Path of Surak

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A voice out of the darkness spoke softly about improving the mind. This voice was that of Surak, who gained numerous followers over the years. Surak's philosophy was that of peace and disciplining the mind. However, while many people were absorbed in Surak's teachings, others were unwilling to accept this passive approach.

The essence of Surak's teaching is in arriving at the truth through logical process. Emotion is illogical, thus making them impure, and deterrent to truth. However, Vulcans are born with the same emotions that afflicted their violent ancestors, but the continual mind conditioning, the t'an s'at, gives them the impassivity sought after by almost all Vulcans. The t'an s'at is an intellectual deconstruction of emotional patterns, a lifelong process that strives for absolute detachment from all emotion. Though not all can arrive at the penultimate pure logical state, the exacting process of mental control gives Vulcans enough to conform to the ideals of Vulcan society. Vulcans of this creed are impervious to greed, deception, anger, and all other vices that still plague the Terran psyche well into the 24th century.

Vulcans believe knowledge to be the only defense against unknown dangers, and pursue them with the intellect and logic that makes them some of the finest scholars in the Federation. Their pursuit of knowledge and impassivity of emotion are the driving forces in a Vulcan's life.

Logic is the cement of our civilization with which we ascend from chaos using reason as our guide.

~T'Plana'hath

The Philosophy of Surak

A movement toward a lasting peace on this planet will not magically appear, nor will its goal be achieved by those who cease reading this now, but it will be achieved, and for those who put forth the effort, there will be a greater reward than we have ever lead ourselves to believe exists.

The solution is, simply stated, to keep our passions in check so that they will not cause entropy. Use logic so that you will know what causes entropy and how to stop it. You may say, "That is not simple " Indeed the trip we must take as a civilized people is not a simple one, but it will be a fulfilling one.

It is much like a trek across the desert, where the terrain is inhospitable, the creatures unfriendly, and the journey seemingly endless. But like the sight of the occasional oasis or green edges of the fertile land, the value of what destination is reached is tantamount to any suffering along the way. It is a joy that cannot be taken away from one's katra.

The essential ingredient is that of the abhorrence of violence. This is the permissible passion; the one that leads to its mastery. This is not innate in many of us, and must be taught. One does not learn this from another person, or from one's teacher, but rather from an event one sees that encourages the opening of eyes, and the acceptance of diversity.
Once this rebirth occurs, it changes a person for good, and for the good. The planet has never been free of war. We have seen how nations send armed forces to keep peace instead of letting tyrants and terrorists fight amongst themselves, but the end result is the same. War. Fighting war with war is humanity's biggest mistake. We seem to be creatures of great intellect and the ability to learn from our mistakes, and certainly the mistakes of others (if history is taught to every generation), so why, then, do we continue to fight war with more war? The problem is that we are using the word fight. If we fight, so that we do not need to fight, we are still fighting, aren't we? It is an endless cycle that cannot be broken...unless...we don't fight at all. Now there is a novel idea. When someone approaches you with hate, give him peace, and there will be no fight. After all, it takes two people to have a fight. If one is unwilling, then the other will not have his way.

Their devotion to logical thinking came as a result of near self-extermination in ancient times when the Vulcans were a hostile, warrior race whose lives were ruled by strong passions. Surak, the father of Vulcan logical thought lived during the planet's last great war. After both sides were devastated, Surak met with emissaries from both sides to establish a workable peace. The philosophy of logic eventually prevailed. In the ensuing years since Surak, there has been little to disrupt the peaceful and logical existence of the Vulcans. The sayings, wisdom and teachings of Surak, and those attributed to him after his death, play an extremely important part in Vulcan culture and society. Although all Vulcans do not follow his teachings in the same manner and some have even rejected his teachings, the vast majority of Vulcans revere Surak above all other Vulcans past or present. It is unlikely this will ever change as long as an advanced culture lives on T'Khasi. Recent information has shown that selected items from Surak's teachings, approved by the government, are even taught in Romulan society.

Surak quietly began to convert those around him to his philosophy of logic and control of emotions. He developed rigorous disciplines. As more and more Vulcans accepted his way, the situation on Vulcan began to change. People discarded their weapons and destructive emotions. One myth is that the Vulcan discards all emotions. This is not true. The emotions remain but under tight control. The key is controlling external display of these emotions. As in all revolutions, groups of Vulcans rose up against Surak's changes. There were many attempts on Surak's life and ultimately he lost his life on a peace mission. Much of the history of this time is a mystery. The point is that Surak, against all odds, succeeded in saving the Vulcan race from its path of self-destruction and forever changed Vulcan society. It is now known that a large group of those who opposed Surak gathered a fleet of spaceships and left Vulcan to find a world of their own. These pilgrims were all thought to have perished while attempting this journey. But some did survive and the Romulans are living proof of this. The Romulans are a living reminder (and embarrassment) of the way many Vulcans were before Surak.

Surak maintained that the root cause of all the problems on Vulcan lay in the uncontrolled outpouring of the people's emotions. His followers swore to live their lives by an ethical system devised by Surak and based purely on logical principles. All expression of emotions, negative or positive, was completely forbidden. Although this new philosophy spread rapidly across Vulcan, a minority rejected Surak's ideals. Surak's philosophy entails IDIC, logic, control of emotions and peace, but even these are not truly fleshed out well, though they can be discerned with an eye toward the language developed by Vulcan philosophers and expositors and possible human philosophies which parallel or from which they could be derived.

A cult, by definition, is a religious sect lead by a charismatic leader who often enforces an authoritarian form of power. The Vulcan philosophy does not require a leader. (Even the Roman Catholic Church has a leader, and furthermore, an army) The Vulcan philosophy does not promote, and does usually not permit suicide of any kind or demand money for membership. Vulcans promote peace and neutrality, not war and violence. Vulcans do not desire power (or anything); thus Vulcanism is not considered to be a cult.
Consider that, as it says in the Bible, that smoke comes before flame, and insults come before violence. If this is true, then in theory, we could virtually stop all war by simply using our words in a more respectful manner. We secretly fear each other. This causes us to hate each other. You see, war and violence stems from hate, which itself stems from fear. So I say to you, cast out fear. The question asked concerning why we have not seen that war is not prudent, can be answered by saying that, because of our passions, we are blinded to see logic. We must put logic first, and then allow our emotions to live out their lives, but always under complete control.

There are biblical precedents to these claims.

Sirach 18:30  Don't be controlled by your lust; keep your passions in check.
Sirach 21:21  An intelligent person will smile quietly while a fool roars with laughter.
Sirach 22:16-18  A wooden beam can be put into a building so firmly that an earthquake cannot shake it loose; a person can be trained to use reason and sense so well that he keeps his head when a crisis comes. A mind that thinks things through intelligently is like a firm wall, finely decorated. Small stones on top of a wall will not stay put when the wind blows, and a person whose stupid ideas have made him timid will not be able to stand up to frightening situations.
Sirach 23:16  ...sexual passion is a hot, blazing fire that cannot be put out at will; it can only burn itself out. A man who lives for nothing but sexual enjoyment will keep on until the fire destroys him.
Sirach 28:5  If you cannot get rid of your anger, you have no hope of forgiveness.
Sirach 28:6-7  So give up hate and live by the Lord's commands... Instead of getting upset over your neighbors faults, overlook them.
Sirach 28:11-12  An argument that blazes out suddenly can lead to violence. You can blow on a spark to make it glow, or you can spit on it to put it out. Either way, you do it with your mouth.
Sirach 33:22  Keep control over all that you do.
Psalm 46:9-10  He stops wars all around the world. He breaks spears, and destroys swords. Stop fighting, he says, and know that I am God.

Vulcanism, by definition, is the intense study of logic to the point of impassivity. The philosophy that stresses that emotion is illogical and thus impure. It stresses that peace is essential and that violence should be avoided at all costs if possible. Even though Vulcans typically believe in a separation of philosophy and religion, outsiders may consider Vulcanism to be a monotheistic religion because it insists that the universe has a creator.

Arie'mnu- This is the mastery of emotion--controlling it to fit your needs. Instead of passion controlling you, you control it. Logic stresses that it must be controlled in order for one to keep a clear mind and to attain all peace sought after.

Impassivity- The state of not feeling or expressing emotions, or being dispassionate. Also, this state should complement a state of logic.

The difference between feeling happy and feeling impassive is the difference between winning a war and never fighting one. Vulcans are advocates of peace, or pacifists.

There are different degrees of Arie'mnu involved in Vulcanism. The following degrees are numbered in order of difficulty (which is directly related to the amount of control necessary for attainment).

1.) A control level of one implies that a person is capable of controlling the facial expressions normally exhibited due to an emotion the majority of the time, but still feels the emotion.
2.) Level two implies a person can control all expressions of emotion the majority of the time, but still feels the emotion.
3.) Level three is where emotion is there, but not expressed, or even felt. It has no influence, the majority of the time.
4.) Mastery level four is complete mastery. In this state, the emotion is completely cast out, and is no longer a part of you. This state is also referred to as Kolinahr.

As there are different levels of mastery, there are naturally going to be different degrees of
liberalism when applying this philosophy. This is good, but potentially harmful if not closely monitored. The most liberal of Vulcans should still fall within mnu level two, or a radical could even fall under level one, but this will be looked at with distaste (but never prejudice).

Summary of Surak's teachings

Cast out Fear. There is no room for anything else until you cast out fear - this does not imply rejection of fear, by pretending not to be afraid. To cast it out you must first ACCEPT it; you must admit it is there. Say: I am afraid. and through this be reduced to total helplessness, this point is potentially the most powerful. Just past it is the great leap to true power: The move through fear, to beyond fear. Especially go past the fear of the Other, the Unknown. Cast out hate and rage. Cast out greed and envy. Cast out all emotion that speeds entropy, whether it be love or hate. Cast out these emotions by using reason to accept them, and then move past them. Use in moderation emotions that do not speed up entropy (e.g. compassion).

Ideally, do not harm. Harm speeds up the entropy of the universe, and indirectly, your own. More practically, do as little harm as possible. Harm no one's internal, invisible integrities. Leave others the privacies of their minds and lives. Intimacy remains precious only insofar as it is inviolate; invading it turns it to torment. Reach out to others courteously: accept their reaching in the same way, with careful hands. Do not murder. All action has equal reaction: what force you inflict, inevitably returns. As far as possible, do not kill. Can you return life to what you kill? Then be slow to take life. Master your passions so that they are used to slow entropy. Do no harm to those that harm you - offer them peace: then you will have peace. Learn reason above all. Learn clear thought. Learn to discern that which seems to be, and that what you wish it to be, from what truly is. Learn the truth of reality, the reality of truth C'Thia. What is - is. This will set you free.

We have differences. May we, together, become greater than the sum of both of us.

There is no offense where none is taken.

Nobility lies in action not in name.

The spear in the other's heart is the spear in your own.

He talks peace if it is the only way to live.

Do no harm to those that harm you. Offer them peace, then you will have peace.

There is no other wisdom and no other hope for us but that we grow wise.

Reach out to others courteously. Accept their reaching in the same way, with careful hands.
Time is a path from the past to the future and back again. The present is the crossroads of both.

Wide experience increases wisdom, provided the experience is not sought purely for the stimulation of sensation.

The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few or the one.

Intuition
...doesn't the concept carry over with Spock in Unification, when he tells Picard he had gifts his father never understood, namely intuition and the faith to follow that instinct? I think he adds that he had found it a source of great strength.

Surely 'reason-truth' is only a part of the character of the mature individual. Intuition and faith may be somewhat alien to Vulcan philosophy, depending on who is constructing it at the time ;)

Patience
Patience - The universe is not perfect, and many things may take quite a bit of time to work, especially dealings with others who do not necessarily share one's beliefs.

Patience is a virtue of many more quietist philosophies and cultures. This does not always derive from a presumption of the imperfection of the all, however. Indeed, Impatience may speak to our immaturity given the perfection of c'thia (the way (things are))

A Vulcan ordered to sit and wait would do so only if it was logical so to do. If it was logical to act when inaction was required, the Vulcan would have no compunction in disobeying the order, even if it subsequently got her into trouble. The Vulcan would maintain that her actions were entirely logical, you see, as if that gave her justification.

At this point it becomes clear that c'thia/logic begins to have a faulty significance to it if we are not careful. It is not that an action is deducible to the intellectual mind but almost begins to take on an ethical character. There may be presumed to be a 'Way' which may be discerned, and if this Way leads one to violate reigning authority, then we may also presume that this Way is elemental to the individual's being, a kind of barometer against which acts are judged however, quickly we enter into a Thelemic (cf. Rabelais/Crowley) dilemma. If at any moment the Vulcan (or indeed any individual) may discern that an action is against c'thia (Terran 'illogical'), then how an any sort or reliability be maintained? It is a Thelemic dilemma because in the philosophy of Thelema the individual is presumed to have a 'true will' by which she regulates and discerns her most perfect activity, and thus it compares directly with this example of disobedience as I say above it appears to enter into a type of 'ethics' in that it cannot be completely presumed that what the individual establishes as c'thia is necessarily to be so in the overview of the action taken. The authority will probably review the action and determine itself whether it was 'right' (cf. officers ordered to perform heinous acts of violence in situations like WWII Germany; this exact ethical dilemma is resolved by the courts in support of disobedience even by Terran standards within the film 'Nuts')

Vulcans are extremely capable of waiting. One of the best descriptions of patience is having something to do while you wait. The Vulcans are capable of high order calculation and thought inside the mind. If you can work on your projects while you wait there is no reason...
to be in a hurry.

Perhaps so, and yet again perhaps it is a cultural difference in a similar manner that, given the endless rebirths and focus on the present moment that is often emphasized within Buddhism, perhaps such practices as sitting has enabled the Vulcan to remain absorbed even without a lot of stimuli (this may be the essence of 'nirvana' or 'zazen' despite their mystical and practical descriptors (the first an extinguishment of craving the objects of desire, the second a static absorption in the present moment)

Vulcan Specialty Schools

T'an sahat

The t'an sahat is the intellectual deconstruction of emotional patterns. It is to be understood that the t'an sahat is a lifelong process, and that one will only very slowly attain the mental control they strive for, which is why a daily regimen of the following steps for the rest of one's life is necessary.

Acceptance: You must know that you are a freethinking individual, who can make a choice for yourself. If you understand logic, then you will see that it is logical to adopt the Vulcan way of life. Others will surely tell you that you should not, but give you no logical reason. They will insist that you are violating their rights by not laughing at their jokes, and jumping into a fight with them, but you must realize that, as I said, you have the right to do what is logical, and no one can take that away from you. You will find that it is difficult to make friends, and that certain people may no longer wish to be your friend, or vise versa. This is due to the fact that you are different. You should explain to people that you have chosen a new way of life, and ask them to accept and respect your choice, if they do not, then they are not truly your friends. Those who stick with you and encourage your individuality will be worth more to you than any other of life's riches, for they are true friends who do not wish to discourage you. You will find that it is more difficult to make friends, but that is only because your definition of a friend has changed. Instead of finding someone who acts the same, and dresses the same and looks the same, you will have a more meaningful relationship with someone who can understand who you are.

Seclusion: It is important not to be influenced by the emotions of others. It is possible, with Vulcan mental control, to be exposed to emotional stimuli and not be influenced. However, in the first stages of the t'an sahat, where there is a lack of control, the individual must prevent themselves from being influenced. DO NOT watch television that is considered to be emotionally moving. That will only complicate the situation. Use time carefully, and ask yourself whether emotion or logic motivates a particular action. If your answer is that you are acting on emotion, then stop immediately to reexamine the situation.

It is not implied that all friendships and associations must cease, only that there should be a period of solitude (a week or two) to attain mental control. Emotions should be avoided to an extreme in this first stage. Later on, after more control has been established, one will be able to reintegrate oneself into their normal social life with the mental control needed to act logically despite the irrational behavior of others. Please note that the presence of fellow Vulcans is encouraged in this and all stages in order to influence one in a positive way.

The Study of Logic- During your periods of solitude it is essential that you truly understand the nature of the principle that you have devoted your life to. Therefore, you must study logic by reading encyclopedias and various other materials on logic and the science of reasoning. If you have not been taught that certain things are right or wrong, then you must decide for yourself. Through your newly found logical reasoning, ask yourself whether certain actions are logical or not. However, logic is not about convenience. What is logical to do may not be what you want to do. That's a good sign that you are having a conflict within your mind, but don't let your wants overtake your needs. Force yourself to do the logical thing instead of the emotional thing. This will quicken your progress toward becoming
dispassionate. You will come to realize which actions are moral and which are corrupt through means of logic. Hopefully, once you have a respectable knowledge of logic you will be absolutely certain that logic is the key to knowledge, and that emotion must be mastered in order to reach that state of knowledge that we as Vulcans strive for.

Kalinahr
Kalinahr is the equanimity of the way is not simply a kind of emotional control, though I know it may have been portrayed this way at times by Terran media. Instead, look to the measured perspective of the Masters of taoism, their acceptance of the twists and turns even of exciting times (a story relates a sage nodding and saying 'so it is' each time a new twist of 'fate' render an inversion of the circumstance) focus and attention would seem to be a very important part of the more rational species or culture, and I presume the Vulcan no exception to this (cf. Japan and some Chinese). Meditation (by its various forms) would probably be essential to early training in any disciplined system of education if these qualities were considered 'standard'

C'thia
Respect: This may actually be a subset of logic. Respect for others would seem to be necessary in order to achieve peace and is of course the foundation of IDIC. Respect for oneself is necessary before respect for others can be achieved. Plus, we have seen examples of how Vulcans respect elders in the clan and their parents.
Compassion: To me this is summed up in The spear in the other's heart is a spear in your own. Is that not an ultimate statement of compassion for others? We also see that Vulcan's have great compassion from their reluctance to take life - sentient or not.
Desire for knowledge: This is actually just a Vulcan trait, and not necessary for Surak's philosophy. However, how can one have logic if there is no knowledge on which to base it? We see this in almost every Vulcan. They see it as a waste not to learn as much as they can.
Discipline: Practicing the emotional control of c'thia or the rigors of Kolinahr requires a considerable amount of self-control and meditation.

Meditation
Meditation encompasses an extremely broad array of practices connected to many of the world's religious and philosophical traditions.
Meditation generally includes avoiding (though not harshly) random thought processes and fantasies, and a calming and focusing of the mind. It is not effortful, and can be experienced as just happening. Different practices involve focusing one's attention differently, and a variety of positions and postures including sitting cross-legged, standing, laying down, and walking (sometimes along designated floor patterns).
The stated purpose of meditation varies almost as much as the practices. It has been seen as a means of gaining experiential insight into the nature of reality (religious/spiritual or not), or communing with the Deity/Ultimate Reality. Even without the spiritual aspects, many have gained concentration, awareness, self-discipline and equanimity.
Meditation is one of the most important tools in the process of mastering emotions. Mental control is essential, and that control can be achieved through meditation. One must customize a routine and engage in it daily to have the desired effect. Later on, after more control has been established, modifications can be made to this routine. These modifications will be discusses later.
The following are some meditation exercises. Always go through step one to attain a meditative state, then move on to other steps.
1) When attempting meditation one must be relaxed and in a comfortable position. It is advised to only meditate when you are not very tired so that the fatigue of your body will not cause you mind to be distracted. First, fold your hands so that your index fingers are steepled together. With eyes closed, imagine all the energy in your body flowing to the focal point of your fingers. Feel all the physical space around you disappear. Your exist only in your mind. Your mind is all that exists. Remain in this state for a few minutes to help your
mind achieve a meditative state. Observe yourself in this meditative state, and try to move
further into your mind where logic is centralized. Try to focus on nothingness. Focus on the
focusing. There is no room in meditation for the things of the real world, so file them away
to clear your mind.

2) Picture yourself on an island such as Manhattan, and place yourself atop a tall, sky
scraping building. This building is the only one around though. You are now meditating atop
this building. You see the many clouds of emotion surrounding the structure that is your
logical mind. Notice the peace that is being disturbed by these emotions. You realize that
you have the power to push them away with your mind. A strong wind coming from your
building appears. It blows the clouds away from your structure. Concentrate on your
emotional control. If there is little of it, you must establish more. That is what we are
attempting. Watch as your emotions grow further away as you are being detached from
them. They no longer control you.

3) Picture yourself on an old sailing ship such as those used by early explorers. The ship
is in danger of sinking because strong waves of emotion have breached the hull of the ship.
Before you can make repairs you must calm the waves of emotion. You start to meditate on
the stern of the ship. You simply use your mental control to imagine that you waves are
being calmed, and they are. The ship starts to regain attitude control, and you can now
repair the damage done to your logic from this storm of illogic.

4) While in a meditative state, focus on a simple geometric shape such as a circle or a
triangle (whichever is preferred). Because of the immensely powerful and undisciplined
imagination, it is difficult to hold that shape for any period of time. The imagination tries to
distort the shape in order to keep the mind occupied. The imagination, as well as the entire
human mind has logical and illogical (emotional) tendencies. However, you can train you
mind to use logic as means of entertainment, or occupation if you will. When logic is the
means of entertainment there is no longer a possibility of feeling bored. Observe the illogical
emotions trying to distort the image that you have consciously created within you mind and
use logic to hold the image despite the tendencies that the imagination may be going
through. If it is successful, you can move on to straight lines and quadrilaterals.

Modifications to your meditation routine:

1.) After you have established a reasonable amount of mental control through meditation,
usually after a month of daily meditation, you may find that the techniques previously
mentioned are no longer of any help in your quest to become more logical. Here is what you
should do. Instead of using a powerful wind to push away your emotions, picture yourself
installing lasers to the top of the building by soldering them to several places on the top of
the building. You can now use them to push away each cloud of emotion. Just simply picture
the lasers pushing away the clouds, and you will attain mental control. As you continue to
gain mental control you can make the lasers bigger and more powerful in order to illustrate
how you can push them away easier.

Note; as you continually attain a meditative state, you may not need as much time to do so,
and you will be able to jump right onto your logical structure instead of waiting for your
mind to do so. You now have a lot more control, so you can do things faster within your
mind.

2.) While in a meditative state, go to the center of your mind where the Structure (logic)
resides. Inevitably in step #2, you will see that the emotions will resist being push away
and controlled. Changing the nature of the attraction can stop this. Since logic and emotion
are essentially opposite poles, you may find yourself imagining the emotions trying to cling
to your structure. You try and try to push them away but this is futile. I have already stated
that felling nothing is like never fighting the war, so if one does not fight the emotion
constantly, it is increasingly more likely that he/she will overcome it, for emotion is war.
You must imagine yourself pushing the clouds that are emotion toward your structure. Since
emotion will resist being controlled, once you let go of the emotion it's inertia will carry it
away from you. Try to apply this to every emotional reaction in your daily life to keep
control all day, and not just in meditation. When you do this, you will change the nature of
the emotion itself, and you will be applying logic to a situation where emotion wants power, which is always a good thing.

Endurance testing- after a reasonable amount of control has been established within your mind, you can start to watch television that is considered to be humorous to see if you can keep yourself from laughing. If you cannot, it is a clear sign that you lack the control that is necessary for daily life as a Vulcan and that you must work harder at it. Do not be discouraged however, this will only make things worse. Try again if at first you fail. Giving up is not a Vulcan virtue. It is now necessary to forewarn the reader that even though some emotional stimuli is good at this point, there is still the danger of the phenomenon known as pon farr. The pon farr is the result of prolonged emotionlessness. You see, when one feels no emotion the body does not release adrenaline, but continues to produce it, and when there is an over abundance on adrenaline it can be very easy for it be released. When it is released it allows emotion to flow and disrupt logic. This is the most psychologically difficult part of the t'an sahat, and may be damaging, so it is advised that one avoid sexual stimuli at this point.

Samadhi - In the samadhi or shamatha, or concentrative, techniques of meditation, the mind is kept closely focused on a particular word, image, sound, person, or idea. This form of meditation is found in Buddhist and Hindu traditions including Yoga, in Medieval Christianity, Jewish Kabbalah, and in some modern metaphysical schools. Related to this method is the method developed by Eknath Easwaran. He called it passage meditation -- silent repetition in the mind of memorized inspirational passages from the world’s great religions. As Easwaran says, ‘The slow, sustained concentration on these passages drives them deep into our minds; and whatever we drive deep into consciousness, that we become.

In Vipassana (insight, or seeing things as they are) meditation the mind is trained to notice each perception or thought that passes, but without stopping on any one. This is a characteristic form of meditation in Buddhism, especially in some Theravada traditions, and is also a component of zazen, the term for meditation practice in Zen. In at least some forms of vipassana, you do not attend to whatever perceptions arise, but purposely move your attention over your body part by part, checking for perceptions, being aware and equanimous with them, and moving on. This form of meditation has some resemblance with choiceless awareness the kind of meditation that Jiddu Krishnamurti talked about.

In annapuna meditation attention is focused on the breath.

Logic
The word logic in Terran English may be only a poor translation from the corresponding Vulcun text. Vulcun dictionaries provide 'reason-truth' and 'the way (things are)'.

Logic is exact and valid reasoning. It is the belief of Vulcuns (as well as other followers of Surak) that everything in life should revolve around logic, and that logic itself is the fundamental constant in the universe.

A Vulcun philosopher by the name of T'Plana'hath once said, 'Logic is the cement of our civilization with which we ascend from chaos using reason as our guide.

The fundamental philosophical difference between Vulcuns and traditional Humans is that Vulcuns only use emotion when it is logical, and Humans only use logic to suit an emotional need.

Roughly speaking, logic is the study of prescriptive systems of reasoning, that is, systems proposed as guides for how people (as well, perhaps, as other intelligent beings/machines/systems) ought to reason. Logic says which forms of inference are valid and which are not. Traditionally, logic is studied as a branch of philosophy, but it can also be considered a branch of mathematics. How people actually reason is usually studied under other headings, including cognitive psychology. Logic is traditionally divided into deductive reasoning, concerned with what follows logically from given premises, and inductive reasoning, concerned with how we can go from some number of observed events to a reliable generalization.
As a science, logic defines the structure of statement and argument and devises formulae by which these are codified. Implicit in a study of logic is the understanding of what makes a good argument and what arguments are fallacious.

Philosophical logic deals with formal descriptions of natural language. Most philosophers assume that the bulk of normal proper reasoning can be captured by logic, if one can find the right method for translating ordinary language into that logic. There are many different kinds of even Terran logic beyond the Aristotelian (cf. Nagarjuna, whose ideas may prove more closely related to those examined by writers on Vulcan philosophy).

Here are some examples of logical equations and instances.

1. Argument I Form I
2. No one putting profits first is putting Vulcan rights first. No P is V
3. This person is putting profits first. This H is P
4. Therefore: Therefore:
5. This person is not putting Vulcan rights first. This H is not V

In this case a person putting profits first cannot also put Vulcan rights first. It is an impossibility for an H that is P to be V.

Below, only the facts are given and conclusions are made only by the facts.

A implies B
If A implies B, then B does not necessarily imply A. This is like saying that just because all Tigers are cats, that all cats are Tigers. All As have Bs, and all As are Cs. Therefore, all Cs have Bs. This is an illogical way of thinking.

It is like saying that just because all Tigers have stripes and that all Tigers are cats, that all cats have stripes. It is obviously illogical.
All As have Bs, and all As have Cs, are the premises of the equation. Therefore, all Cs have Bs is the conclusion drawn from the premises.
If A cannot be B, and C is A, then C also cannot be B.
If A cannot be B, and C is B, then C cannot be A.

Does logic necessarily negate faith? There is no need for faith where the Way is known. Intellectual logic only succeeds in making faith unnecessary, yet it has its limitations of value. Faith might be likened to a forward declaration in a programming language, giving just enough information for the following declaration to make sense. There is a book describing the problem solution style of these kinds of things (Wicked Problems, Righteous Solutions, ISBN 0-13-590126-X). It is the kind of problem where a solution is known only after the fact. Classic a priori logic tends to break down in these cases.

...didn't Spock talk to Valeris about faith in ST6, referring back to their discussion that logic is only the beginning of wisdom, and the very thing he realizes he didn't have in regards to Kirk?

within that series Mr. Spock may not be the most eloquent exponent, at that point, of Vulcan philosophy, even in such intimate conversations. nevertheless, it is possible that he understood that there is a difference between the Vulcan c'thia and logic by strict standards, and was intending to mean it in a more rational, intellectual sense (as it is sometimes called 'reason-truth')

Lyras Lecture on Logic
Robert L Zook presents a translation of a lecture given by Lyras in ShiKahr shortly after the death of Surak. The contents later formed a basis for his monumental volume, Logic and Definition.

Lyras'at C'thia ang Kh'sparkeyralatha
DEFINITION AND MEANING

Consider the word 'staff', and what this word means to: a farmer, a priest, and a warrior. The farmer may use that word to refer to an object used to prop oneself up when lame, or hurt. To the priest 'staff' may refer to an object used to represent his divine authority. A warrior would doubtless think a 'staff' referred to an object one uses as a weapon against one's enemies.

When we consider how this word refers to different existential experiences for each person, to say that 'staff' or any other word has one definite or one 'true' meaning shows a certain lack of understanding about the purposes of words.

A word does not have any inherent meaning in itself, but rather finds definition in its use. One makes clear what one means when using a word by indicating the experiences associated with it. How does one do this? By using other words, of course. Does it seem we have encountered a recursive system? Perhaps, but this one will endeavor to show a way out.

When someone asks the question, what do you mean?, the asker of the question shows that they did not understand your use of the word and asks for a definition. We shall examine several ways of defining words, and evaluate their usefulness in relating experiences accurately.

One can define a word in a most basic way by providing a synonym. By saying, in effect, it is like this other experience set. Our dictionaries contain many such definitions. For example, a staff resembles a rod.

Classification of experience can provide another way of defining a word. One says that, this word represents an instance of this category. The word leh'matya refers to a type of animal, one with poisonous claws, for example.

One can define a word by enumerating a group of words to which it refers to collectively. For example: animal includes leh'matya, selahht, and teresh-kah.

A fourth way would involve defining by example. For instance, One calls that animal over there a selahht. Lastly, you may define a word by describing how one would going about experiencing for oneself that event which the word refers to. I could say, When you combine these ingredients in these proportions and cook them in this manner, you will have cooked plomeek soup.

This one will refer to these five types of definitions as definition by synonym, definition by classification, definition by enumeration, definition by example and definition by operation, respectively.

Now let us examine the actual usefulness of these methods of defining words. Firstly, a definition by synonym has usefulness only if the synonym seems closer to our experiences than the word defined. To those who can only regard sodium chloride as a noise, may certainly understand what salt refers to. The reverse situation is rarely true [Translator's Note: I substituted my own analogy here; the one Lyra's used did not translate into English very well].

Definitions by classification usually have more use than definitions by synonym. I can make
it more clear to someone who has never seen a leh'matya, what one seems like by saying, A leh'matya refers to a omnivorous animal having poisonous claws, and diamond shaped markings, than by saying a leh'matya seems like a big cat (definition by synonym).

However, definitions by classification do not necessarily bring us closer to experience. One can define a rhikbat as an animal with jaws that bite, and claws that slice. However that definition does not bring us closer to an experience of a rhikbat [Translator's note: rhikbat refers to a non-existent animal from ancient Vulcan legend, used by ancient Vulcan mothers to frighten their children into obeying]. One can string any words together in this manner and make it seem one has clarified one's meaning. For example, The Good is what all things aim at. That phrase definitely does not bring us closer to any particular experience.

Definitions by enumeration have usefulness if the members of a class will seem closer to experience than the class itself. For example, one may have familiarity with a leh'matya but not know that a biologist refers to it and others like it as felines [Translator's note: 'felines' = my best guess; the word on the original manuscript had blurred into unrecognizability].

Of course definitions by enumeration have their drawbacks as well. Some words do not refer to classes, like 'the sun', and other may refer to classes who's members one could not practically enumerate, like 'Vulcan'. To define 'Vulcan' by enumeration, one would have to refer to some several billion beings now in existence. Fortunately, however, usually only a few cases would make one's meaning clear.

A great advantage to definitions by example lies in that one cannot define fictional entities in this manner. As we all know, Surak's presence no longer resides among us, so no event can we point to define the word 'Surak'. The greatest value one can gain from defining by example lies in that such definitions _do_ bridge the gap between words and experience. The only difficulty lies in words which do exist but one cannot point to them, as such. For example, electric current, or atoms.

An operational definition succeeds quite well in cases involving such abstract words. One can define an atom by describing the experiments one would have to make in order to experience or detect an atom. In a similar manner one can describe an experiment which would demonstrate the existence of the phenomena one calls 'electric current'.

Operational definitions also have the advantage that one cannot describe the steps to be taken to demonstrate some event that does not exist. They also directly bridge the gap from words to experience. Some Velarian definitions (like definition by synonym and definition by classification) [Translator's Note: by which Lyras means the work of the ancient Vulcan philosopher Velar, who coincidently has a direct earth corollary in Aristotle], seemed formed very closely to operational definition and one can translate these to the operational equivalent, without changing the meaning.

For example, The followers of Surak, believe in non-violence, which on the surface seems like a Velarian definition. However, one can also call this an operational definition, since it implies the procedure to follow to demonstrate the experience that the definition refers to; one can go and ask a great number of those called the followers of Surak, and indeed, they will acknowledge that they follow the path of non-violence.

In modern Vulcan one calls Velarian definitions, 'intentional definitions', and definitions by enumeration, example and operation; 'extensional definitions'. For the purposes of sharing experience, of bridging the gap between words and experience, one prefers extensional definitions. One will find that when one bridges the gap between language and experience, the bridge has formed itself of an enumerative, example or operational definition.
Philosophy of Logic
Philosophy is traditionally defined as the love of wisdom, the ability to think well about the foundations of human action, the nature of reality, and the purposes and priorities of life. The enterprise of philosophy requires sharpening the skills necessary for clarifying premises, uncovering presuppositions (one's own and those of others), weighing the pros and cons of conflicting values, and analyzing concepts and issues.
A principal reason for the study of philosophy and/or religion is the enrichment of one's own life and understanding. However, the study of philosophy is an excellent preparation for a variety of post-baccalaureate professional studies. These range from law and policy planning through the helping professions to computer science. Philosophy and religion offers preparation for the helping professions, the ministry, and advanced studies in theology. In addition, the broader outlook and the ability to think critically about larger issues that are fostered by the systematic study of philosophy and religion are often highly valued by commercial firms in their management level personnel.
The relationship between evidence and hypothesis is fundamental to the advancement of science. It is this relationship--referred to as the relationship between premises and conclusion--which lies at the heart of logic. Logic, in this traditional sense, is the study of correct inference. It is the study of formal structures and nonformula relations that hold between evidence and hypothesis, reasons and belief, or premises and conclusion. It is the study of both conclusive (or monotonic) and inconclusive (no monotonic or ampliative) inferences or, as it is also commonly described, the study of both entailments and inductions. Specifically, logic involves the detailed study of formal systems designed to exhibit such entailments and inductions. More generally, though, it is the study of those conditions under which evidence rightly can be said to justify, entail, imply, support, corroborate, confirm, or falsify a conclusion.
In this broad sense, logic in the twentieth century has come to include, not only theories of formal entailment, but informal logic, probability theory, confirmation theory, decision theory, game theory, and theories of computability and epistemic modeling as well. As a result, over the course of the century the study of logic has benefited, not only from advances in traditional fields such as philosophy and mathematics, but also from advances in other fields as diverse as computer science and economics. Through Frege and others late in the nineteenth century, mathematics helped transform logic from a merely formal discipline to a mathematical one as well, making available to it all the resources of contemporary mathematics. In turn, logic opened up new avenues of investigation concerning reasoning in mathematics, thereby helping to develop new branches of mathematical research--including set theory and category theory--relevant to the foundations of mathematics itself. Similarly, much of twentieth-century philosophy--including advances in metaphysics, epistemology, the philosophy of mathematics, and the philosophy of science, the philosophy of language, and formal semantics--closely parallels this century's logical developments. These advances have led in turn to a broadening of logic and to a deeper appreciation of its application and extent. Finally, logic has provided many of the underlying theoretical results that have motivated the advent of the computing era, learning as much from the systematic application of these ideas as it has from any other source.
Mathematical Logic
Arithmetic and/or algebraic equations are simply the basic principals of logical thinking put into written sentences. There is no debating a mathematical equation. An answer is either correct or incorrect, never in between. In fact, even the most complex mathematical equations that we can identify with are much less complex, and have much less variables than the seemingly unpredictable and endless equation of life. The truth is, that the many variables of life can be put into a logical, or mathematical equation by which valid
predictions can be made. The relatively primitive nature of most arithmetic equations allows us to look at them in a logical manner despite our illogical emotions. Unfortunately, the vast equation of life does not make such exceptions, and for those who lack Vulcan mental control, it seems as though the equation is not very predictable or reliable when in fact, it is. Life itself can be described as an extremely complex example of a mathematical equation. Ideally, there must be a logical way to approach and solve the equation that will always produce an accurate result. The problem is that our emotions impede, or obstruct our view of the correct answer to the equation of life and existence, which we all ponder constantly.

**Motivation**

The emotional reaction to this proposal is that one should not be able to predict the outcome of an event because the individual would not have any reason to live. In other words, emotional people see life as only being interesting if there is illogical, emotional unpredictability, and that life is not worth living otherwise. Actually, it is very naive of us to assume that there is only one such motive in the universe. Emotions are not the only source of motivation. The Vulcan philosophy insists that life should not be approached in an emotional manner. The motive of a Vulcan would be to strive for knowledge, not to live for its unpredictability. Another motive for Vulcans is to reach the desired state of unemotional, impassivity, which is the main drive for Vulcans through life. It is also the belief of Vulcans that knowledge is the only defense against harmful things, and that Logic is the key to knowledge. For example, the only way you can solve an arithmetic equation is by having knowledge of the appropriate operations. Likewise, knowledge of the universe will help humanity surpass intellectual barrier after another. Hopefully, it is understood that logic is the generally accepted form of reasoning in the universe.

Why? You may ask, Because it is the only constant in the field of philosophy. Everything in the universe (other than emotion) seems to act in a logical manner. All evidence suggests that the mind is built on logical reasoning and that emotion is the only thing preventing us from seeing logic 100% of the time. Normally I would have to argue that things are relative to the observer, but this is not the case when dealing with forms of reasoning. I would claim that logic is absolute. It cannot be rebutted. You see, logic is the method of scrutinizing logic. It doesn't work. Emotion is the only way to disprove logic. The reason disproving logic doesn't work is, as stated, you would have to use logic to logically disprove it, but the specifics behind this concept are that a thing can be analyzed so much that no more can be said about it. So, I say that logic is absolute, and innate in everyone. But emotions are as well, so there is a conflict. Our minds are built upon both. So you may say, How can I be told to deny half of who I am? I would reply by saying, We have seen far too much chaos due to emotion. History shows us as much, so we must learn to... not deny, but master our emotions, so that they do not control us. When one is engulfed in passion, they cannot see logic, or perhaps they choose to ignore it, but when one is in a logical state of mind, they cannot easily be made violent.

**Reason**

In philosophy, reason (from Latin ratio, by way of French raison) is the faculty by means of which or the process through which human beings perform thought, especially abstract thought. Many thinkers have pondered reason, and the various views on the nature of reason may not be compatible with one another. Reason is sometimes narrowly defined as the faculty or process of drawing logical inferences. From Aristotle onwards, such reasoning has been classified as either deductive reasoning, meaning from the general to the particular, or inductive reasoning, meaning from the particular to the general. In the 19th century, Charles Peirce, an American philosopher, added a third classification, abductive reasoning, by which he meant from the best available information to the best explanation, which has become an important
component of the scientific method. In modern usage, inductive reasoning sometimes includes almost all non-deductive reasoning, including what Peirce would call abductive. (See also logic, term logic.)

Reason has also been conceived more broadly. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson explicate reason and its scope in this manner:

Reason includes not only our capacity for logical inference, but also our ability to conduct inquiry, to solve problems, to evaluate, to criticize, to deliberate about how we should act, and to reach an understanding of ourselves, other people, and the world.

Reason is often opposed to sensation, perception, feeling, and desire.

Rationalists see reason as the faculty by which fundamental truths are intuitively apprehended. These fundamental truths are the causes or reasons that things exist or happen. Empiricists, of course, deny the existence of such a faculty.

For Immanuel Kant, reason (Vernunft in Kant's German language) is the power of synthesizing into unity, by means of comprehensive principles, the concepts provided by the intellect. The reason which gives a priori principles Kant calls Pure Reason (as in his The Critique of Pure Reason), as distinguished from the Practical Reason which is specially concerned with the performance of particular actions.

In theology, reason, as distinguished from faith, is the human intelligence exercised upon religious truth whether by way of discovery or by way of explanation. The limits within which reason may be used have been laid down differently in different churches and periods of thought: on the whole, modern Christianity, especially in the Protestant churches, tends to allow to reason a wide field, reserving, however, as the sphere of faith the ultimate (supernatural) truths of theology.

Regardless of how it is conceived, reason has often been seen as a uniquely human trait, which separates us from the other animals.

These days, the idea of reason as an independent faculty of the mind, separate from emotions, and unique to humanity, is under attack from a number of sources.

Emotion

Emotion is a subjective, internal experience correlated with a group of physiological reactions arising in response to some situation. It is usually held that an emotion cannot be consciously willed to occur at any particular time, although accounts differ on the extent to which one can train oneself (or be trained) over time to experience a particular emotion. In an experience of emotion there is a feeling, or affective, response (e.g., sadness, anger, joy), a physiological response (changes in internal bodily functioning), a cognitive response (an interpretation of the situation), and possibly also a behavioral response (an outward expression).

Questions concerning the mystery of human emotion were the territory of a number of disciplines until the development of modern psychology. Over the last century, psychologically based theories have provided influential, if incomplete explanations of how emotional experience is produced.

The James-Lange theory proposes that conscious conclusions about what we are feeling form in reaction to physiological changes occurring in the body.

The Cannon-Bard Approach proposes that the lower brain initially receives emotion-producing information and then relays it simultaneously to the higher cortex for interpretation and to the nervous system to trigger physiological responses.

The Schacher-Singer Approach gives highest importance to the cognitive skills that create an interpretation of the situation and so provide a framework for the individual's behavioral response.

The Opponent-Process Approach views emotions as sets of pairs, one positive and one negative. When an emotion-producing stimulus is present, one of the pair is suppressed so that the more situationally appropriate emotion is felt intensely.

The feeling component of emotion encompasses a vast spectrum of possible responses. Psychologists have attempted to offer general classifications of these responses, and as with
the color spectrum, systematically distinguishing between them largely depends on the level of precision desired. One of the most influential classification approaches is Robert Plutchik's eight primary emotions - anger, fear, sadness, disgust, surprise, curiosity, acceptance and joy. Plutchik argues for the primacy of these emotions by showing each to be the trigger of behavior with high survival value (i.e. fear: fight or flight).

Principally involved in the physiological component of emotion are: the autonomic nervous system (ANS), the limbic system, and the hypothalamus.

There is considerable debate as to whether emotions and emotional experiences are universal or culturally determined.

In his book Descartes' Error, the neurologist Antonio Damasio has developed a universal model for human emotions. This model is based on a rejection of the Cartesian body-mind dualism that he believes has crippled scientific attempts to understand human behavior, and draws on psychological case histories and his own neuropsychological experiments. He began with the assumption that human knowledge consists of dispositional representations stored in the brain. He thus defines thought as the process by which these representations are manipulated and ordered.

One of these representations, however, is of the body as a whole, based on information from the endocrine and peripheral nervous systems. Damasio thus defines emotion as: the combination of a mental evaluative process, simple or complex, with dispositional responses to that process, mostly toward the body proper, resulting in an emotional body state, but also toward the brain itself (neurotransmitter nuclei in the brain stem), resulting from additional mental changes.

Damasio distinguishes emotions from feelings, which he takes to be a more inclusive category. He argues that the brain is continually monitoring changes in the body, and that one feels an emotion when one experiences such changes in juxtaposition to the mental images that initiated the cycle.

Damasio thus further distinguishes between primary emotions, which he takes to be innate, and secondary emotions, in which feelings allow people to form systematic connections between categories of objects and situations, on the one hand, and primary emotions, on the other.

Damasio has suggested that the neurological mechanisms of emotion and feeling evolved in humans because they create strong biases to situationally appropriate behaviors that do not require conscious thought. He argued that the time-consuming process of rational thought often decreases one's chances of survival in situations that require instant decisions.

A person's mood is the emotion a human feels at a particular time. A person's way of an ardent demonstrative heart-felt expression dictated by the intellectual judgment at and for a particular moment.

Emotion is a result of the mind reacting or responding on prompted situation. A person's greatest emotional source is the brain. It is the core of all activity in human function. The actions taken could be physical or psychological. Emotions are from the psychological results of varied experiences, past and present. Prompting a person to react in many different ways. Emotion is never controlled. For even if you have controlled your supposed reaction, it remains an emotional stress. Usually, our reactions comes from peoples actions towards us. Even when we are alone, we will arrive at a certain reaction towards ourselves like boredom or sadness making us emotional without noticing it. Without show of emotion.. a person is considered dead. Insensitive people are the least to show emotion but that it doesn't mean they are without it.

Philosophers have considered the problem of emotions from a number of different angles, and in recent years have attempted to integrate, or at least relate, accounts of emotion found in literature, psychoanalysis, behavioral psychology, neurobiology and in the philosophical literature itself. Martha Nussbaum, to take one example, has issued a recent challenge to theorists of emotion who understand emotions to be irrational states grafted onto a rational, emotionless thought process. This understanding of emotions may be considered the epiphenomenal account; emotions may be the end product of cognitive
processes -- such as a feeling of anger upon realizing that one's been cheated -- but they can never take their place among other mental states, such as believing, as equals. In this account, one may, for example, reason perfectly well about an ethical quandary without experiencing emotion.

In Nussbaum's account, emotions are essentially cognitive states of a subject; what distinguishes emotions from other thoughts is that they refer to events or states in the world that directly relate to what she terms the individual's own self-flourishing. Here, self-flourishing refers to a constellation of concepts taken from the Aristotelian notion of Eudaimonia.

Nussbaum's primary goal in her recent work on emotion is to support this cognitive account of emotions against the epiphenomenal account by showing how emotions both have a logic -- can be considered to follow coherently or not upon one another -- and are directly responsive to external facts. For Nussbaum, the fact that the emotion of jealousy can coexist with that of love, but not with that of, say, friendly feeling is a consequence of their cognitive properties. Accounts of psychoanalysis and of the sequence of emotions experienced when listening to music are also, in Nussbaum's view, supportive of the cognitivist account.

The Vulcan freedom from emotion sometimes made it difficult to get along with; they never got jokes, for instance, and were fascinated by what went on around him, but never amused. Because he had no emotions, he made all his decisions with cool rationality, and because he wasted no mental energy on emotions, had had a superhuman degree of intelligence, insight, and logic.

It is taught to Vulcan children from birth that any show of emotion or illogic is frowned upon and must be controlled. Children are schooled in the art of logic from a young age, as well as the mind discipline needed to retain that control. This is mainly achieved through the use of meditation and mental techniques.

Emotions are complex antilogical subroutines within the Human mind. Emotions are always illogical. They cloud our view of right and wrong, or what is logical and what is not by causing the logical neuropathways in our thought processes to skew and fork away from the correct solution, logic.

Do not misunderstand me when I say that emotions are always illogical. True, it is always illogical to have an emotional response, or to act emotionally, but at times emotion and logic agree. For instance, I do not wish to kill my friend because I love him, but it is not logical to kill him either, because I respect him as a living being. And there are other times, where relying on deterministic methods is not logical, and thus a random choice must be made.

The good news is that those emotions can be deconstructed or at least controlled. One key to impassivity is mental control. This can be achieved through extensive meditation and other techniques that are discussed below.

One thing that must be noted here is that the Vulcans are taught to control their emotions, that does not mean that they do not experience them. They just do not allow them to enter into their thoughts, decision-making, or day-to-day life. Why would they need to meditate or learn the control techniques at all if this were not so? A human being can experience great anger, but be able to rationally control such anger, to even reject it so as to not have it disrupt things. It does not mean the anger was not present only that they did not allow it to get in the way.

Examining a Vulcan’s emotionless state is one of the themes in Emotion: The Science of Sentiment (Oxford University Press) by Dylan Evans, a short, witty review of the current scientific and evolutionary views on emotion. It is easy to find in western philosophy a trend to regard emotions as a drain on the intellect. Certainly people can act on emotions and do themselves harm. But emotions are there for a reason. A creature who lacks emotion wouldn’t just not get jokes, he wouldn't act as intelligently as emotion-feeling humans in other ways as well. Emotions are complicated things, and species do not evolve complicated things unless there is a real benefit to them. For instance, fear is a beneficial emotion.
Perhaps Vulcans evolved in a place where there was no reason to fear anything (truly an alien environment, we would say), but for our world, fear helps animals react swiftly to danger, marshalling hormones and shifts in muscle activity. Disgust is another emotion thought of as unpleasant, but disgust enables us to avoid yucky substances that could be infectious or poisonous to us.

Most researchers would include fear, disgust, joy, distress, anger, and surprise in a list of basic emotions. Darwin himself thought that there was a universality of human emotions shared by all cultures, and that this was evidence that humans had evolved together and then the races and cultures had separated. However, this view was not generally held until fairly recently; it was supposed that just as your culture teaches you language, it also teaches you what emotions are part of your world and how to display them. Not true; experiments in the 1960’s showed that a remote tribe that had never seen western media could match pictures of faces to the proper emotion, and in reverse, Americans could recognize the emotions being shown by tribal members who were asked to display fear, anger, etc. Emotions, at least some of the basic ones, are indeed universal and part of our genetic rather than cultural heritage.

Darwin also thought that although emotions are universal, their expressions were no longer of value; they were vestiges of an ancient time, when baring teeth, say, was a good way to intimidate competitors. It is quite possible that he was following the disdain in which scientists and philosophers had held the emotions. Actually, neurological research is showing that not only is making expressions automatic and hard-wired, but reading the expressions of others is deeply and universally ingrained, too. There are deep-seated structures within the limbic area of the brain that do the recognition, and as you would suspect, a person with brain damage in the area cannot pick up the clues about what other people are going through. We evolved with the capacity for such recognition because we can learn from the emotions of others. Because emotions are hard to fake, we get some idea of whom we should trust.

Some cultures do have emotions that others don't. The Gurumbha people of New Guinea get into an emotional state called being a wild pig, in which they, well, behave like wild pigs. It is a state understood and sympathized with by onlookers. Some maintain that romantic love is a product of western upbringing, and C. S. Lewis wrote that it was invented in Europe in the twelfth century. He certainly should have known better; the Song of Songs predates courtly love by a millennium or so, and expresses love quite beautifully. Something similar to romantic love has been found with confidence in 90% of cultures studied.

Hobbes thought that emotions encouraged selfishness, and Kant taught that although emotions might lead us to do the right thing, when they did so, doing the right thing was not truly virtuous. Virtuous behavior was to obey moral laws without emotion. Emotional response to a moral choice, however, helps us make decisions that would be considered virtuous, generally beneficial for those involved rather than only looking out for number one.

All in all, emotions have gotten a bad press for centuries. Emotion, a valuable small primer, helps set the record straight, with amusing examples and fascinating explanations of the experiments that have helped make the role of emotions plain. The lesson is driven home repeatedly: emotions are good for us, they help (not hinder) rationality, and they are there because natural selection has used them to get us around a dangerous, unpredictable world.

It has often been said that our emotions are what make us human – that they separate us from the rest of the animal kingdom. But what, really, is an emotion? Hasn’t everybody seen animals that appear to display happiness or sadness, anger or fear? What then, makes human emotions different?

This point, among others, is addressed by researcher Dylan Evans in his new book, Emotion: The Science of Sentiment (Oxford University Press, $15.95). Indeed, Evans covers quite a lot of ground in this fairly small volume. Much of it is devoted to the discussion of
how our emotions can actually make us more rational, rather than – as is often supposed – less.
Along the way, he does a good job of discussing research indicating that emotions do indeed play a part in our rational decision-making and illustrating how this is so. Though, he notes, people need to have the right amount of emotion or else it does indeed interfere. So, could the use of emotions in the human thought process be part of what separates us from other animals?
Evans notes that many animals do indeed show some types of emotions similar to our own. This indicates that these emotions must have evolved quite a while ago, while those not shown by other animals are more recent advances.
Basic emotions, Evans says, are “universal and innate” – they are not learned. These include joy, distress, anger, fear, surprise, and disgust. Other universal emotions, which he calls “higher cognitive emotions,” involve more use of the human brain. These include love, guilt, shame, pride, and jealousy. Some culture-specific emotions are learned as a person grows up in that culture, but these are the exceptions to most human emotions.
But why would something like love or guilt evolve in humans? Evans discusses some of the reasons these types of emotions would appear and how they have helped people to succeed in the gene pool.
So if it is higher emotions that separate us from animals, what about future dreams for artificial intelligence – will computers ever gain emotions, or will they forever remain complex adding machines? Evans details the points on both sides of this debate, noting that some experts think emotional computers will be in operation within the next fifty years.
He also addresses the issue of whether this is such a good idea, especially since when most people think of emotional computers, they think along the lines of science fiction movies, which often focus on evil computers like HAL of 2001 or the computer armies of Terminator. But referring back to his earlier discussion of how emotions can actually help in the reasoning process, Evans says it may be quite useful to give them to computers.
Also in the area of science fiction, fans of Star Trek will find that they have a bone to pick with Evans. The author uses Spock, a half-Vulcan from that series, as an example of a human-like being with no emotions. He then goes on to explain why intelligent beings could never evolve in such a way. Unfortunately, he misses the point that any Trek fan would know – Vulcans do indeed have emotions, they just use mental exercises to keep them buried. A small point, perhaps, but if a person is going to write a book that includes such references – especially when mentioned multiple times – he should have made sure they were correct.
Whether or not science fiction ever becomes science fact and we end up interacting with sentimental computers (probably not Vulcans, though), humans still have plenty of work to do in looking at how our own emotions work. Anybody who is interested in such an overview will find Emotions an enjoyable and informative read.

Similarities to Zen
It might very well be, that Vulcan logic may be more in the nature of what we call Zen....

Vulcan and Taoist/Zen philosophy are compared as well by Duane, if memory serves, but Vulcan logic itself would have to be compared to the logic of human philosophers of Buddhism to be compared to Zen (again, start with the Indians like Nagarjuna of the Middle Way School/Madhyamika, then look toward the Yogacara and, thereafter, to Ch'an and hence to Zen Buddhism's). Subsequently an examination with this in mind of the Taoist philosophers would round out a complete analysis. No small task, especially as within each their quality of logical exposition must be analyzed and subsequently compared and contrasted with each of the others in order to be complete

Then again, c'thia(sp?) as I have heard it described, might be a better match to Zen, and in Vulcan there may be no separate word for logic as we use the word.
That is how Duane relates it, yes. But 'reason-truth' is an adequate, if more expansive, correlate, since it implies the type of self-evidence typically ascribed to logical deduction. Well here are a few more ideas on the Zen and Vulcan philosophies...

In Zen initial training for a monk includes training of WILL and INTELLECT, complemented by a simple diet, physical work for recreation. Punctuality, conscientiousness, SELF-CONTROL, and physical discomfort are demanded as part of training. Great value is set on Moral character, patience, and observance of ethical order.

Spiritual training requires the pupil to perceive everything that IS (C'Thai), in all its fullness, including displeasing matter - total immersion of perception is demanded. Now Spock does this as part of his meditation in Dwellers in the Crucible by M.W.Bonanno:

- 'The sufferings of the universe passed across his viewscreen and Spock reached out for them and embraced them, reached into them and took them into himself, became one with them.' While in the Method of Zen by E.Herrigel,

  it says;-

  Again and again you have to immerse yourself in the contents of perception to learn to raise above it, to apprehend and accept what you are looking at as if from inside, to look through it and grasp the essence.

  Also a Zen-priest (a Vulcan?) should be a total, impartial observer of life, he should neither hate nor love but that does not mean become indifferent, rather compassionate. Freedom in Zen means: Remaining INDEPENDENT, UNCONSUMED by emotions such as joy, suffering, love and hate, although you need to accept them. While SURAK said (D.D. Spock's World):

  - Cast out all emotions that spreads entropy, whether love or hate, by using reason to ACCEPT them and move past them.

Zen

What is Zen? (the simple question)
Zen is short for Zen Buddhism. It is sometimes called a religion and sometimes called a philosophy. Choose whichever term you prefer; it simply doesn't matter.

Zen is a sect or order of Buddhism known scholastically as "The Doctrine of the Buddha-Heart." It is a contradiction in terms to find a clear and precise definition of Zen. Zen is not a doctrine with books, theories or ceremonial rites. There is no canon or reference library.

The first aspect that one has to realize about Zen is the complete difference in perception to the dominant western worldview. The western world, dominated by science, has a logical or logo-centric and rational view of life. Contradiction and paradox are frowned upon in this worldview. One and one equals two and cannot equal three. Within this rational framework, Zen was introduced, and its introduction brought with it a fresh view of reality. By understanding the Zen point of view we understand that the rational perspective is only one view of life, and not necessarily the most valid. This is not to say that rationality is wrong, but rather that is limited and only one perception that has been historically and geographically prescribed.

Historically, Zen Buddhism originates in the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama. Around 500 B.C. he was a prince in what is now India. At the age of 29, deeply troubled by the suffering he saw around him, he renounced his privileged life to seek understanding. After 6 years of struggling as an ascetic he finally achieved Enlightenment at age 35. After this he was known as the Buddha (meaning roughly one who is awake). In a nutshell, he realized that everything is subject to change and that suffering and discontentment are the result of attachment to circumstances and things which, by their nature, are impermanent. By ridding oneself of these attachments, including attachment to the false notion of self or I, one can be free of suffering.
The teachings of the Buddha have, to this day, been passed down from teacher to student. Around 475 A.D. one of these teachers, Bodhidharma, traveled from India to China and introduced the teachings of the Buddha there. In China Buddhism mingled with Taoism. The result of this mingling was the Ch'an School of Buddhism. Around 1200 A.D. Ch'an Buddhism spread from China to Japan where it is called (at least in translation) Zen Buddhism.

What is Zen? (the real question)
This question basically asks What is the essence of Zen? . It appears in various guises throughout Zen literature, from What is the meaning of Bodhidharma's coming from the West? to Have you eaten yet? . The question cuts right to the heart of the matter and can only be answered by you. Perhaps the best answer is practice .

Satori or enlightenment
Enlightenment is the goal of Zen Buddhism. This again is a very difficult term to describe in a sentence or two. We can understand enlightenment as knowledge of the truth; but this knowledge is not the accumulative and rational knowledge of the west. The word enlightenment is understandable and frequently used in the religions of the west. Satori, however, is a form of enlightenment which is very difficult for the Westerner to understand. The following example may explain something of Satori.

A monk went to the Zen master wanting to know more about the truth of enlightenment. When he asked this question of the Zen master, the master replied, ”Do you hear the sound of that running brook.” “Yes, I hear it,” answered the monk. “That is the entrance to the truth” the Master replied to him.

From this example a number of things should be obvious. Satori is not a form of perception that is mediated by logic or even cause and effect reasoning. Satori is an immediate and complete clear view and understanding of the nature of reality.

The misconception of self
One of the obstacles that stand in the way of the initiate trying to enter into Zen understanding is the concept of the self. This is one of the central reasons why Zen is so difficult for the westerner. Western perceptions of reality are built on the foundation of the self and the idea of the centrality of the ego. In terms of understanding Zen, the greatest obstacle to enlightenment is the self. The reason for this situation is that the self is an illusion created by the society, and by the desires and needs of the individual ego. It is only in moving beyond the ego that an understanding of the enlightenment can begin. There is an important difference between the terms “Self” and “ego” that must be understood in this regard. For the Eastern Mind the Self is the true self that has been released from the false self of the ego. In other words, the ego is the illusionary element that traps man into a false perception of reality. Satori is the break-through from the region of the false self into a new consciousness and awareness that is not limited by the ego.

This distinction between the Self and the false ego is not too difficult to understand in ordinary terms. The self, it is widely acknowledged by psychologists and sociologists, is a construction, In other words, the human self is built from social conventions, personal feelings and history and is, in this temporal sense, an illusion. This illusion of the self stands as a barrier between the true Self and a perception of reality. One only has to think of the false ideals like materialism and envy etc, which absorb us in our daily lives, to understand the validity of the Zen perception of no -self. This is a realization that is skirted over by many western
practitioners of Zen, mainly because of its essential difficulty. But, this is also one of the most significant areas of investigation for the western person wanting to understand Zen.

After fully understanding the illusion of the self, the journey into Zen begins. From this point onwards, we enter into the knowledge of Zen without the encumbrance of the baggage of our daily lives or the illusions of our social selves, but rather concentrating on truth as it emerges beyond both objectivity and subjectivity.

Beyond illusion
Once the journey into Zen begins the dualistic concepts that once imprisoned the mind, fall away. The ideas of birth and death, pain and joy, no longer have any relevance. For the westerner this is almost a nonsensical world where there seems to be nothing at all. It is precisely this concept of nothingness that is the source, for the Zen Buddhist, of all reality. It is interesting to note that modern science tends to confirm these strange notions. For example, the “Big Bang Theory” of how the universe began is currently one of the contenders for the most legitimate explanation of the start of our Universe. But this theory proposes a moment before the Big Bang where, theoretically, there was nothing.

One of the greatest problems in trying to understand Zen from a western perspective is that Zen is an intensely personal experience. Satori is achieved and recognized as a personal and individual knowledge that cannot be shared in an outward logical sense. In the west, religion is formal and concentrated in the institution of churches. There is a procedure and knowledge in these institutions that must be followed in a public sense. While individual enlightenment is obviously part of institutionalized religion, it must occur within the framework of the Church and its formal arrangements. This is not the case in Zen, where there are no formal elements and the individual initiate and the master find the path to enlightenment without these restrictions and without any external validation process.

In order for us to come to grips with Zen, we often have to use metaphors and seemingly strange examples to help us to understand this attitude towards life. It is a mode of thought that is essentially non-dualistic. This means that it tends to initiate a mode of thinking that collapses distinctions between opposites. This is very difficult for the western world that has held opposites, in language and in logic, as the central pillars of civilized thought. In order to understand Zen one must be prepared to question the very foundations of one’s life and of the societal influences that affect one. The purpose of Zen is nothing less than total freedom from these dualities of life. In this way, it suggests, we are able to move into a state of mind and reality that is not troubled by anger or fear or by envy and ambition.

Written by Gary Smith

Some thoughts on zen and modern physics
Until the beginning of our century, the scientific approach widespread in the Western World has always been based on the observation of the external phenomena which surround us, followed by an explanatory logical approach under the form of theories or models. Mankind was observing the world like an object of study separated from his own being. The reality of our world was perceived like an entity ruled by eternal laws unknown so far, by laws escaping our knowledge at the moment but whose discovery was considered as unavoidable and depending only on the progresses to get in our future observation means. Many people share anyway this opinion, thinking that any reality can be discovered provided that the telescopes or the microscopes become powerful enough.

This approach has the enormous disadvantage to entertain a separation between mankind itself and the surrounding universe. This is by the way the main cause of the troubles of our world in the domains of ecology and human relationships. This form of knowledge has
overruled during the last centuries any other form of knowledge and has moreover totally shaded off in the western civilizations the intuitive and meditative knowledge, more widespread in the Middle Age. By the way, knowledge, science and technology should not be confused. The meditative approach, and in particular the one of the zen, is considered by many people as non scientific. It is an integrated approach, that is to say, at the same time, of the self and of the world to which we belong, immediate, spontaneous and direct. It is anyway easy to understand its basis given the fact that our cells are similar to all cells in the universe; we are of course constituted by the same atoms as everything in our observable universe. In that sense, the observation of the self, of the life which inhabits us, is the observation of one part of the whole thing, leading to the opening of a larger knowledge, spreading to our entire world.

The two approaches can be perceived as orthogonal, separated and impossible to be unified again. However the so-called modern physics has undergone and is still undergoing, first among other sciences, a profound revolution, breaking apart the certitudes that we had on the possibilities of our knowledge, ourselves as subjects and our external world as object of our knowledge. That happened with the arrival of quantum physics, time relativity, new notions of space and dimensions of our universe, in particular. These domains of physics were not expressed precisely of course by the historical zen Masters, but in many regards their profound intuition concerning the virtuality of time, the non separation between ourselves and our universe, is lighten up now in a obvious fashion by the new approaches of physics developed during the few past tens of years.

The content of these few lines is simply to suggest that the two approaches may be non contradictory but on the contrary quite complementary, immediate and integrated knowledge and knowledge based on the external observation and logic. Often anyway, the results of both approaches are very similar and drive us to a unique and global perception of our universe. In that sense bringing them together, still in recognizing their own limits, one due to the verification, the other one due to a fragmentary approach, is in itself interesting, every man having in himself the desire to integrate the scientific and, let us say, the religious worlds.

Quantum physics and intuitive knowledge

The point here is obviously not to cover the field but to try to suggest, and not to completely explain, the parallelism between the teaching of the ancient Masters and what appears to be widely agreed by all in quantum physics. For that it is unavoidable to recall few basic concepts concerning quantum physics. These concepts are not immediately obvious for the ones, who like all of us, live in a macroscopic world.

The macroscopic world which surrounds us is ruled by laws of causes and consequences. In this world, matter is matter and waves, for example light, are waves. For example the waves are the movements of water and water is water, quite simply. In the microscopic world of quantum physics, things are not so clear. The duality to which we are accustomed in our everyday life is broken up. Similarly, we are used to observe interacting systems, where some information is transmitted across systems, for example by light or sound. However quantum physics has demonstrated that the duality between the waves and the particles, let's say the matter, should be overruled. The observation of some immediate phenomena has also shaken up our certainties.

Let us take a first example. Light does not exist at rest but is the propagation of a wave, of course at the speed of light. It is then not material, it would not be possible to have a table made of light because light does not exist at rest. On the other hand, the electron which is a small particle, in the sense of the current vocabulary, is not a wave. It so happens that light acts at the same time like a wave and like a particle, like a particle of light. The electrons,
particles, behave also like waves and not like particles. Then what is reality? Is light a wave or a particle and is electron a particle or a wave? This concept of duality between waves and particles should then be overcome. In common language, another name should be invented, for example parton. To talk about matter is certainly understandable in our everyday life, but in the microscopic world matter and energy are a same phenomenon.

In quantum physics, the way we observe a phenomenon defines the state in which it is projected in our macroscopic world. What is then the fundamental reality of things, if our observation itself defines, in the sense of our vocabulary, that we observe it either under the form of matter or the form of a wave, without any material consistence? It is then suggested that the single level of reality to which we are used must be overcome and that a new level of reality must emerge, in which these contradictions can be resolved, integrated, embraced. It is difficult for the mind to grab that, the human mind would like to conclude to the existence of a reality which remains hidden. That is not the case. This hidden real does not exist and the nature of things is embedded in this apparent contradiction, in the case where one limits oneself to a single level of reality. It is however possible to conceive a logic which allows, not to resolve the contradictions, but to accept them. It is another dimension of logic. The same in fact is true in our everyday life where we have to embrace the contradictions to which we are confronted.

In all times, zen Masters have asserted that matter is the phenomena (the wave, the electron) and that phenomena are matter (the electron, the wave). The fundamental nature of everything, matter, phenomena, is the vacuity, named ku. All things, all phenomena, including the phenomena of the mind, are in essence in ku, come from ku and go back to ku. The matter itself is a phenomenon and does not have any intrinsic existence, its essence is ku. Ku, although impossible to translate, suggests in a single word the vacuity, potentially inhabited by energy or matter; this comes to the same thing from the well-known Einstein's equation $E=mc^2$. Today in physics, people talk about vacuity or field, which is in essence the same thing. In particle physics, the more we are trying to understand the foundations of matter, the more we find the vacuity. The vacuity is inhabited by interactive fields which materialize themselves when traversed by a primary grain, or by a grain of light, or by an energy perturbation. It somehow polarizes itself. A field is the scientific concept of ku, mentioned in buddhism from the oldest times.

The concept of particles or waves is replaced by fields. On the same way that ku cannot be observed by itself, fields cannot be observed but they manifest themselves under different ways depending of the method of observation, or depending of the way they are projected in our macroscopic world.

The essence of this new physics was already contained in the intuition of the zen Masters. Today the intuitive and scientific approaches join each other, the immediate one, complete and expressed in terms full of imagery, the other one providing a verification of the first one by observations realized in our real world of everyday. The zen approach is the direct and intuitive approach of ku, the scientific approach, after multiple observations, deductions and contradictions to overcome, has found back this concept by another way.

Inter-dependence: interactions and non-local variables
Let us take a second example. Let us start this time from the zen approach concerning inter-dependence. This inter-dependence is conceived as immediate and global. For example that can be translated in the following sentence: a person who practices zazen modifies the entire universe. Understand this sentence by contemplating an interaction which propagates itself first within our close environment, and then farther and farther is certainly justified. However it contains also a notion of immediate and universal action.
calling for no interaction propagating itself gradually, like if our whole universe were one, entirely linked and in complete inter-dependence. A priori, that seems to be in contradiction with the fact that in our world no interaction can propagate itself at a faster speed than the speed of light. According to this condition, billions of years would be needed until the influence of a person in zazen propagates itself to the frontiers of our universe. However in the last months, a new phenomenon was fully verified and established in physics, proving that a bound system in its initial conditions stays bound, and that changing one of its elements immediately modify the other ones. No signal would have the time to propagate itself from one part to the other one.

