



1967-
2007

Water Wheel

Being one with all Buddhas, I turn the water wheel of compassion.
—Gate of Sweet Nectar

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“Bring Me Your Wrong Doing”

By Sensei Merle Kodo Boyd

The 30th Patriarch was Jianzhi Sengcan. He visited the 29th Patriarch, Master Daizū Huīke, and said, “My body is infected with leprosy. I beg you, O priest, to cleanse me of my wrongdoing.” The Patriarch said, “Bring me your wrongdoing and I will cleanse you.” Master Sengcan paused awhile and then said, “When I look for my wrongdoing, I cannot find it.” The Patriarch replied, “I have already cleansed you of your wrongdoing. You must rely on the Buddha, Dharma, and Community of believers.”

This story is taken from Master Keizan's collection of stories on the transmission of enlightenment from Shakyamuni Buddha to Master Koun Ejo, the lineage of the Soto school. The collection is called *The Record of Transmitting the Light (Denkoroku)*. It is a description of our spiritual bloodline and points each of us in the direction of a unique manifestation of our realization. There are many commentaries on this collection. In these various commentaries, the cause of Master Sengcan's suffering is given various names—wrongdoing, sin, negative karma.

Karma is a Sanskrit word meaning deed or action. It is an act of speech, body, or mind that produces an effect which, when circumstances are right, will manifest in the life of the one responsible for it. On the one hand, this is a subject that only the Buddha himself could fully grasp. During the first watch of the night of his awakening, he saw his own past lives, all of his births and deaths. We do not have this view. Our daily actions arise from beginningless events we cannot clearly identify, producing a stream of causations we cannot foresee. Karma and the events of our daily life are not different.

This is also a subject we avoid. Almost immediately upon hearing the word “karma,” we are in a quicksand of blame, guilt, and shame. It is difficult to get a glimpse of the freedom toward which Master Huīke is pointing us when he says, “Bring me your wrongdoing.”

It can be difficult to look closely at the past causes of



Original Mind, like flowing water, turns the wheel of compassion..

illness or at the roots of any painful or unpleasant event in our life. To look closely, we must avoid both projecting blame onto someone or something else, and abusing ourselves with harsh self-criticism. We need a way to accept responsibility without imposing blame. To claim our freedom and happiness we must acknowledge that absolutely everything that happens to us is ours. What makes this act of graceful acceptance so difficult for us?

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We have all known someone stricken with cancer or with some life-threatening disease. Or we have known those whose lives were turned upside down by abuse or addiction. All of us have known intimately pain, grief, or loss.

In the many ways that our different stories can unfold, there is a common thread of a sense of shame, as if our misfortune is proof of our intrinsic unworthiness. Maybe we have consciously worked to avoid this circumstance. Maybe we have thought it could never happen to us. It is not unusual to experience misfortune as stigmatizing and humiliating. "If I were..., this wouldn't be happening to me," "Now everyone knows...", "What have I done to deserve this?" we ask ourselves. We want to keep our trouble secret. We are cautious about sharing it. We want an explanation that absolves us of responsibility.

A friend was diagnosed with cancer. For years her life had revolved around finding the healthiest way of living. She had deeply explored nutrition, body work, and spiritual healing of all kinds. This had become her identity. It was a while before she was able to share this news with friends and clients. It took great courage and focus for her to accept the reality of her illness.

In healing, the most valuable medicine may be letting go of our conviction that we should not be experiencing whatever it is that we are experiencing.

Often in seeking transformation, without realizing it, we are hoping to become our idea of perfection.

In Master Keizan's teisho on the story of Master Sengcan, he says, "Understanding that the nature of wrongdoing is ungraspable, he was enlightened to the fact that the Mind is originally pure." Perfection is never undone. We are never unworthy. We are always intrinsically perfect.

Recognizing this truth in our life as it is, we are free. We atone. We turn toward our life as it is and claim it, and in that one turning, we take care of past, present, and future. We are freed through recognizing our life exactly as it is. We free ourselves from the pressure of anticipating every possible thing that calls as a problem.

