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Special Points Of Interest:

- Wisdom lived in the midst of daily life receives its transmission from the past and its learning-experience in the present.
- Practical wisdom takes the patterns of human life and nature seriously as tools for knowing how and how not to live in Beauty.
- Water illustrates one of the fundamental patters of wisdom—letting go.
- The underlying pattern of the cosmos is movement and change. Knowing this give us insight into our own changing natures.

**PRACTICAL WISDOM—
IN DAILY LIFE**

Practical wisdom is, first, applied wisdom—wisdom applied to daily life and embedded within as a result of our experience. Second, it is wisdom as *praxis*—the practice of the spiritual principles, teachings and truths from the wisdom traditions where we need it most, in the midst of daily life.

Practical wisdom is a treasury—a storehouse of applied wisdom built up and accumulated over the millennia of human experience. There are “rooms and fields” within this treasury, and each of us, working in the house or field of wisdom allows us to avail ourselves of its treasure, but also to add to its store.

Traditional cultures and societies were often much wiser than modern culture in their use of the treasury. Held in trust for all its citizens, wise men and women (crones and sages) taught the “wisdom of the ages” to their children through proverbs, stories and teachings which instructed its people in the



The old adage, “Chop wood, carry water” is also expressed today as, “After enlightenment, the laundry.”

right ways to live.

Though many men and women today have lost touch with the ancient accumulation of wisdom, nevertheless in their fields of education and expertise, they still practice the transmission of experience as a corpus of wisdom known to the “wise.”

Spiritual wisdom as *praxis* is similar in many ways. It too is an accumulation held in trust within a sacred Tradition, giving individuals access to the life-giving properties of truth in the form of personal

practice on a daily basis. Spiritual traditions have their “store” of practices—many of which have come down to the present as the result not only of divine revelation, but also from centuries of trial and error. These are preserved for us through the spiritual writings and teachings of their saints, and in the practices they taught their students.

Practical wisdom exists to remind us that in our own world we must each in our own way must “chop wood and carry water,” for “after Enlightenment” inevitably there is the laundry.

SEVEN PILLARS OF WISDOM

...for Oriental [Wisdom] knowledge is not control. It is rather the "sensation"—the vivid realization—that "I" am not this individualized consciousness alone, but the matrix from which it arises. This knowledge consists, not in a verbal proposition, but in a psychological change, similar to that which occurs in the cure of a psychosis. One in whom this change has come pass does not attempt to control the world, or himself, by the efforts of his own will. He learns the art of "letting things happen," which is no mere passivity but, on the contrary, a creative technique familiar to the activity of many artists, musicians, and inventors in our own culture, whereby skill and insight are found to be the fruits of a certain "dynamic" relaxation.

—Alan Watts
The Tao of Philosophy

Underlying the accumulation of practical or applied wisdom is a "lived knowing"—that is, a knowledge that comes from having lived which governs the gathering of this treasury as stored experience. These are implicit principles which can best be described in the following ways:

Freedom

Humans are free beings. We have liberty to make choices and to respond through acts of personal freedom. In particular we are free to choose our own responses and reactions. This does not mean that any of us are either totally or equally free to choose, but that each of us has a real degree of freedom of choice. With practice and help we can expand that freedom, making better and better choices based upon the store of wisdom accumulated through experience.

Pattern Recognition

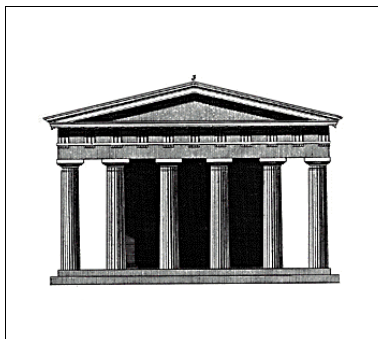
In order to choose and change the way we respond or react, however, we must be able to perceive the actual patterns of our lives in the context of the world around us. There is an aphorism which says, "We cannot leave our traps till we know we are in them." This means we must be able to discern and then change the patterns of distortion which limit our choices, or cause us to choose poorly. To see the cultural and familial patterns that restrict us is a point of real growth.

Context

To see our own distortions and difficulties clearly, however, we must have a new context, a larger way of seeing beyond the world which will have known. This larger context allows us to make comparisons and to perceive more honestly. We need, then, new input, new information and a larger perspective to understand the distortions with which we live.

Spiritual Axis

The perspective necessary for a wider context is typi-



The Seven Pillars of Tradition Wisdom are depicted as a temple within which humanity dwells.

cally provided by sacred traditions and the revelations which they bring from the cosmos as the spiritual ground of being. Inner work demands motivation provided by such larger vision. The consequent effort on our part, as well as help from these sources enable us to work along both the horizontal vertical axes. If we sincerely want to change our lives and take steps to do so, the "wisdom tradition" says we will be assisted by grace from Above. We are not

without aid. Compassionate and benevolent guidance is available to us as we walk through time in this universe.

Programming

The complex human mind is in many respects "programmed" like a computer to see and react in certain ways. Part of our programming is genetic (our heritage from birth), another part is early learning and cultural upbringing. A further part consists of our own pattern of choices over the years. This inner programming largely determines the way we think, perceive, act, and react. The pattern, however, can change.

Reprogramming

We can "reprogram" the inner patterns of our lives, but it takes effort and assistance from Above because many of these patterns are deeply ingrained over time. However, if any of these patterns of life cause us pain the motivation to change is greater, especially as we find better ways of thinking or acting.

Practical Wisdom

Practical wisdom, however, does not come merely by changing our concepts. It is experiential, learned through trial and error. You learn to ride a bicycle by falling off. Doing it wrong helps you learn to do it right, but it takes practice and sometimes pain. The best things in life take great personal practice before we learn, but once learned (like bicycle riding), they are "imprinted" on the fabric of our souls.

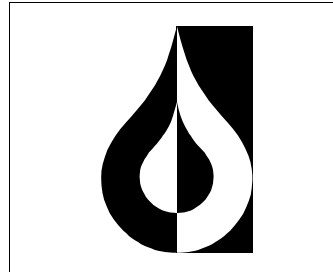
PRAXIS: LIFE LIKE WATER

How does one live so that one's life harmoniously matches the beauty of the universe? This is the crucial question for practical wisdom. The ancient Chinese Taoists said, that one should observe water.

The highest good is like water. Water gives life to ten thousand things and does not strive. It flows in places we reject and so becomes the Way.

—*Tao Te Ching* (8)

Inherent in the universe is the pattern of “flow”—life is a flowing—like water, never static or rigid. Learning to flow like water is a basic wisdom which we must learn, for it all too easy to become rigidly patterned. Typically human beings want security and control over the environment, which means that they must build permanent and unchanging structures



Water is not only a symbol but illustrative of wisdom

of security around us. Inevitably this means that we are incapacitated by our own creations, unable to adapt

and grow. Practically this means learning to “let go” and live in a state of non-attachment—a kind of inner freedom from the compulsion of desire and the demands made by a culture intent on external security. Jalal-uddin Rumi talks about this kind of person when he says...

*I look for one simple
and open enough to see the
Friend,
not an intelligence weighing
several perspectives.
...I want one who can quit
seeing himself, fill with God
and, instead of being irritated
by interruption
and daily resentments,
feel those as kindness.*

It is obvious that a wisdom, which offers deliverance from the vicious circle of “controlling the controller” is of immense value to cultures, like our own, which are hopelessly confused by their schemes to organize themselves. However, it will be extraordinarily difficult for a wisdom of this kind to come within the scope of Western philosophy unless the latter can admit that philosophy is more than logic, more than verbalization, to the point where philosophy can include the very process of the mind, and not simply of the words and symbols which the mind employs.

—Alan Watts
The Tao of Philosophy

THE PATTERN OF THE COSMOS

Without a larger pattern than our own reason we cannot contemplate our true nature nor see our connection to cosmic Fullness. The ancient sources of wisdom tell us that the cosmos is the manifestation of the divine Presence or Being, and that Presence is not static (as the word Being may sound) but dynamic and patterned. It is continuously changing and transforming as a unified field. In its unified totality it is in constant flow.

The pattern is always changing as a flow because it is unfolding. The flow of Being, then, manifests the changes of the pattern of unity as they are transformed into greater and greater complexity. Using

relatively well-defined patterns, this flow is subject to an infinite process of growth and transformation.

This unified flow can be seen also as a matrix through which and from which comes a succession of primal forces, forms, changes, and energies woven together in an infinite variety of material and organic structures, and ultimately crowned with the supreme attribute of reflective consciousness. It is from this flow of energy and vitality that we ourselves come into existence as divine manifestation in the “middle” of the cosmos. We consider ourselves to be “stable beings” but we are rapidly transmuting and being transformed through

time by dynamic changes nevertheless.

As human organisms we stand half way between the infinitely small as **microcosm** and the infinitely large as **macrocosm**. We are, therefore, **mesocosmic beings** — meant to play a meditating role between the extremes as agents of transformation as we experience the pattern ourselves. .

As the early Christian tradition saw, all the dimensions of the cosmos are mediated through “Comic Man” — that is humanity in its totality is mirror to the dynamic transformation of the cosmos, carrying that energy within our own beings.



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THIS JOURNAL IS A
RESOURCE FOR ALL
SPIRITUAL PILGRIMS,
THOSE IN SPIRITUAL
DIRECTION, AND
THOSE GIVING
GUIDANCE AS
DIRECTORS AND
MENTORS.

THE FOUR GREAT DIMENSIONS OF ORTHOPRAXIS

Orthopraxis (authentic practice)—that is spiritual practices which will enable transformation of being and consciousness, allowing the pilgrim to journey to the Center, the Heart of All Reality which consists of four great dimensions.

This journey spirals in two directions at once—inward and outward through the four great dimensions (or quadrants) as a complete and total practice. They provide us with a template whereby we can experience the alchemy of transformation.

Life Praxis

Life itself acts as the Teacher and is the foundation upon which all spiritual learning and teaching is builds. The great spiritual Masters (including Yeshua, the Master of Wisdom from the Middle East) taught that to live in the present moment, in right relationship to all things balanced between heaven and earth, was at the core of his spiritual practice.

Life praxis means becoming the truth and living the virtues of the Names and Qualities of God. Learning to live simply, in balanced moderation, with right-work is the practical side of Life Praxis. Ultimately such practice means practicing of the Presence of God in the midst of life.

Praxis of Prayer

Prayer is the ability to speak the language of heaven. For each individual this is an

interior dialogue that takes place at the level of the heart between all beings in the cosmos and the Creator. One becomes privy to the “cosmic conversation” and to the uninterrupted speaking of the Eternal Word from the beginning of creation.

The development of spiritual consciousness and communication involves forms of meditation, centering prayer,

To live by them, however, creates what most individuals see as an “upside-down” universe—one in which the normal principles of relationship are contravened and subverted. The “upside-down” principles and paradoxes of the Kingdom of Heaven flowing along the vertical axis transmit wisdom. Learning these principles means putting them into practice in daily life.

The Practice of Compassion

In a world filled with suffering and pain, compassionate awareness and response creates a deep bond between all beings, and heals the wounding which is part of our experience of life in space-time and human history.

Compassion is the ultimate gift we bring to the world, but it is enriched by something which the native societies of North America called our “original medicine.” Every human being is and brings a unique gift to creation, a healing medicine destined for the good of all.

Responding in compassion activates the gift of your “original medicine” as a healing sacrament, blessing and restoration to fullness. When we do it touches the entire Web of Creation, and we fulfill our **mesocosmic** role.



prayer of the heart, body prayer, chant, and invocation of the divine Names, all of which are part of the vocabulary of contemplative prayer.

Praxis of Esoteric Principles

Human beings typically live by the external rules and mores of culture and society around them—believing that is sufficient. Outer law exists, but inner Laws govern Reality from within. Yeshua, invited his followers to live by the inner laws and principles of heaven which he said were grounded in love and compassion flowing from the Heart of All Things.