Two particles of light coming from the decay of an atom are emitted. These two particles of light are sent in opposite directions in kilometers of optical fibers. Although separated by kilometers their state stays bound, that is to say that a modification of the state of one of the particles is immediately observable on the other one, without any time for a signal to propagate itself, at the speed of light, from one to the other. The phenomenon is immediate, no spatial separation exists, space is discontinuous. That is a new level of reality. For the moment no mathematical formalism allows to pass from one level of reality to another one. To pass from the laws of the world of quantum physics to the ones of the macroscopic world. This experiment displays what the zen Masters had sensed in talking about inter-dependence among all beings, in the large sense of our universe, immediate inter-dependence, without any spatial separation. There are then in our universe phenomena which staid for a long time unknown from the scientific world, and which come closer of what was expressed from the beginning of buddhism.

Both approaches are complementary in the sense that intuition is certainly correct but can profit from the scientific observation to be verified and be projected as a real phenomenon in our visible world. One could compare this process to the projection of the world of Buddha, source of integrated intuition, in our everyday world, the world of the observation of the physical phenomena. Knowing that, the scientific approach, to the extent that it stays modest, can help the human being to understand the profound nature of things. Like Buddha was saying: if I tell you that I have a diamond in my closed fist, you would have to believe me. If I open my hand, you can see it. In that sense the scientific approach towards the understanding of our universe helps to open the hand, so everybody can see the diamond.

Another dimension in reality
Along Planck's discovery, which is the basis of quantum physics, the energy has a discrete structure, discontinuous. Its building block is the quantum. That corresponds to a real revolution. We are used to a continuous world, made of relationship of causes to effects, of interactions from one place to another and of a linear time. How then can we understand a world made of discontinuous entities, the quanta. How can we understand the real discontinuity, that is to say how can we imagine that in between two points there is nothing, no objects, no atoms, no particles, just nothing? How, although physics has not really approached this subject and that time is still considered as a continuous variable, how can we understand the relationship between the time which flows away and the instant? How much time is there in between two instants? Is time a succession of instants? How to embrace at the same time the time which flows and the discontinuity of the instants? In physics a bizarre situation is established, the space-time of classical physics and the laws of quantum physics have been kept separately. This is really a bizarre situation which brings many problems in the understanding of our world.

We have seen that the classical concepts of material particles and waves are not quantum entities, very different from the objects of classical physics. One is lead to conclude that they are at the same time waves and particles, or are neither waves nor particles. We have
to abandon the dogma of a single level of reality. The quantum objects are controlled by the laws of quantum physics, in rupture with the laws of the macroscopic world. There are two levels of reality. The simple logic where something and its contrary exist only separately should be overcome. For example if one stays in the single level of reality of the macroscopic world, the world of duality, waves and particles appear to be divided, it is a contradiction. The introduction of a new level of reality allows to overcome this contradiction. For example, in that reality waves and particles are in fact unified and called partons.

The appearance of a level of reality where contradictions are overcome, are naturally embraced, is essential. From all times this level of reality pertains to the essence of knowledge in buddhism. During zazen, the apparent duality between body and mind is overcome by an integrated consciousness of the body-mind. This intuitive and integrated approach becomes an essential component of our way to look at things in our everyday life. We live, and consequently we can say that our time is flowing, but also we live only at each instant. If we remain in a single level of reality, we cannot bring the two together.

During zazen, this contradiction disappears, the consciousness of time and instant are unified. It is an integrated approach, at the same time of the self and of the world to which we belong, immediate, spontaneous and direct. An approach in which the self and the world which surrounds us are reunited. That represents anyway the only way, the only hope for humankind, the essence of ecology, the respect and the compassion for all the beings.

Time in physics and instant
It is enough to ask sincerely this question to realize that time is a concept which lives with us. Time has no being and is then not measurable by itself. It is perceived in function of things, in function of the human beings for example. In physics, time has been cleared of everything which makes its importance for us, its concept has been completely simplified, formalized, mathematized. For example, in physics, time is without direction, past and future do not exist. The equations of general relativity are by the way symmetrical with respect to the time variable. This time is a time extremely simplified compared with the one we are living in and science had to develop huge efforts from the end of the 19th century to reestablish its reversibility.

We have kept in our minds this concept of linear time which flows away. It is real, that is enough just to observe the flow of our own life. But our consciousness of a time flowing in a regular and universal manner has profoundly changed in modern time.

In a chapter of the Shobogenzo, Uji, Master Dogen talks about the being-time. Countless documents have talked about time, also in physics about the arrow of time - the direction of time -, why it so happens that in our world time goes only in one direction. Until these last decades, time was considered in the western societies like an absolute entity. Time or moreover its measurement is extremely well defined. However in one hand, in the 13th century Master Dogen talked about the being-time, that is to say expressing the fact that outside of beings, outside of ourselves in particular, or more generally outside of any presence of matter, time does not exist in an absolute manner. Time is completely linked to beings. On the other hand within our century, Einstein has demonstrated that time is a relative concept, depending on the referential from which we observe it and which depends also on the masses in presence. Time has fallen from its pedestal of absolute variable.

One of the big Einstein's discovery has been to establish in the theory of the general relativity that time is not absolute but that its observation is modified by the presence of masses in our universe. In the absolute nothingness (called kakunen musho in the zen documents), time does not exist, first thing. To this regard, to talk about the beginning of
our universe is to refer only to the inexact concept of an absolute time and not of a relative

time, because the distribution of masses inside our universe is constantly changing. In that
sense one could say that our universe has materialized suddenly from the infinity of time,
that our universe and its own time are born at the same time, as one says currently. In

buddhism, the concept of time separating the birth of a universe from its extinction is very

vague and corresponds to the idea of kalpa. A kalpa is by the way also the time of a blink of

an eye of Buddha, expressing this way that it does not have any real content or cannot be

measured in an absolute way. That does not by the way prevent us to talk about any

elapsed time, measured for example by the displacement of a clock hand.

The concept of time disappears on the cosmological level because no external referential to

our visible universe exists to measure it. It is a concept which is internal to our own

universe. The concept of a time measured between the appearance and the possible

extinction of our universe does not have any signification in itself, one could talk about

billions of years or fractions of seconds. On the other hand, inside our own universe, the

measure of time is not absolute.

Dogen was not expressing something else, in other words. Our observation of time depends

of where we are, depends and is linked to our being. Dogen first has realized that time was

not an absolute concept; that has been observed and demonstrated by physics later on. But

also, the knowledge of the relativity of time by physical observations allows the human

being to become aware of the relativity and the impermanence of everything, the world is

not perceived anymore like a fixed entity external to ourselves. Denying the impermanence

of all things is certainly a source of suffering for the human being. On the other hand, the

fundamental concepts in quantum physics lead us to see everything as constantly changing,
in mutual interaction, linking anything to anything, like any human being to the other and to

the world in which he lives.

The universe

Ancient buddhism talks about a multitude of universes appearing and disappearing during
countless kalpas. Like if each of these universes was similar to a bubble which grows,
explodes, disappears, followed by other bubbles. Ourselves, we can only know our own
bubble, which does not excludes that there could be other bubbles which will remain
unknown to us, other universes for ever separated by the frontier of nothingness.

Ancient buddhism always talked about a multitude of countless universes, whereas the
western science talked only about our own universe. How can we understand that? Although
it is our everyday perception, we are not living in a universe made of straight lines. Einstein
has demonstrated in the theory of general relativity that the geometry of our universe is
curved by the action of the masses in presence, matter. We are then living inside a curved
universe. The concepts of space and matter are linked together, space does not exist or
does not have any signification without the presence of matter. Nothingness is then a
concept which we cannot conceive because it has no time and no space. Our universe,
although it appears to us naively infinite, finds its natural frontier at the blurred point where
the influence of the masses which form it finishes. In that sense, it can be perceived as
finite or infinite, because this frontier is blurred. Anyway our universe, taken in its totality,
could be considered like an enormous black hole.

Nothing opposes the presence of multiple and countless universes, each of them being a
complete stranger for the other, having no spatial nor time connection with any other.
Universes are separated by nothingness, although in fact the concept of separation does not
have any sense at all, because it cannot be measured by anything. The universes are
disjoint. To talk about distance in between these universes does not mean anything,
because there is no common geometry. The human being can only know or apprehend the
universe in which he lives, the one which generated his own atoms and his own cells, like the ones of his brain for example. That does not prevent him to be able to suspect that his universe is not unique, even so if for himself his universe is in fact unique. The other universes remain for ever unknown to him, in that sense his own universe is unique.

When one talks about universe, it is important to understand if one talks about our own universe or about the collection of all disconnected universes. Looking at these remarks, it is probable that the human being starts to perceive an infinity much more immense than the one he considered so far. The universe of zen is infinite, people say. This infinity was sensed from the most ancient times. In our century this perception can be backed up by the scientific logic. This perception is born first from the generalized intuition of the world of Buddha.

The third millenium and in particular the 21st century will see more and more the unification of science and, lets say, of the religious world, of the integrated understanding of our universe, both marching hand to hand. That was the prediction of Master Deshimaru.

Modernity: So Dignified, So Disconnected
by Tom Armstrong

In an article printed in the Fall 2002 issue of Tricycle Magazine, titled "Modern Buddhism: So New, So Familiar," Donald S. Lopez, Jr., relates the history and triumph of Modern Buddhism – a relatively new sect that believes it is the resurrection of the Buddha Gautama's original teachings. Tossing aside the philistine, superstition-riddled, idol-worshipping faith of Asian Buddhists in the late 19th Century, Modern Buddhism is fitted with the ideals of the European Enlightenment: reason, empiricism, scientific method, universalism, individualism, tolerance and freedom.

The fuse of this Western-imbued Buddhism was lit with a two-day political debate between a Christian and Buddhist in 1873 in Ceylon [aka, Sri Lanka] in front of 5,000 spectators. The Buddhist speaker was Gunananda, an educated monk who knew the Bible as well as the sutras, who triumphed in his defense of the dharma and raised nettling questions about the rationality of the Christian faith. An account of the debate, published years later in the West, caught the attention of members of the Theosophical Society, including Col. Henry Steel Olcott, who would later publish the influential The Buddhist Catechism which, according to Lopez, promoted Buddha as "the greatest philosopher of India's Aryan past and ... his teachings as a complete philosophical and psychological system based on reason and restraint, opposed to ritual, superstition and priestcraft. It demonstrated ... how the individual could live a moral life without the trappings of institutional religion."

Concurrent with its spread through Europe and America, this modern variety transformed the moribund Buddhist religion in Japan by being more closely in synch with the country's political aspirations, which included sympathy with intellectuals' efforts to purge the country of corruption and remove impediments to progress.

Modern Buddhism, says Lopez, is an activist sect that views suffering more broadly than its ancient counterparts. "Suffering was often interpreted by Modern Buddhists not as the sufferings of birth, aging, sickness, and death, but of those caused by poverty and social injustice." Too, Modern Buddhism, unlike other religions and other Buddhist sects, is not at odds with science and scientific advancement.

Says Lopez, what we in the West regard today as Buddhism is really Modern Buddhism, with all its advanced and egalitarian features, including advocacy of democracy and women's rights. The emphasis on meditation as a core Buddhist practice is also derived from Modern
Buddhism, which emphasized sitting over the ritual-intense and devotional experience of lay Asian Buddhists before the incursion of modernity.

Lopez concludes his article with a description of the Modern Buddhist sect, as not being separate from the pre-existing ancient Buddhists sects, but as being an overlay. He writes, “There is Thai Buddhism, there is Tibetan Buddhism, there is Korean Buddhism, and there is Modern Buddhism. Unlike previous forms of national Buddhism, however, this new sect does not stand in a relation of mutual exclusion to the others. One may be a Chinese Buddhist and a Modern Buddhist, but one also can be a Chinese Buddhist without being a Modern Buddhist. Like other Buddhist sects, Modern Buddhism has its own lineage, doctrines, and practices. And like other Buddhist sects, it has its own canon of sacred scriptures—scriptures that have created a Buddhism so new, yet also so familiar.”

The Problems of Modernity
In his article, Lopez is clearly using the word modern in the sense applied to it by historians – associating Modern Buddhism with the European Enlightenment – and not in the colloquial sense where modern just means that which is contemporary.

Historians refer to the dignity of modernity when they speak of the egalitarian aspects of change within a society from a pre-modern to a modern worldview. Those elements are precisely the ones that Lopez honed in on in his article. Quoting from Ken Wilber's The Marriage of Sense and Soul, the elements of change are the values of the liberal Western Enlightenment, including “equality, freedom and justice; representational and deliberative democracy; the equality of all citizens before the law, regardless of race, sex or creed; and political and civil rights (freedom of speech, religion, assembly, fair trial, etc.)” Mining the same vein, Lopez wrote of Modern Buddhism that it “stresses equality over hierarchy, the universal over the local, and often exalts the individual above the community.”

It is broadly agreed – and I agree -- that the dignity of modernity is a force positive. And, there is a great deal in the sutras to support the idea that Buddha's teachings support or anticipate the dignity of modernity. Thus the admixture of Western culture to the Buddhist stew was likely to bring forth something powerful and empowering – and it has.

But what Lopez completely overlooks in his article, which extols 'the modern' with abandon, is the flipside – the upturning of the tub that has tossed out a beautiful baby with the gray bathwater.

Wilber writes that as empirical science becomes scientism, “[c]onsciousness itself, and the mind and heart and soul of humankind, could not be seen with a microscope, a telescope, a cloud chamber, a photographic plate, and so all were pronounced epiphenomenal at best, illusory at worst.

“The entire interior dimensions ... were dismissed by monological science because none of them could be registered by the eye of flesh or empirical instruments. ... [T]he disaster [of modernity] is that science per se – empirical, monological, instrumental, it-language science ... came to aggressively invade the other value spheres – including interior consciousness, psyche, soul, spirit, value, morals, ethics, and art – thus reducing the entire lot to a colony of science, which itself would pronounce on what was, and what was not real.”

Who is a Modern Buddhist?
I think that there are overwhelming problems with Lopez's declarations regarding the merits and dominance of the “Modern Buddhism” that he describes.
While it is true that there are a great many who share Olcott's edict (which Lopez quoted) that their Buddhism is “in a word, a philosophy, and not a creed,” it is not, in today's world, a reflection of greater depth, but of a new, shallow variety of Buddhism that has taken a Twilight Zone-detour off the road to Enlightenment.

Martha Sherrill in her online article in Slate “The American Yen for Zen” aptly describes the strain of Buddhism that Lopez calls Modern Buddhism:

Our love affair with Buddhism is still new, still exciting, and still heavy with romance.

... The Dalai Lama seems to embody the qualities of Buddhism magnificently: the good cheer, the selflessness, the long view. His message is so unassuming and easy to digest too. My religion is kindness, he likes to say. Who could argue with that? He makes Buddhism seem easy. He makes everything seem easy. And that ease, that sense of mildness and good humor—what Americans think of as the essential Buddhist personality—seems within our grasp too, particularly if we spend a little more money. So we gather to hear him speak. We buy a video. A few more books. (The Art of Happiness) We like looking at his face. We like the way he makes us feel. But sometimes our affection for the Dalai Lama seems strangely close to the way my 3-year-old son feels about Barney.

... We want Buddhism to be pure, unassailable. We almost need it that way. So we tell ourselves it's a philosophy, a set of teachings, not really a religion. It's simple. It's calming. You buy a little Buddha for your mantelpiece and feel better. You drink some green tea and feel cleansed. We're afraid to know much about it—about the demons, the 18 various kinds of hell, or the 108,000 prostrations you need to do just to get through the beginner's phase. Reality might ruin the fun. And it might spoil the good shopping too.

What Sherrill describes is the most-typical stream of Modern Buddhism today. A residue of premodern Buddhism is still very much there as is a belief in modernist principles (and consumerism), too. The dis-ease with it all—the direct contradictions—are overcome with a Tylenol. It is a pursuit of happiness, not a search to end existential suffering. Nettling thoughts re anguish, physical pain, the fear of death and the black wall of non-existence are repressed.

I don't know their numbers, but many Western Buddhists of today are adherents of neither the superstition-riddled premodern varieties nor the shallow, pop-modern Buddhism that is so prevalent. There is, still, a desire by many in the West to break through to the profound state that Gautama Buddha experienced -- without forgoing their commonsense.

Plumbing the depths of mysticism and Buddha's message is not centuries out of date; it is still sought by millions who are not disoriented by the rigors and challenges of Western culture. For them, science does not dictate the reaches of reality; the outer reaches of science are just a subset in the realm of reality. Mind can never be certified by a scientism-spouting guru to be just chemical activity and electrical charges in a putty-soft brain. Consciousness cannot be expressed in terms of 'stuff.'

The egalitarian aspects of today's Buddhism are not a part of a philosophical/political stance for them (like favoring some school bond or opposing Indian casinos). The equality of rights for individuals is instead an easy insight regarding the nature of One Mind. It comes from religious knowledge, not from rather-arbitrary choices made among a selection of options. It is not like preferring Birdseye's brand of canned corn over Safeway's; it is foundational knowledge that springs from the wild blue yonder. It comes from the depths; it's a touch of knowledge of life and the kosmos.
The Modern worldview is a transitional state as individuals, countries, the world move
toward more advanced stages, including the transpersonal. Lopez's "Modern Buddhism" – to
the extent that there is such a thing – is a dangerous bridge, at best. It is certainly
not the Ultimate Butterfly breaking out of the prison of a confining religious cocoon.

The Basis of Dark Zen

Question: What is the basis for your teaching?

Dark Zen: Our basis, if you wish to call it that, is Mind’s luminous originative power which
can also be characterized as an intelligible light. Its other name is Buddha who is a
"light-maker."

Question: I’ve read that the mind is luminous. But I am afraid that I have never heard that the
Buddha is a "light-maker". Is this mentioned in the Buddhist canon?

Dark Zen: Yes. In the earliest scriptures, for example, the Buddha is sometimes described
as “the
bringer of light”. In one account, he was described as a “newly arisen sun” who has a
“corona around him.” It is also said that the Buddha could make the world bright. Now, if
you strip away all the poetic imagery, what is left? I can only see an originative power which
is prior to all things.

Question: Permit me to back up. I think I understand what you're saying. But what I had
originally in mind to ask you is what is the historical basis of your teaching?

Dark Zen: From the corpus of old manuscripts discovered at Tun-huang around the turn of
the last century, it is clear that Zen transmitted the 'dark principle.' The term is used a
number of times in these old documents. In one of the oldest transmission documents found
at Tun-huang it mentions the dark principle. In fact, the title of the document is as follows:
Former Worthies Gather at the Mount
Shuang-feng and Each Talks of the Dark Principle. I should also point out that in this same
document there is no indication that there is a transmission going back to the Buddha. Nor,
is there a master/disciple succession. But what is clear is that each Zen master is such in
virtue of his insight into the dark principle.

Question: But what about the fact of a Zen lineage going all the way back to the Buddha as
found in the book, The Transmission of the Lamp?

Dark Zen: It is, I think, a tall tale. It's a non-scriptural creation by Sung Dynasty Zennists
who took selections from older works and made a singular work befitting of their theory. But
it all falls apart when we compare it with the Mahayana Sutra entitled The End of
Transmitting the Dharma Basket
upon which The Transmission of the Lamp is largely based. The Sutra provides us with a list
of 23 Indian ancestors, beginning with Mahakashyapa and ending with Simha Bhiksu. There
is no mention of Bodhidharma or his master, Prajnatara. In fact, the Sutra is about
transmitting the canon (Dharma)--it's not about Zen. It is also noteworthy that in the
Avatamsaka Sutra (the Gandavyuha chapter) it is mentioned that great disciples such as
Mahakashyapa “were not capable of perpetuating the lineage of Buddhas.” Obviously,
something is wrong. This passage doesn't square with the later Zen theory that
Mahakashyapa was transmitted by the Buddha. Why then would the Buddha transmit to
Mahakashyapa if he were incapable of perpetuating the lineage of Buddhas? As I read
between the lines, Mahakashyapa is only worthy, like Ananda, to transmit the canon. Nothing more. He was incapable of transmitting the Buddha lineage which is the dark principle.

Question: Can you describe this so-called 'dark principle' of which you speak?

Dark Zen: It's an intractable subject, I must say. If I describe it by saying that all constructed things flow from this dark principle while it, itself, remains unconstruced and unmoved, what can such words really explain? At this stage it is a far off goal, like some great mountain seen in the distance. You, as a person, must still make the journey on your own.

Question: Isn't this just the problem of our need to think too much?

Dark Zen: Yes, of course, over-thinking can be a problem. On the other hand, some Zennists teach that we should repress our thoughts and be like a dead tree. This is wrong. But I happen to think that right thoughts are useful, especially those which give us right information. Information can help guide us in the right direction. Sometimes it leads us in the wrong direction. Often, it is true, we have to reconsider our former thoughts and question this information. We may find that they weren't much after all.

Question: Yes, I tend to agree with you. But back to the dark principle. Could you at least sketch it out?

Dark Zen: I will try although I am hesitant to say too much about it. I can't promise you miracles. First of all, each of us has access to this dark principle. All of us can tap into it. This is a given. However, owing to our habit of following appearances, we have lost the ability to communicate with it even though it is coexistent with us. Now, in the case of the Buddha, with regard to the dark principle, when he reached complete enlightenment he entered into what might be called primordial light. But more than just mere light, it is sheer productive power, or the same, sheer potentiality. Naturally, it is free and independent of phenomena although without it, phenomena would not be. With that I can't say much more.

Question: How does this apply to Bodhidharma’s teaching?

Dark Zen: When Bodhidharma spoke of the Two Entrances, one was called the entrance by principle. This principle, of course, is the dark principle. To realize it was by means of wall-contemplation (biguan). Wall-contemplation means to turn to the real by rejecting phenomena, so as to abide in the primordial light. In this light there is nothing further to cultivate. This light, or I should say, this dark principle, is a sheer productiveness and is equally self-knowing. In Zen we call this the Great Perfection of the Path which was first mentioned in the work, the Records of the Lanka Masters.

Question: When the Buddha converged with this dark principle, as you allege, could he influence the weather or change the economic conditions of his country? [laughing]

Dark Zen: We are talking about two different worlds. The Buddha's world is the unconditioned world of potentiality before our senses cut it up and our brain conceptualizes it. The one of which you speak with its weather conditions and poverty is the highly conditioned human, samsaric world. Here sentient beings choose to look at this mysterious, unconditioned world in a certain, predetermined way, assembling it into a plurality of things and conditions. Furthermore, they crave this particular exotic view which ironically ends with their suffering. But if beings elect to transcend the human world, eventually reaching a higher plane of
being, then, in such another world, sure they can influence the weather  [laughing]

Question: Well, I'm not sure I understand you. I only see the human world. It is the one I care about. But let me ask you this question: How do you understand all this in your daily life? This is what really interests me.

Dark Zen: When we tap into this dark principle, what little we can at first, it leads us to its fullness in time. As a result, one becomes blissful as this light gradually de-conditions unwholesome states of being. Even if you are in pain, for example, this light is at work aiding you to win your freedom. It is like an angel who insures that part of you will join the Buddhas.

Question: That is interesting. I like what I hear you saying. So, this is not some intellectual exercise after all. Something actually happens in one's inner being that helps them in their ordinary lives.

Dark Zen: Oh, but of course It is most extraordinary. Let me also say that one senses at all times an illuminating energy present within them. In my case, as I turn to it, I become more of this dark principle. All the human gloominess fades away, you might say.

Question: Why is it that we don't experience this within us right now?

Dark Zen: I think it is because we are glued to appearances, both sensory and mental. Worse, the glue is like Crazy Glue  [laughing] When one faces the world of appearances, one is actually looking away from their true source. One is, in fact, merging with the world of birth and death only to suffer in proportion as they cling to this world. The Buddha said it is like a great king, who spending too much time with his subjects, forgets he is a king. Well, in our case, we have total amnesia  [laughing] This is why we don't experience it.

Question: So, by engaging with phenomena we become conditioned by it and get amnesia?

Dark Zen: Yes. And then we get hooked even more as we act towards our conditioning.

Question: Like a vicious circle?

Dark Zen: Yes  As the Buddha pointed out, humans are always dependently linked with phenomena—they almost never get free. However, for Buddhists, they must learn to de-link with phenomenal arisings. But this is a hard road to travel.

Question: Yes, it sounds like it. From all that you have said, at least it is encouraging to know that within me is the potential for liberation. I get the impression that if I could only merge with the dark principle of which you speak, my problems would melt away.

Dark Zen: Yes, that is true. At least your problems would be seen to not be such a big deal. But until that time, one must follow the Buddha's teachings to make this possible.

Question: To change the subject, does Dark Zen have a sangha? Most Zen groups that I am familiar with have a congregation. Do you have one?

Dark Zen: We have a different view of sangha. For us, sangha is made up of those who
have experienced the Buddha's true Dharma. These beings have become a witness to his pure teaching—or the same, the dark principle.

Question: So, this is not a community then, am I right?

Dark Zen: Let's say that it is a community of like minds. In the Avatamsaka Sutra it tells us to "observe the Buddha's power of energy" which is his true Dharma. In observing it, we at once become members of his sangha.

Buddha-nature

Students of the Way. Many of you seem perplexed about the idea of Buddha-nature. I know that a number of you come from other Zen centers which teach the doctrine of Dogen Zenji who believes that all beings are Buddha-nature. And perhaps, using Dogen's words, you also believe that a donkeys' jowls are the Buddha-nature.

Tonight, I will enlighten you with the truth of Buddha-nature. Then you can set aside the belief that a donkey's jowl is the Buddha-nature, thereby coming to learn, for the first time, where to begin your search for the authentic Buddha-nature which is within yourself.

First, you should realize that the term Buddha-nature refers to the very mind of the Buddha. Next, it is important to understand that sentient beings have the potential to attain Buddha-nature, but have not yet actualized it.

For what is potential, in the example of a acorn, must still develop itself into an oak tree which is its actuality. Keep in mind, too, that the little acorn, more than likely, will be eaten by a squirrel or will be taken away by a woodpecker. What I am driving at, is that many of you will not actualize your Buddha-nature, even though you have the sentient potential to do so.

Hopefully, I can help most of you become oak trees

To realize our Buddha-nature, two general conditions must be met. First, we must be sentient beings. Looking around, I think that we all qualify. The Buddha calls this the direct cause. It is analogous to milk from which cream can be derived.

Next, it is important to know what a sentient being is. A sentient being is, roughly speaking, spirit. Don't be confused and just assume that a sentient being is an animal or a plant, or even the five aggregates. It isn't. Your thoughts, for example, are sentient beings--but not a common fence post.

The second condition you must fulfill in order to realize Buddha-nature is the indirect cause. The indirect cause refers to the six paramitas according to the Mahaparinirvana Sutra. By means of the six paramitas you will surpass the confines of the mortal body, in addition to all levels of attainments, including those of the Hearers and the Solitary Buddhas.

What does the term indirect cause mean? It means a cause that comes from the outside to do its work on the direct cause. This is analogous to adding the juice of the p'o-chiu tree to milk, according to the Buddha, which causes cream to be formed right away.
Six paramitas

Turning to the indirect cause, namely the six paramitas, let me briefly outline their meaning consistent with the spiritual practice of Dark Zen.

According to our founder Bodhidharma the paramitas are the means to the other shore, namely, Buddha-nature. They are intended to help us surpass the six senses which Bodhidharma calls the six robbers.

The first paramita is charity. By mastering it, we surpass the robber of the visual world and thereby become spiritually wealthy. This paramita destroys our desire to cling to visual things as would a miser who clings to his property.

The second paramita is discipline. By mastering it, we surpass the robber of the auditory world and acquire good spiritual practices and concentration. It destroys our desire to cling to acoustical determinations, thus becoming free of distractions, being able to abide in stillness.

The third paramita is patience. By mastering it, we surpass the robber of the olfactory world and acquire inner peace, both for self and for others. It destroys our desire to investigates what is pleasant and unpleasant in the example of a dog tracking scents. Thus, we come to abide indifferently with regard to what is pleasant and unpleasant.

The fourth paramita is strength. By mastering it, we surpass the robber of the world of taste and acquire devotion. It destroys our desire for the appetites and various forms of flattery that come from the tongue. Acquiring this paramita, we develop wholesome spiritual states.

The fifth paramita is meditation. By mastering it, we surpass the robber of tactile sensations. It eliminates sensuous distractions. Acquiring this paramita, we are able to focus mind on a sublime object.

The sixth paramita is wisdom. By mastering it, we surpass the robber of consciousness. This paramita eliminates all false views of the absolute. Acquiring this paramita, we are able to distinguish our Buddha-nature from that which is empty of it.

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From what has been said thus far, the actualization of our Buddha-nature is not easy to accomplish. Grasses and mountains, it is evident, have not actualized the Buddha-nature. What is more, grasses and mountains are not even Bodhisattvas who are the only beings worthy to actualize Buddha-nature.

I see a real danger for some American Buddhists who have been misled by deviant teachings which insist that temporal conditions are Buddha-nature itself. Make no mistake about it, mountains, rivers, and earth are not Buddha-nature. A mountain is a mountain because it is not Buddha-nature, having never completed the six paramitas. A river is a river because it is not Buddha-nature. And earth is not Buddha-nature. If earth were Buddha-nature, having completed the six paramitas, then nothing with a body made of earth would ever suffer or perish. Clearly, this is not the case.

To see Buddha-nature requires extraordinary actions. Obstructions that hamper our supreme vision of Buddha-nature must be removed by using the paramitas. In that respect,
Buddha-nature does not come easily or automatically.

I beg you to surpass the six senses which are empty of Buddha-nature. Don't imagine that Buddha-nature can be seen. Don't search for it as if it were a sound. Do go after it like a dog tracking a scent. Don't imagine that the tongue can taste it or speak of it. Don't believe that it can be touched or felt. Don't be misled and take Buddha-nature to be a mental representation. Surpass all the senses. Leave everything behind so that you might awaken to that which is the very source of all things.

The Transcendence

Q: What do you mean by transcendence?

A: Can you see that which asks this question? Can you hear it? Can the nose smell it or can the tongue taste it? Can you become conscious of it? In truth, you cannot. And because you can't, something mysterious transcends the sphere of the six senses.

Q: But if I can't perceive it, it doesn't exist. So, why even bother with transcending?

A: You can't see wind either or hear vision or see smells. But that does not prove the nonexistence of wind, vision or smell. If we wish to stop suffering, then we must turn to that which is free of suffering--despite the fact that the senses can't see it. The very minute we do, that is transcendence.

Q: You are saying then, that the Buddha's enlightenment is outside of the sphere of the six senses.

A: Yes.

Q: But that sounds like some kind of God or Soul. Didn't the Buddha deny an absolute? Isn't this world, itself, the absolute when we see it as being purely empty--when we empty it of form?

A: Not to my recollection--although many academic Buddhists think so. He just pointed out that such words, rather than being vital and real, evoke impermanent mental images which should be recognized to be empty. What is absolute, is beyond the emptiness of speech and metal imagining. Nor can it be experienced as some gurus imagine.

Q: You didn't answer the second part of my last question. Isn't this world the absolute when we see it as empty?

A: Some Buddhists, I am sure, believe that. It is like making a mountain into rocks, then crushing the rocks into powder, then making the powder into aether. But that is a destructive view. The true nature of the cosmos is already empty; it cannot be made empty a second time. It is like watching ripples of water. Only the form changes--the content is still the same.

Q: To me, this is just a bunch of mystical mumbo-jumbo. I find it just to be word-games. It doesn't help our world one bit. So-called transcending, I am convinced, won't do a single thing to help anyone, least of all, a starving child. Isn't this kind of Zen irrelevant? In our Zen center we are helping each other to become better human beings and to make this
world a better place.

A: To make the world a better place, as you use the term, only means to make people comfortable. On the other hand, what the Buddha preached and what the Zen masters of old transmitted, was a means for making us truly happy by learning how to distinguish the undying from the mortal. As a result, it is possible to stop clinging to finite appearances such as this mortal dung heap which is a lasting cause of sorrow. Personally, I think it is better to be comfortable and wise, rather than be comfortable and ignorant. Your approach is too narrow. You can't exclude the mysterious. If you want to give everyone mental problems, then destroy the mystical. But such a path, I must add, is one of lasting alienation.

Q: What do you mean by that last remark?

A: At the deepest level, we are Buddhas. But by looking outwards to what is an image of our Buddha-nature, we become confused because we can't see our imageless Buddha-nature. Nothing lines up, so to speak. This is alienation which is the difference between our Buddha-potentiality and our current state of progress marching towards Buddhahood. In addition, this is disharmony which is the same as suffering. Now, what you propose is that we all give up the long march towards harmony with our original Buddha-nature and turn into moralists, instead. Well, by doing that, alienation can only get worse-not better. Don't you see that we are all unhappy because we are not practicing the Dharma, learning how to remember our Buddha-nature?

Q: But aren't we really unhappy because we haven't the things we need and require as human beings?

A: When I was a little boy, we lived with no electricity. We had an old radio with B-batteries. We even had a Ward's icebox that held a huge block of ice in it. Now we have electricity, T.V., computers and refrigerators—but we are still unhappy. Everyone is on Prozac—even little children. Something is wrong. Technology isn't making anyone happy—I like the good old days anyway. Seriously, we have to look within, trying instead, to remember where our Buddha-nature is located. Life will become happy again if we do that. I know that to be a fact.

Q: So you are saying that to study the Dharma will make us feel less alienated?

A: Yes. And to follow the ways of the world will make you unhappy. And to follow religions which only teach you how to cope with the ways of the world will make you unhappy. However, the more you study authentic Dharma, the less medications you will need [laughing].

Q: What do you mean by Dark Zen?

A: Dark Zen is synonymous with mystical Zen. It is the highest truth of Zen which is transmitted by means of Mind's self-awakening. Here you are in complete unity with true nature of Mind itself. In the time span of a single thought you complete the stages of a Bodhisattva and enter the lineage of the Buddhas, going back to the first Buddha. Without a doubt, you recognize that all phenomena are continent on Mind's bright vivifying nature.

Q: How does Dark Zen differ from conventional Zen?
A:- Given that the fundamental basis of conventional Zen owes its origin to Dark Zen, it does not follow that conventional Zen can likewise transmit the Buddha-nature. That is the chief difference between the two. What, in fact, conventional Zen transmits is a second-hand teaching. Such a second-hand teaching is only intended to comfort and inspire those who wish to proceed on their own to look even deeper within their own being so as to awaken and see the mysterious nature of Mind.

Q:- Isn't it true that the lineage of Zen began with the Buddha passing his knowledge on to Mahakashyapa who in turn passed the teaching on to Ananda where it eventually was transmitted to present day teachers? Are you saying that this lineage is false?