We free ourselves from concern about our own image and about how others see us. We live in this: Nothing lasts, each moment has endless possibilities, and every action has endless consequences. How is it best to respond in such circumstances?

We are all familiar with the following story of Master Hakuin, the great Rinzaï master:



Is that so?

At the time of this story he was a young monk in training, living a life of begging and zazen. A beautiful young girl lived nearby. Her parents discovered that she was pregnant. Pushed to name the father, she resisted. After being cajoled and threatened, she named Hakuin as the father.

The parents, in a rage, swept up the baby and rushed to Hakuin's hut. "It's your baby. You take care of it," they said. Hakuin responded, "Is that so?"

Time went by and Hakuin's life expanded to include begging for food for the baby as well. Zazen and rocking the baby. Begging and feeding the baby. Cleaning and washing the baby. Being a monk including caring for the baby.

More time went by. The young girl admitted to her parents that the father was the fisher boy next door and not Hakuin. After further consideration, the parents burst into Hakuin's hut again, "Sorry. It wasn't you after all. We'll take our baby back now."

Hakuin responded, "Is that so?" and surrendered the child.

Atoning, we approach life with the equanimity of "Is that so?" Master Sengcan's search for his "wrongdoing" culminated in the essential Dharma teaching of no preferences, *Faith in Mind*, a teaching of trust in the all-inclusive life. In the wholeness of every moment, we are free to choose any of all possible actions. And in that action, we claim ownership of all that leads up to it, all that will come of it, and of the moment of action itself. ■

Sensei Merle Kodo Boyd leads Lincroft Zen Sangha in New Jersey where she lives. She received dharma transmission from Roshi Ekyoku in March 2006 at Normandie Mountain.

The Truth of Not Finding

By Rabbi Don Ani Shalom Sensei

In a Hasidic tale from Martin Buber's *Tales of the Hasidic Masters*: "The Yehudi was asked to examine thirteen years old Hanokh, later the rabbi of Alexander, in the Talmud. It took the boy an hour to think over the passage before he could expound it. When he was done, the zaddik cupped his hand around Hanokh's cheek and said: 'When I was young I plumbed passages more difficult than this in no time at all, when I was eighteen, I had the reputation of being a great scholar in the Torah.

'But one day it dawned on me that man cannot attain wholeness by learning alone. I understood what is told of our father, Abraham; that he explored the sun, the moon, and the stars, and did not find God, and how in this very not finding the presence of God was revealed to him.

'For three months I mulled over this realization. Then I explored until I too realized the truth of not finding.'"

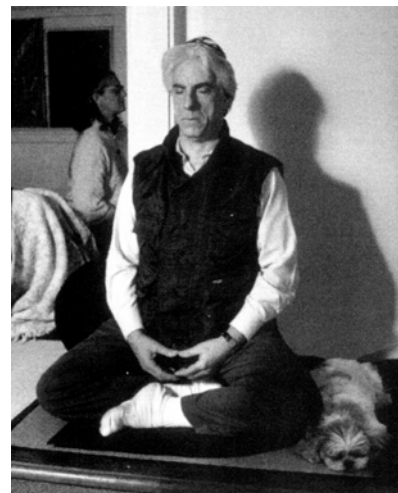
The Yehudi's name was Rabbi Yakov Yitzhak, (Jacob Isaac) but that was also the name of his teacher, the Seer, the holy rabbi of Lublin, from whom the Yehudi learned how to sleep. Wherever the Yehudi rested or journeyed in that eastern European world of the early nineteenth century, he was intimate. He was intimate with animals and birds and the forest and the forest streams and all the folk he met on the way. The people loved him and named him the Yehudi, which means, Jew. In a world of Jews, Yehudi means Everyman. Even the Seer called him "the Jew."

"Once the Yehudi was walking up and down the street. For hours he talked about apparently idle and worldly matters with the people, but in reality he was accomplishing marvelous unifications in the upper worlds. Then the evil urge, the dualistic impulse, whispered to him:

'See how great and splendid is the power of your soul! But he replied:

'What do you want to make me conceited about? I am sure that everybody does what I do, only that I notice it as little in them as they do in me.'"

The evil urge is that self-serving, busy voice that pops up in the course of every day. Sometimes we take it seriously and call it "I" or "me." But never you mind; we look right through it.



Rabbi Singer with Pudi, at right

The upper worlds of "marvelous unifications," is a reference to the Tree of Life, the Original Self, the popular kabalistic Mandala on which a circle is drawn around each of ten basic words that represent the sensibilities of existence, like wisdom and understanding, love and beauty and nothing. Yes, Nothing at All, boundless, empty, the ending and beginning.

All these words are also called worlds and lights, and a line interconnects them all, because they are really one. The seeing, the sudden realization that they are "one," that I am "one," is called "lightning." One night I saw lightning light the whole valley. Only in the lightning did I see the true space of that valley. It seemed like a light without shadows, but it was a silver light. The ten words are also called colors, the whole spectrum; the lightning of the Mandala is true light.


We live in "one" every day. We notice it more or less: affection, sincerity, trust, kindness, and a sense of beauty. We warmly embrace and kiss and sometimes enter into real conversations, communion, dialog, forgetting ourselves. This is our daily life, our daily bread, wholesome, marvelous unifications. At night, sleep like the Yehudi's sleep, deep sleep, perchance to dream, beautiful dreams of forgiveness, of reconciliation, of wholeness. Sometimes we even sense eternity.

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Rabbi Don Ani Shalom Singer Sensei founded Shir Hadash contemplative community in 1981. He received dharma transmission from Roshi Bernie Glassman in 1995. In 2007, Shir Hadash High Holy Day Services will be held in Pacific Palisades, September 12, 13, 21 & 22; website: www.shirhadashcommunity.org.


Zen Programs On Normandie Mountain

You will find the latest program information at our new website www.zcla.org. Please check it regularly. See our website calendar for the detailed daily program schedule. Program details and updates are also sent by email through [ProgramFlash](#).

 **Please register in advance.** Contact the office at info@zcla.org to register.

The **Dharma Training Fund (DTF)**. Through the generosity of the Sangha, the DTF is available to all Zen practitioners to supplement program fees. **No one is ever turned away for lack of funds.** If you find yourself in financial need for a particular program you wish to attend, please do not let finances keep you from attending. Inquire with Gemmon in the office for an application. Do not miss any opportunity to practice and study the Dharma!

Fall Practice Period

Fall Practice Period. October 6 to December 31. Led by Sensei Ryodo. The training schedule begins Tuesday evening, and runs through Sunday noon. It includes zazen and service, breakfast oryoki, as well as programs. Zen practitioners are invited to join the Practice Period for a few hours, a day, a month, or the entire period. There is an afternoon study class from Wednesday through Friday for those attending during the day. The study texts are selected sutras from the Buddha's *Majjhima Nikaya* (the Middle Length Discourses). Check the calendars for schedule details .


Practice Period Entering Ceremony. Saturday, October 6, at 9:00 a.m. Please join as we officially open the Practice Period by entering the Zendo and offering incense. Participant names are entered on the training board.


Meals. Wednesday through Friday during these three months: Oryoki breakfast at 7:05 a.m.; On Saturday, oryoki breakfast at 7:05 a.m.; on Sunday, buffet breakfast at 7:05 a.m. (no silence). All members may join breakfast. Members may find weekend breakfasts especially conducive to your schedules. Fee per meal: \$4. Please sign up in advance.

Practice Period Commitment Agreements

All members are asked to make practice commitments for the Practice Period. You will be receiving your Practice Period Commitment booklet and form the end of August. Please send a copy to the office by September 26, (Attention: Sensei Ryodo), so that we can list your name on the Training Board.

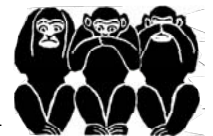
Zazen Programs

Tangaryo.* Saturday, September 8, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. All members are encouraged to come to this silent and restful day of unstructured zazen; no bells, no teacher. You set your own schedule. Silent, informal lunch will be provided. If you are a member who has not yet sat tangaryo, contact Lorraine Gessho Kumpf through the office. (All members are required to participate in one Tangaryo.) Fee: Dana; Zendo open for non-participants. 

Sesshin.* Sunday evening, October 21, 6:00 p.m. supper and registration; 7:30 p.m. (sesshin begins) **to Saturday, October 27, 9:00 p.m.** Led by Dharma-Holder Shingetsu Guzy and Dharma-Holder Koan Janka. "Sesshin" means "to collect one's heart and mind." It is highly recommended for deepening one's practice. The schedule includes zazen, chanting, face-to-face meeting with the assistant teachers, work, rest, and three vegetarian oryoki meals daily. We observe silence, maintain lowered eyes and samadhi, and refrain from social greetings. Overnight accommodations available. \$240; \$480 for nonmembers. 

*** Note: Zendo remains open for nonparticipants.**

Precept Practice



A **Day of Reflection** on the Zen Bodhi-sattva precepts will take place on **Saturdays, September 15 and October 20, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.** We begin with recitation of the precepts, zazen, and a brief precept talk followed by a short work period and lunch. A Precept Circle is held from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. on the precept of the day. Open to everyone. **September 15** will be led by Teido Cartee on Precept #10: Not speaking ill of The Three Treasures; **October 20** will be led by Emerald-Lake Porcaro on Precept #9: The practice of not being angry.

(Continued on page 5)

PROGRAMS (Continued)

Atonement Ceremony. Thursday, October 18, at 7:30 p.m. During this ceremony of renewing the vows and precepts, we each have an opportunity to bear witness to our conduct in thoughts, words, and actions. Everyone is welcome to participate and renew themselves. Those who have received the precepts are asked to attend on a regular basis. Officiated by Shingetsu Guzy.

Classes, Retreats, Workshops

Kitchen Cleaning. Sunday, September 9, 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Led by Gary Belton and Ensho Berge, Co-Tenzo Coordinators. Join the Sangha for a thorough cleaning of the Sangha kitchen. Come for laughter, degreasing, and singing along to your various iPod mixes. Ice cream sundae break halfway through. Come for all or part-time.

Contemplative Caregiving for Caregivers. Friday, September 21, through Sunday, September 23. For caregivers. Led by Evi Gemmon Ketterer. ☎

Sutra Class and Copying. Saturday, October 13, 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. An exploration of important points in a selected sutra from the Buddha's *The Middle Length Discourses*, and a sutra copying session. Copies of the sutra will be available in class. You bring your favorite pen(s) and writing paper. Everyone is welcome. Led by Dharma-Holder Shingetsu Guzy.

Shared Stewardship 2007. Sunday, October 14, 1:30 to 4:00 p.m. We will continue creating a Shared Stewardship mandala as a collective practice, play, and exploration. There will be a Mandala Council on the wisdoms and shadows of Shared Stewardship. We experiment with physically moving into one of the circles and speaking from the place of that Buddha Energy. Led by Dokai Dickenson and Plum-Hermit Swanger. Everyone is welcome.

Pumpkin Carving. Sunday, October 28, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Monsters of all ages are invited to a frightfully fun pumpkin carving extravaganza. Pumpkins are provided. \$5 material fee per family. RSVP the office so we know how many pumpkins to purchase. For information, contact Dharma-Lotus at 310.741.5406. Everyone is welcome.

STUDY TOPIC: During Fall Practice Period, the theme for the talks will be on the teachings of the Buddha from the *Majjhima Nikaya* (the Middle Length Discourses). Copies of selected sutras are available in the bookstore and will be posted in the members' area of the website.

Three Step Zen

with Sensei Kipp Ryodo Hawley

Introduction
Thursday evening, November 1
7:30 p.m.

Sensei's talk will introduce the Three Step Zen method and explore its connection to Buddha's teachings in the *Majjhima Nikaya*.

Level II: Retreat
Saturday, November 3
9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

A one-day intensive for those who have attended the Thursday talk or previous Three Step workshops. During this day of zazen, discussion, and group exercises, we will apply the Three Step method to

- ✿ Functioning—emotional situations and every day life in general
- ✿ Training—samadhi, body awareness and precept practices
- ✿ Insight—deeper understanding of the Buddhist path

Includes lunch, zazen, and face-to-face meeting with Sensei. Fee: \$40/ZCLA members; \$55/nonmembers. Contact the office at info@zcla.org or call (213) 387-2351 to register.



*Tom Yudo
Burger and
Ty Jotai
Webb clearing
the tangles
and under-
growth from
Pundarika
Courtyard.*



Sangha Rites of Passage

Shared Stewardship Leave-taking

Teachers Circle Steward
Sensei Ryodo Hawley

Ino
Gary Koan Janka

Shared Stewardship Entering

Teachers Circle Steward
Patricia Shingetsu Guzy

Ino
Jeanne Dokai Dickenson

Center Point Steward
Raul Ensho Berge

Member of Board of Directors
Hillary Kongchal Stephenson

Death

Philomene Gyokuho Long
1940-2007

Join Us on a Pilgrimage to Northern China

From October 23 to November 7, 2008

In 2008, ZCLA will sponsor its third Buddhist Pilgrimage, this time to Northern China, to Buddhist, Ch'an, and Chinese historical sites. Our pilgrimage guides will be Andy Ferguson and Bill Red Pine Porter, both highly experienced guides to Buddhist China.

Open exclusively to ZCLA and White Plum Sangha through December 31, 2007. After December 31, the pilgrimage will be open to everyone.

For overview of the itinerary, please refer to www.zcla.org. For more information, and pre-registration, contact South Mountain Tours at www.southmountaintours.com. ZCLA contact is Dokai Dickenson at developmentsteward@zcla.org.



Monks with cell phones at Bai Lin.



Bai Lin Monastery, (Zhaozhou's Dharma Seat, J. Joshu).

Your Gifts are Received with a Heartfelt Thank You!

Please let our staff know of the many bodhisattvas to appreciate. Have we missed anyone?

The Fundraising Committee for 2007 Dharma Training Fund appeal: **Patti Muso Giggans**, Board Fundraising Chair; **Roshi Egyoku, Rosa Ando Martinez, John Plum-Hermit Swanger, Evi Gemmon Ketterer, Gary Koan Janka**, and **Jeanne Dokai Dickenson**;

Sensei Ryodo for leading Maezumi Roshi Memorial Sesshin;

Raul Ensho Berge, Center Point Person, for managing legal procedures;

John Daishin Buksbazen for leading Zazenkai;

Roshi Egyoku for leading the Angell Foundation Spirituality Initiative, and to **Muso Giggans, Plum-Hermit Swanger, Dokai Dickenson** and **Burt Wetanson** for assisting with the grant proposal preparations;

Everyone who helped cleanup broken window in the Buddha Hall: **Seth Aronson, Ensho Berge, Gemmon Ketterer, Jennifer Hart, George Mukei Horner, Thomas Meier, Plum-Hermit Swanger**, and **Reeb Kaizen Venners**;

Sawada Shonin of Nipponzan Myohoji for library books;

Michael Sakamoto and **Steven Saitzyk** for providing archival footable of Maezumi Roshi doing calligraphy;

Hillary Kongcha'l Stephenson for stepping in as newly-elected Board member;

Patti Muso Giggans for yoga mats;

To everyone who helped with the Commitment Ceremony for Senshin and Myoho: **Roshi Egyoku, Deb Faith-Mind Thoresen, Sensei Ryodo, Lorraine Gessho Kumpf, Patricia Shingetsu Guzy, Ando Martinez, Gemmon Ketterer, Plum-Hermit Swanger, James Bodhi-Song Graham, Mark Shogen Bloodgood**, and **Erik Mathiesen**;

Reeb Kaizen Venners for digitizing archive tapes;

Seth Aronson for proofreading publications;

Faith-Mind Thoresen, Ensho Berge, Ty Jotai Webb, and **Koan Janka** for many years of caring for the Main Garden lawns;

Thomas Matsuda for Jizo sculpture exhibit, Jizo workshop, and sculpture-carving demonstrations;

Evi Gemmon Ketterer for leading Contemplative Caregiving Retreat;

Andy Ferguson for slide presentation on Zen Buddhism in China;

John Heart-Mirror Trotter for his bodhisattva spirit of "just taking care" of the Center;

Thomas Meier and **Seth Aronson** for general facilities and maintenance support; and

Thomas Meier for exceptional illusionist show;

Welcome to new members: **Betsy Brown, Julie Estrada**, interior designer and dancer; **Mark Estrada**, artist/designer and dancer; and **Ron Eldard**, an artist. New resident **Larry Barber**, writer, former Hollywood writer and producer for 20 years;

We were honored to host ZCLA 2007 Artist-in-Residence **Thomas Matsuda** during his West Coast exhibition tour;

We also enjoyed the visit of guest residents **Jayne Dundes** and **Thomas Meier**. ■

Upcoming Events November 2007 to April 2008

Sesshin:

Enlightenment Sesshin: [Nov. 30 to December 8](#)

End-of-Year Sesshin: [December 26 to 3](#)

Sesshin: [February 22 to 24](#)

Introduction to Sesshin: [March 27 to 29](#)

Tangaryo Day: [March 8](#)

Zazenkai: [June 14](#)

Retreats, Classes & Workshops:

Three Step Zen Retreat: [November 3](#)

Sutra Copying: [November 9](#)

HomeWalk: [November 17](#)

Bodhidharma in China: New Findings: [February 2](#)

Day of Reflection: [November 17](#)

Day of Dana: [December 15](#)

Special Observances:

Evergreen Cemetery Visit: [January 20](#)

Parinirvana Service: [February 9](#)

Buddha's Birthday: [April 6](#)

Earth Day: [April 20](#)

ZCLA-Affiliated Sitting Groups

The Valley Sangha (Woodland Hills, CA)
led by Dharma-Holder Patricia Shingetsu Guzy

The Hill Street Sangha (Santa Monica, CA)
led by Dharma-Holder John Daishin Buksbazen

The Lincroft Zen Sangha (Lincroft, NJ)
led by Sensei Merle Kodo Boyd

The Laguna Hills Sangha (Laguna Hills, CA)
coordinated by Helen Daiji Powell

Contact us at info@zcla.org for information.

The *Water Wheel* is published by the Zen Center of Los Angeles / Buddha Essence Temple, which was founded in 1967 by the late Taizan Maezumi Roshi.

The ZCLA Buddha Essence Temple mission is to know the Self, maintain the precepts, and serve others. We provide the teaching, training, and transmission of Zen Buddhism. **Our vision** is an enlightened world free of suffering, in which all beings live in harmony, everyone has enough, deep wisdom is realized, and compassion flows unhindered. **Our core values** are available upon request.

Founding Abbot: Taizan Maezumi Roshi
Abbot Emeritus: Roshi Bernard Glassman
Abbot: Roshi Wendy Egyoku Nakao

Staff: Mary Rios, Business Manager; John Plum-Hermit Swanger, Operations Steward; Evi Gemmon Ketterer, Program Steward; Tom Yudo Burger, Guest Steward; Jeanne Dokai Dickenson, Development Steward. *Water Wheel* Editor, Dokai Dickenson; Assistant Editor, