

RELATING OUR LIVES TO THE ENDURING

Christ Church  
Jan. 13, 1945

"...and of" religion means "to bind..."

It suggests the idea of being connected with  
related to  
something greater than self...

Sometimes it is a principle - sometimes  
sometimes a person - but always there is  
in the original form of Buddhism -  
this enduring reality WAS THE LAW OF KARMA

-- a kind of principle of cause and effect  
at the heart of things...

In the religion of Mohammed -- it was Allah  
whose prophet Mohammed was said to be...

In ancient Zoroastrianism -- IT WAS AHURA MAZDA  
a principle of light --  
after which Mazda lamps have been named...

AND SO IT GOES  
There have been many conceptions of the nature of  
THAT WHICH IS ULTIMATE OR FINAL IN REALITY...

BUT ALL MAJOR RELIGIONS  
ARE ONE IN THIS

## INTRODUCTION

Involved in every one of the major religions of the world ---  
is the IDEA OF RELATING <sup>one's life</sup> ~~OUR LIVES~~ TO SOMETHING MORE ENDURING THAN ~~OURSELVES~~..... <sup>himself</sup>.

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In its root ~~meaning~~ <sup>sense</sup>, religion means "to bind..."

It suggests the idea of being connected with  
related to  
something greater than self....

3) Sometimes <sup>the enduring reality is interpreted as</sup> ~~It is~~ a Principle - Sometimes a Law  
Sometimes a Mysterious Power

" " Person --- But always there is  
In the original form of Buddhism ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> Objective  
this enduring reality WAS THE LAW OF KARMA <sup>Reference</sup>

-- a kind of principle of cause and effect Mor  
at the heart of things...

Endur  
than the  
individual

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whose prophet Mohammed was said to be....

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a principle of light ---  
after which Mazda lamps have been named...

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AND SO IT GOES ---

There have been many conceptions of the nature of  
THAT WHICH IS ULTIMATE OR FINAL IN REALITY.....

~~--- BUT ALL MAJOR RELIGION ARE ONE IN THIS ---~~



They ~~like~~ <sup>try</sup> to help people relate their lives to something more enduring than themselves.....

all this, ~~that~~ raises the question B.

~~I~~ why should anybody want to relate his life to something more enduring than himself?

Immediately we have to acknowledge that ~~obviously~~, some people don't ----- they are quite willing to live for transitory pleasures and sensations and let it go at that.....

Such meaning as life may have ---- is to be found strictly in terms of MOMENTARY ENJOYMENTS.

In every generation, however, or

There are others, ~~however~~ who <sup>Fuller</sup> FEEL THAT THE MEANING OF LIFE IS SOMEHOW BOUND UP WITH BEING A PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER THAN YOURSELF...

Dostoyevsky -- the Russian <sup>novelist</sup> ~~writer~~ who has penetrated so deeply into ~~the~~ human nature, once wrote:

"The man who bows <sup>down to nothing</sup> ~~before no God~~, <sup>can never bear</sup> cannot stand the burden of himself....."

Life ~~without horizons~~ <sup>without</sup> outreaching purposes <sup>devotion of</sup> ~~devotion of~~ <sup>a real, devoted</sup> can become a dead weight -- as it does for a good many people.

*Therefore*

There are those who believe --- and live by the faith ---

THAT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LIFE COMES IS  
BEING RELATED TO

COOPERATING WITH

~~and CONTRIBUTING TO~~

some worhtful and on-going <sup>cause a</sup> reality.....

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There are ~~also~~ those --who believe --- and live by the faith

THAT ANY REAL (SECURITY) IN THIS WORLD --INNER SECURITY

..... <sup>having</sup> must come by way of ~~getting that~~ ONE'S LIFE

ROOTTED IN AN ABIDING REALITY -- of a trustworthy  
character.....

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There are those who believe -- and live by the faith

THAT OUR BRIEF LIVES -- TAKE ON LASTING MEANING ---

A sense of significance thro' identification with  
lasting values....

A sense of security

these are the FRUITS OF RELATING ONE'S LIFE TO

SOMETHING MORE ENDURING THAN HIMSELF.....

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.....  
Dostoyevsky, the Russian writer who has penetrated so  
deeply into human nature, once wrote:

"The man who lives before he dies, cannot stand

the burden of himself....."

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.....  
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②

*now* This, in essence, was the philosophy of the person who wrote the immortal 90th Psalm.....

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It is one of the greatets off the Psalms ----  
although some poeople don't like it so well,  
... BECAUSE OF ITS VERY FRANK REALISM....

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There really are three parts to the Psalm:

① It begins with a moving statement of the reality of  
GOD -- AS BEING THE ENDURING FACT OF THE UNIVERSE....

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generat  
Before the mts. were brought forth,  
Or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world --  
Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art  
God...

