

By [James Allen](#)

The year 1905 has grown old and is ready to pass away. Burdened with its sins and sorrows, its tears and ineffectual strife, like an old man weary of the stress of life, it is prepared to die.

Like the year, all things are changing, growing old, and making for decay. One of the great facts of life is its mutability. Leaf is added into leaf, and the tree perishes; day is added unto day, and a thousand years are no more; deed is added unto deed, and man is withdrawn from visible existence.

The processes which build up bodily life, at last destroy it: truly, "Life and death are one." The deeds by which a man strives to preserve himself, bring about his destruction: verily, "He that would save his life shall lose it."

All things are impermanent in substance and transitory in their nature, and he is not wise who sets his heart on fleeting shows.

The widest empire, the greatest conqueror, the most perfect saint, must perish from the face of the earth.

"The great mountain will crumble,
The strong beam will break,
And the wise man must wither away
like a plant."

There is no escape from the inevitable, nor should there be, for the inevitable is the good.

The wise man puts aside all opinion, desire and predilection, and faces, masters, and comprehends the facts of life.

All things decay and pass away, but Truth does not decay and pass away: the principles of things remain unchanged; the Law of Truth abides forever.

The Unformed becomes the Formed; and the Formed subsides again into the Unformed. Truth is neither the Formed nor the Unformed; it abides. There is no rest except in Truth; all else is passion, stress, impermanence and sorrow. Knowing this, the wise man neither desires to live nor to die. And not desiring life, he comprehends it; not lusting for enjoyment, his bliss is not disturbed.

There is no place in the universe where the Law of Causation does not obtain. Every atom, every world, is subject to it. Both the visible and the invisible are governed by it. Man is not exempted from it. Suffering is by causation; bliss also is by causation. He who clings to the impermanent, will not escape suffering; he who puts away all selfish clinging, will find the place of peace.

A man's life is determined by his deeds. Sinning, he suffers; ceasing from sin, he ceases from

suffering.

The foolish man, ignorant of the impermanence of all things, acts towards others as though they would remain with him forever. He thinks reverently and kindly only of the dead. He disparages, condemns, and abuses, not only his enemies, but his friends, and acts harshly and unkindly even towards those who are near and dear to him; and when they are snatched away from him, he is overwhelmed with grief, his wretched memory accuses him, and every sinful act he committed towards them rises up to witness against him: he is stunned with sorrow, and smitten with remorse.

“O wedding guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide, wise sea,
So lonely 'twas that God Himself
Scarce seemed there to be.”

The wise man, understanding the impermanence of all things, acts towards all with unalterable kindness. Knowing the brevity and uncertainty of life, he cherishes those who are near to him with constant and unchanging love, and prepares his mind for the inevitable separation; and when they are taken away from him, he remains in peace, knowing that all is well, his memory blesses him with its rich store of gentleness, sorrow does not lay him low, and his conscience is at rest. He thinks of the living as others think of the dead, with reverence and love.

“Enter the path! There is no grief like hate,
No pain like passion, no deceit like sense;
Enter the Path! For hath he gone whose foot
Treads down one fond offense.”

He only has comprehended the Eternal Truth who, when he is condemned does not retaliate; when he is abused does not abuse in return; who, when he is mocked, reviled and spat upon, remains unaltered and unmoved.

To open the hand and let go all the fleeting shows of life as perishable toys, to regard the futile and petty passions of men with sublime indifference –verily, this is Truth.

To hold the praises of men as bubbles that will burst, and their curses as the dust under your feet –this alone is wisdom.

For he who praises you to-day may blame you to-morrow, and he who blames you to-day may praise you to-morrow.

All things are mutable: the winds are mutable; the worlds are mutable; the ways of men are mutable: in Truth alone is there steadfastness and peace.

He only is blessed who has taken refuge in Truth.

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