if they were themselves Sufis!'

**Commentary:** Ordinary people, only through lack of experience in reflection, are without the means to judge such situations as these. They therefore tend to accept mere imitators who step into the shoes of a teacher and reject those who are indeed carrying on his work.

When a teacher leaves a community, by dying or otherwise, it may be intended for his activity to be continued - or it may not. Such is the greed of ordinary people that they always assume that this continuity is desirable. Such is their relative stupidity that they cannot see the continuity if it takes a form other than the crudest possible one.

## The Three Candidates

Three men made their way to the circle of a Sufi, seeking admission to his teachings.

One of them almost at once detached himself, angered by the erratic behavior of the master.

The second was told by another disciple (on the master's instructions) that the sage was a fraud. He withdrew very soon afterwards.

The Third was allowed to talk, but was offered no teaching for so long that he lost interest and left the circle.

When they had all gone away, the teacher instructed his circle thus:

'The first man was an illustration of the principle: "Do not judge fundamental things by sight." The second was an illustration of the injunction: "Do not judge things of deep importance by hearing." The third was an example of the dictum: "Never judge by speech, or the lack of it."

Asked by a disciple why the applicants could not have been instructed in this matter, the sage retorted: 'I am here to give higher knowledge; not to teach what people pretend that they already know at their mothers' knees.'

## Three Visits to a Sage

Bahaudin Naqshband was visited by a group of seekers.

They found him in his courtyard, surrounded by disciples, in the midst of what seemed obviously to be revels.

Some of the newcomers said: 'How obnoxious - this is no way to behave, whatever the pretext.' They tried to remonstrate with the master.

Others said: 'This seems to us excellent - we like this kind of teaching, and wish to take part in it.'

Yet others said: 'We are partly perplexed and wish to know more about this puzzle.'

The remainder said to one another: 'There may be some wisdom in this, but whether we should ask about it or not we do not know.'

The teacher sent them all away.

And all these people spread, in conversation and in writing, their opinions of the occasion. Even those who did not allude to their experience directly were affected by it, and their speech and works reflected their beliefs about it.

Some time later certain members of this party again passed that way and they called upon the teacher.

Standing at his door, they noticed that within the courtyard he and his disciples now sat, decorously, deep in contemplation.

'This is better,' said some of the visitors, 'for he as evidently learned from our protests.'

'This is excellent,' said others, 'for last time he was undoubtedly only testing us.'

'This is too somber,' said others, 'for we could have found long faces anywhere.'

And there were other opinions, voiced and otherwise.

The sage, when the time of reflection was over, sent all these visitors away.

Much later, a small number returned and sought his interpretation of what they had experienced.

They presented themselves at the gateway, and looked into the courtyard. The teacher sat there, alone, neither reveling nor in meditation. His disciples were now nowhere to be seen.

'You may at last hear the whole story,' he said, 'for I have been able to dismiss my pupils, since the task is done.'

'When you first came, that class of mine had been too serious - I was in process of applying the corrective. The second time you came, they had been too gay - I was applying the corrective.'

'When a man is working, he does not always explain himself to casual visitors, however interested the visitors may think themselves to be. When an action is in progress, what counts is the correct operation of that action. Under these circumstances, external evaluation becomes a secondary concern.'

## One Way of Teaching

Bahaudin was sitting with some disciples when a number of followers came into the meeting-hall.

El-Shah asked them, one by one, to say why he was there.

The first said: 'You are the greatest man on earth.'

'I gave him a potion when he was ill, and so he thinks I am the greatest man on earth,' said El-Shah.

The second said: 'My spiritual life has opened up since I have been allowed to visit you.'

'He was uncertain and ill at ease, and none would listen to him. I sat with him, and the resultant serenity is called by him his spiritual life,' said El-Shah.

The third said: 'You understand me, and all I ask is that you allow me to hear your discourses, for the good of my soul.'

'He needs attention and wishes to have notice paid to him, even if it is in criticism,' said El-Shah. This he calls the "good of his soul."

The fourth said: 'I went from one to another, practicing what they taught. It was not until you gave me a wazifa (exercise) that I truly felt the illumination of contact with you.'

'The exercise which I gave to this man,' said El-Shah, 'was a concocted one, not related to his "spiritual" life at all. I had to demonstrate his illusion of spirituality before I could arrive at the part of this man which is really spiritual, not sentimental.'

## Cherished Notions

Sadik Hamzawi was asked:

'How do you come to succeed, by his own wish, the sage of Samarkand, when you were only a servant in his house?'

He said: 'He taught me what he wanted to teach me, and I learned it. He said once: "I cannot teach the others, the disciples, to the same degree, because they want to ask the questions, they demand the meetings, they impose the framework, they therefore only teach themselves what they already know."

'I said to him: "Teach me what you can and tell me how to learn." This is how I became his successor. People have cherished notions about how teaching and learning should take place. They cannot have the notions and also the learning.'

## Falsity

One day a man went to a Sufi master and described how a certain false teacher was prescribing exercises for his followers.

'The man is obviously a fraud. He asks his disciples to "think of nothing." It is easy enough to say that, because it impresses some people. But it is impossible to think of nothing.'

The master asked him: 'Why have you come to see me?'

'To point out the absurdity of this man, and also to discuss mysticism.'

'Not just to gain support for your decision that this man is an impostor?'

'No, I know that already.'

'Not to show those of us who are sitting here that you know more than the ordinary, gullible man?'

'No. In fact, I want you to give me guidance.'

'Very well. The best guidance I can give you is to advise you to - think of nothing.'

This man immediately withdrew from the company, convinced that the master was also a fraud.

But a stranger, who had missed the beginning of these events, and had entered the assembly at the exact moment when the sage was saying, 'The best guidance I can give you is to advise you to - think of nothing.', was profoundly impressed.

'To think of nothing: what a sublime conception!' he said to himself.

And he went away after that day's session, having heard nothing to contradict the idea of thinking of nothing.

The following day one of the students asked the master which of them had been correct.