\*\*\*\*\*

For modern man -- preoccupied with himself ---

IT IS GOOD TO BE REMINDED OF THAT  
THAT ENDURING REALITY --- "before the mountains  
were brought forth...."

(2)

The second part of the Psalm --- has its theme ---  
THE RELATIVE BREVITY OF HUMAN LIFE....

"Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest:  
'RETURN, YE CHILDREN OF MEN....'"

Again:

~~"We spend our years as a tale that is told...."~~

The days of our years are three score years and ten,  
and if by reason of strength they be four-score years ---  
yet is their strength labor and sorrow ---  
for it is soon cut off and we fly away....."

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Thus we have these two ideas contrasted ---  
THE ENDURING REALITY OF GOD  
THE BREVITY OF HUMAN LIFE.....

(3)

The third part of the Psalm --- in some respects the  
greatest --- begins with a prayer:

"So teach us to number our days that we may apply our  
hearts unto wisdom....."

-----And then the Psalmist goes on to express  
his conviction as to HOW THIS REALTIVELY BRIEF HUMAN  
LIFE ----- can be made most meaningful.....



By relating it to -- he says -----

THAT WHICH IS ENDURING IN THE NATURE OF THINGS....

~~THAT WHICH IS~~ ~~more~~

~~brought~~

By building into our characters -- THE CHARACTER  
OF THAT WHICH IS ENDURING

\*\*\*\*\*

of God

"Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us.....

Establish THOU the work of our hands....."

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~~It seems to me that~~ there are few passages in  
ancient literature which SAY SO MUCH IN SO FEW WORDS

as this Psalm -----

It's theme is that of relating our RELATIVELY BRIEF  
LIVES -----

TO THAT WHICH IS MOST ENDURING

*and in that process*

~~and in that process, finding~~

~~increased significance~~

~~security~~

our lives take on  
the stamp of the  
Eternal

in our living

*more specifically,*

~~JUST~~ WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? —

*relating our lives to the enduring?*

I.

For one thing — IT MEANS TRYING TO INCORPORATE INTO  
OUR LIVES — <sup>those</sup> PRINCIPLES AND CHARACTER TRAITS —  
Which Wear Well.

\*\*\*\*\*

*someone's*  
When we look back over ~~a~~ life we might conceivably  
ask — How much did he own?

But in the perspective of the years a more  
fundamental question is:

What kind of a person was he?

*what did he stand for*  
*what Principles did he embody?*

\*\*\*\*\*

We are what we are — BY VIRTUE OF WHAT WE STAND  
FOR — The Principles + Characteristic — *People*  
*associate with us*

Many a person of unusual possibility HAS MISSED  
THE MARK OF SIGNIFICANT LIVING —

because he has never identified his life  
with anything in particular —

And many an average person — HAS LIVED A TRULY  
MEANINGFUL LIFE —

by BECOMING AN INSTRUMENT of

Embodiment

principles and character-traits — WHICH ARE ACKNOWLEDGED  
TO BE OF ENDURING WORTH...



Many years ago Victor Hugo said "Nothing is so powerful as an idea whose time has come....."

Only recently General McArthur expressed a similar conviction when he spoke of "the irresistible ~~the~~ influence of a sound idea....." He went on to say "A sound idea cannot be stopped."

\*\*\*\*\*  
Among the more enduring realities of this world are sound ideas principles of integrity -----

Its the kind of world in which

"the tumult and the shouting dies....  
The captains and the kings depart.....  
Still stands thine ancient sacrifice  
And humble and a contrite heart ----

together with those PRINCIPLES OF  
JUSTICE, AND MERCY, AND SERVICE, AND UNDERSTANDING....

✓  
To stand for these things.....  
To incorporate these things into our daily living...

IS TO RELATE OUR LIVES TO THE ENDURING...

XX ~~maybe~~ Perhaps that's what the Psalmist meant when he said — "let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us —."

## II.

Again, to relate our lives to the enduring ----

MEANS TO INVEST OURSELVES AND OUR ABILITIES

IN SOMETHING THAT LIVES ON IN The lives of others and is continuing.

To start some influences for good ---- that will not  
\*\*\*\*\* stop with us.....

In one of the finest poems of our language  
George Eliot speaks of "a choir invisible...."

that company of people who are no longer  
present - bodily ----

but who do live on in our world IN TERMS OF THE  
INFLUENCES THEY HAVE HELPED TO BUILD INTO THE LIVES  
OF OTHERS:

"Who live again -- in minds made better by their presence  
In pulses storred to generosity ----

\*\*\*\*\*

B.

There is in this world.---- AN IMMORTALITY OF INFLUENCE  
... the significance of which ought not to be minimised....

is Tremendous

--- HOW IS <sup>This</sup> IMMORTALITY WON?

