



Of Seeds and Flowers



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The Wooden Bowl

A frail old man went to live with his son, daughter-in-law, and four-year-old grandson. The old man's hands trembled, his eyesight was blurred, and his step faltered. The family ate together at the table. But the elderly grandfather's shaky hands and failing sight made eating difficult. Peas rolled off his spoon onto the floor. When he grasped his glass, milk spilled on the table cloth. The son and daughter-in-law became irritated with the messy table.

"We just have to do something about my father," said the son. "I've had enough of his spilled milk, noisy eating, and food on the floor."

So the husband and wife set a small table off in the corner. There, the grandfather ate alone while the rest of the family enjoyed dinner together. Since the grandfather had broken a dish or two, his food was now being served in a wooden bowl.

When the family glanced in grandfather's direction, sometimes they caught a tear in his eye as he sat and ate alone. Still, however, the only words the couple had for him were sharp words of admonition when he dropped a fork or spilled his food.

Their four-year-old son watched it all in silence. One evening before supper, the father noticed his son playing with some wood scraps on the floor. He asked his son, "What are you making?" The boy responded, "Oh, I am making a little bowl for you and mom to eat your food when I grow up."

I often wonder, when I watch parents drop off or pick their children at day care, what will happen to their parents when they reach their senior years. WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND.

OLD AGE DISEASES: Early, middle and senior-middle age are the times to prevent ancient diseases such as prickly impatience, touchy irritability, moody grumpiness, pessimistic cynicism of youth, and sickly nostalgia for the good old days. In your early aging years, swear a vow never to indulge in any one of them. Strictly scrutinize your speech to guard against a sneak infection of even a small debilitating virus. If you are already advanced in age and infected with one or more, then perform repeated, radical self-surgeries. As soon as you catch yourself complaining about anything, instantly yank out your griping like it was a painful rotten tooth.

Jewish Wisdom

"Rabbi Yoel Toteilbaum Zatsal was known to keep his door open to those who wanted to have a discussion or take advice from him. One day, a man arrived on crutches at the rabbi's house and recounted all his sufferings: 'Rabbi, I have been a widower for some time, and the care of my children falls entirely on me. As if that were not enough, I broke my foot and the doctors think it's impossible for me to heal. I don't know what to do, Rabbi. I'm lost.'

The Rabbi comforted this unfortunate man, as he always did when encountering the poor, and he gave him a large sum of money. The man left the room, followed by the rabbi's secretary, who called the next person to see the rabbi.

Suddenly, the secretary reappeared and exclaimed: "Rabbi, the man who just left threw away his crutches and continued happily on his way! He didn't have a broken foot! It's a scam!" The rabbi flinched, and murmured a prayer. Seeing the rabbi's reaction, the secretary left again to see if the man was still around. She quickly returned, "Rabbi!" she exclaimed. 'That man lied to you twice over! He isn't a widower. He just rejoined his wife who was



waiting for him outside. He just wanted to steal money from you!"

"The rabbi exclaimed, 'Baroukh Hachem! (Blessed be His name!) Thank Hachem, I am so happy that this man didn't have a broken foot! I'm very happy that this man isn't a widower. Thank you, my God, for having permitted me to hear this good news. Thank Hachem, I am very joyful. "

A DROP OF RAIN...A BIT OF SUN

Purity of Heart, Eh,?

In 1971 Father Ed Hays backpacked around India for three months. Throughout the pilgrimage he had a deep longing to share what was happening spiritually inside of him. With an interpreter, he visited Hindu holy men living in caves at the base of the Himalayas. "Those experiences opened my heart to the catholicity, the universality of prayer and the search for holiness," he said.

Fr. Hays recalled being with a Hindu holy man who had kept his vow of silence for 40 years, sitting in a cave. (Interesting side note: All of the beginnings of Eastern holiness and asceticism was transplanted from Western Christianity.)

Father Hays wrote questions to the holy man on a slate. "Have you ever seen God?" The holy man wrote back "yes" several times, each with larger letters. And then Hays chalked back: "What's necessary to see God?" The man grabbed the slate again and replied: "You must have a pure heart." "Wow! I couldn't believe it," said Hayes. "Those were exactly the same words Jesus said, 'Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God.'"

If I could give you 25 hours in your day, what would you do with the extra hour? Would you use the extra hour for personal spiritual growth, for contemplation, to read the Scriptures, prayer, to genuinely work to acquire purity of heart? "If only you recognized God's gift." John 4:10. *You are a child of God; call home.*

As the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands increased, Anne Frank and her family bravely prepared and then moved to a secret hiding place to escape the danger. They hid there for two years during World War II before being found and sent to concentration camps. Yet, Anne, writing in what became her famous Diary of a Young Girl, said this: "In the long run, the sharpest weapon of all is a kind and gentle spirit."

"ONE SINGLE ACT OF KINDNESS CHANGES THE UNIVERSE." - Thomas Keating, OCSO

ANXIETY

Do not let anxiety sabotage your search for God. You know well that when you search for something too anxiously you can come upon it a hundred times without ever seeing it. Anxiety masquerades as true spiritual energy, even as it wearies our mind, drains our enthusiasm, and deadens our soul. It pretends to stir up our soul, but all it does is dampen our spirit. It pushes us until we stumble over our own feet.

We need to be on the watch for this impostor that would have us believing that our spiritual life Depends completely on our efforts, so that the more panicked we are, the more anxiously we search, the more likely we are to find God. **Let God do his part.**

Be patient. Not even our best efforts can earn the blessings of God. Our role is to be ready, to receive God's gifts with an open heart, carefully, humbly, and serenely. St. Francis De Sales

"Angels can fly because they take themselves lightly. Never forget that the devil fell by force of gravity."

VISION AND REALITY

*"Almighty God, we make our earnest prayer that Thou wilt keep the United States in Thy holy protection, that Thou wilt incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate **a spirit of affection and love for one another and for their fellow citizens.** And that Thou will dispose us all to **do justice, to love mercy, humility and peaceful temper of mind,** which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without whose example in these things, we can never hope to be a happy nation. "* President George Washington 1783. **"O George, where art thou now, when we need you???"**

MARRIAGE WISDOM: In marriage it's so happens that the Lord has devised a particularly gentle but no less disciplined and effective means for helping men and women to humble themselves, to surrender their weak and straying wills and to become as holy as any monk who ever lived. Even the closest of couples will inevitably find themselves engaged in a struggle of wills; for marriage it's a wild, audacious attempt at an almost impossible degree of cooperation between two powerful centers of self-assertion. Marriage cannot help being a furnace of conflict, a crucible in which these two wills must be melted down and **PURIFIED IN LOVE**. Most people do not realize that this is what they are signing up for when they get married but this is what invariably faces them. Marriage turns out to be, through and through, **an act of acquiescence, a willing compliance both with God and with one other person**, in the difficult process of surrendering one's ego. It cannot succeed without, first of all, a profound acceptance of the conditions of struggle, and the demand for a personal transformation no less than that of a committed monk. "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." Proverbs 27: 17.

Marriage was never intended as a comfort station for lazy people. On the contrary, it is a systematic program of deliberate and thoroughgoing self-sacrifice. A man's home is not his castle so much as his monastery, and if he happens to be treated like a king there, then it is only so that he might be better enabled to **become a servant in love**. For marriage is intended to be an environment in which he will be lovingly yet persistently be confronted with the plainest and ugliest evidence of his sinfulness and thus encouraged on a daily basis to repent and to change. Marriage is really a drastic course of action which, as much as any monastic commitment, dedicates the person to a life of vigorous self-denial, to a disciplined and joyful love path of renunciation for one's beloved. It is a radical step and is not intended for anyone who is not prepared to surrender his own will in love. "Unless the grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat. But if it dies, it produces much fruit." John 12: 24. "The Mystery of Marriage" Mike Mason Page 139.



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William Blake

Unless the eye catch fire,
the God will not be seen.
Unless the ear catch fire,
the God will not be heard.
Unless the tongue catch fire,
the God will not be named.
Unless the heart catch fire,
the God will not be loved.
Unless the mind catch fire,
the God will not be known.



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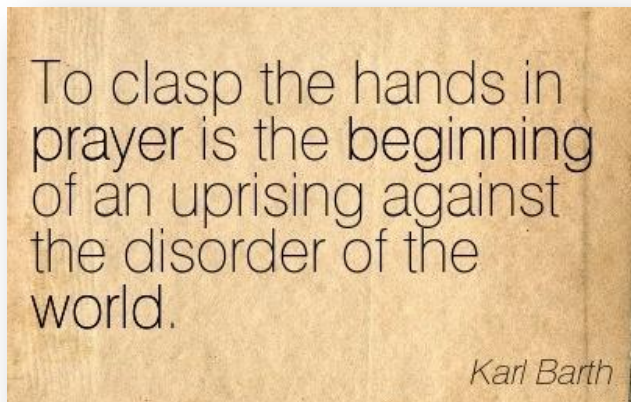
SPEAKING SOFTLY

"Peace is the tranquility of right order". Whenever I have found myself unhappy, feeling insecure, anxious, tense, upon *reflection and prayer*, I have ALWAYS discovered that **something important in my life was OUT OF ORDER**. -that something important in my life was, NOW, in a state of **DIS-ORDER**. DISORDER, HOW? Too much work, not enough leisure or rest or fun, not praying enough or hugging of the Scriptures or a good spiritual book, not generously loving Cindy or the children or God, worry about money, the bills, my ego, impatient or angry with life, too much eating, too little exercise etc.. Peace is the tranquility of **RIGHT ORDER**. **Whenever we lose RIGHT ORDER in our lives, we lose our peace**. We have to find out what has gone awry and fix it. Not to do this is to remain in pain.

EVERYONE that I have had the privilege of counseling over the years has come to share because they are unhappy; they have lost their peace; their life has **lost its order**. They are **IN DIS-ORDER**. Something in their life, other than the TRUTH, has taken over, and they are in pain. They have lost the **TRANQUILITY OF RIGHT ORDER**. **PEACE!!** Check your own life. Is this true or not? **Order= peace. Dis-order=pain**. Not sure what is OUT OF ORDER, pray, really pray; ask the Holy Spirit for help. She is the "**Great Revealer**"; and will speak when the time is right.

Our society, as a whole, is swimming in disorder, MAINLY, BECAUSE TOO MANY PEOPLE ARE SWIMMING IN DIS-ORDER!! - NON TRUTH!! THERE IS NO PEACE TO BE FOUND.

**REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR ONE MINUTE AT 9P.M. EASTERN FOR OUR COUNTRY.
THE TRUTH IS COMING OUT!!**



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