'Neither,' he said. 'They still have to learn that their greed is a veil, a barrier. Their answer is not in one word, one visit, one easy solution. Only by continuous contact with a teaching does the pupil absorb, little by little, that which gradually accumulates into an understanding of truth. Thus does the seeker become a finder.'

'The Master Rumi said: "Two men come to you, one having dreamt of heaven, the other of hell. They ask which is reality. What is the answer?" The answer is to attend the discourses of a master until you are in harmony.'

## Eat No Stones

A hunter, walking through some woods, came upon a notice. He read the words: "Stone Eating is Forbidden."

His curiosity was stimulated, and he followed a track which led past the sign until he came to a cave at the entrance to which a Sufi was sitting.

The Sufi said to him: 'The answer to your question is that you have never seen a notice prohibiting the eating of stones'

because there is no need for one. Not to eat stones may be called a common habit. Only when the human being is able similarly to avoid other habits, even more destructive than eating stones, will he be able to get beyond his present pitiful state.'

## Time for Learning

The Sage of Ascalon would only speak to his disciples rarely. When he did, they were overcome by his ideas.

'May we have lectures at times when we can conveniently attend?' they asked, 'because when you speak some of us have family duties and cannot always be there.'

'You will have to find someone else to do that,' he said, 'because whereas I only teach when I do not feel the urge to teach, there do exist some who can teach in accordance with who is present at a fixed time. It is they who feel the urge to teach and consequently only need to adapt what they say to the audiences.'

## Sufi Literature

There are three ways of presenting anything.

The first is to present everything.

The second is to present what people want.

The third is to present what will serve them best.

If you present everything, the result may be surfeit.

If you present what people want, it may choke them.

If you present what will serve them best, the worst is that, misunderstanding, they may oppose you. But if you have served them thus, whatever the appearances, you have served them and you, too, must benefit, whatever the appearances. -Ajmal of Badakhshan

## To Be a Sufi

Being a Sufi is to put away what is in your head - imagined truth, preconceptions, conditioning - and to face what may happen to you. -Abu Said

## Sufi Lectures

Sufi students may or may not be encouraged to familiarize themselves with the traditional Classics of Sufism. It is the Sufi Guide, however, who indicates to each circle or pupil the curriculum: the pieces from the Classics from letters and lectures, from traditional observances which apply to a particular phase of society, to a particular grouping, to a certain individual.

The usage of materials sharply divides Sufi ideology from any other on record. It is this attitude which has prevented Sufism from crystallizing into priestcraft and traditionalism. In the originally Sufic groupings where this fossilization has indeed taken place, their fixation upon a repetitious usage of Sufi materials provides a warning for the would-be Sufi that such an organization has 'joined the world.'

## What is Sufism?

The question is not "what is Sufism?", but "what can be said and taught about Sufism?"

The reason for putting it in this way is that it is more important to know the state of the questioner and tell him what will be useful to him than anything else. Hence the Prophet (Peace and Blessings upon him!) has said: 'Speak to each in accordance with his understanding.'

You can harm an inquirer by giving him even factual information about Sufism, if his capacity of understanding is faulty or wrongly trained.

This is an example. The question just recorded is asked. You reply: 'Sufism is self-improvement.' The questioner will assume that self-improvement means what he takes it to mean.

If you said, again truly: 'Sufism is untold wealth', the greedy or ignorant would covet it because of the meaning which they put upon wealth.

But do not be deceived into thinking that if you put it in a religious or philosophical form, the religious or philosophical man will not make a similar covetous mistake in taking, as he thinks, your meaning. -Idris ibn-Ashraf

## 100 Silver Coins

Nasruddin opened a booth at the fair with a sign above it: "Two Questions On Any Subject Answered For Only 100 Silver Coins."

A man who had two very urgent questions handed over his money, saying: "A hundred silver coins is rather expensive for two questions, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Nasruddin, "and the next question, please?"

## Jewish Thoughts and Deeds

### Tradition

Rabbi Steinsaltz was teaching a class. He was only 25 years old at the time, and he realized that some in the class were great thinkers, the best in the nation. Some were three times his age. As he thought about it, he became embarrassed at the thought that he should teach them. Suddenly he realized that there was only one way he could justify his teaching. He decided to tell himself that these great minds, his elders, were listening to Adin Steinsaltz not as an individual, but as a representative of a tradition. In that sense, he was 5,000 years old and teaching 75 year-old babies.

-Adin Steinsaltz 1937-, Rabbi and Talmudic scholar

## Taoist Thoughts

### #48 Knowledge (Tao Te Ching)

In pursuit of knowledge,  
every day something is added.  
In the practice of the Tao,  
every day something is dropped.  
Less and less do you need to force things,  
until finally you arrive at non-action.  
When nothing is done,  
nothing is left undone.  
True mastery can be gained  
by letting things go their own way.  
It can't be gained by interfering.

## GREEN BOOK 5

### Monky Business

#### Time To Learn

A young but earnest Zen student approached his teacher, and asked the Zen Master:

"If I work very hard and diligent how long will it take for me to find Zen?"

The Master thought about this, and then replied, "Ten years."

The student then said, "But what if I work very, very hard and really apply myself to learn fast -- How long then?"

Replied the Master, "Well, twenty years."

"But, if I really, really work at it. How long then?" asked the student.

"Thirty years," replied the Master.

"But, I do not understand," said the disappointed student. "At each time that I say I will work harder, you say it will take me longer. Why do you say that?"

Replied the Master, "When you have one eye on the goal, you only have one eye on the path."

#### End of Questions

Upon meeting a Zen master at a social event, a psychiatrist decided to ask him a question that had been on his mind.

"Exactly how do you help people?" he inquired.

"I get them to where they can't ask any more questions," the Master answered.

#### Bell Teacher

A new student approached the Zen master and asked how he should prepare himself for his training. "Think of me a bell," the master explained. "Give me a soft tap, and you will get a tiny ping. Strike hard, and you'll receive a loud, resounding peal."