There is ~~but~~ only one path ----

THROUGH IDENTIFICATION WITH INVESTMENT  
causes, and purposes, and services  
of enduring significance....

\*\*\*\*\* lasting \*\*\*\*\*



There is something self-defeating about the utterly ingrown life ~~-----~~

But) There is the stamp of ENDURING ~~IDENTITY~~ MEANING  
UPON THAT LIFE --- HOWEVER BRIEF ---

which brings something of gladness  
beauty  
~~beauty~~  
goodness  
into the world.....

\*\*\*\*\*  
The LENGTH of a human life can be measured in years  
The SIGNIFICANCE of a human life can never be  
measured that  
Life offers few finer satisfactions way -

Life offers few finer satisfactions  
than that of PLANTING SEEDS OF CONSTRUCTIVE WORK  
which will continue to grow and reach out  
and produce benefit  
in years to come...

The touch of life upon life is far-reaching --  
more far-reaching than we know.....

~~AND WHEREVER THAT TOUCH IS BENEFICIAL and~~  
~~HELPFUL~~ ~~life takes on enduring worth....~~

For the significance of life is found  
in those on-going influences that flow  
out from what we are & do.

Perhaps the Psalmist had something of that sort in mind when he said — "Establish Thou the work of our hands."

And now -- one more suggestion:

III.

WE RELATE OUR LIVES TO THE ENDURING

INSOFAR AS WE KEEP AWARE OF -- and REVERENT TOWARD

whom we so inadequately comprehend

but upon whom we are daily dependent...

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The word God is a very small word -----

But it suggests a reality TOO VAST FOR ANY ONE OF US  
FULLY TO COMPREHEND.....

----- YET WE CAN COMPREHEND THIS, in a measure -----

In the rush of things -- when the world is so  
much with us -- good to recall  
THE ULTIMATE SOURCE OF HUMAN LIFE -- IS IN

A CREATIVE POWER ----- MORE THAN MAN -----

THIS CREATIVE POWER EXISTED BEFORE MAN EXISTED...

and will endure long after we have passed  
from the stage of history...

\*\*\*\*\*

XX All about us <sup>Now</sup> WE SEE THIS CREATIVE POWER -----

MANIFESTATIONS OF GOD'S GREATNESS.....

Marks of Law & Wisdom  
we dimly Trace

----- Yet we know p ----- we hardly  
touch the hem of the garment -----  
yet even in the Presence of God, we <sup>recognize</sup> know  
there is so much more, beyond  
our sphere of knowledge.... experience & information



It is wholesome to catch this sense of vastness  
→ TO KNOW THAT OUR LITTLE LIVES ARE SET IN A LARGER LIFE.

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(a) There are great ~~processes~~ law-abiding processes of  
creation --- and healing --- and growth

All these we associate with God.....  
and the life of God in our world.....

(b) At the heart of reality there ~~seems to be~~ a  
fundamental principle of  
CREATION THROUGH ORGANIZATION and COOPERATION

And this -- ~~some of us~~ identify with  
THE LIFE OF GOD IN OUR WORLD.....

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✓ To order our lives in harmony  
with the best we know about God.....

✓ To live out our days in THE CONVICTION OF GOD'S  
INTEGRITY AND DEPENDABILITY ---

✓ TO STAND IN REVERENCE BEFORE HIS WORKS ---

IS TO RELATE OUR LIVES WITH THE ENDURING

*Surely the Psalmist was thinking of this when he*  
*"Lord thou hast been our dwelling place"*  
*in de*

→ Human life may be relatively brief -- as the Psalmist points  
But as he went on to point out ---  
IT MAY TAKE ON THE CHARACTER OF THE ETERNAL.

*all*

During this past Christmas season — a fine thing  
happened in the city of Tokyo..

A choir of about 300 voices -----  
made up mostly of Japanese and Americans  
sang Handel's oratorio — "The Messiah...."

Brought together — in their common song:

...."King of Kings and Lord of Lords...."

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This oratorio celebrates THAT MAN OF NAZARETH

who tradition says lived a comparatively short life  
*when we know lived*  
BUT ~~/~~ A LIFE OF ENDURING IMPORTANCE

and who taught ----- THAT THE MEANING OF LIFE  
IS DISCOVERED — AS WE DISCOVER THE MEANINGS OF GOD....

+ Purpose



One of the great things about religion is that it helps  
us to see life IN A GREATER WAY -----

It helps us to see <sup>human</sup> life AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THAT  
DIVINE LIFE AND SPIRIT -----

of which the Psalmist wrote saying:

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations  
Before the mountains were brought forth,  
Or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world,  
Even from everlasting to everlasting -- thou art God.....

----"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply  
our hearts --unto wisdom...."