

Wisdom From Our Sources:

All Is Dukkha

By Elizabeth Tarbox

"*Dukkha*," they say. The Buddhists say, "All is *dukkha*." It is hard to translate, they tell us. It means literally "suffering" but the feeling of *dukkha* is closer to impermanence. The fact of impermanence is central to the Buddhist path to nirvana, enlightenment.

Dukkha. All is impermanence. Nothing lasts. *Dukkha*... impermanence.

And life goes on, and people who were with us last year at this time have died, all souls pass on, all is *dukkha*, nothing lasts.

The path to enlightenment is understanding, accepting impermanence to the point where we no longer struggle against it. That is the way of the Buddha. But here in the West we search for that which is permanent, even as we live with the death of all things, all people. We hold on to the things we can count on—our church, our community, our memories of those who died before us, our love and hope, and the search for certainty in a world that is *dukkha*.

Thoughts on Impermanence by Anne Morrow Lindbergh

“We have so little faith in the ebb and flow of life, of love, of relationships. We leap at the flow of the tide and resist in terror its ebb. We are afraid it will never return. We insist on permanency, on duration, on continuity; when the only continuity possible, in life as in love, is in growth in fluidity -- in freedom....How can one learn to take {not just the crest, but also} the trough of the wave? It is easier to understand here on the beach, where the breathlessly still ebb tide reveals another life below the level which mortals usually reach. In this crystalline moment of suspense, one has a sudden revelation of the secret kingdom at the bottom of the sea... So, beautiful is the still hour of the sea's withdrawal, as beautiful as the sea's return.”

Wisdom From Our Sources:

Mitch Albom's book, *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*, is "...dedicated to Edward Beitchman, my beloved uncle, who gave me my first concept of heaven." ... Eddie was a maintenance man in The Park at Ruby Pier. Eddie believed he was nothing, accomplished nothing, and was lost until...

".... the river rose quickly, engulfing Eddie's waist and chest and shoulders. Before he could take another breath, the noise of the children disappeared above him, and he was submerged in a strong but silent current. His grip was still entwined with Tala's but he felt his being washed from his soul, meat from the bone, and with it went all the pain and weariness he ever held inside him, ever scar, every wound, every bad memory. He was nothing now, a leaf in the water, and she pulled him gently, through shadow and light, through shades of blue and ivory and lemon and black, and he realized all these colors, all along, were the emotions of his life she drew him up through the breaking waves of a great gray ocean and he emerged in a brilliant light above an almost unimaginable scene:

There was a pier filled with thousands of people, men and women, fathers and mothers and children – so many children –children from the past and the present, children who had not been born, side by side, hand in hand, in caps, in short pants, filling the boardwalk and the rides and the wooden platforms, sitting on each other's shoulders, sitting in each other's laps. They were there, or would be there, because of the simple mundane things Eddie had done in his life, the accidents he had prevented, the rides he had kept safe, the unnoticed turns he had affected every day. And while their lips did not move, Eddie heard their voices, more voices than he could have imagined, and a peace came upon him that he had never known before."