### Transmission of the Book

In modern times a great deal of nonsense is talked about masters and disciples, and about the inheritance of a master's teaching by favorite pupils, entitling them to pass the truth on to their adherents. Of course Zen should be imparted in this way, from heart to heart, and in the past it was really accomplished. Silence and humility reigned rather than profession and assertion. The one who received such a teaching kept the matter hidden even after twenty years. Not until another discovered through his own need, that a real master was at hand was it learned that the teaching had been imparted, and even then the occasion arose quite naturally and the teaching made its way in its own right. Under no circumstance did the teacher even claim, "I am the successor of So-and-so." Such a claim would prove quite the contrary.

The Zen master Mu-nan had only one successor. His name was Shoju. After Shoju had completed his study of Zen, Mu-nan called him into his room. "I am getting old," he said, "and as far as I know, Shoju, you are the only one who will carry on this teaching. Here is a book. It has been passed down from master to master for seven generations. I have also added many points according to my understanding. The book is very valuable, and I am giving it to you to represent your successorship."

"If the book is such an important thing, you had better keep it," Shoju replied. "I received your Zen without writing and am satisfied with it as it is."

"I know that," said Mu-nan. "Even so, this work has been carried from master to master for seven generations, so you may keep it as a symbol of having received the teaching. Here."

They happened to be talking before a brazier. The instant Shoju felt the book in his hands he thrust it into the flaming coals. He had no lust for possessions.

Mu-nan, who never had been angry before, yelled: "What are you doing!"

Shoju shouted back: "What are you saying!"





# Music & Poetry of the Celts, Part 1

By Daniel Hansen

## ORAL TRADITION

Oral tradition is a method of passing down knowledge in spoken form. The material passed down may be law, philosophy, science, history, or literature. We are told that the Filidh (poets) and bards would memorize as many as 350 stories and poems. They passed the tales, myths, legends and folklore down from one generation to the next generation. Modern scholars continue to debate theories about written Celtic literature. It can be argued that there were religious restrictions that might have

prohibited early Celts from writing at length in their own language. Although the ancient Celtic people knew and possessed the use of writing, they preferred to maintain a lively oral tradition. Julius Caesar comments: ‘They commit to memory immense amount of poetry. And some of them continue their studies for twenty years. They consider it improper to commit their studies to writing.’ Surviving Celtic inscriptions and texts actually date back to the same period as the surviving Latin literary remains. Celtic tradition, however was that all knowledge – law, poetry, philosophy, science, etc. – should be passed on orally.

There is evidence that the ancient tales of the poets were finally committed to writing only at the advent of Christianity, when Christian scribes wrote down many of the stories from oral tradition. At that point, the stories might have already been a thousand years old. The epics, such as the *Tain bo Cuailgne* [The Cattle Raid of Cooley], may well have passed down orally for a thousand years before being finally written down during the Christian period.

In the myths we learn that the ancient Irish literati has a secret language, *berla na Filied* (the language of the poets) which only the initiated could understand. This idea that the clergy had a secret language is nothing new because whenever archaeologists find writing and inscriptions in a language they can’t translate; it is common practice to label it a ‘secret language of the priests’ and move on. Usually later someone will be able to translate it, but not always. Both Cuchulainn and his wife Emer, we are told, knew this exclusive literary language. Celtic heroes and heroines were no empty headed beauties but were always accomplished in the arts and sciences.

Today, born out of the belief that what people have to say is an essential part of history, oral history has extended the existing documentary evidence of the past and investigated those less literate sections of society which have either been ignored by historians through lack of ‘evidence’ or interest. The History Workshop movement has, since the 1960s, done much work in oral history, as have the Oral History Society and the National Sound Archives, and in British history has largely centered on working class oral testimony of rural and urban life in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries – and notably in wartime too. The criticism of oral testimony as a source cite the fact that people may be partisan and/or partial in their recollections of the past. In response, oral historians point out that the current practice of working with small groups enables oral testimony to be treated as any other historical source and checked against other data, and in any case how the past is remembered is a way of understanding the ideology and motivation of a period, which is as valuable as discovering empirical information about it. Many local

history and community groups are involved in oral history projects that successfully extend not only the field and methodology of historical enquiry, but also the range of people who can undertake it.

## ***BARDIC POETRY***

Bardic poetry in its most general sense refers to verse composed by the professional poetic class found all over Celtic societies, the *filidh* and bards, who earned rich rewards for singing poems in praise of their patrons, or satires against their patron's enemies. However, surviving verse compositions in Irish from before c. 1200 are religious or historical in character, the product of the learned *filidh*, rather than straightforward eulogies to the aristocracy such as the bards composed orally. It is not until the amalgamation of these two classes in the course of the 12<sup>th</sup> century to produce hereditary, literate professional praise poets, the *filidh* or *fir dhana* of the later middle Ages, that a substantial body of praise-poems begins to survive in written form. As a part of the development, by 1200 the poet had forged a new standard literary language, Classical Early Modern Irish, and evolved strict rules of metre and rhyme to be rigidly observed in their most prized mode of composition, *dan direach*, or 'mighty poetry'. The less demanding mode, *bruilingeacht*, used by less educated poets, or by the hereditary Irish historians, lawyers, or clerics when composing in verse, observed the same rules of metre, but used imperfect rhymes, while a third, even easier mode, *oglachas*, used amateurs and comic poets, employed much simplified versions of the metres and imperfect rhymes.

The majority of such poems are formally addressed to lay persons, Irish chieftain, Anglo-Irish barons, and their respective relatives. These consist of eulogies to be recited at banquets hosted by the patrons, eulogies to grace their funerals or commemorated feasts, epithalamiums for weddings, poems to celebrate newly built palaces or churches, and occasionally inauguration poems or incitements for battle. A further 20 per cent or so of poems on religious subjects, though composed by the same professional *filidh* who were responsible for the secular eulogies. The remaining compositions consist of Tudor and Jacobean poems of courtly love, in the style of contemporary English verse though in bardic metres. Political exhortations, poetic contensions, and miscellaneous personal pieces. Works from the 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century poets like Tadhg Dall O' hUiginn, Eochaidh O' hEodhasa, and Fearghal og Mac an Bhaird are best preserved, because at that date a literate reading public collected their works in anthologies based on artistic merit. Surviving medieval manuscript collections normally contain poems addressed to a particular ruling family, for example the 14<sup>th</sup> century Book of Magauran or composed by a particular poet or family of poets such as the lost duanaire or poem-book of Muireadhach Albanach O' Dalaigh (fl. 1213), or the O' hUiginn poems in the so-called Yellow Book of Lecan.

The value of these texts for a historian lies partly in their factual information: it was a poet's duty to immortalize a list of patron's victories, and when he extols a subject's relatives he included wives, mothers, and grandmother, who are nominally unrecorded in formal genealogies. They are most interesting as testimony to the public image a patron wished to have propagated. When the subject is urged to make war or peace with the English, for example, the poet is unlikely to be offering unwelcome advice, as his payment depended on the patron's satisfaction with his poem. An unwarlike man, however, like Cuchonnacht Maguire (Mag Uidhir) (d. 1589), could be praised as dashing and aggressive, if he paid well.

## **MUSIC**

Celtic heroes and heroines had to be accomplished in the arts, particularly in music. Various instruments – harp, stringed instruments, bagpipes, and timpani – are mentioned by name. The earliest surviving example of Irish musical notation and composition is contained in an 11<sup>th</sup> century manuscript. Early music would seem to consist of short airs divided into two staves or parts, and it showed a great preoccupation with harmony. Irish musicians were celebrated from earliest times.

## *Musical instruments*

Little is known of the music of the ancient Celts, as the classical references to it are few and casual, and native evidence is lacking save in the case of the Irish texts, which cannot be taken as decisive for the earlier period. Some classical authors refer to the trumpet (carnon, carnux). It was used to summon assemblies and also in battle, especially in the charge and as a loud and clamorous accompaniment of the war cries for which the Celts were famous. The pipe of the trumpet was made of lead, and the bell was in the form of an animal, according to contemporary accounts. Archaeological research has discovered several trumpets of the bronze or early Iron Age. These are made of cast bronze, or of tubes of sheet metal riveted together. Some are of very fine workmanship, and one from the early Iron Age (late Celtic period) found in Ireland has its disk extremely ornamented in hammered work. These trumpets are of two varieties - with the mouthpiece at one end or at the side. Straight cylinders have also been found, evidently part of some larger instrument. The Celtic trumpet is figured also on Roman monuments. Horns are referred to by classical writers as used both in war and by swineherds to call together the swine. These as well as pipes and reeds of different kinds are also mentioned in Irish texts, and bone flutes have been discovered in Thor's Cave, Staffordshire.

'The courtship of Ferb' speaks of seven cornaire (horn players) with corna of gold and silver. These, however, may have been trumpets already referred to. Instruments of ox-horn were also in use.

An Irish poem of the 11<sup>th</sup> century despoiling the fair of Carman mentions pipes, and these are probably a form of bagpipes, as the plural name pipai is still used in Ireland, as in the Highlands of Scotland, for this instrument. The Irish form differs in some particulars from the Scots, its scale is more complete and full, while the reeds are softer. The bagpipe has become the characteristic Highland instrument, it has ousted the harp which was at one time so popular.

The harp or lyre (chrotta, ir. cruith, crot = Welsh crwth, a fiddle) was used by the bards of Gaul as an accompaniment to their chants, and is figured on Gaulish coins. It was common also to Irish, Welsh, and Highland music, and is frequently referred to in the Irish texts. In early times its power over the mind of men was the subject of a myth, which recurs constantly in Irish story. The reference is first to the harp of the god Dagda, one of the Tuatha de Danann.

With it he played 'the three musical feats which gives distinction to the harper, the Suantraighe, the Gentraighe, and the Goltraighe. He played them the Goltraighe until their women and youths cried tears. He played the Gentraighe until their women and youths burst into laughter. He played then the Suantraighe until the entire host fell asleep.' Before this the harp is said to have come itself from the wall to its owner, killing nine persons on its way.

The number of strings of the harp varied. The so-called Brian Boru's harp in Trinity College, Dublin, must have had thirty strings. Others had eight, but in some early texts reference is made to three stringed harps. In a story of Fionn in the Agallamh na Senorach to each string is attributed one of the powers of the Dagda's harp. In a story in the Book of Leinster this three stringed harp is called a timpan, and elsewhere the timpan is differentiated from the cruit or harp. It appears to have been played with a bow or wand with hair. It may, therefore, have been a species of violin or fiddle, and separate reference to a stringed instrument of the violin type exists.

The origin of the harp is the subject of an Irish myth. A woman walking on the seashore saw the skeleton of a whale. The wind striking on 'the sinews made a pleasing sound, and, listening to its murmur, she fell asleep. In this position her husband found her, and perceiving that the sound had caused her to sleep, he made a framework of wood, put the strings from the whale's sinews on it, and so made the first harp.

Bells of the Bronze Age have been found in Ireland. They are spherical or pear-shaped, and contain loose clappers of metal or stone, producing a feeble sound. These may have been the kind of bells, which were hung on valuable cows and on horses. Gongs are also mentioned - the plate of silver over Conchobar's bed struck by him with a wand when he desires silence.

An instrument to which most soothing powers are ascribed is mentioned in the text - the musical branch, or craebh ciuil, carried by poets and kings. This has been conjectured to be a branch or pole on which a cluster of bells was suspended. When shaken, it caused all to be silent; in other words it was a



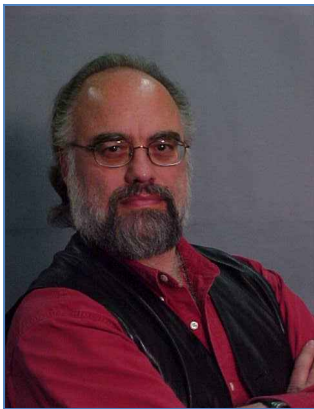
signal for silence. In some cases mythical qualities are ascribed to the branch. Cormac Mac Art's branch of golden apples produced the sweetest music and dis-spelled sorrow.

'Sweeter than the world's music was the music which the apples produced and all the wounded and sick men of the earth would go to sleep and repose with the music and no sorrow or depression could rest upon the person who heard it.

In the Irish Elysium reference is often made to trees growing there, which produce marvelous music causing oblivion to those who hear it. These trees are different from the instrument called. The Crann ciuil, or 'musical tree' which is described as a generic name for any kind of musical instrument – harp, timpan, or tube.

Special names were given to the players upon these various instruments, the name being taken from that of the instrument itself: pipaire – 'piper'; cruitire – 'harpist.'

To be continued.



## The Pagan Jesus

Karl Schlotterbeck, MA, CAS, LP – 2010  
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**Editor's Note:** *Used with permission of the author. "First published in The Henge of Keltria's publication, 'Henge Happenings'." The article definitely raised some ideas on the construction of Christianity and the boundaries and overlaps between monotheism and polytheism.*

Having brushed against a number of religious and spiritual paths over the years, I have noticed that many people use religious labels to define their personal identities -- but often do so in a symbolic rather than a communicative way. Such labels seem to be used more to mark where one *belongs* rather than what one *is* – a form of boundary to set oneself apart from one group and to indicate with which group they want to be identified. In reality, most of these boundaries are imaginary.

One such imaginary line in the sand is the moving boundary between Paganism and Christianity. In my reading of history, such boundaries were not so terribly important, but only became so when certain groups established "purity laws" and endorsed practices that, they claimed, distinguished them from their less-desirable neighbors. Because of its complexity, one can hardly do justice to this topic in a brief article such as this, and any number of books could be written regarding the details of these concepts and their history. I will attempt, however, to present some of the highlights of my reading of history that have led to these conclusions.

Jews and Christians have not been in the only ones, by any means, but they have become our example because of their prominence in our culture. These boundaries were early laid down (as I read history) by the struggle between early Christianity and the Hebrew establishment, as each codified its cannon of scripture, and selected its target audience and requirements for belonging. Similar boundaries were established by Hebrew tribes to distinguish them from the indigenous Canaanites whose lands they took over. Their boundary at that time served to establish their own center of authority and to discourage their tribes-people from being seduced into loyalties to Canaanite deities and practices. In addition, the Hebrew people have gone to great lengths to distinguish themselves from the ancient Egyptian culture from which, by their own history, they emerged.

The teachings of Jesus (whose actual name was something similar to "Yeshua") grew out of his context within Judaism, and apparently intended at first for the Jewish people. (There are legends of his travels in India and in Egypt, but they do not concern us here.) Because of resistance from the religious

establishment of that time, the Jewish nature of the Yeshuite movement broke down and it became open to Gentiles, and an eventual drawing of a new boundary *between* Hebrews and the now-Christians. The followers of Yeshua were then forced to distinguish themselves not only from their Hebrew origins, but also the Pagan Roman and Greek influences of that time -- until Christianity became a tool of the Roman state under Constantine. As they accepted their evolving identity, however, Christians brought with them Hebrew and Pagan concepts of sacrifice, teachings of the earlier Hebrew Scriptures, and the idea of a "chosen" people (among other concepts noted below).

As the Hebrew tribes earlier had done with regard to Egypt, so did Christianity portray itself as something new and special -- even as it carried forward and adopted Pagan practices and mythologies. Let's look at some of the specifics.

Many of the ideas claimed by Christianity as its special mythos include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Virgin birth
- The Ever-Virgin Mother of God
- Baptism
- Miraculous healings
- The Son of God on earth
- A hero's position in a cosmic play
- Sacrifice of the first born
- The "scapegoat" that relieves the people of their sins
- Suffering, three days absence, and reappearance
- Various holidays, particularly those of Christmas and Easter

Both Christians and non-Christians (or at least most of them) believe these elements to be Christian in nature. However, each of these existed prior to the adoption of them by the early Jews and Christians. In that regard, there have been times in history when various fundamentalist Puritan sects attempted to expunge some of these recognizably Pagan elements from their practice of Christianity. So, let's look at the Pagan origins of some of these nominally "Christian" motifs.

- **Son of God:** The concept of the Son of God on earth, born of a virgin, is found in the history of the Egyptians who considered each Pharaoh to have been conceived not by a physical father, but by the particular deity that the Pharaoh represented on earth.
- **The ever-Virgin Mother of God:** This was a fairly common concept of matriarchal cultures around the Middle East.
- **Baptism:** Baptism was, according to the scriptures, the central ritual of a Jewish reformer of the time (John the Baptist). What's more, baptism was a fairly common practice among other non-Christians for the purpose of cleansing and initiation.
- **Miracles:** Miraculous healings and "magical" acts were quite common in the time of Yeshua as evidenced by historical and biblical references to others who were perceived as competitors to the "official" disciples.
- **Sacrifice of the First Born:** Sacrifice of the first born - often meaning giving the first born into service to the local temple and not necessarily to death - was another common concept in the ancient Pagan world. Also related is the ritual of the "scapegoat" in which the sins and troubles of a village were heaped upon a goat after which it was driven out of the village.
- **Bread as the Body of the God:** Grain gods (such as Egypt's Osiris) were expected to die so that there could be life -- as happens with the grain-seed. A communion with bread is in line with Yeshua's statement that the bread he shared with his disciples was his body. That the wine was his blood also suggests his identification with the elements -- similar to the Celtic concept of the "God of the Elements" and the "God in the Elements."

- **Cosmic Hero:** Nearly every savior-hero of the people is portrayed as playing a central role in some great cosmic play - usually a struggle between good and evil or marking the advent of a new age. One of the early competitors to Christianity was the Roman religion of Mithras. The Mithraic religion - for males only - was popular with Roman soldiers. Largely secret, it appears that they celebrated a communion with round cakes; and they celebrated the story of Mithras' struggle with a great bull after which he lay as dead in a cave for three days before his re-emergence. This motif of three days of disappearance, common in many myths, has been related to the cycle of the moon.
- **Holidays:** It is fairly well known that the birth of Yeshua was set by the church hundreds of years after his time. Because of the already-existing popular celebrations of the birth of Mithras, the Roman Saturnalia and other heroes "born" at that time, the solstice (Rebirth of the Sun) was chosen for Yeshua's symbolic birth as well. Similarly, the celebration of Easter occurs when it does because of its connection with the Jewish Passover. But Passover is not tied to a date. Rather it comes after the first full moon after the spring equinox. Traditions of the Easter Bunny, eggs and new clothes are reflections of the rebirth of new life (in the Northern Hemisphere) after the dead of winter – and the name "Easter" is a derivative of a goddess.
- **Sunday Services:** The tradition of worshipping on Sunday was set by the Roman Emperor Constantine because Sunday was the day for celebration of Sol Invictus – the Invincible Sun. Seventh day Adventists attempt to negate this Roman tradition by insisting that the proper Christian Sabbath is Saturday.
- **Misogyny and the Spirit-Matter Split:** There are additional elements ascribed to Christianity such as misogyny and the imagined split between spirit and matter (with the feminine identified with the "inferior" status of matter). These ideas did not originate in Christianity, but came directly out of the Pagan Greek and Pagan Roman (particularly Latin) cultures. Modern Pagans can see in some of these elements of Christianity a reflection of their own early errors. This does not absolve traditional Christianity from these errors, for it remains responsible for having used them to its advantage.

From a distance, it would be easy to see Yeshua/Jesus as yet another form of the expression of divinity, as well as his mythos as an expression of a particular combination of already-existing Pagan elements. To be fair, we should separate the teachings of Yeshua from the actions and teachings of those who came after him. The core of the Yeshuite teachings – as I read them – included such ideas as liberation from the letter of the law, forgiveness, healing, and his one commandment to "Love one another." In fact, he taught that their love for one another would show who his followers were.

One could - whether Pagan or Christian - easily celebrate his pristine teachings and practices without becoming entangled in the way many of his followers used him for their own purposes. Similarly the wide range of nominally Christian beliefs and practices is so great that it is not difficult to find Christian groups who have an essentially Pagan orientation to life, as we may still find in some of the Celtic world.

I've been deceptively speaking of Christianity (and Neopaganism) as if it was a monolithic, homogeneous entity (violating my own warning about labels). The spectrum of those who call themselves Christians is probably at least as broad as those who call themselves Pagan. There are Christian religions that do not portray Yeshua/Jesus as a "savior," but as a Great Teacher; that do not separate spirit and matter, but consider the Divine inherent in everything; who are deeply concerned about our violations of the earth; who view mind as a creative force; and that creation is an on-going "project" in which humankind is a co-creator. Thus, anyone who uses the term "Christian" without defining it is invoking a label-of-belonging rather than communicating substantive ideas.

There are, in our modern world, Christian witches who will long remain hidden because they are subject to bigotry and persecution from *both* sides of this artificial Neopagan-Christian boundary. These invisible people could be a bridge spanning this unnecessary gulf but for the world's attachment to the labels. An irony here is that many Neopagans have taken seriously this line drawn in the sand by the early Hebrews and Christians as if it were real when it was (is) a political move to establish "party

loyalty" and the Judeo-Christian myth of separateness. These boundaries belie a common origin and similar mythologies among many of the peoples of the world. In short, the distinction is artificial and unreal.

In the end, I would assert that no sectarian religion can rightfully lay claim to ownership of any of these elements of human experience. They are part of our relationships with each other, with Nature, and with something inside us that ever expresses and reaches toward Divinity.

## THREE NEWS ARTICLES



### How church shopping is polarizing the country

The difference in viewpoints between traditionalists and modernists has dramatic effects on the culture wars, June Carbone and Naomi Cahn say.

*Editor's Note: June Carbone and Naomi Cahn are law professors and authors of the recent book ["Red](#)*

*[Families v. Blue Families: Legal Polarization and the Creation of Culture"](#).*

By Naomi Cahn and June Carbone, Special to CNN

A report this month on who gets abortions showed some surprising results: Catholic women are about as likely as any other woman to terminate a pregnancy. Then again, the striking thing about American Catholics is that they look almost exactly like the average American.

According to the Pew Research Center, for example, Catholics supported Obama in the 2008 election by 1 percentage point more than the general public. Even when it comes to abortion, which the Catholic Church strongly opposes, American Catholics are only 2 percent more likely than the general public to favor making it illegal.

What explains the divergence between church teaching and political poll responses? A large part of it is the difference between those who check a religious box in a public opinion poll and those who show up at a church on Sunday. If we look at only white Catholics who attend church at least once a week, they favor making abortion illegal by 76 to 27 percent.

The figures underlie a striking change in the characteristics of American churches of all denominations: in the '60s, those showing up in church on Sunday might have represented a cross-section of American viewpoints; today, they are more likely to reflect traditionalist views, further driving modernists away from religion altogether - and intensifying what some have called the "devotional divide" in American politics.

The difference in viewpoints between traditionalists and modernists is profound - and has dramatic effects on today's culture wars. David Campbell, a Notre Dame political scientist, explains that traditionalists [believe in an eternal and transcendent authority](#) that "tells us what is good, what is true, how we should live, and who we are."

Modernists, on the other hand, would redefine historic faiths according to the prevailing assumptions of contemporary life. They are less dogmatic, more tolerant, more open to change. Both might prefer that their 17-year-old daughters not sleep with their high school boyfriends. Modernists, however, would have an easier time saying, "But if you do, be sure you use a condom."

In the era following World War II, both groups attended the same churches. They were likely to subscribe to their parents' religion, to attend the church down the street, to include their children in community activities the church sponsored. Today, we are more likely to shop for churches that express our individual values, and traditionalists - those searching for "an eternal and transcendent authority" - are much more likely to attend church at all.

The result, according to [journalist Bill Bishop](#), is the "collapse of the middle" in American church life. Mainline Protestant churches, which tended to be more moderate and inclusive, have been losing membership for decades. The churches that have shown the greatest growth have been the large-scale megachurches, where eight in 10 are traditionalist.

During the same period, Catholics have become more likely to choose parishes on the basis of something other than geography, and 72 percent said that "the traditional or conservative nature of the church" was an important or very important reason for choosing their parish.

In the meantime, modernists, who are less comfortable with churches dominated by traditionalists, have become less likely to attend church at all. During the '90s, the number of Americans reporting "no religion" doubled, and sociologists believe the shift reflected the desire of many Americans to distance themselves from the increasingly close association between organized religion and conservative politics.

That association is the result of a set of reinforcing factors. Traditionalists are much more likely to attend church. The Republican Party has adopted more traditionalist rhetoric and policies, locking in the political support of those most in search of fixed rules and uncompromising principles. The association between religion and conservative politics and policies alienate the modernists, who distance themselves from religion. This leaves church attendees talking to the converted - those who share both their religious and political beliefs.

Studies of group psychology show that when people with similar views talk to one another, they end up at even more extreme positions. The very ability to choose - neighborhoods, cable TV stations, websites, churches - increases the risk that we will hear only those with whom we already agree.

As a result, the middle may be dropping out of American politics the same way it did from Protestant churches. The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life found that those who attend religious services more than once per week voted Republican more than those who never attend religious services at all.

Notre Dame's Campbell adds that, in interpreting these results, traditionalism may matter even more than church attendance. In 2004, for example, only 24 percent of the top quartile of modernists voted for Bush, compared to 84 percent of the highest quartile of traditionalists. Campbell concludes that in explaining the devotional divide "it is clearly traditionalism that makes the difference."

Catholics as a group may accordingly be quite capable of reaching consensus views. The traditionalists who dominate Sunday mass and the modernists who have become less likely to attend church at all, however, are increasingly unlikely to talk to each other.

*The opinions expressed in this commentary are solely those of June Carbone and Naomi*

**EDITOR'S NOTES:** So it seems that the article says that rather than breaking off, the progressives have to put up with the conservatives and stay in the same church building.



## Are there dangers in being 'spiritual but not religious'?

By **John Blake**, CNN

### STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- In survey, more "millennials" identify themselves as spiritual rather than religious
- Jesuit author says spirituality without structure can "lead to self-centeredness"

- Spiritual blogger argues organized religion inevitably leads to tussles over power
- Being a spiritual Lone Ranger fits the tenor of our times, a philosophy professor says

(CNN) -- "I'm spiritual but not religious."

It's a trendy phrase people often use to describe their belief that they don't need organized religion to live a life of faith.

But for Jesuit priest James Martin, the phrase also hints at something else: egotism.

"Being spiritual but not religious can lead to complacency and self-centeredness," says Martin, an editor at *America*, a national Catholic magazine based in New York City. "If it's just you and God in your room, and a religious community makes no demands on you, why help the poor?"

Religious debates erupt over everything from doctrine to fashion. Martin has jumped into a running debate over the "I'm spiritual but not religious" phrase.

The "I'm spiritual but not religious" community is growing so much that one pastor compared it to a movement. In a 2009 survey by the research firm LifeWay Christian Resources, 72 percent of millennials (18- to 29-year-olds) said they're "more spiritual than religious." The phrase is now so commonplace that it's spawned its own acronym ("I'm SBNR") and Facebook page: [SBNR.org](http://SBNR.org).

But what exactly does being "spiritual but not religious" mean, and could there be hidden dangers in living such a life?

### Did you choose "Burger King Spirituality"?

Heather Cariou, a New York City-based author who calls herself spiritual instead of religious, doesn't think so. She's adopted a spirituality that blends [Buddhism](#), Judaism and other beliefs.

"I don't need to define myself to any community by putting myself in a box labeled Baptist, or Catholic, or Muslim," she says. "When I die, I believe all my accounting will be done to God, and that when I enter the eternal realm, I will not walk through a door with a label on it."

BJ Gallagher, a Huffington Post blogger who writes about spirituality, says she's SBNR because organized religion inevitably degenerates into tussles over power, ego and money.

Gallagher tells a parable to illustrate her point:

"God and the devil were walking down a path one day when God spotted something sparkling by the side of the path. He picked it up and held it in the palm of his hand.

"Ah, Truth," he said.

"Here, give it to me," the devil said. "I'll organize it."

Gallagher says there's nothing wrong with people blending insights from different faith traditions to create what she calls a "Burger King Spirituality -- have it your way."

She disputes the notion that spiritual people shun being accountable to a community.

"Twelve-step people have a brilliant spiritual community that avoids all the pitfalls of organized religion," says Gallagher, author of "The Best Way Out is Always Through."

"Each recovering addict has a 'god of our own understanding,' and there are no priests or intermediaries between you and your god. It's a spiritual community that works."

Nazli Ekim, who works in public relations in New York City, says calling herself spiritual instead of religious is her way of taking responsibility for herself.

Ekim was born in a Muslim family and raised in Istanbul, Turkey. She prayed to Allah every night, until she was 13 and had to take religion classes in high school. Then one day, she says she had to take charge of her own beliefs.

"I had this revelation that I bow to no one, and I've been spiritually a much happier person," says Ekim, who describes herself now as a Taoist, a religious practice from ancient China that emphasizes the unity of humanity and the universe.

"I make my own mistakes and take responsibility for them. I've lied, cheated, hurt people -- sometimes on purpose. Did I ever think I will burn in hell for all eternity? I didn't. Did I feel bad and made up for my mistakes? I certainly did, but not out of fear of God."

### **Going on a spiritual walkabout**

The debate over being spiritual rather than religious is not just about semantics. It's about survival.

Numerous surveys show the number of Americans who do not identify themselves as religious has been increasing and likely will continue to grow.

A 2008 survey conducted by Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, dubbed these Americans who don't identify with any religion as "Nones."

Seminaries, churches, mosques and other institutions will struggle for survival if they don't somehow convince future generations that being religious isn't so bad after all, religion scholars warn.

Jennifer Walters, dean of religious life at Smith College in Massachusetts, says there's a lot of good in old-time religion.

Religious communities excel at caring for members in difficult times, encouraging members to serve others and teaching religious practices that have been tested and wrestled with for centuries, Walters says.

"Hymn-singing, forms of prayer and worship, teachings about social justice and forgiveness -- all these things are valuable elements of religious wisdom," Walters says. "Piecing it together by yourself can be done, but with great difficulty."

Being a spiritual Lone Ranger fits the tenor of our times, says June-Ann Greeley, a theology and philosophy professor.

"Religion demands that we accord to human existence some absolutes and eternal truths, and in a post-modern culture, that becomes all but impossible," says Greeley, who teaches at Sacred Heart University in Connecticut.

It's much easier for "spiritual" people to go on "spiritual walkabouts," Greeley says.

"People seem not to have the time nor the energy or interest to delve deeply into any one faith or religious tradition," Greeley says. "So they move through, collecting ideas and practices and tenets that most appeal to the self, but making no connections to groups or communities."

Being spiritual instead of religious may sound sophisticated, but the choice may ultimately come down to egotism, says Martin, the Jesuit priest, who writes about the phrase in his book, ["The Jesuit Guide to \(Almost Everything\)."](#)

"Religion is hard," he says. "Sometimes it's just too much work. People don't feel like it. I have better things to do with my time. It's plain old laziness."



## Spiritual, But Not Religious

*More than one fifth of Americans describe themselves with this phrase. What does it mean?*

*From "[Spiritual, But Not Religious](#)," by Robert C. Fuller. Used with permission from Oxford University Press.*

A large number of Americans identify themselves as "spiritual but not religious." It is likely that perhaps one in every five persons (roughly half of all the unchurched) could describe themselves in this way. This phrase probably means different things to different people. The confusion stems from the fact that the words "spiritual" and "religious" are really synonyms. Both connote belief in a Higher Power of some kind. Both also imply a desire to connect, or enter into a more intense relationship, with this Higher Power. And, finally, both connote interest in rituals, practices, and daily moral behaviors that foster such a connection or relationship.

Before the 20th century the terms religious and spiritual were used more or less interchangeably. But a number of modern intellectual and cultural forces have accentuated differences between the "private" and "public" spheres of life. The increasing prestige of the sciences, the insights of modern biblical scholarship, and greater awareness of cultural relativism all made it more difficult for educated American to sustain unqualified loyalty to religious institutions. Many began to associate genuine [faith](#) with the "private" realm of personal experience rather than with the "public" realm of institutions, creeds, and rituals. The word

*spiritual*



gradually came to be associated with a private realm of thought and experience while the word

*religious*

came to be connected with the public realm of membership in religious institutions, participation in formal rituals, and adherence to official denominational doctrines.

A group of social scientists studied 346 people representing a wide range of religious backgrounds in an attempt to clarify what is implied when individuals describe themselves as "spiritual, but not religious." Religiousness, they found, was associated with higher levels of interest in church attendance and commitment to orthodox beliefs. Spirituality, in contrast, was associated with higher levels of interest in mysticism, experimentation with unorthodox beliefs and practices, and negative feelings toward both clergy and churches. Most respondents in the study tried to integrate elements of religiousness and spirituality. Yet 19 percent of their sample constituted a separate category best described as "spiritual, not religious." Compared with those who connected interest in private spirituality with membership in a public religious group, the "spiritual, but not religious" group was

less likely to evaluate religiousness positively, less likely to engage in traditional forms of worship such as church attendance and [prayer](#), less likely to engage in group experiences related to spiritual growth, more likely to be agnostic, more likely to characterize religiousness and spirituality as different and nonoverlapping concepts, more likely to hold nontraditional beliefs, and more likely to have had mystical experiences.

Those who see themselves as "spiritual, but not religious" reject traditional organized religion as the sole-or even the most valuable-means of furthering their spiritual growth. Many have had negative experiences with churches or church leaders. For example, they may have perceived church leaders as more concerned with building an organization than promoting spirituality, as hypocritical, or as narrow-minded. Some may have experienced various forms of emotional or even sexual abuse.

Forsaking formal religious organizations, these people have instead embraced an individualized spirituality that includes picking and choosing from a wide range of alternative religious philosophies. They typically view spirituality as a journey intimately linked with the pursuit of [personal growth](#) or development. A woman who joined a [meditation](#) center after going through a divorce and experiencing low self-esteem offers an excellent example. All she originally sought was a way to lose weight and get her life back on track. The Eastern religious philosophy that accompanied the meditation exercises was of little or no interest to her. Yet she received so many benefits from this initial exposure to alternative spiritual practice that she began experimenting with other systems including vegetarianism, mandalas, incense, breathing practices, and crystals. When interviewed nine years later by sociologist Marilyn McGuire, this woman reported that she was still "just beginning to grow" and she was continuing to shop around for new spiritual insights.

McGuire found that many spiritual seekers use the "journey" image to describe a weekend workshop or retreat-the modern equivalents of religious pilgrimages. The fact that most seekers dabble or experiment rather than making once-and-forever commitments is in McGuire's opinion "particularly apt for late

modern societies with their high degrees of pluralism, mobility and temporally limited social ties, communications, and voluntarism."

Finally, we also know a few things about today's unchurched seekers as a group. They are more likely than other Americans to have a college education, to belong to a white-collar profession, to be liberal in their political views, to have parents who attended church less frequently, and to be more independent in the sense of having weaker social [relationships](#). Quantitative data about how those who are "spiritual, but not religious" differ socially and economically from their church counterparts is helpful. But it is difficult to move to a more qualitative understanding. We don't fully understand how unchurched Americans assemble various bits and pieces of spiritual philosophy into a meaningful whole. We are even further from understanding how to compare the overall spirituality of unchurched persons with that of those who belong to spiritual institutions.

Spirituality exists wherever we struggle with the issue of how our lives fit into the greater cosmic scheme of things. This is true even when our questions never give way to specific answers or give rise to specific practices such as prayer or meditation. We encounter spiritual issues every time we wonder where the universe comes from, why we are here, or what happens when we die. We also become spiritual when we become moved by values such as beauty, love, or creativity that seem to reveal a meaning or power beyond our visible world. An idea or practice is "spiritual" when it reveals our personal desire to establish a felt-relationship with the deepest meanings or powers governing life.



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