A:- That history of the transmission from one teacher to another was composed by an adept of Dark Zen during the Sung dynasty in China as a means to inspire weaker souls who lacked the ability to understand that the Buddha is their very own mind. To be honest with you, the lineage that you are alluding to, described in _The Flame Transmission_ is an extended allegory speaking to the various ideas and aspects of absolute Mind as it unfolds itself. Now to answer your question. These stories are not false if they lead you to see the nature of Mind itself. However, these stories will delude anyone who does not have the True Eye to see the nature of Mind in each story, foolishly clinging, instead, to a succession of human teachers supposing that each teacher actually handed over Mind's bright nature to his heir

Q:- My own teacher claims to be the Dharma heir of his teacher's teaching going back to the Buddha. Is he not a genuine heir of the teaching of Zen?

A:- Again, that is the teaching of conventional Zen. It is not the ultimate teaching. Your teacher is an heir to his teachers opinions about Mind's mysterious nature. That is all. That doesn't mean he is enlightened to the nature of Mind itself. It only means that he is part of a lineage that accepts Zen's Mind doctrine. In Dark Zen, a Dharma heir is someone who has seen Mind's pure nature directly having passed through all the stages of a Bodhisattva. From this they are able to promote the ancient teachings of the Buddha, creating skillful means in order to teach others the true purport of Buddhism.

Q:- My own teacher who was transmitted seems to know the answers to the koans. Doesn't that say something for his wisdom?

A:- When a teacher gives his Dharma heir a collection of koans with answers, which more or less is considered the succession of Dharma, he is merely recognizing his student's potential to become a genuine Bodhisattva. In other words, the Dharma heir has only demonstrated his understanding of Buddhism, not his accomplishment of it. If you think that this individual can interpret a Mahayana Sutra correctly or has had genuine Bodhicitta after five or ten years of study, you are deluded. Before the Sung dynasty and the invention of the succession fable, for almost four hundred years prior to that, Zen was mainly Dark Zen. Teachers recognized genuine enlightenment in others without recourse to koans as a means of testing. Today, that has all changed.

Q:- In what way has modern Zen changed from the perspective of Dark Zen?

A:- From the perspective of Dark Zen, today's Zen institution is much different. It is based on paternal allegiances, formalism, blind rituals, and clericalism. We must realize that the pure essence of Zen is not found in the outer elements of religion which such institutions present to the public. The true content of Zen is only to be found within our being stripped bare of all preconceptions. Let me finally say, that institutional Zen is really for those people
who are afraid to give up conceptual thinking and their emotions. Such people are still motivated by the ways of the world putting their energizes into building a cultural edifice that they believe will somehow push back the ocean of suffering. In contrast to this, Dark Zen is for those individuals who understand that the mysterious source of the teaching cannot be conceptualized through the senses, taught, or even cultivated. In fact, it cannot even be transmitted. What the term transmission, in fact, means is just to awaken to the whereabouts of Mind itself thus putting an end to suffering once and for all.

Q:- My teacher has the authority to teach Zen. I have seen his credentials. What is your authority and where is your proof?

A:- Buddhism only recognizes one authority. That is Mind which is also the Buddha. If you have seen Mind’s nature then you have the authority, given to you by the Buddha, to do has you please. If not, then you should guard both yours words and your actions. Those who claim to have the authority to teach Zen, showing off their robes and certificiates, have no authority since these things are not Mind. Over the years, I have seen that anyone, with enough money, can become a Zen master almost over night. So it proves nothing to brag about your teacher's credentials. In the past good students could recognize good teachers just by listening to a word or two. In their heart, they were searching for the one true source of all, having recognized that Mara’s shadow was upon them. And because they were searching in this manner, their hearts resonated with the ideal teacher who had safely crossed to the other shore. Today, inferior students can only recognize inferior teachers judging them by looking at their wares like merchants. This implies that they only resonate with materialism and not Mind. As for proof, if you only want mouse shit, rather than gold, there is nothing I can do to convince you otherwise. Evidently, you are attached to the trappings of conventional Zen. But make no mistake about it, Dark Zen, variously described as Yin Zen, is the true teaching that Bodhidharma brought to China.

Dark Zen Students of the Way

I cannot teach you the true meaning of Zen if you are more concerned with day to day matters rather than understanding the truth. Please don’t bother me with questions such as where to put your shoes or hang your coats. I am not your father or your mother. I am not here to scold you or to give you warm milk and tuck you into bed. Now some of you, I noticed, when I first came in, looked bored. Are you disappointed in Zen? Did you expect me to pull a rabbit out of a black hat?

Some of you, I suspect, want to see some miracles. I am not a magician either. Zen is not a sideshow. Also, I suspect some of you came here to become instantly enlightened, expecting me to drill a hole in your head and fill it with wisdom at once. I cannot do that. It wouldn’t be Zen. You must learn to wipe your own nose and effect your own enlightenment and attain the mysterious Mind transmission that our founder Bodhidharma still gives out--although some believe that he died a long time ago.

Long ago the Buddha told us that life is hell; that it is a dung pit, and that no matter what we did to improve it, our efforts would still prove unsatisfactory in the long run. To remedy this painful existence the Buddha instructs us not to cling to this world and this mortal body that we are housed in, being in his words, home dwellers. He cautioned us that the consequence of such clinging would only make matters worse. I know that you must feel by now that the Buddha is a pessimist; that when he was alive he walked from village to village in ancient India telling everyone that all of existence is miserable and just accept it that way. But this is not the message of the Buddha. The Buddha was not a pessimist. If you want me to tell it to you straight from the heart, the Buddha experienced great joy when he realized enlightenment, becoming disembodied from his parents body and the world it
abided in. Even during my own practice, I am amazed to look at my own parent-begotten dung machine and wonder why I took a nose dive into it, getting involved in its birth and death. There is more beauty outside this mortal body than living a life stuck inside it--and there is more freedom in nirvana than going from one body to still another.

So this evening, please try to concern yourself with the pursuit of absolute truth, coming to the joyful realization of your Buddha-nature. It is your only hope for avoiding a future life of pain and sorrow. Students of the Way, if you begin earnestly to seek the truth, I promise you, things will get much better. One day you will thank me for telling you to seek your Buddha-nature. But if you insist on bothering me with petty day to day details, I am afraid that you will never uncover your Buddha-nature. Please stop clinging to such finite matters and instead, question who or what is moving this body of yours around. Try at least to give it some thought tonight.

What if the universe was an afterimage whose only purpose was to serve as a finger pointing to that invisible power which originated it? Would, therefore, our perception of it be like a backward glance in which even our bodies would be those of backward men chasing after endless illusions without ever finding their origin? According to the Buddha, we are such backward men who desire to look into the obscure past that mankind calls its future. Who now is brave enough to look forward, as if to live in such a way as to preexist the universe, thus to never become backwards again?

What manner of human being is willing to live above all things that come after his vision? Such men we declare, are called Sages. Truly, such men come before all else, having surpassed the visible tomb called the human body.

Here then is our declaration: transcend the shadow called mankind and live in anterior bodies of light. If now your lost courage is coming back to you?if now you feel the awakening from a thousands sleeps about to commence, then you must leave your house of flesh and join our cause. For what greater adventure is there for a knight of wisdom than to conquer his own mortality as the Buddha conquered Mara.

Mystical Zen Buddhism

The goal of Zen Buddhism is directed towards achieving mystical union with Buddha Mind because Buddha Mind is the basis of all existence. In so doing, the Zennist comes to see for himself that all things are born from this Mind; that in fact, all things are subjoined to Buddha Mind, having their true commencement and end in it.

The Zennist is one who faithfully strives to realize Buddha Mind, studies the Buddhist canon, and practices many forms of meditation. Ultimately, the Zennist perceives in a very real sense what the Buddha actually intuited when he became enlightened. It is the full and complete remembrance of the ultimate nature of existence. Intuitively identifying directly with this mysterious principle, which is uncreated, the Zennist discovers that he has always been one with this mysterious principle.

This intuitive perception, usually called by its Japanese name, 'Satori', is an indescribable mystical awakening that transcends both human thought and sensory experience. At once, the Zennist recognizes that from the very beginning he was never really separated from Buddha Mind. Further, the sleep of ignorance, the Zennist comprehends, was caused by his continuous clinging to all kinds of phenomena, from gross manifestations to extremely subtle manifestations, including even so-called religious experiences.
Realizing Buddha Mind, the Zennist eventually becomes, in a very substantial way, detached from his illusory body. In this sense, detachment in Buddhism goes far deeper than our ordinary understanding of the word can convey. In its fullest sense, detachment suggests disembodiment, such that the Zennist eventually comes to transcend his mortal body, as it were, abiding in another body more perfect and not liable to samsaric generation. Upon complete enlightenment, the Zennist comes to see the mortal body to be empty and insubstantial.

As for the unique path of Zen Buddhism which makes it possible for the Zennist to awaken to Buddha Mind, the pathway of Zen sets about to remove the illusion that Buddha Mind is not already attained. In addition, such a path is intended to free the Zennist from all path-dependency because a path exists on account of the goal not yet being attained. But when the goal is attained the former path, therefore, becomes unnecessary. With regard to path-dependency, many Buddhist practitioners mistake the path for the goal confusing the search for wisdom with its actual possession. Eventually, the one following the path and the one making the path, i.e., Buddha Mind, are realized to be one and the same.

To conclude, at a mystical level, just like the Buddha's own mysterious body that he attained long ago after his own enlightenment, the Zennist likewise acquires a spiritual body of thirty-two marks of excellence analogous to a coat of mail which is bright like the moon in the month of Karttika (The Mahavastu).

This text is presented by: Zenmar, the Dark Zen Mystic.

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The Teachings of Mystical Zen Buddhism

1) Buddha-nature

Students of the Way. Many of you seem perplexed about the idea of Buddha-nature. I know that a number of you come from other Zen centers which teach the doctrine of Dogen Zenji who believes that all beings are Buddha-nature. And perhaps, using Dogen's words, you
also believe that a donkeys' jowls are the Buddha-nature.

Tonight, I will enlighten you with the truth of Buddha-nature. Then you can set aside the belief that a donkey's jowl is the Buddha-nature, thereby coming to learn, for the first time, where to begin your search for the authentic Buddha-nature which is within yourself.

First, you should realize that the term Buddha-nature refers to the very mind of the Buddha. Next, it is important to understand that sentient beings have the potential to attain Buddha-nature, but have not yet actualized it.

For what is potential, in the example of a acorn, must still develop itself into an oak tree which is its actuality. Keep in mind, too, that the little acorn, more than likely, will be eaten by a squirrel or will be taken away by a woodpecker. What I am driving at, is that many of you will not actualize your Buddha-nature, even though you have the sentient potential to do so.

Hopefully, I can help most of you become oak trees.

To realize our Buddha-nature, two general conditions must be met. First, we must be sentient beings. Looking around, I think that we all qualify. The Buddha calls this the direct cause. It is analogous to milk from which cream can be derived.

Next, it is important to know what a sentient being is. A sentient being is, roughly speaking, spirit. Don't be confused and just assume that a sentient being is an animal or a plant, or even the five aggregates. It isn't. Your thoughts, for example, are sentient beings--but not a common fence post.

The second condition you must fulfill in order to realize Buddha-nature is the indirect cause. The indirect cause refers to the six paramitas according to the Mahaparinirvana Sutra. By means of the six paramitas you will surpass the confines of the mortal body, in addition to all levels of attainments, including those of the Hearers and the Solitary Buddhas.

What does the term indirect cause mean? It means a cause that comes from the outside to do its work on the direct cause. This is analogous to adding the juice of the p'o-chiu tree to milk, according to the Buddha, which causes cream to be formed right away.

Turning to the indirect cause, namely the six paramitas, let me briefly outline their meaning consistent with the spiritual practice of Dark Zen.

According to our founder Bodhidharma the paramitas are the means to the other shore, namely, Buddha-nature. They are intended to help us surpass the six senses which Bodhidharma calls the six robbers.

The first paramita is charity. By mastering it, we surpass the robber of the visual world and thereby become spiritually wealthy. This paramita destroys our desire to cling to visual things as would a miser who clings to his property.

The second paramita is discipline. By mastering it, we surpass the robber of the auditory world and acquire good spiritual practices and concentration. It destroys our desire to cling to acoustical determinations, thus becoming free of distractions, being able to abide in stillness.

The third paramita is patience. By mastering it, we surpass the robber of the olfactory world and acquire inner peace, both for self and for others. It destroys our desire to investigates
what is pleasant and unpleasant in the example of a dog tracking scents. Thus, we come to abide indifferently with regard to what is pleasant and unpleasant.

The fourth paramita is strength. By mastering it, we surpass the robber of the world of taste and acquire devotion. It destroys our desire for the appetites and various forms of flattery that come from the tongue. Acquiring this paramita, we develop wholesome spiritual states.

The fifth paramita is meditation. By mastering it, we surpass the robber of tactile sensations. It eliminates sensuous distractions. Acquiring this paramita, we are able to focus mind on a sublime object.

The sixth paramita is wisdom. By mastering it, we surpass the robber of consciousness. This paramita eliminates all false views of the absolute. Acquiring this paramita, we are able to distinguish our Buddha-nature from that which is empty of it.

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From what has been said thus far, the actualization of our Buddha-nature is not easy to accomplish. Grasses and mountains, it is evident, have not actualized the Buddha-nature. What is more, grasses and mountains are not even Bodhisattvas who are the only beings worthy to actualize Buddha-nature.

I see a real danger for some American Buddhists who have been misled by deviant teachings which insist that temporal conditions are Buddha-nature itself. Make no mistake about it, mountains, rivers, and earth are not Buddha-nature. A mountain is a mountain because it is not Buddha-nature, having never completed the six paramitas. A river is a river because it is not Buddha-nature. And earth is not Buddha-nature. If earth were Buddha-nature, having completed the six paramitas, then nothing with a body made of earth would ever suffer or perish. Clearly, this is not the case.

To see Buddha-nature requires extraordinary actions. Obstructions that hamper our supreme vision of Buddha-nature must be removed by using the paramitas. In that respect, Buddha-nature does not come easily or automatically.

I beg you to surpass the six senses which are empty of Buddha-nature. Don't imagine that Buddha-nature can be seen. Don't search for it as if it were a sound. Do go after it like a dog tracking a scent. Don't imagine that the tongue can taste it or speak of it. Don't believe that it can be touched or felt. Don't be misled and take Buddha-nature to be a mental representation. Surpass all the senses. Leave everything behind so that you might awaken to that which is the very source of all things.

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2) Critique of modern Zen

Does modern Zen resemble the Zen (C. Ch'an) of old China? It would seem that it doesn't. While many modern day practitioners, who frequent American Zen centers believe, to the contrary, that it does there is no historic evidence that this is the case. First, it is a fallacy to think that early Zen was a school of meditation (S. dhyaaana, C. Ch'an, J. Zen). The word *Ch'an* (J. Zen) was reinterpreted in the Sung period to mean enlightenment, not meditation. In fact, followers of Ch'an (J. Zen) in the Sung denied that their tradition taught meditation. They argued that Zen was synonymous with Buddha Mind, as an enlightenment tradition transmitted outside the common teaching; and had little or nothing to do with practicing meditation (C. hsi-ch'an). Even a close examination of the word *dhyaaana*, in
light of traditional Buddhist practices, reveals that seated meditation is not suggested in the meaning of this word. In Sanskrit, the word merely expresses the ideas of contemplation, reflection, and mental concentration, being more akin to the Greek meaning of *theoria*.

What is lost sight of in the modern day practices of Zen, is that Zen's traditional goal is the realization of Buddha Mind. Consequently, any and all forms of meditation must be subordinate to the goal at hand, namely, enlightenment. Meditational forms can never become the goal itself. Historically speaking, many Zen priests became enlightened during work, rather than during seated meditation; or from reading, as was the case with the great Hakuin (1685-1768).

Modern Zen, its practice, is chiefly Soto. But more specifically, it revolves around the strange teachings of Dogen Zenji. The often murky writings of Dogen, have their appeal to a certain type of Zennist; but what Dogen says about Zen, nevertheless, has to be examined and tested against Zen's historical and spiritual culture. Japanese Zen has another tradition besides that of Dogen Zenji, the father of that lineage being Bu'nan Shidoo (Munan) whose vision gave birth to the great Hakuin Zenji. Bu'nan, to change the subject somewhat, reads differently than Dogen. For one thing, he is clear rather than obscure.

To illustrate the strangeness of Soto *sitting methodologies*, I am sure all of you remember the anecdote where Nan-yueh likens his disciple Ma-tsu's zazen to the futility of polishing a tile in order to make a mirror, pointing out the limitation of seated meditation (knowing whether to whip the cart or the horse). So what does the genius Dogen Zenji say about this particular anecdote? He argues that the act of polishing, in fact, creates a mirror out of a tile. Just in the same way that sitting on a zafu makes one a living Buddha. Actually, here are Dogen's words:

> We truly know that when we make a mirror by polishing a tile, Ma-tsu becomes a buddha. When Ma-tsu becomes a buddha, Ma-tsu immediately becomes Ma-tsu. When Ma-tsu becomes Ma-tsu, zazen immediately becomes zazen.

Maybe the foregoing explains the general irrationality of most modern Zen temples (with the exception of Ch' an and Son traditions). It would also seem that Dogen is quite ignorant of Buddhism. Generally speaking, the Five Aggregates (skandhas), making up the physical body, including the senses and consciousness (vij~naana), are not regarded to be vehicles (yanas) though which enlightenment is accomplished. The real question for orthodox Zen is WHO held up this half-alive corpse? And WHO is fixated to the Five Aggregates, constituting the ego-form?

The extreme emphasis, in modern Zen centers, on seated meditation alone will not advance a student of Buddhism to the level of wisdom the Buddha attained under the Bo- tree. Without extensive Sutra study and proper instruction in Dharma, no actual advance can be made to the other shore of intuitive wisdom. Also, it is rather curious that most Zen centers make little or no mention of the *stages of a bodhisattva*, nor is there any mention of what actually constitutes the credentials of a genuine Bodhisattva; that, in fact, the rank of a Bodhisattva only occurs in the ecstasy of *bodhicitta*. Yet, traditional Zen never departed from the Bodhisattva path and strove to met the demands of the path. Now, modern Zen has lapsed into anti-intellectualism concerning the study of Dharma and the Bodhisattvic path. Some even hold that it is merit not to read traditional Buddhist literature. Moreover, some practitioners believe it a virtue to act unreasonable, as if insanity were the mark of enlightenment. Some Buddhists, like myself and others, are very displeased with this new trend. However, we don't blame it on the practitioners. It is rather the fault of their teachers who suffer from religious ignorance.

3)Dark Zen Meditation Part 1
Q: What is the meditation of being mindfulness of in-and-out breathing?

A: From the perspective of Dark Zen it means that fundamentally we are unrelated to in-and-out breathing.

Q: I have never heard that before. I thought that mindfulness of in-and-out breathing meant that we must follow our breath. Isn't that right?

A: If you follow something, aren't you led by it? In that case you are less than what you follow. And don't you also, as a consequence, become more of what you follow?

Q: Yes, of course. But isn't that what the Buddha is telling us to doing this particular form of meditation? I mean-aren't we supposed to be aware of our breathing?

A: Why would the Buddha, who is detached from his corporeal body, teach his students to be dependent on the breath cycles, as if to be led by them? Maybe he is telling his students to remember what is before in-and-out breathing so as to be aloof from any kind of breath attachment-and overall, the mortal body.

Q: Give me a practical example. I am confused right now.

A: When I meditate, I first recollect the antecedent source of my breathing. In this state, when breathing is going on, I maintain a recollection which is prior to the totality of breathing which is most imperceptible.

Q: I am still confused. Explain to me again what you mean.

A: First, assume the proper meditation posture that you have been taught. Next, just breathe in and out for a few seconds. Fine. Now, do this.

 Activate your out-breath so as to breathe it out. Next, activate your in-breath, so as to breathe it in. This would be like actively thrusting your hand out, then taking it back in thinking, I am thrusting my hand out; now I am drawing it in. So, do that now with your breathing. And think all the while that what is doing the breathing is always prior to both in-and-out breathing.

Q: Okay. It's a little strange, but I sense a small 'energy' of sorts growing in me when I do that. I see what you mean. Curiously, something is happening.

A: Hey, that is great That means that you are energizing your breathing by being a little bit before it. Just let me say, that the more prior you can manage to become, the more you will sense the breathing as being energized.

Q: Where does the mindfulness come into play?

A: Mindfulness actually means to recollect that which is, let us say, the one who is free of breathing This one is always before in-and-out breathing-just remember that. By recollecting it, the more of you eventually begins to spiritually separate from the body-in a spiritual way that is-thus being able to distinguish the body from that which is not the body.

Q: May I ask you where you learned this type of meditation?
A: If I told you, you wouldn't believe me. In the course of practice, many things happen which cannot be explained. One day you just try something different. Then, pow  Something extraordinary happens. Then you re-read a few Sutras and discover the Buddha was a slippery old devil. Nothing magic, but nothing ordinary either.

Q: Do you think that maybe you invented something new?

A: Let's put it this way - I was just lucky to discover what I think the Buddha figured out a long time ago.

Q: Do you practice it? And what is it like?

A: Sure. After a while you can even get past your heart beats. Sometimes I can, for a moment, get past the body. It is quite weird.

Q: Do you teach this kind of meditation?

A: No, not personally. I haven't either the space nor the money to teach. In what amounts to living in a back room and eating beans and rice, I do the best I can.

Q: I don't believe that. Well, anyway, I hope someone helps you.

A: Me too. But I don't expect anything. We just happen to live in a time when everyone wants money and power. Most people could care less about this kind of stuff, unless, of course, it helps them with their task of making a million dollars  [laughing]

Q: Is this meditation of yours like zazen?

A: Not at all. Zazen is like waiting for a bus. My meditation is like flying. I should say, however, that all forms of meditation are directed towards overcoming our fixation with the body and all its problems. Why would anyone meditate thinking, I want to experience great pain whilst meditating? No, instead we sit and try to come to some kind of inner peace. To bring this about we try out different meditations like following our breaths or counting or just sitting. Most of these forms, however, don't work. And many kid themselves into believing that their meditation is making progress. With Dark Zen's meditation - progress is known without a doubt.

Q: How is that?

A: Because Mind is the leader of all things.

Q: You're saying, it seems, that because Mind is before all else and all else comes after; that by remembering our beforeness during breathing, we are, in a way, tracing our steps back to the original Buddha Mind. Is that right?

A: Say, do you want to take over?  [laughing]  Hey, that was good. But you figured it out because it is so natural. That is what I love about Buddhism - it's like the religion of the universe. It is simple and elegant. But I am afraid we humans are getting too complicated these days. And maybe that is why Buddhism seems difficult. But I am digressing, I am afraid.

Q: So what is it like when you meditate - I think I have asked this before?

A: Well, I'm at that stage where the more of me is identified with what is not my mortal
body. I guess you could say I sense my mind affecting my body's nerves so as to energize and lead my body and thus not follow it anymore as to be its slave. As a result, my body tries to comport itself with mind and shape up. Automatically, I began to eat less, sleep less, and care less about dying. One also senses another body growing which is like clear light, but with bliss. It is kind of neat—your own secret delight.

Q: Well that sounds interesting. I sure hope you do something with this meditation and share it with the rest of us.

A: I hope so too. It would be fun to have everyone all jacked up on joy

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4) Dark Zen Meditation Part 2

Q: How do we begin to practice Dark Zen Meditation [DZM]?

A: First, the proper mental attitude is necessary. You cannot just sit down on a cushion, cross your legs, and hold your back erect. That is not enough. It just becomes performative, you might say. One becomes a Zen actor, in other words.

Q: Well, could you give me a few more details as to how to frame the proper mental attitude?

A: Start this way. First, realize that all day long we cling to a material body which we believe is our true identity. Next, understand that what is clinging to the material body is not really in the body. We should conceive that our true fundamental nature is like the moon overhead, in contrast to the moon in the water below.

Q: Let me ask you this question. When I am aware of my body, is that like the moon in the water?

A: Yes. Everything we sense or are aware of is like the moon in the water. Even our awareness is limited to being like the moon in the water.

Q: What is not the moon in the water?

A: You might say our true-nature. All arises from our true-nature, or the same, Buddha Mind. This means that everything—absolutely everything—exists on account of this nature. Nothing is outside of it. But now I have only given you empty words. You need to merge with this nature which is within.

Q: Okay, I am beginning to get the picture. You are saying that in DZM I am really above my body and its breathing like the moon overhead. Is that right?

A: Yes. But now the problem is how do we identify with our true nature which transcends our breathing—even this very body?

Q: Then, do we first follow our breath?

A: No. That doesn't make any sense if you think about it. We need to backup and envisage being prior to the breath. Following the breath leads to attachment. We must sense our breathing as it is generated. At that point we enter true meditation sensing an energy-stream growing inside of us.
Q: That is hard to do. How do you backup as you say?

A: Believe it or not, you are already there. But by depending on the body and its breathing, you have forgotten the moon overhead. Face it, all of us can get so focused on a subject that we forget our true nature. It is like movie goers being absorbed in a movie, so much so that they imagine they are the character. They fall into sympathy with their character. They feel fear when their character feels fear, or laughs when he laughs. One lives as if they were that very character. Then, when the movie is over-wham-the audience comes back to reality. Our situation is much the same. Presently, we are in the movie of this body. At some point, we must come away from the movie screen. [laughing]

Q: Getting back to energy-do you feel an energy-stream inside of you?

A: Yes. And I can increase it by being more of that which is antecedent to my body and its various biological processes. One is aware of a growing power, you might say, which is more powerful than the body.

Q: I must tell you I am having a difficult time understanding DZM.

A: Don’t try so hard. Just sense your breathing, but be the one who is working the lung bellows. Don’t get involved in the breathing effect. Get involved in the breath making. That will put you prior to breathing. It is the same with your body, too. Be before it. Think that what you really are flows into the body and makes it work. Be the source of that inflow.

Q: I like your description. I get the sense that I am surrounded by a life energy field and that my body is just a node in that field. My problem is to orient myself to the field instead of the node. Is that about right?

A: If it helps to make the energy appear in your body, I say that is pretty good.

Q: So, what is the deal with this energy, or as you have mentioned, energy-stream?

A: Not wanting to sound too mysterious, let’s say that we only know Mr. Buddha by this energy which we shall call Bodhisattva. In that respect, the Bodhisattva, as an energy, lies between our Mr. Buddha and this corporeal hunk of impending disaster. It is also like a stream flowing back to Mr. Buddha—but a stream of energy.

Q: Is it like the sun warming us, although we are not the sun?

A: Yes, that is a very good analogy. We could say that the Buddha is 93 million miles away from us, like the sun, yet we still feel his warmth. In the same way when we line up right, being prior to our breathing, in a sense we have joined with his power so that we sense this power within us.

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The Future of Zen Buddhism in the West
By ROBERT AITKEN, Roshi

Text digitised by T.Matthew Ciolek <tmciolek@coombs.anu.edu.au>,
Canberra Zen Group.
I have been commissioned to do a paper for the forthcoming (July, '87) conference on World Buddhism in North America that will be titled, The Zen Buddhist Movement in North America: Retrospect and Prospect. I have the first draft finished, and here are some excerpts. (The conference will be held in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and is sponsored by the Zen Lotus Society under the direction of the Korean teacher Samu Sunim.)

The Middle Way is the Sangha form that we choose, the nature of our organisation and the practice we follow as members. Organisation and practice are intimately interrelated matters, but they can be examined separately and in categories.

Regarding the organisation: The Buddha’s teaching is our guide. You and I have no abiding self, but rather we are temporary aggregates, individually and socially, depending on each other for our lives and our identities. The Sangha that is grounded in this teaching will have a number of distinctive qualities.

First, like all beings, the Sangha will have its own personality. This will be partly a synthesis of the personalities of its members and its teacher, and partly a je ne sais quoi spirit that cannot be precisely identified. This personality will have a virtuous power that will radiate the teaching so long as it is not turned back upon itself in self-congratulation.

Next, the Sangha will be grounded in certain rituals – a meditation meeting with ceremonies that make it a spiritual home, just as a secular home is grounded in the ceremonies of greetings, common meals, in-jokes, bedtime stories, and so on. The spiritual home is a particular place, a temple perhaps, but it can carry over into the secular home if a corner is made sacred with an image, flowers, candlelight, incense, and meditation practice, and if gathas are included as grace before meals and at other occasions such as bedtime. In this way, the secular home becomes spiritual, enhancing the virtues of both spirit and family. The Buddha Sangha is then an aggregate of households.

Among the rituals of the Sangha there should, I am sure, be refuge in the Three Treasures and acceptance of the Three Pure Precepts and the Ten Grave Precepts. As monks of ancient times came together to renew their vows every fourteen days, so the lay Western Sangha can work out periodic renewal ceremonies that confirm the way of right action. The Tiep Hien ceremony of renewal is an instructive model. We are in the world but not of it. Like lotus flowers in the fire, we bloom in the world of desires including our own, conserving our energies for the Dharma wheel, and maintaining the Buddha’s noble path as our own.

Other rituals should, I believe, be forms of communication for sharing, healing, and reconciliation. Many of these can be adapted directly from Theravada ceremonies, some can be taken from contemporary Christian and humanistic movements. The sharing and healing rituals of Rissho Koseikai that bring lay leaders into member families to help with problems of disaffection are very interesting models. All such rituals confirm our interdependence, and offer intimate engagement as a way of realisation. Depth psychology, the interpretation of dreams, and the study of folklore can be important supplements to sharing and healing rituals.

The Zen centre programme should, I believe, also include academic study of Buddhism. Traditionally, Rinzai Zen in particular has offered little teaching of other forms of Mahayana, and even less of classical Buddhism. Yet Zen is a Buddhist stream, and the various formulations – the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, the Four Abodes, the Six Paramitas, the Three Bodies of the Buddha – and the many sutras are essential lights on our
path. There also should be a supplementary study of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in the pantheon, for these archetypes can be personalised as inner guides toward compassion and understanding.

Finally, if indeed the Sangha is all-inclusive, then the BuddhaSangha is merely a sub-family of the larger community, and engagement in the neighbourhood, city, nation, and world is also the way of turning the Dharma wheel. As a Sangha, we can offer specific programmes to the homeless or the imprisoned. We can speak out against injustice, violence and war - and the exploitation of forests and lakes.

It must be communication, not just projection. The systemic illness of Western society that has infected the world arises directly from the neglect of perennial values that Buddhism shares with other religions, so when we speak, we communicate best with language that is common to all and with actions that resonate across sectarian lines.

The way of Zen Buddhism in the West should, I think, recall the perspective of the Buddha in a relevant manner for lay people. Most people tend to get locked into a quite dreary round of tasks, and experience little peace or harmony. Yet if Nirvana and Samsara are the same, we must find upayas that can keep such unity clear at all times.

For this there are three options for meditative practice within the Zen tradition. The first is koan practice, the second is shikantaza or pure sitting, and the third is the way of mindfulness through gathas and mantras. These three ways inform each other, and can be combined or blended. The choice of one of these options, or two or the three of them together - reflects the karma, personality and aspiration of both student and teacher.

Koans can be called arcana, points of quest, matters to be made clear - that enlighten the dark night of the spirit, and release the self from its limited preoccupations. The points are examined during periods of withdrawal, some no longer than a single breath, some for extended periods, with concentration fuelled by a profound questioning spirit.

The essence of this meditative practice is shikantaza, which is pure sitting, not merely sitting. I hear shikantaza described as watching perceptions come, identifying them, and letting them go. I don’t think this is adequate. Shikantaza is a matter of sinking into one’s bones and sinews and facing the bare emptiness of the mind. This mind is both inside and outside – neither inside or outside.

The third meditative option, the path of mindfulness through gathas and mantras is exemplified by the teaching of Thich Nhat Hanh. Repeating the verse:

- Breathing in, I calm body and mind;
- Breathing out, I smile;
- Dwelling in the present moment,
- I know this is the only moment.

you are brought to your breath and to the personal realization that all beings are indeed Buddha, beginning with yourself. Acknowledging your need to mature and to understand, acknowledging your past mistakes, it is all right to be where you are now in your practice.

In my view, the practice of Zen Buddhism in the future must include all three of these options. I do not list them in order of importance because all are important and they depend upon each other. First, there is the practice of focussing on arcana and experiencing the primordial truths of purity, harmony and variety; second, there is the practice of grounding this focus in the empty, silent samadhi of the vast and boundless universe; and third, there
is the practice of using reminders that keep the lotus of the Buddha Dharma blooming in
the midst of all the demands of our busy lives.

All this in a setting of a Buddha Sangha that is not preoccupied with its own identity, that
holds ceremonies of refuge, accepting precepts and renewing of vows, that seeks the most
open communication possible, and reaches outward into the larger community. This is for
me an ideal image of a balanced Sangha.
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Monkey in the House of Six Windows

teisho by Ven. Anzan Hoshin roshi
Zazen-ji, June 10, 1990

Sun and clouds and rain. Thoughts and feelings and sights and sounds. Self and other. This
and that. Experiences arise and present themselves, always shifting and changing. A blade
of grass with a drop of rain dangling from its tip. The sun seen burning through a mass of
grey clouds. Waking up in the morning feeling like shit, wandering around throughout the
day, bumping into things, grasping at things, pushing things away, coming and going.

The Nirvana Sutra says that usual mind is like a monkey in a house with six windows.
There's seeing and hearing, touching and tasting, smelling and consciousness. Through
these six windows the world can be seen coming and going. The monkey sometimes thinks
that it owns the house and so it just sits in the middle of the floor, waiting for something to
enter into its territory, something to come and try to take its house away from it.
Sometimes it thinks it senses something so it leaps up off its haunches and lands on a
windowsill and peers out to see what's going on out there. Then it hears something and so it
leaps off and hangs peering through the window of hearing. Then it smells something, it
tastes something, it thinks something; it jumps around back and forth, bouncing madly
from wall to wall until it becomes so exhausted it collapses into the middle of the floor
again, where it can see through each of the windows, but it can't see anything clearly. It is
so exhausted that it goes to sleep for a while; and then something stirs and it's up leaping
again from window to window.

Attention crouches inside the bodymind, leaping from sense to sense, grasping at this,
grasping at that. In zazen, the bodymind sits; the house sits. The monkey thinks it owns
the house and it is still jumping around but at least the house is where it is. From the
house's point of view there's this thing inside of it, clawing, jumping, shrieking. Can you feel
how seriously it takes itself?

A thought comes up. It is a thought about how the world is; the world is a hateful place, it's
a bad place. There's a beautiful flower I'm itchy. What's that sound? It sounds like a bird. My knee hurts.

The house can sit and allow its windows to be completely open to the world; instead of
glass, instead of walls, the house then begins to see the world and realizes that the world is
not something outside of it but that the house is arising within the world. We don't need to
get rid of the monkey, we don't need to even tame the monkey. We simply need to take the
walls of the house down. Then the monkey has nowhere to leap to, has no purpose, it is no
longer enclosed. The monkey then realizes that it too is arising in the world.

Moment after moment, out of habit or pattern, attention pulls itself away from this moment
of experiencing and leaps into a past moment, or pushes itself into a future moment of
expectation, or grabs and clutches at only the smallest part of this moment, perhaps that
which is seen, perhaps that which is heard, perhaps that which is thought.

Just leave the monkey alone. Let the monkey do whatever it wants to do. Practise like the house. The house always has its six windows. Can we slide the windows open, allow a fresh breeze to circulate through our rooms? Can we begin to ventilate the musty attic, sweep out the dusty basement? Can we see the ways in which the walls of the house are attempting to keep the world out and trying to keep something in? What's outside and what's inside? Well sure, there might be that monkey jumping around, but there's also a great deal of space; there's air, there's room. The fundamental quality of a room, beyond its four walls, ceiling and floor is that it's full of space. There's a vastness.

The air in front of your face, behind your back, and resting on top of your head is the same air that passes in and out of your lungs, the same air that stretches over mountain and valley, over the sea. It circles the earth, it embraces the blue of the sky and the shifting of the clouds. There is this bodymind; what is it that is inside the bodymind? What is it that is outside? Outside right now? There's a wall, and there are sounds, the feeling of the hands, and the hokkai-in, the dharmadatu mudra of things as they are, resting in the lap. Is that inside or outside? Feel the thumbs touching lightly, fingers resting on top of each other like the petals of a flower. Are the hands inside or outside? There's the wall. You see the wall. Is that inside or outside? You see the wall with your mind, you feel the hands with your mind. What is the mind? Is the mind this succession of thoughts and feelings, or is it also seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling? That which is being seen, that which is being heard; is that inside or is that outside? Does this skin of the body enclose something, or does it simply arise, the same way that a sound arises? Is it simply being felt, being experienced, the way that a thought is experienced, the way that a song is experienced, the way that the world is experienced? In experiencing, is there an inside, is there an outside?

The windows, the walls, the house and the monkey all arise within this world. All of the things of your life arise within this living. What is this life? Is there an inside and an outside to life? Even death arises within life. Death is what life does. We breathe in and breathe out. Thirty ants dismantle a caterpillar. The flowers and leaves eat the sunlight. Even death is not outside of life; death is the activity of this living, being born is the activity of this living. But what is it that is born, what is it that dies? Is it separate from this living? What is it that is living each and every one of you? What is it that you are experiencing when you experience something? Whether it's your hand or someone's else's hand, whether it is standing up or sitting down, whether it is waking, sleeping or dreaming, whether it feels good or bad: what is it that you are experiencing? Is it possible for you to experience something outside of experiencing? Is it possible for you to know something without knowing it? Is there ever anything going on but this knowing, this space, this life?

In our practice we might try to do all kinds of things to the monkey; we might try to tame the monkey, we might try to teach it tricks, teach it how to put on a little suit, a funny little hat, learn how to do calculations. We might try to make the monkey chant the Heart Sutra. We might ask ourselves, How did the monkey get in the house? Or we might just simply open the doors, open the windows, take down the walls and let the monkey go free.

Zen is this life. Zen is facing yourself as you are. It is seeing how you are moment after moment, so that you can unfold for yourself, directly, who you are. Zen is meeting yourself face to face. Zen is the direct pointing to the nature of experiencing itself, to the nature of Awareness itself. When you meet the teachings you meet the practice; when you meet the practice you meet yourself. You encounter the teachings through words like this, through coming face to face with the teacher in the dokusan room. Can you meet the teacher as he
or she is? Can you recognize that the teacher is just Awareness itself, presenting itself? Can you recognize that you are just Awareness itself, presenting itself? Can you meet the teacher as you are and as he is, so that there is only Awareness itself? This is Zen.

We speak of a direct transmission. The teachings and the teacher might point, but it is up to us to look. When we look, when we see, is there anything other than this looking, this seeing? Is there someone to receive transmission? Is there someone to offer it? Moment by moment, this moment expresses itself. What is it that you are aware of? What is it that is aware? Is there an inside or an outside to your experiencing?

The mind seems like a space with shifting surfaces of thoughts and feelings coming and going in it. Somehow a thought or a feeling can appear to be quite solid and if we attend to it, it seems to have a direction, it seems to locate itself some place. There is this space of mind, the spaces within the body, the space of the room in which this body is arising. Are these spaces separated from each other or is space just space? We tend to believe that space is that which is between objects, but what is the object? If we look very closely, perhaps we will see that it is space presenting itself as the object. If we look very closely here, very intimately, touch without barrier, perhaps we will find that all forms are formless forms. The Heart Sutra says SHIKI SOKU ZE KU : form, in other words emptiness; KU SOKU ZE SHIKI : emptiness, in other words, form. It depends on how you look at it, of course, but what is it that's looking? What is it that's experiencing?

I leave you with this experience. This moment of experiencing is completely open. The door stands so far ajar it comes off its hinges. Will you enter? Welcome. Thinking About Not Thinking

by Ven. Jinmyo Renge osho
September 26, 1997

As a practice advisor, I am often asked, in one way or another, How can I stop thinking? And so I've done a lot of thinking about this. Thinking about not thinking is thinking and the notion of trying to stop thinking comes from thinking about it and is a strategy, a kind of thinking.

In the text The Straight Path, Zen Master Anzan Hoshin quotes the following from Zen Master Dogen's Fukanzazengi, or How Everyone Can Sit:

Think of not-thinking. How do you think of not-thinking? Be before thinking. These are the basics of zazen.

The Sensei unfolds the meaning of this passage in this way:

This means: No opposites. Zen is not a matter of thinking (shiryo) or of shutting out thought (fushiryo) but of being Before Thinking (hishiryo). Before Thinking means to be prior to experiences in the same way that a mirror is always prior to what it shows even at the moment of showing it. We cannot be anything that we are aware of. We are always the context of whatever content arises. When we release all of our states and our avoidance and identification then we are always right there at the very moment that the world arises, right at this pointless point. Bring together every aspect of mind, everything hidden and everything obvious, and allow each to resolve itself into the knowing of it. This is zazen, the shikan-taza of all Awakened Ones.
If reading that were enough, I wouldn't need to say anything further. Although the Sensei provides clear instructions on how to understand our practice in one concise paragraph, we don't do it. Instead, we think about every sentence. When we read, we think we are reading about thoughts and that we should think about them. When the Sensei speaks, he tells us how to practice. When he uses words like release or bring together, or allow, it's not just good prose. These are technical terms for certain activities of attention. This book The Straight Path is a guided tour through the structures of attention we experience and a manual for opening them.

It's all very simple. So simple that we don't know what to think about it. We sit. The longer we sit, the more we see that any thought that comes up is just another thought and that all thoughts arise within the vastness of Awareness.

When we think, we are experiencing thinking. Depending on the extent to which we are practicing, there is some awareness of the thinking. If we are not practicing at all, we have withdrawn, obsessed with our stories, recoiling from present experiencing into fabricated labyrinths that lead us nowhere and teach us nothing. When we practice, we can allow the thoughts to rise and fall and know simultaneously that they are only thoughts, without substance, and allow them to be simply a movement, like a breeze rustling through leaves.

Even when the thoughts and feelings are so dense, so confused that we feel as though we can't see our hand in front of our face, we can still see the wall, hear the sounds, see the colours and know that we are in reality, just sitting in a room and there is nothing going on. With practice, even when the thoughts and feelings are about utter desolation, fear, anger, hopelessness, through practice, we can come to know that thinking is just an activity of bodymind, something that it does, like eating or shitting and means nothing about who or what we are. Isn't it odd that when we sit down to eat a bowl of soup, we don't look into it and think Oh, that's who I am, that's what I mean. When we shit, we don't look into the bowl and say Oh, that's who I am, that's what I mean. So sorry if this sounds a bit rude but monks aren't quite the sort of people you want to invite to a garden party.

My point is that when we think, we think that's who we are and what we mean. It doesn't occur to us that if we really were this thought and the meaning of this thought, we wouldn't need to think another, because we would be that all of the time. How many thoughts do we have in the space of a minute? It's worth looking into. And at the end of that minute, who are we, and what do we come to mean? And in the next minute? And the next? How odd that with the experience of countless minutes, we still think that this thought is true, this is the one.

Often, during practice interviews, when a student asks a question about thinking, there is an accompanying frustration and when I respond by asking Right now, are you feeling your breath, your hands, your feet? , the frustration deepens. Until they actually allow themselves to do this and then everything shifts and they laugh and shake their heads at how absurd their frustration was.

We hear the phrase all of the time, open up around it. When we have managed to really shore up our belief in a self by working up a good state all around it to give it a place to be, we don't want to hear this. It seems too expensive to us. And that's true. Opening up around it all will cost us everything. All of our thoughts, our beliefs, our belief in our thoughts, all of it. It will leave us not knowing where we are, and because we are so used to living mediated by our delusions we doubt whether we can support ourselves without them.

But our thoughts and stories have never been how we were really able to actually live: to
see and hear and cook and eat and stand up and sit down.

Whatever you or I think about anything is inconsequential. It means nothing about who we are or what is actually going on.

So what is going on here? Are you feeling your breath, your hands, your feet? Are you seeing the colours, the depth of the space in front of you and to the side, above and below? Are you hearing the sounds, the sound of (present sound) of your breath, the breathing of the person next to you? Are you feeling the temperature of the air on your skin?

Thoughts rise and fall and come and go just like the breath comes and goes. We don’t need to try to stop thinking in order to practice. We just need to allow ourselves to recognize that the world is unthinkable. That who we are is beyond thought and cannot be captured in the web of our same old stories.

Have you ever noticed how every thought we think is familiar? Every shadowy trail we follow is already known, because we’ve already followed them in one way or another. Sometimes we might re-combine them in some convoluted way and think that we’re thinking something altogether new and brilliant, and get really into it, but it’s only a matter of time before we see that these, like every other thought we have ever had, was only the flickering of mind.

Our storylines spin endlessly, but our lives are not a story. Our lives are taking place right here, right now and the storylines take place within our lives and cannot define our lives. When we sit, we see again and again and again, that there is only what is going on right now and what’s going on right now isn’t inside any of our thoughts or our feelings. The only place from which we can do anything about anything is only ever right here; the only time we can do anything about anything is always only right now. Right here right now is not a thought.

Practice is inconceivable. It can only be understood through doing actually doing it. Anything we think about our practice is just thinking. It’s not practice, just more stories.

We love stories, ours and everyone else’s. Recently, someone mentioned that they would be interested in hearing my story.

I think you’ll enjoy my response. I wrote:

In my story, like everyone else’s, there’s lots of suffering, lots of nonsense, lots of hard-won wisdom, and more importantly the mystery, to me, of how I got here and what here is. The Sensei has spent thousands of hours with me, literally, showing me how to release past experiences. But for that to happen, I had to be willing to show them to him. Exposure - such fear we have of it. Sometimes, when there was too much fear, he would show them to me. I’ll give you an example of how subtle this can be. This was a memory that came up when I was walking with him one day. It was almost completely forgotten, and seemed not important at all.

Some background: My mother loved dancing. She used to tap dance during the war, loved Fred Astaire movies, loved swing and so on. She was in England during the war, was in the WAF, so when she was transferred from one base to another, the first thing she would do would be to check out the local dance halls. She was very beautiful, very energetic, and she had a fabulous sense of rhythm.

When I was three, we (my father, mother, older sister and older brother) emigrated to
Vancouver. About six months later, we bought a turntable and I discovered Tschaichowsky -
the Nutcracker Suite. I think it was the first piece of classical music I'd heard, and I thought
it was just fabulous. There was a picture of a doll on the cover. That just made my day. I
didn't have any dolls. My parents had very little at that point, so I had dishtowels with a
knot tied in them for dolls. So this beautiful sound and the painted dolls on the cover were
jewels and I got up and danced for joy. (Though I felt a bit silly doing so).

My mother got really into this. It became a thing we shared. When she had the energy (she
was working nightshift as a nurse in a mental institute) we put on Tschaichowsky and I
would dance and she would say do this, do that and so forth. It was a lot of fun, but it was
also very intense.

The memory that came up:

I have a somewhat blurry recollection of the intensity. At three, the wiring isn't working too
well, so I had a really difficult time trying to sort out what was my stuff and what was hers
and what was true about any of it. It was kind of like standing on a tilted floor -- it was
askew, but I didn't know where my sense of balance was coming from, let alone how to
articulate it.

What I said to the Sensei did not include any of the details, and what I said was simply
this: When I was little, I loved to dance. That was all.

We were walking down the street at the time. He didn't say anything, just started whistling
a piece from the Nutcracker Suite.

I still don't know what to think about this. So many events like this in my life are
unthinkable. All of my practice continually points me to That which is Before Thinking, the
space of open Awareness in which thinking and not thinking, colours and forms and sounds
and birth and death are all coming and going. We don't need to stop thinking and we don't
need to follow thoughts. We can just release them. Then we find that they occur in a space
bigger than they are and that we can bring all of how we are together as just this moment.
And release that into a yet larger space. And so I want to just point out to you that this is
what your practice is as well. What do you think about that?

Have a GOOD morning.

On The Use Of Words

Bodhisattavas never engage in conversations whose resolutions depend on words and
logic.

These words, attributed to Shakyamuni Buddha 2,500 years ago, embody the attitude Zen
has towards the use of words. Truth and Meaning have existence beyond and independent
of words. Words may or may not contain truth. Ultimately the awakening to our
fundamental enlightened mind, is beyond descriptions possible in words. Words are
convenient tools or sounds limited by the both the nature of sound itself, and the minds of
both speaker and listener.

Ever try explaining how a certain food tastes to someone who's never tasted that particular
food before? When you were finished did you think they really knew the taste? Could they
honestly, just from your description, say they've tasted it?

No they couldn't. But you could, through the use of language, build motivation in the person
to taste the food for themselves (at which point they they'd probably be more than happy to
tell you how your description was lacking )

In that exact same way, Zen Masters use words only to coax, prod, push, or drag a person to enlightenment, both as an experience and a way of life. Zen has little use for words which don't precipitate or point to, Awakening. Even logic must take a far, far, second place to the all important task of a personal realization of the unborn, undying, pure wisdom source which is the birthright of every human.

For more specific and philosophical discussion on the use of words refer to the Surangama and Lankavatara Sutras. You can find both these sutras in A Buddhist Bible (the first book on the reading list).

Applied Yoga
By Douglas Brooks

Once a student of mine asked me if any television character embodied the ideal yogi. Not perfectly, I said, but how about half perfectly? I would pick Mr. Spock. You know, the half-Vulcan, hyper-logical, emotion-free character on Star Trek.

She immediately protested, But I thought yoga was about getting into your body and your emotions.

It is, I replied, and I said Spock was only half perfect. But his example reminds us that yoga is not only about the body and the emotions; it's just as much about learning to think with crystal-clear logic. Yoga teaches us to use all our resources, body and mind. Unlike the Western philosophies where reason and emotion are often treated as separate forms of experience, yoga locates feelings and thoughts in the same place—in the faculty called the manas—and teaches us how to integrate these essential human experiences. We usually translate manas as mind, even though it often means something more like heart: the seat of true feeling, the place where thought and feeling are fully present. To value our feelings over our thoughts or vice versa brings us to only half our true potential. But when we cultivate our physical and emotional experiences, as we do in an asana practice, yoga traditions teach that we will naturally want to go more deeply into our intellectual and rational abilities. All practicing yogis are, by necessity, yoga philosophers. At stake is whether we will become as supple in our minds as we are in our bodies.

As Mr. Spock might say, it's not only what we think and feel that transforms our lives; thinking clearly and effectively is itself transformative. As the renowned sixth-century Buddhist philosopher Jnanagarbha went so far as to say, Reason is ultimate. By this he meant that logic is essential in creating the highest yogic experience. Logic and intellectual cultivation are this important because we all can do it and we all must do it. We can't really function in the world without it.

The Need for Philosophy

Like the student who was surprised to hear me cite Mr. Spock as a half-exemplary yogi, some yoga practitioners seem to believe that being logical somehow blocks us from more direct, personal levels of experience. Certainly yoga has always taught that there is more to us than logical truths. Yet the great yoga masters never suggest that transcending logical boundaries means forsaking logic itself. Thinking and expressing ourselves rationally isn't a liability that somehow prevents us from going more deeply into our emotions or ourselves. In fact, being able to give a logical, coherent account of one's deepest experience has always been considered a vital part of a yogi's development. We cannot hope to reach our full potential without developing effective practices based on sound thinking.

The importance of yoga philosophy is actually part of yoga's emphasis on practicality, which
historically has meant that yogis prefer results they can measure one way or another and also that people are held accountable for their claims of experience. Failure to give a persuasive account means you are describing an experience that we can’t share or one that you yourself don’t fully understand. If your experience is so overly personal that it is just yours, if your account fails to convey a deeper, common human experience, what good is it to the rest of us? Yoga traditionalists are pragmatic. They insist that we make sense of our experience. This emphasis on clarity as well as accountability has resulted in texts and teachings that continue to inspire and guide us today.

The Purposes of Yoga

Although the ancient yoga masters taught that we must integrate minds and hearts and be able to give a full account of our thoughts and feelings, we might ask ourselves if this requirement is still relevant to our practice. Our answer depends on what we think yoga is for, what purpose it serves in our lives. Do we practice yoga primarily for physical exercise? Or do we practice yoga for more spiritual reasons? The ancients created the paths of yoga because they believed these were the best ways, indeed the only ways, to realize our full human potential. No one makes this any clearer than Patanjali, the second-century author of the Yoga Sutra.

Patanjali states that yoga has two distinct purposes or goals. In Chapter II, verse 2 of the Yoga Sutra, he states that yoga’s purpose or goal is to cultivate the experience of equanimity [samadhi] and to unravel the causes of negativity. Patanjali tells us, in effect, that yoga will help us figure out and eradicate the reasons why we suffer, even as it leads us to feel the deepest of human experiences.

Because Patanjali describes yoga's two distinct projects-cultivating true equanimity and unraveling the causes of negativities—he suggests that yoga creates two different but yet connected results. A practice that leads to deeper equanimity empowers us to bring our joy to others as well as to ourselves. In this way, we become free to act for a higher purpose. (At the same time, we need to uncover the causes of negative experiences so that we learn to avoid them and thus to become more free from the sources of negativity.)

Becoming more free to live with ourselves confers on us a greater sense of empowerment and joy. Our actions become more meaningful because we know their true purpose. Freedom to gives perspective and depth, the feeling that what we do does matter. The world's everyday indignities bother us less, and from our more grounded experience we naturally act more decisively and compassionately. In a complementary way, as we unravel or attenuate the causes of negative experiences, we will feel free from them because we understand more deeply how our experience has evolved. To give a simple example, we learn from experience that touching a hot stove will cause a painful burn, and so thus we learn from understanding the cause how to avoid the effect. Freedom from gives us a clear sense of the relationship between past experience and what we might expect in the future. Yogis strive to become free to live life from true equanimity and free from the causes we know will bring us suffering. Our experience of freedom is not irrational or anti-rational but rather is rooted in more deeply understanding our relationships: with others, the world, nature, and ourselves. Over time, what is logically true becomes experientially true for us, and each type of experience complements the other.

The Role of Intellect

Even among the many schools of yoga that pay homage to Patanjali, however, there are somewhat different views on the role of logic in yoga. In the view of Classical Yoga, which claims to be Patanjali’s rightful heir, we become as free to experience our joy as we are free from the limitations of our bodily and mental nature. The ultimate Self is beyond all logic
yet cannot be experienced without it. The immortal Purusha, or Spirit, pervades reality, but we confuse this with our mortal psychophysical Prakriti, or material nature. Logic fills an important role in sorting out the immortal Spirit from the limited material self. Put simply, Classical Yoga treats having a body and a mind as a problem to be solved. For Classical yogis, the challenge is to isolate the Self of pure Spirit. The true Self, Classical Yoga proclaims, was never truly tainted by our material nature or the causes of negativity, which can only belong to limited matter. Recognizing these facts about our material and spiritual natures depends as much on our logical understanding as it does on forms of experiential learning. As we clearly see and become free from the causes of negative experience, the Classical yogi says, we become free to revel in our spiritual nature.

The strength of Classical Yoga’s vision is the way it leads us to consider a deeper level of reality, beyond material forms, while it affirms that the experiences we have as limited, embodied beings are real. Logic belongs to our limited, material nature, but like our bodies it is useful in the process of distinguishing Spirit from matter. Indeed some critics of the Classical view have questioned the coherence of severing Self so completely from the experiential self; to them, it seems ironic and even puzzling that we are asked to get into our body, mind, and heart so that we might transcend them for a Self that has no qualities at all. On a practical level, since this Self is not our bodies or minds, it becomes a kind of abstraction until (and unless) we experience it directly as pure Spirit. In the important and influential tradition of Advaita (nondualist) Vedanta, all of yoga is for the sake of becoming free to experience the Self as Oneness. Samadhi reveals that we are, and always have been, only the one true Self that abides in all beings. We need not cultivate the experience of the Self, as in Classical Yoga, but rather open up to its being the sole reality, the All, the One. At the deepest level, we are already free from the negativities; in truth, these are only forms of ignorance. Advaita Vedanta teaches that these forms of ignorance are unreal in light of the true Self or, at best, only provisionally real experiences that evaporate with the knowledge of ultimate reality. Ignorance is like darkness that vanishes when the light of knowledge enters to take its place. Advaita Vedanta tells us that yoga’s purpose is to realize Oneness and that all other experiences are ultimately rooted in error or illusion. As Advaita leads us out of the maze of worldliness and into the light of Oneness, it also leads us to believe that the world is itself an illusion based on a limited, flawed understanding.

Advaita Vedanta’s critics have countered that it’s hard to believe that the I who experiences a root canal isn’t really in pain because distinctions are ultimately false. And on a pragmatic level, the Advaita position seems to imply the idea that there is nothing to achieve and therefore no need for yoga practice. As an activity, yoga can have no direct role in liberation—knowledge alone liberates, according to Advaita Vedanta. We may practice yoga for pleasure if we choose so, but it seems to have no higher purpose. While perhaps true on one level, this view can also leave seekers adrift and rudderless.

In the Tantric-based yoga that is my lineage, philosophers such as the great Abhinavagupta and those practitioners of the goddess-centered Srividya traditions maintained that all of reality is the Divine expressing itself. This Divinity includes all temporal and material realities, including anything we experience as negative. Yoga, according to the Tantric philosophers, empowers us to experience every facet of ourselves as a manifestation of the Divine. Our recognition that the self of ordinary experience is none other than the same true Self that is present as the infinite forms of the universe occurs at every level of our experience, from logic to emotion. This One Self appearing as the Many does not diminish the value of the material world nor does it make our emotional or intellectual experience irrelevant by dissolving it into pure Oneness, as Classical Yoga or Advaita Vedanta can seem to do. Rather, the Tantric position maintains that yoga means we are free to experience everything as Divine because we are free from the misconception that our mortal experience is a barrier to the immortal. Thus for the Tantric tradition, we are not so much
bound by our limited experience as we are simply informed by it; this is the gift of experience as well as the insight that yoga provides. But, as the critics of Tantra have pointed out, its radical affirmation that the senses and the body are Divine can lead to overindulgence and abuse by those who have more interest in their own pleasure than in Divine joy.

From its origins, yogis have debated rationally and with deep emotion what yoga's purpose truly is and how we might best go about reaching our goals. But no matter what goals we set for ourselves or what understandings we create from our human experiences, yoga asks us to bring all of ourselves—our body, emotions, and thoughts—to its practice. In this sense, yoga truly lives up to its literal meaning, union. Without logic and clear thinking, we might have strong feelings but no way of evaluating and knowing if we are meeting our goals. But, just as Mr. Spock comes to realize from being half human, feelings are equally crucial, for they can boldly transport us to realms where logic alone can never go.

Training

cdneely@[127.0.0.1] (Charles D Neely):
How one would go about creating such a training program. Discipline of the mind and the senses. That is what meditation is about. Meditation is based on something. Zen meditation is based on the focus of the void.

let us discuss our perception of this. When I sat with Zen Buddhists in temple I did not gather that 'focus on the void' was the major objective, but instead 'focus on the breath' and 'attention to the here and now' were the prime elements of zazen (sitting zen; sitting absorption) this is certainly a training of the mind, yet unlike some rigorous workout of intellectual logical analysis (which may well prove beneficial), in zazen the challenge is to remain passive as the thoughts and feelings course through (if they do -- apparently with extended practice or very calm individuals this difficulty, called 'monkey mind' dissipates)

The idea of disciplining the mind through various control and meditation techniques is one of the reasons I like this web. If we can debate the validity of Surak's philosophy, why can we not try to develop some of the other arts as well???

precisely. I would encourage this as a productive enterprise. within Buddhism (with which many people associate 'zen' practice and philosophy), there is a principle which may be somewhat related to the Vulcan IDIC ('Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combination'). it is called 'upaya', and relates to the variety of means by which we may come to nirvana, the extinction of the dissatisfaction of life why not (re? :>)discover the training techniques of the Vulcan adepti, inclusive of mental discipline and philosophic complexity. there is a very fruitful foundation to be found within Indian, Chinese, Japanese and American history from which to draw, not to mention other cultures into which Zen has reached

Language

[This one presents a translation of the second of a series of lectures given by Lyra, shortly after the death of Surak. Later these lectures were gathered into the volume _Lysas'at C'via ang Kh'sparkeyralatha_.]

Definition and Classification
I. Abstraction
Long ago proto-vulcan beings learned to form sounds and associate these sounds with specific kinds of experiences. Thus, language formed; and we came to communicate in a more complex manner. I can say the word \textit{leh'matya} and have the reasonable assurance, that the one I speak with will understand, approximately, what I mean. With language I can provide directions to some one so they may experience what I have experienced.

A. Existants

I see a rod before me. I can measure it, and say that this rod has a length of 1m [Translator's Note: substituted metrics for the vulcan measure, to make the meaning more clear to an English reader.]. Yet the length of the rod does not lie in the rod it self, but in my act of measuring. For if I measure it again, I will get a slightly different result; I can never position my instrument in exactly the same place, nor read it exactly the same way. Surely the rod would not change with each measurement? No, this particular _abstraction_ of the rod changes, not the rod itself.

All so-called properties of events in space-time exist only as our specific abstractions of these events. Length, width, color, mass... no event 'possesses' these abstractions, they exist merely as features of language, to enable us to communicate our experiences to each other. Many people, ignorant of science, still speak of heat as a substance rather than a process. As if some thing exists that they could point to and call heat.

This sehlat here, I call Ni'rch. Those of you here for my previous lecture will note I just committed a definition by example. Yet surely, you would all agree that the word Ni'rch does not equal this beast? However, if I should talk to you later when you cannot see Ni'rch and I tell you he has died, you will react just as if you had seen Ni'rch die (doubtless not to the same degree), and offer your condolences. What did you react to? Words, as if they equaled the event they denote.

C. Ladder of Abstraction

The word Ni'rch, the way I just defined it, does not even denote a space-time event but the abstraction _my pet sehlat_. That concept itself consists of an abstraction of some other concept. We can 'abstract' this process of abstracting, by comparing it to a ladder.

On the bottom rung of the latter, one would have the actual space-time event, the sehlat, and all the infinite number of things one could say about this particular sehlat. The next rung up would have one's perception of that sehlat. Next rung up the ladder would hold the abstraction 'sehlat'. This would consist of all the similarities one has observed between individual sehlat, and none of the differences. Further up the ladder we have 'animal', which denotes the idea of a certain type of creature. 'Creature', of course, would have the next higher rung.

The highest rung might have the word 'exist', or 'substance'. At this level of abstraction, the words most often have lost any reference to an existant, that one could point to or give directions to experience. They may still have some use if one speaks or writes them with some meaningful context.

This represents the process of abstracting. One generalizes, groups the similarities and ignores the differences. Naturally, one would not wish to discard this process, since speaking in the abstract has allowed us to break free from the here and now of experience and think about things that could exists, or future possibilities.
II. Distrust of Absractions.

Yet in spite of the benefits, one should have awareness of the pitfalls of generalized abstraction, or classification. One should not think only at a certain level of abstraction. If one remains stuck at a low level of abstraction, one cannot draw general conclusions. To see 'the whole picture', as it were [Translator's Note: substituted my own analogy here, Lyra's seemed a bit obscure for English speakers].

On the other hand, thinking only at a high-level of abstraction appears to never let one leave the realm of vagueness, ambiguity, and perhaps even utter meaninglessness. On one hand we have various utterance with no connections to each other, and on the other we have words cut loose from experience.

One can show how statements as well as words appear at a higher or lower level of abstraction. In this way we can see explicitly the problems of getting stuck in one of the levels.

A. An example of language at a low-level of abstraction:

I hold an object. The object possess a length of 1 meter, and a diameter of 0.02 meters. The object possesses a cylindrical surface area of 0.0003 meters squared. The object appears gray in color. The object has a smooth surface texture. The object has a specific gravity of approximately 7. [T.N: again substituted the measurements English speaking people would feel familiar with].

As you can see, the writer gives very accurate reports about various measurements of said object, but never says I hold the strut used in the shock absorbing devices of ground vehicles, to pull all those facts together into a coherent idea representative of the experience as a whole.

C. An example of language stuck at a high level of abstraction:

In order to understand justice, one must devote oneself to the defense of truth. In the defense of truth, one follows what one knows as truth; ones morals.

Surely this seems clear? After all justice involves truth and morals, correct? Yet what does the writer mean by 'justice', and 'truth' and 'morals'? These very abstract words never get defined, and insufficient context exists for one to do anything but guess at what the speaker means. Meaning does not exist in such abstract words until the author defines them, because these words exist at the very top of that ladder of abstraction.

Thus, that passage, which doubtless has some meaning to the speaker, seems unclear to the rest of us, unless we make some assumptions about what the speaker means by those abstract words. This leads to misunderstandings, which may seem trivial, but such misunderstanding lie at the root of all the wars we Vulcans have ever had.

D. Invalid Classfications

Of course, no Vulcan gets stuck continuously, at one level, all the time, for every subject. One fluxuates between levels depending on what one wishes to communicate. One simply must have awareness of the levels and not get confused between them. I call the process of equating a concept at one level of abstraction to a concept at a total different (higher or lower) level of abstraction, an invalid classification.

If one compares all animals to one leh'matya, one would have made an invalid comparison,
due to the difference in levels of abstraction. Likewise one can only compare one existant leh'matya to all animals, in a very limited way.

As a more everyday example, in your clan, during 'ankh some groups (or clans) of vulcans got classed as enemies, and others as friends, or at least as not-enemies. This situation represents a perfect example of invalid classification. A clan leader or one with great influence with the clan could say, that group or that vulcan = enemy. Let us examine this situation to see how this exemplifies a classification error. One can determine the level of abstraction of a concept by determining what concepts it includes. In this case, 'clan' includes 'group of Vulcans' and 'group of Vulcans' includes 'a vulcan'. The concept of enemies can include any of these objects, and thus occupies the highest level of abstraction of any of the terms in this example.

You can see these relationships in this diagram: [T.N: Lyras used a display in this lecture]

1. enemies 2. clan = 3. group of Vulcans = 4. a Vulcan =

Looking at this table one may ask oneself, but a classification by its very nature states that set X contains thing X1...X. Where does the error lie?

The error lies in judging the existant of a word, some individual vulcan or group of vulcans, as having the same relationship to the word enemy, as the words 'clan', 'group of Vulcans', and 'Vulcan' do.

One can classify words validly, in some situations, but only in a limited way. If you classify Vulcan1 as belonging to the set of all enemies, you acknowledge the similarities between Vulcan1 and all other Vulcans you call enemies and forget the differences. You stop seeing these 'enemy' Vulcan as individuals.

D. Vulcan1 NOT = Vulcan2

Existential events do not equal one another, so any statement which tries to make some existant event equal some other existant event, constitutes a classification error. Likewise some statement in which one tries make some existant equal to an abstract word, also constitutes a classification error.

When you classify a Vulcan as an abstraction, that Vulcan no longer seems real. You have let the conceptual Vulcan in your head overlay the existant Vulcan you can experience. It seems much easier then, to kill a concept rather than an existant being like yourself. In a war, this allows one to commit any sort of atrocity to this Vulcan, on the pretext, But this Vulcan comes from clan X and clan X = Enemy, therefore I must hate, attack or oppose him/her.

Remember a word represents a concept, an abstraction of something real. When you wish to discuss an existant event using words, beware you do not confuse the two. One cannot know c'thia if one remains stuck in the world of words, and one cannot know c'thia if one cannot assemble facts into knowledge. Just because you can speak some word, does not mean the word refers to an existant event.

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General Semantics
I think of general semantics as a system for making evaluations vital to success and survival. By evaluating, I mean our processing of perceptions and inferences as influenced by existing conscious and unconscious assumptions. Evaluations, not necessarily conscious ones, involve our thoughts, feelings, judgments, decisions, etc. Generally we do something as a result. Evaluating leads to appropriate or inappropriate action. We might describe general semantics as an integrated system for improving our thinking, evaluating, communicating, etc. Of course, in doing so we've only just begun.

Korzybski recognized that language and lived experience consist of two distinctly separate realms. He said 'The word is not the thing,' and 'Whatever you might say the object 'is,' well, it is not. Such expressions remind us that our verbal descriptions do not equal the external world, that words (maps) and lived experience (territory) do not constitute the same thing. Hence Korzybski's analogy, 'The map is not the territory.' In the system of general semantics, lived experience goes by several terms: territory, silent level, non-verbal level, facts, un-speakable level, object level.

1. Korzybski's formulation of abstracting says that we obtain incomplete information. If we remain conscious of our abstracting, we can reduce delusions arising from confusion of our linguistically created worlds with the world of lived experience. The term abstracting refers to a general-semantics formulation relating to how we obtain and process knowledge. During abstracting, we process information by leaving things out.

2. From use to use, our words don't mean precisely the same thing. Our interpretation of words depends partly on their context. We assign different meanings in different contexts. Korzybski advocated developing a continuing awareness that we abstract, so that we will recognize the incompleteness of knowledge, expect the unexpected, and thereby reduce stress and shocks to the nervous system. The term extensional refers to putting experience before language. When we sense, observe, and then describe, we evaluate extensionally. This Korzybski considered a healthy and sane way to go about making our evaluations of the world. To observe, test, sample, look, touch, etc., then describe.

3. To reduce stress and danger, and reach our goals, we must think and evaluate more critically. To accomplish this, we can use the extensional devices: dating, indexing, quotes, hyphens, and etc. et cetera.

4. According to current scientific theory, everything changes at some level, from micro-changes at the cellular or atomic level, to macro-changes of the shifting earth and the expanding universe. We use the extensional device Dating to keep aware of change.

5. Current scientific theory postulates that all things are unique in space-time. The principle of non-identity holds that no two things are identical in all respects. The extensional device of indexing reminds us of uniqueness by specifically tagging individual
things or events with an index number.

6. Quotes alert us to regard with caution terms such as mind or truth. In general semantics, quotes also

7. Indicate when we have used an ordinary word, such as abstracting, in a manner unique to the system.

8. Because we process knowledge by abstracting, we cannot say all about anything. We use etc. as a reminder of the general semantics principle of non-allness.

General Semantics is a school of thought founded by Alfred Korzybski in about 1933 in response to his observations that most people had difficulty defining human and social discussions and problems and could almost never predictably resolve them into elements that were responsive to successful intervention or correction.

In contrast, he noted that engineers could almost always successfully analyze a structural problem prospectively or a failure of structure retrospectively, and arrive at a solution which the engineers first of all could predict to work and secondly could observe to work. He found especially significant the fact that engineers had a language which helped them to do this, in mathematics. Mathematics has such properties that it appears to mimic its referents and thereby simulate or emulate the behavior of the observed physical universe with some precision. This gives physical scientists and engineers a valuable tool.

Korzybski also observed that the humanities lacked any parallel for mathematics in their languages. He set out to change that.

Alfred Korzybski's effort to introduce linguistic precision of a sort to the humanities resulted in General Semantics. In it, he attempted to make accurate observations with regard to the mechanisms of neural, biological, mental, and emotional interactions between man, other organisms, and the environment, and to describe these in terms which would admit themselves to prospective and retrospective rational analysis of human and social events to the same degree as the engineering disciplines.

Expressed simply, and thus inadequately, the essence of general semantics is the idea that the structure of language distorts our perception of reality, a failing that could be remedied by insight into that process and also by the creation of language that is structured in the same way reality is.

General Semantics never caught on as a major school of thought within the humanities, but a tenacious and growing band of followers
continues the effort today to apply and advance upon the results which Korzybski produced.

One novel idea from General Semantics concerns the role of magic in popular culture, especially notable in the use of incantations as political and advertising slogans.

What is general semantics

General Semantics teaches that all linguistic representations discard most of reality (The map is not the territory; the word is not the thing defined.) and in particular that much un-sanity is caused by adherence to the Aristotelian representation of two-valued either-or logic, which Korzybski saw as being built into Indo-European language structures. From this simple beginning, with which many 20th-century analytical philosophers including their dean Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) would find it hard to differ, Korzybski developed a complex, controversial, jargon-riddled system of what he called mental hygiene intended to increase the student’s effective intelligence. Techniques such as indexing with superscript numbers help in this task.

These ideas, retold in more accessible form by Samuel Hayakawa's Language In Thought And Action (1941), Stuart P. Chase's The Tyranny of Words, and other secondary sources, achieved considerable initial success in the 1940s and early 1950s. During that period they entered the idiom of science fiction, notably through the works of A.E. van Vogt and Robert A. Heinlein. After 1955 they became popularly (and unfairly) associated with scientology but continued to exert considerable influence in psychology, anthropology and linguistics (notably, the development of Neuro-Linguistic Programming shows very obvious debts to General Semantics).

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy

Cognitive therapy focuses on thoughts, assumptions and beliefs. With cognitive therapy, people may learn to recognize and change faulty or maladaptive thinking patterns. Cognitive therapy is not about positive thinking in the sense that you must always think happy thoughts. It's a way to gain control over racing, repetitive thoughts which often feed or trigger anxiety.

What is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy?

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is a psychotherapeutic approach which is used by psychologists and therapists to help promote positive change in individuals, to help alleviate emotional distress, and to address a myriad of psycho/social/behavioral issues. Cognitive Behavioral therapists identify and treat difficulties arising from an individual's irrational thinking, misperceptions, dysfunctional thoughts, and faulty learning. The therapy can be conducted with individuals, families, or groups. Problems such as anxiety, depression, anger, guilt, low self esteem, adjustment difficulties, sleep disturbance, and post-traumatic
stress are addressed.
What are the goals of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy?
The goals are to restructure one's thoughts, perceptions, and beliefs. Such restructuring facilitates behavioral and emotional change. During therapy, coping skills and abilities are assessed and further developed.

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The aim of cognitive behaviour therapy is to help you find more realistic and appropriate ways of coping with problems in your life. If you are distressed and lacking in self esteem you are likely to see yourself in a very negative way. This in turn may lead you to misinterpret situations and other people's intentions towards you in a way that further adds to your low self-image and distress.

Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies are psychological approaches which are based on scientific principles and which research has shown to be effective for a wide range of problems. Clients and therapists work together to identify and understand problems in terms of the relationship between thoughts, feelings and behaviour. The approach usually focuses on difficulties in the here and now, and relies on the therapist and client developing a shared view of the individual's problem. This then leads to the identification of personalised, time-limited therapy goals and strategies which are continually monitored and evaluated. Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapists work with individuals, families and groups. The approaches can be used to help anyone irrespective of ability, culture, race, gender or sexual preference.

Ellis' Rational Emotive Therapy (RET)
Stoic philosophers, Epictetus & Marcus Aurelius Men are disturbed not by things, but by the view which they take of them Epictetus (The Enchiridion, 1st Century AD) Albert Ellis 1940's & 50's psychoanalytic therapy. Symptomatology remained despite insight & connections. As child, indoctrinated with irrational ideas of worthlessness. Reindoctrinate continuously with irrationalities. Pressed to give up irrationality & patients resisted.

Musturbate: Absolutistically demand,
1) that they do well and win others' approval
2) that people act considerately and fairly
3) that environmental conditions be unfrustrating & gratifying
Simple preferences misleadingly defined as needs.

Active-directive, cognitive-emotive-behaviouristic attack on major self-defeating value systems (beliefs not clients).

ABCD Model
Most believe when highly charged emotional Consequence follows a significant Activating event, A causes C.
 Emotional consequences are largely created by the individual's Belief system.
Beliefs can be rational (rB) or irrational (iB).
Emotional disturbances are caused by an individual's unfounded irrational beliefs. Once identified, they are disputed by challenging them rationally.

Basic Concepts
- People are born with the potential to be rational and irrational.
- People's tendency to irrational thinking, self-damaging habituations, wishful thinking, & intolerance is frequently exacerbated by their culture & family (especially during early years).
- Humans tend to perceive, think, emote & behave simultaneously. None done in isolation.
- Highly cognitive, active-directive, homework-assigning & discipline oriented. Therefore fewer sessions.
- Warm relationship neither necessary nor sufficient.
- Many techniques used (role playing, AT, operant conditioning, suggestion, support etc.).
- Emotional problems stem from magical, empirically unvalidatable thinking.
- Insight does not lead to behavioural change.

Common Irrational Beliefs & Rational Alternatives
- It is awful if people don't approve of me or of my actions.
- It is pleasant and often advantageous to have people's approval but I can survive quite well without it by gradually learning to accept, like, enjoy, respect, and depend on myself.
- I must not make mistakes or do poorly.
- To make mistakes is to be human. Striving to improve is satisfying but striving to be perfect will only make me anxious and less effective. Accepting past mistakes calmly enables me to learn from them.
- I deserve to feel guilty over my past wrongdoings or mistakes, and ashamed for my symptoms. Without guilt and self-condemnation, how can I improve?
- My wrongdoings, mistakes, symptoms make me human. I will accept myself with them calmly, while trying my best to improve on some of them, one at a time. Guilt, shame and self-condemnation hinder rather than aid the work of improving.
- People (and situations) should be the way I want them to be. If they're not, I should be angry, condemning, or rail at injustice.
- People and events are the way they are--not the way I want them to be. My anger only punishes me. I can get happiness out of the world the way it is, while doing my reasonable share to better it. I am not running the universe.
- People (or external situations) make me unhappy or depressed.
- I almost always create my own misery by my irrational thinking.
- I should preoccupy myself with thoughts about situations which seem dangerous or fearsome.
- Risk-taking is an inevitable part of life. Why brood constantly about something which may not happen? Even if it will happen, does brooding add anything now except more misery?
- It is usually easier to avoid than face life's difficulties and responsibilities.
- Avoidance of difficulties tends to increase them--facing difficulties step-by-step leads to their lessening and elimination. My long range goals and desires require continuous self-discipline-- Present pain for future gain.
- I cannot change because I am a product of my past experience.
- The past is past--there is ample proof that people of all ages can change even the strongest habits by regular work and practice.
- I have no control over my feelings and emotions.
- I can control my thinking which, in turn, controls all my feelings and emotions. It takes a lot of practice, but there is good evidence that it can be done.
- Without effort on my part, happiness will come to me.
In this society fulfillment tends to come from regular effort towards my long-term goals and from actively reaching out to involve myself with people and things of my choice.

Beck’s Cognitive/Behavioural Therapy (CBT)
- Original focus on depression
- Symptomatic behaviours
- Cognitive Triad (Self, World, Future)
- Systematic Biases (Distortions)
- Negative Cognitive Schemata

Stable cognitive patterns through which events are processed. Functioning like a template, schemas actively screen, code, categorize and evaluate stimuli (Sacco & Beck, 1985, p. 4)

Trait (Main-Effects) Model
- Certain cognitive processes seem chronically atypical among depressed patients and may represent a stable characteristic of their personality (Kovacs & Beck, 1978, p. 530)

Stress-Diathesis (Interaction-Effects) Model
- Certain events are similar to (physically or symbolically) traumatic early childhood events.
- Vagueness as to method of formation of ‘vulnerable’ schemata.
- Interaction of events that impinge on specific vulnerability result in negative affects.

Anaclitic vs. Introjective Personalities

AKA Sociotropic vs. Autonomous

Repeated reinforcement in early life leads people to value certain self-characteristics.

These valued characteristics influence self-esteem.

Anaclitic (Sociotropic) values relationship and attachment to others.

I am nothing if a person I love doesn't love me.

Introjective (Autonomous) values achievement and success (e.g., school, work).

If I fail at my work, then I am a failure as a person.

THE TEN FORMS OF TWISTED THINKING
1. All or none thinking
You look at things in absolute, black-or-white categories.

2. Overgeneralization
You view a negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.

3. Mental Filter
You dwell on the negatives and ignore the positives.

4. Discounting the positive
You insist that your accomplishments or positive qualities don't count.

5. Jumping to conclusions
- Mind reading—you assume that people are reacting negatively to you when there's no definite evidence for this;
- Fortune-telling—you arbitrarily predict that things will turn out badly.

6. Magnification or minimization
You blow things way up out of proportion (usually negatives) or you shrink their importance inappropriately (usually positives).

7. Emotional reasoning
You assume that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are: I feel
angry. This proves I’m being treated unfairly. Or I feel so inferior. This means I’m a second-rate person.

8. Should statements
You criticize yourself or other people with shoulds or shouldn'ts. Musts, oughts, and have tos are similar offenders.

9. Labelling
You identify with your shortcomings. Instead of saying I made a mistake, you tell yourself, I’m a jerk, or a fool, or a loser.

10. Personalization and blame
You blame yourself or something you weren’t entirely responsible for, or you blame other people and overlook ways that your own attitudes and behaviour might contribute to a problem.

Over 2000 years ago the Greek Stoic philosopher Epictetus said that people are disturbed not by things but by the views they take of them. It is the interpretation we place on events, rather than events themselves, that determine our emotions. For example: if you were lying in your bed at night and were woken by a window blowing open in the next room, the way you thought about the event would affect how you felt about the situation. If you thought the window had blown open accidentally, you might feel angry or annoyed. However, if you thought that someone was trying to break in, you would be more likely to feel anxious. Therefore, our feelings are not just automatic reactions to events, they are created by the thoughts that we have.

Just as individuals construct irrational thoughts that maintain their negative emotions and maladaptive behaviour, they can reconstruct their thoughts and view situations differently so their cognitions lead to positive feelings and adaptive behaviour.

What Is Cognitive Therapy?
Cognitive therapy or cognitive behavior therapy is a kind of psychotherapy used to treat depression, anxiety disorders, phobias, and other forms of psychological disorder. It involves recognising distorted thinking and learning to replace it with more realistic substitute ideas. Its practitioners hold that the cause of many (though not all) depressions are irrational thoughts. Cognitive therapy is often used in conjunction with mood stabilizing medications to treat bipolar disorder.

There are several approaches to cognitive-behavioral therapy, including Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy, Rational Behavior Therapy, Rational Living Therapy, Cognitive Therapy, and Dialectic Behavior Therapy. [1]

With thoughts stipulated as being the cause of emotions rather than vice-versa, cognitive therapists reverse the causal order more generally used by psychotherapists. The therapy is essentially, therefore, to identify those irrational thoughts that are making one unhappy and what it is about them that is irrational; this is done in an effort to reject the depressing thoughts and replace them with more accurate, but also more cheering thoughts.

Cognitive therapy is not an overnight process. Even once a patient has learnt to recognise when and where his thought processes are going awry, it can take months of concerted effort to replace an invalid thought with a more suitable one. But with patience and a good therapist, cognitive therapy can be a valuable tool in recovery.

Negative thinking in depression can result from biological sources (i.e., endogenous depression), modeling from parents, or other sources. The depressed person experiences negative thoughts as being beyond their control. The cognitive therapist provides techniques to give the client a greater degree of control than ever before.

Negative thoughts in depression are generally about one of three areas: negative view of
self, negative view of the world, and negative view of the future. This composes the cognitive triad.

A major technique in cognitive therapy is the four column technique. It consists of a four step process. The first three steps analyze the process by which a person has become depressed or distressed. The first column records the objective situation. In the second column, the client writes down the negative thoughts which occurred to them. The third column is for the negative feelings and dysfunctional behaviors which ensued. The negative thoughts of the second column are seen as a connecting bridge between the situation and the distressing feelings. Finally, the fourth column is used for challenging the negative thoughts on the basis of evidence from the client’s experience.

A sub-field of cognitive behavior therapy used to treat Obsessive Compulsive Disorder makes use of classical conditioning through extinction and habituation. Such a procedure has been used successfully by Dr. Steven Phillipson to treat OCD. CBT has also been successfully applied to the treatment of Generalized Anxiety Disorder and Panic Disorder.

While the cognitive therapist view of emotion has existed for millennia, cognitive therapy was developed in its present form by Albert Ellis and Aaron T. Beck in the 1950s and 1960s. It rapidly became a favorite intervention to study in psychotherapy research in academic settings. In initial studies it was often contrasted with behavioral treatments to see which was most effective. However, in recent years, cognitive and behavioral techniques have often been combined into cognitive behavioral treatment. This is arguably the primary type of psychological treatment being studied in research today.

Cognitive Therapy is a very effective way of understanding how you think, and therefore feel. Cognitive Therapy helps us to explore our underlying belief patterns that result in negative, irrational and unhealthy thoughts. It then allows us to explore our thoughts and replace them with more useful ones in order to manage our emotions effectively. Basically, we can think of our mind as being a suitcase which over time has collected many beliefs, thoughts, memories and past experiences. Some of these thoughts and beliefs are helpful, and some of these thoughts and beliefs are not so helpful. Cognitive Therapy assists us to examine what we are carrying around in our suitcase, and helps us to remove that which is causing us difficulties, and replace it with more useful thoughts and beliefs to gain control over our emotions and behaviour.

Cognitive Therapy is a way of talking about the connections between how we think, how we feel and how we behave. It particularly concentrates on ideas that are unrealistic. These often undermine our self-confidence and make us feel depressed or anxious. Looking at these can help us work out different ways of thinking and behaving, that in turn will help us cope better. The basic premise of cognitive therapy therefore, is that the way we think about events in our lives (cognitions) determines how we feel about them (emotions). Cognitive Therapy also helps people to look at their “rules for living” called schemas. Schemas are cognitive structures or templates that organise how we think, feel, act, relate, and understand and are typically referred to as our personality style. Schemas are outside of conscious awareness and determine how we interpret the world and respond to situations. Whilst cognitive structures can be adaptive, allowing us to process information rapidly, the same rapid processing can result in entrenched maladaptive structures. This is because they are strong beliefs and assumptions about how we should live our lives, which we develop whilst we are growing up.

How does psychological and emotional distress occur?

Psychological and emotional distress occurs when people perceive the world as threatening. When this happens perceptions and interpretations of events become highly selective, egocentric, and rigid, resulting in people making systematic errors in reasoning, called 'cognitive distortions'.
Cognitive Distortions include:

All-or-nothing thinking: Seeing things in black-or-white categories that exist on a continuum.

Mental Filter: Dwelling on a single negative detail, whilst excluding positive information.

Over-generalisation: Seeing one negative event as a never-ending pattern of 'always', or 'never'.

Jumping to conclusions: Interpreting things negatively when there is no evidence to support it.

Mind reading: Guessing the content of someone else's thoughts, without checking it out.

Fortune-telling: Predicting the future in a negative way, without any supporting evidence.

Discounting the positive: Positive experiences are dismissed, as 'not counting'.

Magnification: Magnifying one's problems and shortcomings, or minimising one's positive qualities.

Should statements: Ridged, absolute demands about oneself, others or the world taking the form of should, must, ought, have to, or awfulising, catastrophising, leading to 'I can't stand it'.

Emotional reasoning: Assuming negative emotional thinking reflects reality. i.e. 'I feel it'.

Labelling: Attaching a negative label to an action i.e. I'm a failure, instead of, I made a mistake.

Personalisation: Holding oneself responsible for an event outside one's control.

Research has shown that specific patterns of thinking are associated with a wide range of emotional and psychological problems. These negative or extreme thought patterns have frequently become so habitual that they are experienced as automatic and go unnoticed by the individual.

Cognitive Restructuring

Cognitive Therapy treats emotional problems by changing or restructuring maladaptive patterns of thought. Clients are taught how to uncover and re-examine these negative beliefs, and replace them with more adaptive ways of viewing life events. Through this process, clients learn self-help techniques that can produce rapid symptom shifts, solve current life problems, and improve self-esteem. This negative pattern of thought are called negative automatic thoughts and can be thought of as abbreviations of deeper cognitive structures called schemas.

Cognitive Therapists also teach clients coping skills, which serves two functions:
1. enables clients to deal with the problems for which they have sought therapy
2. clients are more able to apply the coping skills to future problems in their lives.

In essence, Cognitive Therapy is a school of psychotherapy that: identifies several aspects of thinking as influential in the development and course of
emotional and behavioural problems recognises the potential for change in the way people think about their experiences, problems, and selves.
actualises this potential for cognitive change in order to facilitate progress toward goals and emotional well being.

How Cognitive Therapy is Different.
Cognitive Therapy incorporates a variety of features that differ from traditional psychotherapy and shorten the process of change. Four of these elements are briefly described below:
1. the cognitive therapist actively directs clients to the discovery of central thinking problems
2. cognitive therapists and clients actively work together to resolve negative feelings, behaviours and functioning
3. cognitive therapy focuses on the resolution of current, specific problems, providing a clear structure and focus to treatment
4. the therapist makes joint decisions with the client and regularly asks for feedback to maintain a high degree of collaboration and empathy.

Cognitive Therapy is based on the scientifically supported assumption that most emotional and behavioural reactions are learned. Therefore, the goal of therapy is to help clients unlearn their unwanted reactions and to learn a new way of reacting. Cognitive Therapy is not about just talking, it is a practical, goal-orientated treatment procedure, that uses a large number of scientifically based cognitive, emotive and behavioural techniques designed to promote profound philosophic, emotive and behavioural changes.

Clients will often be asked to keep a diary of their thoughts, feelings and behaviours in the situations that they find particularly stressful. These and other agreed assignments provide useful feedback as to whether or not particular ways of thinking are realistic. These negative automatic thoughts are then examined in detail and clients are shown better ways of viewing and challenging negative thoughts. They can then learn to change these ways of thinking, to use more helpful ones. Research has shown that clients who are actively engaged in therapy achieve quicker change. The educational emphasis of Cognitive Therapy has an additional benefit - it leads to long-term results. When people understand how and why they are doing well, they can continue to do this to maintain their gains.

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy has three main goals:
1. To relieve symptoms and resolve problems.
2. To help the client to acquire skills and coping strategies.
3. To help the client to modify underlying cognitive structures in order to prevent relapse.

How effective is Cognitive Behaviour Therapy?
Empirically-based.
Cognitive Therapy is the most widely researched form of all psychotherapies. It is one of the few forms of psychotherapy that has been scientifically tested and found to be highly effective in hundreds of clinical studies. Results overwhelmingly support the effectiveness of Cognitive Therapy for a wide range of problems.
In study after study, it has been shown to be as effective as drugs in treating both depression and anxiety states. For many disorders, Cognitive Therapy is a more effective treatment than other forms of psychotherapy.

Stoicism
Stoicism was one of the most important and influential traditions in the philosophy of the
Hellenistic world. It claimed the adherence of a large portion of the educated persons in the Graeco-Roman world. It had considerable influence on the development of early Christianity. The Roman Stoics, Epictetus, Seneca, and Marcus Aurelius were widely read and absorbed by the Western cultural tradition. Indeed, the very word 'stoic' has, in the popular sense, become synonymous with 'philosophical' and has come to represent that courage and calmness in the face of adverse and trying circumstances which was the hallmark of the ancient Stoics.

Background
It is one of the ironies of history that Alexander, once a student of Aristotle, was in large part responsible for undermining the Hellenic political climate to which the classical Greek thought of Plato and Aristotle was inextricably tied. As the free city-state of Hellenic Greece gave way to the empire of the Hellenistic world, the sharp distinction between Greek and barbarian was replaced by the more cosmopolitan view reflective of Stoicism. Persons were less citizens of their particular city-states than citizens of the empire. It is to be expected that philosophy would reflect this change, and that is what we find in the philosophical schools of the Hellenistic period. Interest shifted from the speculative systems of classical Greece to a concern for the individual's well-being in the more complex cultural environment of the Hellenistic period. Given its particularly ethical interest, it is not surprising that Stoicism borrowed many of its cosmological and metaphysical ideas from earlier, pre-Socratic philosophers. While the Epicureans adopted the atomism of Democritus, the Stoics borrowed their cosmology from Heraclitus.

Its founder, Zeno (c 336-264 BCE) (not to be confused with the Eleatic Zeno), discussed philosophical ideas at the agora in the Stoa Poikile, Painted Colonnade, or porch and thus his followers came to be called Stoics or philosophers of the porch. Like so many others, Zeno was impressed with the thought and character of Socrates. Interpreting the Socratic model from the point of view of the Cynics, Antisthenes, Diogenes, and Crates of Thebes, of whom Zeno was for a time a disciple, Zeno admired most in Socrates his strength of character and independence of external circumstances. From Zeno's point of view, virtue resided not in external fortune, wealth, honor, and the like, but in self-sufficiency and a kind of rational ordering of intention.

Principal Ideas
Later Stoics of the Hellenistic period, including Cleanthes of Assos (c 331-233 BCE) and Chrysippus (c 281-208 BCE), developed Stoicism as a systematic body of doctrine, complete with a system of logic, epistemology, and cosmology. In logic, the Stoics developed the logic of propositions more recently formalized by Frege and Bertrand Russell. Chrysippus was recognized by his contemporaries as the equal of Aristotle in logic. Stoic epistemology was decidedly empiricist and nominalist in spirit. They rejected both Plato's and Aristotle's notions of form. There are no abstract universals, either apart from particulars, as Plato would have it, or in particular substances, as Aristotle held. Only particular things exist and our knowledge of them is based on the impressions they make upon the soul. Our knowledge of particular objects is therefore based on sense perception, as is our knowledge of our mental states and activities, our soul itself being a material thing.

Metaphysically, the Stoics were materialists. While all that exists is material, nevertheless there are two principles of reality. The passive principle is matter devoid of quality. Borrowing from Heraclitus, the Stoics identified the active principle of reality with the Logos, Reason, or God. Unlike later Christian versions, the Stoic view of the Logos is both materialistic and pantheistic. God has no existence distinct from the rational order of nature and should not be construed as a personal, transcendent deity of the sort essential to later Western theism.

The Stoics were determinists, even fatalists, holding that whatever happens happens necessarily. Not only is the world such that all events are determined by prior events, but the universe is a perfect, rational whole. For all their interests in logic and speculative philosophy, the primary focus of Stoicism is practical and ethical. Knowledge of nature is of instrumental value only. Its value is entirely determined by its role in fostering the life of
virtue understood as living in accord with nature. This practical aspect of Stoicism is especially prevalent in the Roman Stoic, Epictetus (c 50-138 CE), who developed the ethical and religious side of Stoicism. This practical side of Stoicism can be understood in terms of a number of key ideas taught by Epictetus.

The life of virtue is the life in accordance with nature. Since for the Stoic nature is rational and perfect, the ethical life is a life lived in accordance with the rational order of things. Do not seek to have events happen as you want them to, but instead want them to happen as they do happen, and your life will go well (Handbook, ch. 8).

Essential to appreciating this Stoic theme is the recognition of the difference between those things that are within our power and those not within our power.

Our opinions are up to us, and our impulses, desires, aversions--in short, whatever is our doing. Our bodies are not up to us, nor our possessions, our reputations, or our public offices, or, that is, whatever is not our doing...So remember, if you think that things naturally enslaved are free or that things not your own are your own, you will be thwarted, miserable, and upset, and will blame both the gods and men. (Handbook, ch. 1)

The only thing over which we have control, therefore, is the faculty of judgment. Since anything else, including all external affairs and acts of others, are not within our power, we should adopt toward them the attitude of indifference. Toward all that is not within our power we should be apathetic.

What upsets people is not things themselves but their judgments about the things. For example, death is nothing dreadful (or else it would have appeared so to Socrates), but instead the judgment about death is that it is dreadful, that is what is dreadful. (Handbook, ch. 5)

To avoid unhappiness, frustration, and disappointment, we, therefore, need to do two things: control those things that are within our power (namely our beliefs, judgments, desires, and attitudes) and be indifferent or apathetic to those things which are not in our power (namely, things external to us).

Toward those unfortunate things that are not within our power which we cannot avoid (for example, death and the actions and opinions of others) the proper attitude is one of apathy. Distress is the result of our attitudes towards things, not the things themselves. This is the consoling feature of Stoic fatalism. It is absurd to become distraught over externals for the same reason that it is absurd to become distressed over the past; both are beyond our power. The Stoic is simply adopting toward all things the only logical attitude appropriate to the past--indifference.

It is tempting to characterize Stoicism as an emotionally cold, not to say sterile, moral outlook. Epictetus certainly provides ample material upon which to base such a charge. Yet this is at least misleading. It is not so much emotion as passion understood as excessive attachment which is Epictetus' target. It is crucial to recall that Epictetus, as the other Stoics, was concerned to provide an account of moral virtue, not a general theory of value.

Inspired by the teaching of Socrates and Diogenes of Sinope, Stoicism was founded at Athens by Zeno of Citium c. 300 BC and was influential throughout the Greco-Roman world until at least AD 200. It stressed duty and held that, through reason, mankind can come to regard the universe as governed by fate and, despite appearances, as fundamentally rational, and that, in regulating one's life, one can emulate the grandeur of the calm and order of the universe by learning to accept events with a stern and tranquil mind and to achieve a lofty moral worth. Its teachings have been transmitted to later generations largely
through the surviving books of Cicero and the Roman Stoics Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius.

Stoicism is a school of philosophy commonly associated with such Greek philosophers as Zeno of Citium, Cleanthes, or Chrysippus and with such later Romans as Cicero, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and Epictetus. Organized at Athens in the third century B.C.E. (310 BC) by Zeno of Citium and Chrysippus. The Stoics provided a unified account of the world that comprised formal logic, materialistic physics, and naturalistic ethics. Later Roman Stoics emphasized more exclusively the development of recommendations for living in harmony with a natural world over which one has no direct control. Their group would meet upon the porch of the market at Athens, the stoa poecile. The name stoicism derives from the Greek stoa meaning porch.

The Stoic philosophy developed from that of the Cynics whose founder, Antisthenes, had been a disciple of Socrates. The Stoics emphasized ethics as the main field of knowledge, but they also developed theories of logic and natural science to support their ethical doctrines.

Holding a somewhat materialistic conception of nature they followed Heraclitus in believing the primary substance to be fire. They also embraced his concept of Logos which they identified with the energy, law, reason, and providence found throughout nature.

They held Logos to be the animating or ‘active principle’ of all reality. The Logos was conceived as a rational divine power that orders and directs the universe; it was identified with God, nature, and fate. Human reason and the human soul were both considered part of the divine Logos, and therefore immortal.

The foundation of Stoic ethics is the principle, proclaimed earlier by the Cynics, that good lies in the state of the soul itself, in wisdom and restraint. Stoic ethics stressed the rule Follow where Reason leads; one must therefore resist the influence of the passions—love, hate, fear, pain, and pleasure.

Living according to nature or reason, they held, is living in conformity with the divine order of the universe. The four cardinal virtues of the Stoic philosophy are wisdom, courage, justice, and temperance, a classification derived from the teachings of Plato.

A distinctive feature of Stoicism is its cosmopolitanism. All people are manifestations of the one universal spirit and should, according to the Stoics, live in brotherly love and readily help one another. They held that external differences such as rank and wealth are of no importance in social relationships. Thus, before the rise of Christianity, Stoics recognized and advocated the brotherhood of humanity and the natural equality of all human beings. Stoicism became the most influential school of the Greco-Roman world and produced a number of remarkable writers and personalities.

Stoicism was the most influential philosophy in the Roman Empire during the period preceding the rise of Christianity. Zeno of Citium (c. 335-263 BC) founded the Stoic school in Athens about 310 BC. The Stoic philosophy developed from that of the Cynics whose founder, Antisthenes, had been a disciple of Socrates.

The Stoics, like the Epicureans, emphasized ethics as the main field of knowledge, but they also developed theories of logic and natural science to support their ethical doctrines. Holding a somewhat materialistic conception of nature they followed Heraclitus in believing the primary substance to be fire. They also embraced his concept of Logos which they identified with the energy, law, reason, and providence found throughout nature. They held Logos to be the animating or ‘active principle’ of all reality; it was conceived as both the divine reason and as simply a finer kind of material entity, an all-pervading breath.
or fire, analogous to Heraclitus' cosmic principle. The Logos was conceived as a rational divine power that orders and directs the universe; it was identified with God, nature, and fate. Human reason and the human soul were both considered part of the divine Logos, and therefore immortal.

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The importance of this view is seen in the role Stoicism played in developing a theory of natural law which considered human nature the standard for evaluating laws and social institutions; this view had an important influence on Roman and later Western law. The four cardinal virtues of the Stoic philosophy are wisdom, courage, justice, and temperance, a classification derived from the teachings of Plato.

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Stoicism became the most influential school of the Greco-Roman world and produced a number of remarkable writers and personalities:

- Lucius Annaeus Seneca (4 BC-65 AD), Roman philosopher, statesman, and orator, was Rome's leading intellectual figure in the mid-1st century AD.
- Seneca summarized the basic tenants of Stoicism as follows:
  A living according to nature
  A accepting events dispassionately as part of the divine plan
  A a universal love for all humanity

According to Seneca, Philosophy calls for simple living, not for doing penance, and the simple way of life need not be a crude one. Epictetus (55-135), the Greek slave and later Roman philosopher, whose teachings were known for their religious tone.

- True education, he believed, consists in recognizing that there is only one thing that belongs to an individual fully—his will, or purpose; and that God has given each being a will that cannot be compelled or thwarted by anything external.

- All men are the sons of God by virtue of their rationality and are kindred in nature with the divinity. Thus, man is capable of learning to administer his world and his life according to the will of God, which is the will of nature.

- The natural instinct of man is self-preservation and self-interest. Yet men are so constituted that the individual cannot secure his own interests unless he contributes to the common welfare.

- Marcus Aurelius (121-180), the Roman emperor noted for his wisdom and nobility and for his Meditations on Stoic philosophy.

- The Meditations, the thoughts of a philosopher-king, are basically the moral tenets of Stoicism learned from Epictetus: the cosmos is a unity governed by an intelligence, and the human soul is a part of that divine intelligence and can therefore stand pure and undefiled amidst chaos and futility.
General Description
The term Stoicism derives from the Greek word stoa, referring to a colonnade, such as those built outside or inside temples, around dwelling-houses, gymnasia, and market-places. They were also set up separately as ornaments of the streets and open places. The simplest form is that of a roofed colonnade, with a wall on one side, which was often decorated with paintings. Thus in the market-place at Athens the stoa poikile (Painted Colonnade) was decorated with Polygnotus's representations of the destruction of Troy, the fight of the Athenians with the Amazons, and the battles of Marathon and Oenoe. Zeno of Citium taught in the stoa poikile in Athens, and his adherents accordingly obtained the name of Stoics. Zeno was followed by Cleanthes, and then by Chrysippus, as leaders of the school. The school attracted many adherents, and flourished for centuries, not only in Greece, but later in Rome, where the most thoughtful writers, such as Marcus Aurelius, Seneca, and Epictetus, counted themselves among its followers.

We know little for certain as to what share particular Stoics, Zeno, Cleanthes, or Chrysippus, had in the formation of the doctrines of the school, But after Chryssipus the main lines of the doctrine were complete. The stoic doctrine is divided into three parts: logic, physics, and ethics. Stoicism is essentially a system of ethics which, however, is guided by a logic as theory of method, and rests upon physics as foundation. Briefly, their notion of morality is stern, involving a life in accordance with nature and controlled by virtue. It is an ascetic system, teaching perfect indifference (apathia) to everything external, for nothing external could be either good or evil. Hence to the Stoics both pain and pleasure, poverty and riches, sickness and health, were supposed to be equally unimportant.

Basic Ideas of the Stoics
Dr. Jan Garrett

The key to successful living (sometimes called happiness) is freedom from the violent feelings.

The key to freedom from the violent feelings is living in accordance with virtue.

The key to virtue is living consistently in agreement with nature.

The things called good by most people, such as life, health, possessions, good reputation, and the like, are often in accord with our nature.

But they are not consistently in accord with our nature, as they are sometimes purchased or preserved at the expense of a person's integrity.

Virtue and successful living are not inborn but result from deliberate choice and continuous attention to what is in our power and what is not.

Stoic Philosophy
The Stoics were disciples of a Greek philosopher named Zeno. Stoic philosophy is in many ways similar to the Taoist philosophy of China. Both teach one to attune with his/her inner nature, which the Romans called Reason, the Chinese the Tao, and the Greeks the Logos. Both encourage simple living and contentment with ones present state of being. Both view the world as exchange of opposites. There are other similarities, which you can explore.

The Major Tenets of Stoicism

Stoicism teaches...

One to live in accord with Nature; worldly Nature and human nature.
The Unity of All; all gods; all substance; all virtue; all mankind into a Cosmopolis (Universal City).

That the external world is maintained by the natural interchange of opposites (poioun / yin, paskhon / yang)

That everyone has a personal, individual connection to the All; a god within.
That every soul has Free Will to act and that the action of the soul is opinion.

Simple Living through moderation and frugality.
That spiritual growth comes from seeking the good.
That Virtue is the sole good, Vice the sole evil, and everything else indifferent.
That the Cardinal Virtues are Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance.

That the path to personal happiness and inner peace is through the extinguishing of all desire to have or to affect things beyond ones control and through living for the present without hope for or fear of the future; beyond the power of opinion.

The sequential reabsorption and recreation of the Universe by the Central Fire; the Conflagration.

It is irrational to want that which is not God's will, so attune thyself with thy inner Nature and live happily. Live according to YOUR own Nature.

The Basic Tenets of Stoicism

The Stoics were Empiricists. The Stoics rejected both Plato's and Aristotle's doctrine of the universal. For the Stoics only the individual exists and our knowledge is knowledge of particular objects only. The Stoics founded all knowledge on sense-preception.

The Stoics were Materialists. For the Stoics reality was composed of only physical material, the concept of any non-physical reality was rejected. They considered the sum total of all physical reality to be their notion of God and/or nature, for them neither of these terms were meant to convey a spiritual connotation. The Stoics did not believe in a life after death.

The Stoics held that God orders all things for the best, and they explained evil as being necessary for the existence of good. These notions would later find their modern expression in the philosophy of both Spinoza and Leibniz.

The Stoics held that no act is evil and reprehensible in itself. It is the intention, the moral condition of the agent from whom the act proceeds, that makes the act evil.

The Stoics were Determinists. They denied the doctrine of the freedom of the will. Providence and Fate are the plan of nature and not of the individual person.

The Stoics held that Virtue consists in living according to nature. Life according to nature meant life according to the principle that is active in nature and that is shared in by human nature, namely reason. The ethical life, therefore, consists essentially in submission to the divinely appointed order of the world. From this arises the popular conception of the Stoics as being indifferent to or unaffected by joy, grief, pleasure, or pain, i.e., the doctrine of stoic acceptance.

The Stoics believed in a notion called Cosmopolitanism. Every man is naturally a social
being, and to live in society is a dictate of reason, but since reason is the common essential
nature of all men, there is but one Law for all men and one State. The division of mankind
into warring states is absurd. The wise man is the citizen, not of this or that particular state,
but of the world.

As many commentators have pointed out, Stoicism was not so much a systematic
philosophy as it was an ethical theory. As such one can detect slight differences of opinion
among the stoics in regards to the principles listed above. As we read The Meditations it
will be interesting to see if Aurelius modifies any of these principles in light of his own
experiences.

Stoicism was a very popular philosophy during the days of the Roman Empire, and it still
continues to be so. The example of Spinoza and Leibniz has already been alluded to, but
stoicism continues to influence many people even today. Browse though the self-help
section of any bookstore and notice how much of the advice being given flows directly from
the Stoic tradition. Perhaps one could even view Marcus Aurelius’ Meditations as being
one the first and best self-help books ever written.

The four essential tenants of Stoic Thought

The following four tenets were inspired by lengthy discussions with contemporary Stoics in
the First Stoic Council (1999), but do not reflect the opinions of all Councilors nor of all
members of the Stoic community. Again, to paraphrase Seneca, Stoics do not follow the
tyranny of dogma. These tenets are an overview of Stoic thought, beginning with the most
general to the most specific, from the Logos to a guide for human conduct.

TENET ONE. We recognize the existence of intelligible order in the universe, and we call that
order the Logos.

TENET TWO. We acknowledge that Nature is One, a dynamic continuum uniting the Logos
and matter.

TENET THREE. Nature has endowed us with the faculty of reason, the power of choice, and
the capacity for love.

TENET FOUR. A Stoic chooses to live by the Four Cardinal Virtues: Wisdom, Justice,
Courage, and Decorum.

The Stoa
The Stoa is a living philosophy. What that means is that Stoic philosophy is more than just
great thoughts organized into a complete and coherent vision of reality. It is first and
foremost a philosophy to live by, a practical application of ancient wisdom, a way of life, and
a guide to the choices one makes in this life.

It also means something more. The Stoa is alive. The reason it is alive after nearly 2300
years is because it is universally adaptable and available to all people, men and women of
every color, class, and culture. And something else: it evolves. As the human race learns
and grows, so does the Stoa. It evolves because of the strength and conviction of the Stoics
themselves. Stoics have a tradition of independent thought, and we like it that way. We of
the Stoic school, as Seneca said, do not follow a tyrant. This is not to say that what we are
left with is a hodgepodge of assorted ideas collected here and there. This is not the Stoa. Its
inner core of orthodoxy moves very slowly, glacially, expanding and refining with the ages. Its foundation is secure because it is built upon the unassailable power of a single idea:

Live according to Nature.

That's the Stoic motto. Zeno said it first, and he's the founder and father of our school, but he wasn't working alone. He was following a path already begun by two of the greatest thinkers in history, Heraclitus and Socrates. These two men, one a mystic cosmologist and the other a moral philosopher who lived and died by his ideals, may rightly be called the Grandfathers of the Stoa.

But Stoicism actually began with the teachings of Zeno at the central market of Athens about 300 BCE. Zeno regularly met with students on the north side of the market at a stoa, a covered colonnade, called the Painted Stoa, renowned for its spectacular murals. In time, Zeno and his students became known as the men of the Stoa, or Stoics. Here he taught a moral system based upon nature: the guide to human happiness, he said, is clearly evident in the processes and cycles of nature. Upon these teachings the school was founded, continuing through the Roman Stoa, the Christian Stoa, and into the present period, the Cyberstoa.

What does it mean to live according to nature? Zeno said that to do so was the same as living a virtuous life, because virtue was the goal towards which nature guides us (D.L.,VII.86-90). On the same subject, the great Stoic theoretician Chrysippus said that individual nature is but a part of the nature of the Whole (ibid.), which is why one who lives conformably with nature follows the Logos, the reason that pervades all things.

Does this emphasis on virtue, the ethical discipline of philosophy, suggest that Stoics are cold and arrogant perfectionists? No. Arthur Schopenhauer (1818) made this useful observation:

The ethics of Stoicism are originally and essentially, not a doctrine of virtue, but merely a guide to a rational life, the end and aim of which is happiness through peace of mind....the ethical theory of Stoicism is in its whole nature and point of view fundamentally different from the ethical systems which lay stress directly upon virtue, such as the doctrine of the Vedas, of Plato, of Christianity, and of Kant.

Stoic Logic
Stoic logic is, in all essential, the logic of Aristotle. To this, however, they added a theory, peculiar to themselves, of the origin of knowledge and the criterion of truth. All knowledge, they said, enters the mind through the senses. The mind is a blank slate, upon which sense-impressions are inscribed. It may have a certain activity of its own, but this activity is confined exclusively to materials supplied by the physical organs of sense. This theory stands, of course, in sheer opposition to the idealism of Plato, for whom the mind alone was the a source of knowledge, the senses being the source of knowledge, the senses being the sources of all illusion and error. The Stoics denied the metaphysical reality of concepts. Concepts are merely ideas in the mind, abstracted from particulars, and have no reality outside consciousness.

Since all knowledge is a knowledge of sense-objects, truth is simply the correspondence of our impressions to things. How are we to know whether our ideas are correct copies of things? How do we distinguish between reality and imagination, dreams, or illusions? What is the criterion of truth? It cannot lie in concepts, since they are of our own making. Nothing is true save sense impressions, and therefore the criterion of truth must lie in sensation itself. It cannot be in thought, but must be in feeling. Real objects, said the Stoics, produce in us an intense feeling, or conviction, of their reality. The strength and vividness of the
image distinguish these real perceptions from a dream or fancy. Hence the sole criterion of truth is this striking conviction, whereby the real forces itself upon our consciousness, and will not be denied. There is, thus, no universally grounded criterion of truth. It is based, not on reason, but on feeling.

Stoic Physics
The fundamental proposition of the Stoic physics is that nothing incorporeal exists. This materialism coheres with the sense-impression orientation of their doctrine of knowledge. Plato placed knowledge in thought, and reality, therefore, in the ideal form. The Stoics, however, place knowledge in physical sensation, and reality -- what is known by the senses -- is matter. All things, they said, even the soul, even God himself, are material and nothing more than material. This belief they based upon two main considerations. Firstly, the unity of the world demands it. The world is one, and must issue from one principle. We must have a monism. The idealism of Plato resolved itself into a futile struggle involving a dualism between matter and thought. Since the gulf cannot be bridged from the side of ideal realm of the forms, we must take our stand on matter, and reduce mind to it. Secondly, body and soul, God and the world, are pairs which act and react upon one another. The body, for example, produces thoughts (sense impressions) in the soul, the soul produces movements in the body. This would be impossible if both were not of the same substance. The corporeal cannot act on the incorporeal, nor the incorporeal on the corporeal. There is no point of contact. Hence all must be equally corporeal.

All things being material, what is the original kind of matter, or stuff, out of which the world is made? The Stoics turned to Heraclitus for an answer. Fire (logos) is the primordial kind of being, and all things are composed of fire. With this materialism the Stoics combined pantheism. The primal fire is God. God is related to the world exactly as the soul to the body. The human soul is likewise fire, and comes from the divine fire. It permeates and penetrates the entire body, and, in order that its interpenetration might be regarded as complete, the Stoics denied the impenetrability of matter. Just as the soul-fire permeates the whole body, so God, the primal fire, pervades the entire world. But in spite of this materialism, the Stoics declared that God is absolute reason. This is not a return to idealism, and does not imply the incorporeality of God. For reason, like all else, is material. It means simply that the divine fire is a rational element. Since God is reason, it follows that the world is governed by reason, and this means two things. It means, firstly, that there is purpose in the world, and therefore, order, harmony, beauty, and design. Secondly, since reason is law as opposed to the lawless, it means that universe is subject to the absolute sway of law, is governed by the rigorous necessity of cause and effect. Hence the individual is not free. There can be no true freedom of the will in a world governed by necessity. We may, without harm, say that we choose to do this or that, and that our acts are voluntary. But such phrases merely mean that we assent to what we do. What we do is none the less governed by causes, and therefore by necessity.

The world-process is circular. God changes the fiery substance of himself first into air, then water, then earth. So the world arises. But it will be ended by a conflagration in which all things will return into the primal fire. Thereafter, at a pre-ordained time, God will again transmute himself into a world. It follows from the law of necessity that the course taken by this second, and every subsequent, world, will be identical in every way with the course taken by the first world. The process goes on for ever, and nothing new ever happens. The history of each successive world is the same as that of all the others down to the minutest details.

The human soul is part of the divine fire, and proceeds into humans from God. Hence it is a rational soul, and this is a point of cardinal importance in connection with the Stoic ethics. But the soul of each individual does not come direct from God. The divine fire was breathed into the first man, and thereafter passed from parent to child in the act of procreation. After death, all souls, according to some, but only the souls of the good, according to others, continue in individual existence until the general conflagration in which they, and all else,
return to God.

Stoic Ethics
Almost anyone who has any ideas about the Stoics is aware that the Stoics advocate two things:

- Indifference to things not under our control (wealth, health, reputation, and the like).
- Elimination of the passions or emotions.

Technically, this is correct: The Stoics place things like wealth and health, along with their opposites, poverty, illness, low status, etc., in the category of indifferent things. And they consider what they call the emotions (pathos) all bad. Happiness for them is apatheia, which we can translate as freedom from the emotions.

It's not difficult to imagine plausible late 20th-century objections to these notions.

OBJECTION 1. Stoics say we should be indifferent about life and health. How, we are tempted to ask, can a good person, who is, say, a parent, be indifferent about the life or health of her child? And isn't it a bit extreme, we want to say, not to care about one's own life or health?

OBJECTION 2. Stoics say we should eliminate the emotions. But psychological counselors today tell us to get in touch with our feelings. Dr. Bill DeFoore, for example, is author of a recent popular psychology paperback entitled Anger: Deal with It, Heal with it, Stop It from Killing You. He tells his readers to say to themselves All of my feelings are OK with me (77). DeFoore holds that at the core of each of us is an inner child, which is either identical to, or associated with, the more vulnerable emotions of fear, pain, and the need for love. We are supposed to affirm this inner child and to protect it (DeFoore, 67)

OBJECTION 3. Without passion, nothing creative or progressive ever gets done. People are sometimes described as apathetic by other people who would have liked to see them more concerned about racism, peace, the environment, or other social problems. If that's what Stoic apatheia recommends for everyone, well, we don't need it, we've got enough.

The Stoics can reply to these objections, but first we have to understand their perspective better. A good place to start is the Stoic conception of moral development.

Moral Development
The young child naturally wants to preserve itself; it should learn how, and it normally does.

As we become older, we become aware that we operate in various roles: son or daughter, brother or sister, friend, student, apprentice, etc. And this goes on into adulthood: we learn what it means to be a citizen, a mayor, a client, a professional, a teacher, a craftsperson, a husband, a wife, a parent, etc. Corresponding to each of these roles is a set of appropriate actions (roughly duties), and there's no particular mystery concerning what they are.

Generally speaking, what should be going on at these two stages is the promotion of the primary things according to nature--things like life, health, technical knowledge, possessions, beauty, etc. A child's choices for self-preservation and a person's selection of actions appropriate to his or her roles are all called appropriate actions (AA's). The child's AA is to try to stay alive, the doctor's AA is to assist that process if the child is injured or gets ill; the apprentice's AA is to learn technical knowledge, his master's job is to teach it
well. And so on.

The final stage, which is fully reached only rarely, is the goal which Stoics seek to reach. The person who has reached it, they say, is living consistently according to nature. This person, the sophos or wise person, lives virtuously as well as happily. Such a person is able to observe in practice, not merely in words, the distinctions on the Stoic Values chart. She can distinguish between goods, evils and indifferents, but within the indifferents, she distinguishes between the preferred and rejected indifferents.

From this perspective, only the virtues, actions that express the virtues, and feelings inseparable from virtue are good. By contrast, and that phrase cannot be overstressed--by contrast, by comparison, things like life, health, possessions, good reputation, etc. are not good but indifferent. The term indifferent does not imply that we should not care about these things; only that we should not care about them when they conflict with right living and lead us into temptation or towards evil.

Now, the opposites of these indifferent things, bodily and external conditions like death, disease, poverty, and disgrace are in a similar position; compared with wickedness or evil, things like acting unjustly, in a cowardly manner, etc., these bodily and external conditions too are indifferent.

The Emotions

One's position on the so-called indifferent things is inseparable from her position on the emotions.

Emotions, say the Stoics, are excessive attachments to preferred things. When we lust for the pleasures associated with fame, high social status, possessions, money, etc., we are regarding these things as good. Yet they are ultimately indifferent.

If we fear losing or not getting these things, we are regarding their opposites--low social status, poverty, etc.--as bad or evil. Yet these too are ultimately indifferent.

Thus fear and lust are wrong because they involve a false belief. And likewise with distress (including grief) and delight.

We feel distress when we get what we fear (a rejected thing falsely believed evil).

We feel delight when we get what we lust for (a preferred thing falsely believed good).

These terms fear, lust, distress and delight should not be understood in the ordinary way, but need to be understood in relation to the other Stoic ideas to which you have been introduced. Just as energy in ordinary life means one thing, and in modern physical theory something a bit different, so lust in ordinary English is not quite the same thing as lust in Stoicism. You can lust after longevity, possessions, the praise of others, and even health as well as after another human being.

The Stoics say that emotions are excessive impulses disobedient to reason, that emotions are movements in the soul contrary to nature. (Disobedient to reason and contrary to nature mean about the same thing; the term nature sometimes means the ideal--contrary to nature here means contrary to reason.)
The Stoics say that emotions are upsets or disorders in the soul. They are physical events, but they are also mental events. As a mental event, each emotion involves a compound belief, one part of which is fresh.

Here’s an example: Suppose someone whom I know passes me on the street and seems to ignore me. I might feel hurt or angry over this. In this case, there is a background belief (BB):

(BB) So-and-so ignored me.

BB is presupposed by this emotion but not part of it.

The emotion itself is composed of two beliefs:

1. So-and-so’s ignoring me was a bad thing.
2. I ought to be distressed over So-and-so’s ignoring me.

(2) is the fresh part. Typically events in our more remote past no longer sting, even if we still regard them as bad. I might still think (1) ten years after the event but no longer think (2). In that case I would no longer be angry.

Note that for the Stoics (1) and (2) are both false. (1), however, is the main problem since (2) is largely based on (1).

According to the Stoics every belief can be analyzed into two components ((a) and (b)):

(a) The thought itself, without endorsement.
(b) Assent, endorsement, of the thought.

Stoics call the first component (a) an appearance. For example, the appearance in (1) is:

(1a) So-and-so’s ignoring me appears to be a bad thing.

One might say to herself:

(1b) Yes, it is.

Unless we assent to false appearances such as this one, we do not experience an emotion. It is our power to assent or withhold assent that makes it possible to avoid emotions. Unfortunately, most of us have not developed the skill to use this power correctly, so we tend to endorse the false appearances that lead to emotion.

Preferred and Rejected Indifferents

Stoics do not altogether ignore the usual distinctions between life and death, health and disease, possessions and poverty. They call things like life and wealth preferred, things like death and disease rejected. The preferred things are preferred over the rejected ones. But their value is virtually zero whenever they have to be compared with good things, such as virtuous action.

A person who becomes wise and virtuous will undergo a shift of perspective. Much of what was once called good or bad will be reinterpreted. Wealth, for example, is now understood as a preferred thing, no longer a good on the same scale with virtue; in comparison with
goodness or virtue, wealth is essentially neutral.

Can we be more specific about virtue? It includes character traits like courage, fidelity, fairness, and honesty, plus the mental ability to make wise moral choices. For the Stoics, virtue is an art that governs selection among the preferred and rejected indifferents. It is an art of living.

AN EXAMPLE. Consider a parent's relationship with her child. Naturally, the parent would like the child's good will, but virtue demands that the parent discipline the child when the child does something very wrong. Now, the good will of another person is not really a good, but a preferred thing; losing the good will of another person, by contrast, is a rejected thing. If the parent selects the preferred thing on this occasion, retaining the child's good will in the short run, she will neglect virtue and act in an inferior way. In this case, acting virtuously means overriding the attraction of the preferred thing. The wise person chooses virtue over what is merely preferred and will not be torn over the issue.

The key to virtue for the Stoics is its consistency—courage, wisdom, justice, proper loyalty, proper generosity, proper friendliness—are all consistent with one another. And what is just in one circumstance is consistent with what is just in another circumstance. By contrast, pursuit of preferred things is not always consistent: one person's pursuit of power or fame or money or erotic pleasure may clash with someone else's.

The Stoic ethical teaching is based upon two principles already developed in their physics; first, that the universe is governed by absolute law, which admits of no exceptions; and second, that the essential nature of humans is reason. Both are summed up in the famous Stoic maxim, Live according to nature. For this maxim has two aspects. It means, in the first place, that men should conform themselves to nature in the wider sense, that is, to the laws of the universe, and secondly, that they should conform their actions to nature in the narrower sense, to their own essential nature, reason. These two expressions mean, for the Stoics, the same thing. For the universe is governed not only by law, but by the law of reason, and we, in following our own rational nature, are ipso facto conforming ourselves to the laws of the larger world. In a sense, of course, there is no possibility of our disobeying the laws of nature, for we, like all else in the world, act of necessity. And it might be asked, what is the use of exhorting a person to obey the laws of the universe, when, as part of the great mechanism of the world, we cannot by any possibility do anything else? It is not to be supposed that a genuine solution of this difficulty is to be found in Stoic philosophy. They urged, however, that, though we will in any case do as the necessity of the world compels us, it is given to us alone, not merely to obey the law, but to assent to our own obedience, to follow the law consciously and deliberately, as only a rational being can.

Virtue, then, is the life according to reason. Morality is simply rational action. It is the universal reason which is to govern our lives, not the caprice and self-will of the individual. The wise man consciously subordinates his life to the life of the whole universe, and recognizes himself as a cog in the great machine. Now the definition of morality as the life according to reason is not a principle peculiar to the Stoics. Both Plato and Aristotle taught the same. In fact, it is the basis of every ethic to found morality upon reason, and not upon the particular foibles, feelings, or intuitions, of the individual self. But what was peculiar to the Stoics was the narrow and one-sided interpretation which they gave to this principle. Aristotle had taught that the essential nature of humans is reason, and that morality consists in following this, his essential nature. But he recognized that the passions and appetites have their place in the human organism. He did not demand their suppression, but merely their control by reason. But the Stoics looked upon the passions as essentially irrational, and demanded their complete extirpation. They envisaged life as a battle against the passions, in which the latter had to be completely annihilated. Hence their ethical views end in a rigorous and unbalanced asceticism.

Aristotle, in his broad and moderate way, though he believed virtue alone to possess
intrinsic value, yet allowed to external goods and circumstances a place in the scheme of life. The Stoics asserted that virtue alone is good, vice alone evil, and that all else is absolutely indifferent. Poverty, sickness, pain, and death, are not evils. Riches, health, pleasure, and life, are not goods. A person may commit suicide, for in destroying his life he destroys nothing of value. Above all, pleasure is not a good. One ought not to seek pleasure. Virtue is the only happiness. And people must be virtuous, not for the sake of pleasure, but for the sake of duty. And since virtue alone is good, vice alone evil, there followed the further paradox that all virtues are equally good, and all vices equally evil. There are no degrees.

Virtue is founded upon reason, and so upon knowledge. Hence the importance of science, physics, logic, which are valued not for themselves, but because they are the foundations of morality. The prime virtues, and the root of all other virtues, is therefore wisdom. The wise man is synonymous with the good man. From the root-virtue, wisdom, spring the four cardinal virtues: insight, bravery, self-control, and justice. But since all virtues have one root, those who possess wisdom possess all virtue, and those who lack it lack all. A person is either wholly virtuous, or wholly vicious. The world is divided into wise and foolish people, the former perfectly good, the latter absolutely evil. There is nothing between the two. There is no such thing as a gradual transition from one to the other. Conversion must be instantaneous. the wise person is perfect, has all happiness, freedom, riches, beauty. They alone are the perfect kings, politicians, poets, prophets, orators, critics, and physicians. The fool has all vice, all misery, all ugliness, all poverty. And every person is one or the other. Asked where such a wise person was to be found, the Stoics pointed doubtfully at Socrates and Diogenes the Cynic. The number of the wise, they thought, is small, and is continually growing smaller. The world, which they painted in the blackest colors as a sea of vice and misery, grows steadily worse.

The similarities between Cynicism and Stoic ethics are apparent. However, the Stoics modified and softened the harsh outlines of Cynicism. To do this meant inconsistency, though. It meant that they first laid down harsh principles, and then proceeded to tone them down, to explain them away, to admit exceptions. Such inconsistency the stoics accepted with their habitual cheerfulness. This process of toning down their first harsh utterances took place mainly in three ways. First, they modified their principle of the complete suppression of the passions. Since this is impossible, and, if possible, could only lead to immovable inactivity, they admitted that the wise person might exhibit certain mild and rational emotions. Thus, the roots of the passions might be found in the wise person, though they would never be allowed to grow. In the second place, they modified their principle that all else, save virtue and vice, is indifferent. Such a view is unreal, and out of accord with life. Hence the stoics, with a masterly disregard of consistency, stuck to the principle, and yet declared that among things indifferent some are preferable to others. If the wise person has the choice between health and sickness, health is preferable. Indifferent things were thus divided into three classes: those to be preferred, those to be avoided, and those which are absolutely indifferent.

In the third place, the stoics toned down the principle that people are either wholly good, or wholly evil. The famous heroes and politicians of history, though fools, are yet polluted with the common vices of humankind less than others. Moreover, what were the Stoics to say about themselves? Were they wise men or fools? They hesitated to claim perfection, to put themselves on a level with Socrates and Diogenes. Yet they could not bring themselves to admit that there was no difference between themselves and the common herd. They were proficient, and, if not absolutely wise, approximated to wisdom.

Answers to Objections

Now let us return to the objections mentioned at the start.
WILL A STOIC PARENT BE INDIFFERENT REGARDING THE LIFE OR HEALTH OF HER CHILD? Strictly speaking, and in comparison with virtue, the life or health of every person is indifferent. But a Stoic parent chooses her acts because they are the right thing to do, and the right thing for a person to do normally coincides with the role-related appropriate action.

The main difference is the spirit in which the action is done--the non-Stoic does it so as to promote his own or somebody else's preferred values; the Stoic does it because it is right to do it. And doing the right thing is not indifferent at all.

The right thing lies in the striving, not in the external success. You can only do what is in your power. If, having strived rightly, you fail to save life or health, you have no reason for grief, which is a kind of distress.

NOW LET US CONSIDER THE OBJECTIONS CONCERNING THE STOIC IDEAL OF FREEDOM FROM THE EMOTIONS.

To some extent, the Stoic term *apatheia* is misleading, even in the ancient Stoics' own cultural context. In fact, the Stoic view is that the wise and virtuous person will have some feelings.

The wise person experiences not delight but joy (at living a wise life); not fear but caution (which prevents her from agreeing with false appearances); not lust for preferred things but wish (that one choose well and not badly). So, Stoic happiness is not altogether devoid of feeling.

Another important point is that the Stoics recognize what they call pre-emotions; these are physical twinges that are sometimes but not always followed by an emotion. Even a virtuous person may feel a pre-emotion (say, a twinge of desire) when he sees an attractive individual of the appropriate gender. But this is not the emotion of lust; lust is not present unless the first person endorses the false appearance that having intimate relations with that attractive person would be a good, instead of the preferred thing that it might be.

Earlier I mentioned an apparent conflict between the Stoic view that the emotions are bad and modern therapy. But when we examine more closely the views of modern therapists, we do not find such a big conflict. When the therapist whose book I cited (Dr. Bill DeFoore) says that anger can be a good thing, it turns out that he is really talking about emotional energy behind anger, which he reasonably claims can be diverted into nondestructive uses.

When psychologists today tell us to affirm our feelings, they do not mean that our emotional selves are just fine the way they are--people don't usually end up in psychologists' offices if they believe that, and psychologists are not going to put themselves out of business. What they mean is that we should not hide our emotional selves from ourselves; that it is better to be aware of our present feelings than not to be aware. But this awareness is also a starting point for change. None of this is in conflict with what the Stoics say.

Even the goals of contemporary psychological therapy are largely compatible with Stoic practice. Bill DeFoore says that the emotional energy which fuels rage can be redirected--towards acquiring skills that enable one to take responsibility for oneself.

Now the Stoics do not have our modern notion of emotional energy, which after all is loosely borrowed from the notion of modern energy that physicists use. But they had an idea they called impulse, the inner power behind action, and talked about directing this impulse, when it takes the form of desire (*orexis*), away from preferred things and towards the good. The
results would be similar to what DeFoore has in mind.

If one carries out the mental exercises that DeFoore recommends, he says, an inner peace will emerge. Vulnerability and anger will be gradually reduced.

The Stoics say that if a person can be successful in eliminating the emotions (all of which are irrational and violent movements in the soul), that person too will enjoy tranquillity. This is another way of understanding apatheia, the elimination of all the excessive movements of the soul. Thus, the Stoic ideal is psychological invulnerability. In fact, with this in mind, the Roman Stoic Seneca will compare the wise person to a god.

By contrast, Dr. DeFoore says that the vulnerable inner child never disappears entirely--the vulnerability never entirely goes away.

Yet of those who professed Stoicism and tried to live it, to the best of their ability, few claimed that they had reached the goal themselves, and many frankly admitted that they had not. The difference between the Stoics and psychologists like DeFoore seems to be one of emphasis.

The Stoic view, in my opinion, has at least one advantage. Because the Stoics don't strictly rule out reaching a stable goal, they spend more time thinking about what it would be like to live that way. And it does not seem to be a bad idea to have a clear target where one's own happiness is concerned.

Stoicism and Christianity
In recent decades one might have been considered competently acquainted with ancient philosophy if one knew the main outlines of the ideas of the pre-Socratics, Plato, and Aristotle. Knowledge of the Hellenistic philosophies of Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Skepticism along with the Roman traditions that followed was not considered essential. These traditions were thought to embody ancient philosophy in its decline. This certainly does not reflect the overall influence of Stoicism on the Western tradition.

In the first place a recognizable Stoic school persisted for some five hundred years in antiquity. While it differed from Christianity in fundamental ways (it was materialistic and pantheistic), nonetheless Christianity defined itself in an intellectual environment pervaded by Stoic ideas of the logos. Furthermore, for much of modern Western history, Stoic ideas of moral virtue have been second to none in influence. Stoic ideas regarding the natural order of things and of each rational soul as a divine element provided one basis upon which later ideas of natural law were erected. Kant's conception of the pre-eminent value of the Good Will and the moral indifference of external circumstances, though not entirely Stoic, shows the influence of Stoicism. In addition, Spinoza's conception of the promotion of the active over and against the passive emotions further reflects the pervasive influence of Stoic ideas. The notion of virtue as conforming to the rational order of things suggests the Christian idea of conforming one's will to divine providence. The influence of Stoicism on subsequent Western ethical and religious thought testifies to its continuing importance.

An Imaginary Conversation on Ethics Between a Stoic and an Aristotelian
Dr. Jan Garrett

Characters

Procopo. A student of ethics.
Graecus. His Greek friend, who resides in Rome and is introducing him to philosophy.

Aristotelicus. An Aristotelian philosopher.

Stoicus. A Stoic philosopher.

Time and Place: ca. 80 B.C., the streets of Rome.

Graecus. Come along. I'd like you to meet two friends of mine. They have just come back after a period of study with different philosophical schools in Greece. Before I introduce you--and before you find out about how they differ, I must tell you that they actually agree on quite a few points. Their agreements as significant as well as their disagreements.

Agreements between the Two Views

They both hold that (1) the goal of ethical philosophy is practical: the improvement of human lives, the promotion of eudaimonia. Eudaimonia is another term for what you Romans call vita beata (the blessed or supremely good life, happiness).

They agree, moreover, about several things pertaining to eudaimonia:

(2) that eudaimonia is also the ultimate end (goal) of human life.

(3) that eudaimonia is the most complete end;

(4) that eudaimonia is self-sufficient.

To say that it is the most complete end is just to say that other things are done for its sake, but it is desired for its own sake and for nothing further. Other valuable things are means to or parts of it, but it is not a means to or part of any other end.

Procopo. Please explain this talk about means and parts of ends.

Graecus. I think a couple examples will help. Exercise is a means to being strong; a bad-tasting medicine may be a means to a cure. On the other hand, paying your debts when you should pay them is part of acting in accord with justice; that is, it is a part of it without being all of it. But eudaimonia is neither a means to some other end nor a part of some other end.

Procopo. You said that eudaimonia is self-sufficient. What does that mean?

Graecus. If something is self-sufficient, then if you have it, you lack nothing and cannot reasonably wish anything to be added. It would be nonsense to say: I am really happy (eudaimôn) but I really need this or that other thing.

To go on now: Both my friends agree that

(5) eudaimonia provides a stable target capable of being sought for its own sake.

(6) actually realizing eudaimonia is at least to a significant degree dependent upon our efforts.

Like most philosophers, but unlike many people who are not philosophers, they insist that

(7) virtue is a central ingredient in eudaimonia and so they have a lot to say about virtue.
And about this topic too they agree in several ways, for example:

They both agree (8) that nobody is born virtuous, but persons become so by repeatedly acting in certain ways and not in others; for virtues are more or less stable tendencies to act appropriately and not badly.

They both think (9) that virtue is, or is associated with, something we might call an art of life. This art is a capacity to use correctly, or to relate correctly to, bodily and external things. By bodily things, I mean things like beauty and ugliness, sickness and health, life and death; by external things I mean things like friends and enemies, peace and war, wealth and lack of wealth.

They both think (10) that being virtuous has a lot to do with how we stand in relation to the emotions or passions (pathē).

Reason is an important human capacity for both of them. They agree that (11) reason is closely related to virtue and must be effective if we are to bring about eudaimonia.

And they insist that (12) feelings and thoughts are not two entirely separate aspects of the human soul: One will fear something just when one thinks that the thing represents an imminent evil. If one has stopped fearing something, then one has ceased to think that the thing represents an imminent evil.

Above all, both of them agree that (13) eudaimonia is a life with great inherent dignity or nobility.

Here they are now. Aristotelicus studied with a member of the Peripatos, the school whose founder was Aristotle. Stoicus is a member of the Stoic school, which was founded by Zeno of Citium and whose illustrious leaders have included Cleanthes and Chrysippus. Gentlemen, would you explain to Procopo here the differences between your philosophies of life.

Differences Between the Views

Primary Audiences

Aristotelicus. Our ethical philosophy was designed first for political leaders whose job is to guide the state and promote the happiness of the citizens. They need a clear idea what true happiness is if they are going to do that. In this sense, our ethics is not directly aimed at producing happiness for its immediate audience but at helping them do their tasks more effectively.

However, our philosophy can also help any morally decent and thoughtful person keep to the path of virtue. (In recent years this has been of more importance than it was in Aristotle's time.) Philosophy achieves this task by developing clear and reasonable general definitions of happiness as well as virtue and vice, and by clear and reasonable discussions of specific virtues and vices, for example, courage and cowardice, generosity and stinginess. These discussions cover how these virtues and vices are related to the emotions, to deliberation and choice, and to practical intelligence. Helping people have clear ideas about these important things keeps them on track, provided that they have a good start in life, a good upbringing.

Stoicus: For us the aim has always been to help individuals, to provide guidance to
individuals concerning the aim for which they at least unconsciously act and for which they should act consciously. We try to help them in their moral decision-making. More than our Aristotelian friends, who rely too much (in our opinion) upon a good prior upbringing, we seek to persuade individuals to upgrade their goals in accord with reason and change their values in order to promote their own well-being.

External and Bodily Values

Aristotelicus. For us lack or loss of external goods such as friends and wealth and bodily goods such as health can prevent the full blooming of eudaimonia. External goods also include other family members, one's good reputation in the mind of others, and a good political environment. Bodily goods also include strength, physical beauty and biological life itself.

Stoicus. Our disagreement here is sharp. We refuse to call good what the Aristotelians call bodily goods and external goods. With the exception of good persons who are friends, we say that these outside and bodily things are preferred or advantageous rather than good. The positive reason for calling them preferred is that nature herself leads us to select them. But that does not mean they are really good. Lack or loss of preferred values cannot destroy or even seriously hamper true eudaimonia. If individuals are truly virtuous, they are also wise and happy; and they cannot be happy without also being wise and virtuous. Our view is that virtue is sufficient for happiness. Virtue is a complete and self-sufficient good.

Graecus. You'll see, Procopo, that many of the differences between Aristotelicus and Stoicus hinge on this issue. Incidentally, Stoicus did not tell you that he also describes preferred things as indifferent.

Stoicus. Unlike some of my fellow Stoics, who delight in sounding paradoxical, I like to be cautious when I introduce the term indifferent. The fact that we say that preferred things are indifferent does not mean that they are not valuable. We just refuse to put them into the same class with virtue, which Aristotelicus does when he calls external and bodily values goods. We say they are indifferent because even without them one can be happy (in Greek eudaimôn)—one can live well, so long as one has virtue.

External and Bodily Disvalues

Graecus. While we are on this topic, note that the external and bodily values have opposites, which one might call disvalues. The external and bodily disvalues include children who turn out bad, bad reputation in the mind of others, poverty, bad reputation in the mind of others, illness, physical ugliness, and shortness of life.

Aristotelicus. We call your external and bodily disvalues evils, bad things.

Stoicus. But we Stoics call them rejected things. We want to distinguish them from the vices and the emotions, which are really evil or bad. We say that rejected things, like the preferred ones, are also indifferent. That does not mean it is not preferrable to avoid the rejected things, only that if you cannot avoid rejected things but remain wholly free from vice, your eudaimonia is untouched. Poverty and ugliness are compatible with happiness, wickedness is not.

Aristotelicus. As for us, although we call things such as health and possessions goods, we insist that they are not the highest goods. And we never say that since they are good we are always better off with more of them. There is, for example, a natural limit to the wealth
one ought to have. Beyond a sufficiency for oneself, one's household and friends, one needs little more. I admit that political leaders need more than, say, philosophers who lead a more private life. The right amount must be related to one's situation and this is not the same for everyone.

The Value of Life

Graecus. One really sharp difference is that concerning the value of life itself.

Stoicus. Yes, for us, life is a preferred indifferent value, not a good. It's important to realize that this is clear only to the person who is already virtuous or very close to it. We are quite aware that anyone far below this moral level will find our claim absurd. A virtuous person, which is the same thing as a wise person (sophos), does not tightly cling to life because he does not regard it as a good. Granted, continued life is preferable to death and to be selected if one can have it without evils, i.e., without living badly or viciously.

Aristotelicus. Our view is closer to common sense. We think that a good life has a certain natural span and a normal shape --a period of maturation, a period of flourishing, a period of decline, and a natural death after, say, 60-70 years. If a person is cut off in or before his prime, that represents a genuine loss of something good. Our view helps to explain why an early death, especially of a good person, is a tragedy.

Stoicus. The drawback to your view is that it makes it reasonable for a virtuous person to fear death. We Stoics deny that a virtuous person will fear death. A person's life is complete and self-sufficient just when he or she is living virtuously. It does not require any more time after that point. (Turning to Graecus and Procopo) If Aristotelicus is virtuous in his own sense of the term, he actually has a reason to hesitate to do the right thing when the choice is between doing the right thing and risking death. I might hesitate too, but that's because I am not yet fully virtuous. If I were fully virtuous (in the Stoic sense), then I wouldn't hesitate. Which kind of virtuous person do you think is really courageous?

The Emotions

Graecus. You gentlemen also disagree about the emotions, I understand.

Aristotelicus. Yes, the position one takes on the external and bodily things is closely linked to the position one takes on the emotions. Differences on the first lead to differences on the second. For us Aristotelians, the emotions or passions (pathê) are neither good nor bad in themselves. For example, anger is bad only when it is expressed inappropriately, towards the wrong person, or at the wrong time, or to the wrong degree (excessively or deficiently).

Stoicus. For Stoics, the emotions are always bad. That is why we sometimes describe eudaimonia as apatheia (freedom from the emotions): happiness is, or precisely coincides with, freedom from the emotions.

Graecus. I have to warn Procopo that you Stoics use the term emotion in a somewhat strange way. For one thing, you admit that some feelings are not emotions.

Stoicus. Yes, we understand emotions as violent movements of the soul, and not all feelings fit this description. Now, the wise person will wish to do the right thing for the right reason, and wish (a good feeling) is not an emotion, though lust is. The wise person will exercise caution; the wise person will take care not to judge that preferred things are good); caution
(another good feeling) is not an emotion, though fear is. And the wise person will experience joy, at living virtuously. Joy (also a good feeling) is not an emotion, though delight is.

Emotions and Judgments

Aristotelicicus. You use the words fear and delight in a strange way, too.

Stoicus. Ethics is a science and in a science specially defined terms are sometimes unavoidable.

Perhaps you think it strange that we equate all these emotions with false judgments. For us,[1] lust, which is aimed at preferred things, is a judgment that some preferred thing at which we aim is good. The judgment is false because a preferred thing is not a good one.

[2] Fear, which is related to rejected things, is a judgment that some rejected thing which we try to avoid is evil. The judgment is false because rejected things are not true evils.

[3] Delight, which is related to preferred things, is the judgment that a present preferred thing is good. The judgment is false once again because preferred things are not really good.

And [4] distress, which is related to rejected things, is a judgment that some present rejected thing is bad, but this is false since rejected things are not really bad.

Graecus (to Procopo). Stoicus has just described for you the four main classes of emotions in the Stoic system.

Aristotelicicus. My view is less systematic, perhaps, but more plausible and closer to what most people say. Some delights and sorrows, appetites and fears, are appropriate and found in the lives of virtuous people. A virtuous person desires to see justice done and is delighted or pleased when it is done. Such people are disappointed when it is not done. They fear death, not least because they are aware of their own goodness, and realize that eradication of good persons is an evil; however, they will risk death and accept it if doing so is the price of doing the right thing: for they fear doing the shameful thing more than they fear death. But the emotions are not always right any more than they are always wrong. Excessive fear of death is wrong. Excessive desire for wealth is wrong. Cowardly soldiers feel too much delight when their commander orders a retreat and are too disappointed when their commander orders an advance towards the enemy.

Stoicus. For you, there's also a proper amount of anger that one should feel when one is insulted. This is a striking example of the differences between Stoics and Aristotelians. We deny that any anger is legitimate. First of all, anger in this case is the false judgment that a present insult is a bad thing. But while such an insult is not nice and can be properly called a rejected thing, it is not bad--what is bad is the erroneous judgment, made by Aristotelians and others, that the insult is bad. Secondly, anger makes us lose self-control; it is like very fast running--you cannot stop exactly where you want if you are in such rapid motion. That's why anger so often leads to inappropriate violence. And where it does not lead to violence against others, it tears up the insides of the person who is angry.

Aristotelicicus. In any case, for us moral virtue is a disposition to express emotions or passions (such as anger, fear, confidence, desire for food, etc.) appropriately, i.e., in the right degree, neither excessively nor deficiently, at the right time, towards the right object,
etc. For us, moral virtue and experiencing the emotions are compatible.

Stoicus. In our view, the emotions are all bad. They are false and ignorant judgments regarding values, and such ignorance is a vice.

Pain

Procopo. Where does pain fit in? I heard that Stoics regard pain as a false judgment. I don't understand how anyone can say that pains are simply judgments, as if I could make the pain of a spear wound go away just by thinking ‘Hey, it's only a bodily injury that may kill me.'

Stoicus. There has been some confusion arising from the fact that the Greek term which I translate ‘distress’ is sometimes translated as ‘pain.’ It is better to distinguish between pain, a very real thing beyond our total control, and distress, which is an emotion. For us, then, pain is a rejected indifferent. We distinguish here between

(1) the felt physical pain,

(2) the appearance or the thought that this thing (which happens to belong to the class of rejected things) is something bad,

and (3) the emotion of distress.

The first thing to occur is normally the felt physical pain. Next there is the appearance, an idea about that pain resulting from habit or social suggestion, for example, e.g., something bad has happened to me.

But to have such an appearance or thought in one's soul is not yet to feel an emotion of distress. For an emotion to emerge, a third element is required: judgment or assent. Without assent to the appearance, without judgment, there is no true emotion, no distress in the genuine sense. Human beings can refuse to assent to appearances, and we should refuse when they are false. Of course, such refusal cannot occur without practice; indeed, it rarely occurs without both philosophy and practice; but it can be done. The problem is that it is not usually done, and when we assent to such appearances, we choose to enslave ourselves to emotions.

At the very least, the Stoics hold that a person who truly understands Stoic philosophy, who has fully assimilated it and tried to live by it, can be eudaimon even in the face of pain. A wise person cannot always avoid the experience of pain, but can and will be entirely free from distress.

Once Again: External and Bodily Things

Graecus. Let us get back to the issue of external or bodily goods, such as wealth or soundness of body.

Stoicus. You mean preferred indifferents.

Graecus. Sorry.

Aristotelicus. Well, they are goods, and they are often indispensable for happiness. Lack of them can hinder one's virtuous activity, and happiness, at least as we Aristotelians define it, is a complete life of activity in accordance with virtue. Now, generosity is a virtue, but a
person who has barely enough on which to survive cannot exercise this virtue. Courage is a
virtue, but a person who is not of sound body, who is, say, crippled from disease, cannot
fight to defend his city and so cannot exercise courage where it could be most appropriately
exercised.

The Importance of Intentions

Stoicus. We Stoics insist, on the contrary, that virtue can be active internally, in striving,
even if nobody other than the virtuous person knows about it. On the rare occasions that we
are totally lacking in the preferred things that enable us to express our virtue in overt
action, striving is enough. A Stoic can be virtuous in a prison cell and in chains, even if all
her muscles are paralyzed. Note, however, for striving to be virtuous, it must be
whole-hearted. If your aims are mixed, some good, some bad, the fact that some of them
were good will not override the bad ones. And having entirely good intentions is not
something that comes easy to us.

Moral Reasons and Ethical Conservatism

Graecus. When you develop your ethical ideas, where do you get your starting points?

Aristotelicus. Ethical philosophy starts from the common beliefs of the many and/or the
wise. That is, it collects received opinions and tries to find some coherent perspective
embedded within them. Of course, it must remove contradictions and it does not have to
pay much attention to the opinions that vicious people express concerning happiness and
virtue (when they are not looking over their shoulder to see who else is listening). Our
method gives greater weight to nobler and wiser opinions. But we must try to save the
phenomena, that is, we must never get too far from the spirit of the culture.

Stoicus. Stoics do not reject the appeal to received opinions, but we believe that philosophy
must be willing to reject some doctrines held very tenaciously by most people and even by
many of the so-called wise and apparently virtuous civic leaders. Received opinions may be
incoherent at a fairly deep level. This is especially clear in at least one difference between
Aristotle and us Stoics: Aristotle tried to show that there were natural slaves, that the
institution of slavery was natural and thus sometimes justified. We Stoics insist on the
common humanity of slaves and freemen, citizens and noncitizens, Greek, Roman and
barbarian.

Graecus. Finally, would you each comment on the role dignity plays in your conception of
eudaimonia.

Aristotelicus. For us, the life in accord with virtue is a dignified life in itself, but it is more
dignified when accompanied by sufficient material and external goods, good health, good
friends, freedom, citizenship, etc. Slavery is contrary to a truly dignified life, but a person
who is not a slave by nature and who is forced to be a slave by circumstances beyond
individual control may live with greater dignity than other slaves if he or she is virtuous.

Stoicus. Once again, for us external and bodily things are of essentially no significance when
it comes to true dignity. For us no human is a slave by nature. Acting slavishly or not, which
is to say, wickedly or not, is up to us. A poor person or a slave can live (or, if need be, die)
virtuously and with true dignity. In that respect, there is no difference between rich and
poor, slave and free.

Pragmatism
Bruce Kimball identified six points of pragmatism in The Condition of American Liberal Education. They are:

1. That belief and meaning, even truth itself, are fallible and revisable;
   That an experimental method of inquiry obtains in all science and reflective thought;
   That belief, meaning, and truth depend on the context and the inter-subjective judgment of the community in which they are formed;
   That experience is the dynamic interaction of organism and environment, resulting in a close interrelationship between thought and action;
   That the purpose of resolving doubts or solving problems is intrinsic to all thought and inquiry
   That all inquiry and thought are evaluative, and judgments about fact are no different from judgments about value.

The pattern of our thought about the world is explicitly described in Logic: The Theory of Inquiry (1938). There, Dewey identifies a six-step process that includes:

1. The presence of an indeterminate situation in our experience of the world to which we respond with subjective doubt,
2. Our recognition of this situation as a problem to which the principles of inquiry may be applied,
3. Our invention of various hypotheses as potential solutions that might (if viable) resolve the problem,
4. Our careful reasoning about the meaning of these solutions in relation to the problem itself and to our other convictions,
5. The application of our results to the facts of the situation, understood by reference to the operation of our observations on them
6. Acceptance of a scientific or common sense explanation of the situation that provisionally reduces the original indeterminacy.

Objectivism

Ayn Rand summarized her philosophy in The Objectivist Newsletter in 1962:

1. Metaphysics: Objective Reality
2. Epistemology: Reason
3. Ethics: Self-Interest
4. Politics: Laissez-faire capitalism

1. Reality exists as an objective absolute--facts are facts, independent of man's feelings, wishes, hopes or fears.
2. Reason (the faculty which identifies and integrates the material provided by man's
senses) is man’s only means of perceiving reality, his only source of knowledge, his only
guide to action, and his basic means of survival.

3. Man--every man--is an end in himself, not the means to the ends of others. He must
exist for his own sake, neither sacrificing himself to others nor sacrificing others to himself.
The pursuit of his own rational self-interest and of his own happiness is the highest moral
purpose of his life.

The ideal political-economic system is laissez-faire capitalism. It is a system where men
deal with one another, not as victims and executioners, nor as masters and slaves, but as
traders, by free, voluntary exchange to mutual benefit. It is a system where no man may
obtain any values from others by resorting to physical force, and no man may initiate the
use of physical force against others. The government acts only as a policeman that protects
man's rights; it uses physical force only in retaliation and only against those who initiate its
use, such as criminals and foreign invaders. In a system of full capitalism, there should be
(but historically has not yet been) a complete separation of state and economics, in the
same way and for the same reasons as the separation of state and church.

Humanistic Principles
by: Jeff Traigle (1987)

Space, the final frontier. These are the voyages of the starship Enterprise, her five year
mission to explore strange new worlds, to seek out new life and new civilizations, to boldly
go where no man has gone before. 1 These words, which preceded every episode of the
television series, Star Trek, have become legendary in the realm of science fiction. What,
however, do they mean? From the recent Star Trek movies, it becomes clear that the
exploration is not so much of the universe for new planets and new life forms as it is of the
Earth for a new world and a new life under a humanistic world government.
Space is defined, according to The Merriam-Webster Dictionary, as the limitless area in
which all things exist and move. It is the collection of all matter into a single functioning
unit. Within this unit, the many distinctly different parts work together to keep the whole
intact.
It is in this manner that the Enterprise functions. She is the crew's world, the delicate,
self-sufficient vessel of their existence. The members, each different in ethnic background
and personality, work together to keep her operating properly and to insure their survival,
acting as a unified driving force of the ship.
The humanists, who follow the basic moral outline set forth by Paul Kurtz in Humanist
Manifestos I and II, believe that such a driving force can exist in the world in which we live.
Kurtz asserts that they deplore the division of humankind on nationalistic grounds. Man has
reached a turning point in history where the best option is to transcend the limits of national
sovereignty and to move towards building a world community in which all sectors of the
human family can participate To accomplish this they look towards the development of a
system of world law and a world order based upon transnational federal government. 2 The
Enterprise is symbolic of this unity, and her crew are the representatives of all the world's
nations.
The recent Star Trek movies have dealt with three closely related objectives that the
humanists feel must be reached before a unified world government can exist: 1) having
faith in man, 2) finding purpose for existence, and 3) deciding the role of God in that
existence. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin describes the first objective, faith in man, as being the
fervent conviction that mankind as an organized whole possesses a future; a future
consisting of not merely successive years, but of higher states to be achieved by struggle,
not only for survival, but for some form of higher life.3
The one crew member on the Enterprise that best depicts this struggle for a higher life is
Mr. Spock, the half-human, half-Vulcan First Officer. He is torn between his preferred Vulcan
nature, which dictates that emotions serve no purpose and should be eliminated, and his ever-present human nature, which dictates that emotions are a necessary part of the whole and should be honored. It is in Star Trek - The Motion Picture that this inner conflict is resolved.

Spock has been on Vulcan, his home planet, undergoing the Kalinahr, the Vulcan ritual in which all emotions are released, and has nearly completed his training when we first see him in the movie. He is disturbed by a consciousness from space during the final phases and is unable to finish. Since he fails the Kalinahr, he leaves Vulcan in search of the consciousness because he believes that it holds his answers.

He finds, once he is aboard the Enterprise, that the consciousness lies within an enormous energy cloud that is headed towards Earth. Spock senses that the being inside is extremely intelligent and is capable of emitting only pure logic. Because of his desire and failure to achieve such a state, he is deeply intrigued by the being.

During the long encounter with the being, in which the Enterprise becomes trapped, Spock discovers the answer for which he has been searching. He tells Captain Kirk that logic and knowledge are not enough; without emotions, there is only emptiness. This realization is based upon one of the beliefs of humanists that reason should be balanced with compassion and the whole person fulfilled.

The answers he found were concealed in the resolution of his confusion between what he was and what he wanted to be. This confused state is similar to that of many humans today, torn between the need to be self-reliant and the need to be subservient. The Enterprise being trapped in the being was symbolic of this state on the global level. The humanists believe, as is depicted by the Enterprise's eventual escape, that the only way to resolve the situation is to choose the path of self-reliance.

The second objective, finding purpose for existence, is a problem that has faced man since early times. The humanists find the answer to this problem in their faith in man. They submit that men can find plenty of scope and meaning in their lives through freely enjoying the rich and varied potentialities of this luxurious earth; through preserving, extending and adding to the values of civilization; through contributing to the progress and happiness of mankind during billions and billions of years; or through helping to evolve a new species surpassing man.

In general, man's purpose is to make improvements in himself. Indeed, one of the major problems man has to face is his feeling about death. Most people get depressed or try to avoid the subject when it is mentioned. In doing this, they have trouble realizing any satisfactory purpose for life because they view death as the absolute end. It becomes evident then, as Kirk states in Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan, that how we deal with death is at least as important as how we deal with life.

In Star Trek II, Kirk represents the leaders of all the world's nations. He is struggling to save the Enterprise, symbolic of the world, and her crew, its citizens, from what seems like certain destruction. When he is asked by Lieutenant Saavik, a Vulcan cadet training for a starship command, if he has ever faced death, he replies, No, not like this. It is a question that too many people tend to ignore because their religions state that the end of man on Earth is inevitable. When it comes to the annihilation of the human race, however, Kirk has the right idea when he says, I do not believe in a no-win situation.

On the individual level, Kirk has to deal with another type of death, that of his close friend, Spock. All people must face this at some point in their lives. Kirk had an advantage that most do not have: He knew Spock died to save the Enterprise and her crew from being destroyed because, as Spock said before he died, The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few or the one. Spock's action follows the concept that ...to commit oneself to Humanist values is to put the welfare of human beings first.

The final objective, the role of God, is the most controversial, if not the most important, of the three. If man were to accept a faith in himself and to believe that man holds his own destiny, the way in which he views God would be drastically changed. He would no longer
be the omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient being that He is believed to be. Though some humanists deny the existence of God, only a modification of present beliefs is necessary to accomplish their goal. In reevaluating the current concept of God, three main areas must be considered: 1) His existence, 2) the creation of life, and 3) the salvation of man.

When Gene Roddenberry was creating the character Spock, he made two columns on a page. In one column, he wrote questions and in the other, he wrote Spock's answers. When God was mentioned in his notes, Spock corrected, Its proper name is The Consciousness. This statement proposes that God does not exist physically, but as a feeling within people, as a consciousness. This would seem logical since, as Captain Decker, the Executive Officer of the Enterprise in Star Trek, stated, We all create God in our own image.

In Star Trek II, the Federation has found a way to create life from lifelessness: the Genesis Project. It is a concept that takes away from religion the belief that only God can create life. It is no longer beyond the scope of man to perform such a task. The cells of living organisms can be altered and reproduced by humans. As the mysteries of life are slowly solved, the need to rely on the belief in a supernatural creator decreases.

The Genesis Project is also significant because it yields to the needs of two current theories of the origin of life: the Big Bang and creation. The Big Bang theory is supported by the fact that an explosion occurred, due to the detonation of the Genesis Torpedo, which produced a solar system containing life. The creation theory is maintained because there was a creator, man.

Through Star Trek II and Star Trek III: The Search for Spock, Spock becomes a parallel of Jesus. This should not seem peculiar because the moral teachings of the humanist philosophers are basically the same as those of Christianity. Man's salvation, however, is believed to be in his own hands instead of God's. The sacrifice that Spock makes in order to save the Enterprise, again symbolic of the world, is the same as that made by Jesus in the Christian religion. Each died by his own choice in order to assure the salvation of his people. Both believed in what Spock said logic dictates: The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few or the one.

This parallel is also discovered in what Kirk says after Spock dies. In Star Trek II, he quotes the last line of Dickens' Tale of Two Cities, It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done. It is a far, far better rest that I go to, than I have ever known. Then, in Star Trek III, he replies to a trainee who asked if there would be a celebration when they returned to Earth: God knows there should. This time we have paid for the party with our dearest blood.

The aftermath of Spock's death is similar to the aftermath of Christ's death. The same basic questions are being asked. In a conversation with Kirk in Star Trek III, Sarek, Spock's father, condemns him for leaving Spock on the Genesis planet. He says, Spock trusted you and you denied him his future. When Kirk, bewildered, replies that he saw no future, Sarek becomes upset and exclaims that only the body was dead and that he should have taken the body to Vulcan. Kirk, still baffled, asks why, and Sarek replies, Because he asked you to. He entrusted you with his very essence, with everything that was not of the body. He asked you to bring him to us and to bring that which he gave you, his living spirit.

This last statement is a summary of the attitude that the Christians have towards Jesus and his teachings. They claim that man should do as He asked for the simple reason that He taught and practiced goodness and entrusted man to carry out His teachings and practices. He gave man that which was not of the body, His living spirit.

Why, some may ask, should a movie based upon humanistic principles contain what would appear to be a religious statement? The answer to this lies in what Kirk told the Starfleet Commander in Star Trek III: You don't have to believe. I'm not even sure that I do, but if there is a chance that Spock has an eternal soul, then it is my responsibility. Kirk, representing a global voice, is saying that if the human race has a chance of a glorious and peaceful future, whether we believe in it or not, it is our responsibility to make sure it has every conceivable opportunity to exist. As for God's role in this future, it can be said that
whatever feelings humanists have towards the mysterium fascinans and the mysterium
tremendum of the universe, whether they call it God and whether God is dead or alive for
them, they categorically deny that man's destiny depends on any external power, call it God
or the Universe or Nature, 9 and, while there is much we do not know, humans are
responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.

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Such aspirations as a unified world government, faith in man, finding purpose in life, and
deciding the role of God may seem to some pompous ventures, but, while their goals for the
human race are high ones, the humanists realize the limitations of man.
We should not be carried away wishfully by the lure of the possible, nor believe that it can
easily become actual. In the nature of things, we are still frail animals, and though capable
of creating wonders, we are still prone to error, limited by power, finite in an infinite
universe. Although we may tap new sources of energy, there are doubtless powers which
we must recognize and appreciate as beyond our control. There is a serene
unfathomableness in the universe, far greater than man. We are insignificant by the
measure of eternity.11

The picture of a humanistic world that Star Trek shows is not a totally undesirable one,
though reaching a reasonably close situation in our world would be slowed by controversy
from the religious community (in particular the Christian community). The humanists feel
that our purpose is to achieve and to live in such a civilization, one in which all men and
women of all races are equal, in which logic and reason are balanced with emotion instead
of being dominated by it, and in which the unknown is appreciated instead of worshiped. If,
indeed, we ever reach this goal, we will begin a new epoch in our eternal mission to explore
ourselves and what we wish to become, hence, to boldly go where no man has gone
before.

ENDNOTES
4Kurtz, Humanist Manifestos I and II, p. 18.
5Corliss Lamont, The Philosophy of Humanism (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co.,
6Antony Flew, Scientific Humanism, p. 112, quoted in J. Wesley Robb, The Reverent
416.
9Alfred Braunthal, Salvation and the Perfect Society (Amherst, Massachusetts: The
10Kurtz, Humanist Manifestos I and II, p. 16.

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Sayings attributed to Surak of Vulcan
We have differences: May we, together, become greater than the sum of both of us.
There is no offense where none is taken.
Nobility lies in action not in name.
The spear in the Other's heart is the spear in your Own: You are He.
He talks peace if it is the only way to live.
There is no other wisdom and no other hope for us but that we grow wise.
Time is a path from the past to the future and back again. The present is the crossroads of both.
Wide experience increases wisdom, provided the experience is not sought purely for the stimulation of sensation.
In my time, we knew not of Earth men. I am pleased to see that we have differences. May we together become greater than the sum of both of us.

Sayings attributed to Spock of Vulcan

On Being a Vulcan
To be Vulcan, means to adopt a philosophy, a way of life which is logical and beneficial. We can not disregard that philosophy merely for personal gain - no matter how important that gain may be. (Spock to Amanda - Journey to Babel)
I too am a Vulcan, bred to peace. (Spock - Savage Curtain)

On Logic
Logic is the beginning of wisdom not the end. (Spock to Valeris STII)
Logic is a little bird tweeting in meadow; logic is a wreath of pretty flowers which ... smell bad... (Spock - I Mudd)

On Existence
Change is the essential process of all existence.

On Death
I would remind you, though, that the word for 'decide' is descended from older words meaning to kill; options and opportunities die when decisions are made. Be careful what you kill. (Spock, Spock's World by Diane Duane)
Is death truly a curse? There is little logic in condemning something one has not experienced...or does not remember experiencing. (Spock - Wounded Sky, Diane Duane)
Accepting death - by understanding that every life comes to an end, when time demands it. Loss of life is to be mourned, but only if the life was wasted. (Spock to younger Spock in Yesteryear - STA)

On Killing
It is illogical to kill without reason.
If there were a reason a Vulcan is quite capable of killing - logically and efficiently. (Spock - Journey to Babel)

On the Warrior Mentality
Shakespeare understood the warrior mentality: ‘Witness this army, of such mass and charge/ Exposing what is mortal and usure/To all that fortune, death, danger dare/ Even for an eggshell.’ or as a Klingon poet might put it, Captain, any excuse for a fight. (Vulcan Academy Murders: J. Lorrah)

On Intelligence
A world without intelligence is a primitive place, Doctor, not an enchanted place. Intelligence is part of the advancing scheme of evolution. Without it, nature reaches a plateau very quickly and does not progress beyond raw survival. The full flavor of possibility goes un-savored. And that... is a true shame. (The First Frontier: by Diane Carey & Dr. James Kirkland)

On Fear
Irrational fear is a construct of an undisciplined intellect (Spock to Chekov in Deep Domain)*
Fear is among the strongest and most violent of the emotions. (Spock - Wolf in the fold.)

On vegetarians (sort of)
In a strict scientific sense, Doctor, we all feed on death - even Vegetarians. (Spock - Wolf in the Fold).

On Computers
Computers make excellent and efficient servants - but I have no wish to serve under them. *
...that computers are more efficient - not better than human beings (Spock - The Ultimate Computer)

On emotion
However, I have noted, that the 'healthy' release of emotion is frequently very unhealthy for those closest to you. (Spock - Plato's Stepchildren)
Emotions are alien to me - I am a scientist. (Spock - Paradise syndrome)
What you do not yet understand is that Vulcans do not lack emotion. This is an all too common misconception. It is merely that our emotions are controlled, kept in check. This adherence to principles of logic offers a serenity that humans rarely experience in full. We have emotions. But we deal firmly with them and do not let them control us. (Elder Spock to young Spock in Yesteryear TOS-animated)
Humans smile with so little provocation. (Spock- Journey to Babel)

On knowledge
Not even Vulcans can know the un-known. (Spock - Immunity syndrome)
If I drop a wrench on a planet with a positive gravity field, I need not see it fall, nor hear it hit the ground, to know that it has in fact fallen. (Spock - Court Martial)
I object to Intellect without discipline. I object to power without constructive purpose. (Spock - Squire of Gothos)

On Humans behaviour
I do not mean to offend, sir, but it behaves with an almost human pattern. (Spock - The Ultimate Computer)

On Humanoid behaviour
It is the lot of 'man' to strive, no matter how content he is. Each of us at some time in our life turns to someone, a father, a brother, a God and asks Why am I here? What was I ment to be?. (Spock - ST-I)
On Fascinating
Fascinating is a word I use for the unexpected. (Spock - Squire of Gothos)

On diplomacy
We must acknowledge once and for all that the purpose of diplomacy is to prolong a crisis. (Spock - A taste of Armagedon)
The entire key to diplomacy is sincerity. Once that can be faked, the rest is simple. (Spock - The Rift: Peter David).

On madness
Madness has no purpose or reason but it may have a goal. (Spock - Alternative factor)

On Appreciation
Appreciation is a noun. It denotes the just valuation or recognition of worth. (Spock - My Enemy My Ally).

On Beauty
It is our way - Art and Science combined. There is no reason that function should not be beautiful - in fact beauty usually makes it more effective. (Spock - Spock's World)

On Creativity
Creativity is necessary for the health of the body. (Spock - Return of the Archons)

On Wanting
Having is not so pleasing as wanting. It is not logical, but it is often true. (Spock to T'Pring in Amok Time).

Spock's mental rambling
*Crisis situation,* he considered. *I must learn to handle it, and quickly. Emotional communication... (A Vulcan would sooner learn techniques of assassination.) Wait* Anomaly: Vulcans do learn techniques of... (Tal Shaya. The lirpa. The ahn-woon. Others...) Logical inconsistency: We suppress emotion because it clouds logic and leads to violence, which ends in destruction. Destruction is always undesirable. 'Reverence for life.' Surak's primary construct. Yet... we learn techniques of destruction. Why? Analyze *

*What was I taught?* Spock pondered. *There are rare circumstances under which logic dictates no other course.' So: violence motivated by logic is acceptable, but violence motivated by emotions is not. That appears consistent (Appears? Be sure.) * Wait. If the effect is the same, why should the motivation make any difference? * But certainly, it makes a difference. Emotional violence is uncontrolled, blind, irrational, while logically-motivated violence is... logical... No, one can't do that. Circular reasoning: illegitimate. Try again.*

*One simply cannot say,* Spock gnawed over the knotted problem, *that logic is right and emotion wrong. (Though I was taught that as a child. The reasons -- rationalizations? -- came later...) One must show why. (Show cause. So much misery and effort -- there had to be a reason for it.) Logic is... orderly and predictable. Emotion is not. (Is it? Does not anger reliably make one wish to do harm, while love makes one wish to protect, to be kind, to make one's beloved happy?) If that were always true, we would not be here. (No, the problem here is love denied its direct expression.) Indeed, Protection -- and relief at my eventual safety -- those are the only he knows. (What of the others?) I... do not allow others. How can he show kindness to me when I do not acknowledge kindness? How can
he attempt to make me happy when I refuse to feel happiness? (Own fault, then.) Yes...*

*I do not even know how to feel happiness * Spock berated himself. *Only not-sad, not-in-pain, not- frustrated... (All negative states.) True, nothing positive. Thus I allow Jim no positive expression of his feeling -- only these costly rescues from pain... (Is this where logic has brought us?) Surely, it was meant to do better than this *

*Examine premises,* Spock deliberated. *One's logic is no better than its basic premises. Vulcan adopted the philosophy of logic and emotional suppression in order to survive. Survival is the only purpose our logic serves. So there. (And what is survival?) Non-extinction. (No more?) Surely more A stone is not dead; neither is it alive. Life is... an organic process. There. (Nothing more? Plants live, and animals; do we only imitate them?) Certainly not. We... think. Yes, and strive to think well. Intelligence, then. (But computers think, and are not alive.) Of course, if one could develop an organic computer... (Is that what we are supposed to be?) This is a horrible idea

Spock snapped his head up, his back taut, fingers digging into the hearthrug. All those old human jokes, half-serious accusations, distant insults, had finally struck home.

*Good question,* Spock considered, looking up at the sky. *Concept never analyzed (or even fully defined). ...Satisfaction of desire? Perhaps. (But desire for what? What do I desire from life?) Life itself, of course. Survival... (But not just existence.) Intelligence also, and not to be in pain... nor to see him suffer. (Negatives Negative values again.) This problem again... (What solutions did Jim offer?) 'Aesthetic appreciation'... (of which Vulcan approves) and that shadowy (dangerous) realm of 'feelings' (of which Vulcan does not approve)...* He gave a very humanlike sigh. I do not know, Jim. I honestly do not know.

That is not what I need. *Indeed, Vulcan is full of philosophers, and I have never heard that any of them conclusively dealt with this problem...* He sighed again. *'When in doubt, observe'* I need facts, data, observation. You have always been most efficient at providing opportunities for that.

*What if... emotions are not irrational and chaotic, but have a hidden logic of their own? What if... one could purposefully use one's emotions, harness them, instead of just repressing them? What if... this is the secret of human vitality, a secret Vulcans lost long ago -- or perhaps never possessed? (What if... this were the reasons my father took a human wife? ) Is that why father so badly wanted me to go to the Vulcan Science Academy? Did he hope that I might inherit all those ill-understood human abilities, use them to rescue Vulcan from its dangerous stagnation, give our culture something better than negative goals? But I didn't. I took my valuable genes (and brain) and ran off to space. Lost his hope for saving Vulcan-- No wonder he was so displeased (Upset? Enraged?) Logical. (My father, a cultural radical) It would explain everything...*

He had run out of observed data in only a few hours, and the working hypothesis still worked. *Item,* he reviewed, *life involves more than just negative values (example: Vulcan, with its declining birth rate and cultural stagnation). Item: Humans appear to possess (unconsciously?) knowledge of positive values which Vulcans lack, and sorely need (which is quite possibly why I was born.) Item: Said knowledge includes the deliberate harnessing, manipulation and use (rather than repression) of emotions (observed example: affection). Addenda: Emotions not used properly in this fashion tend to turn on the possessor and cause destructive/self-destructive behavior

Astonishing Spock reared up on his elbows. We appear to have come to the same
conclusions by totally different lines of reasoning. Vulcans find it illogical to base anything as important as behavior or ethics on unproven theory, whereas you begin with the effect of belief/disbelief and work... hmmm, backwards. Both methods are equally valid.

...’It is illogical to deny one's nature.’ Spock’s voice was so quiet that Kirk wasn't sure he'd meant that to be heard. Necessary, critical, to understand these positive human capacities. Yes the only one I seem to possess is... that one emotion. How to use it? ... No idea. And my ignorance allows... He steepled his fingers and pressed his mouth against them.

... Conclusion
If you have read this document and do not agree with the things stated within it, I encourage you to live your life without it, and see how it goes. I challenge you. If you can tolerate the sight of one man killing another day after day then you can forget about Vulcans all together. But if you cannot stand the sight of violence, and cry when you think of the pain caused by war, then you will understand the need for this new kind of lifestyle. Good luck. Live long and prosper.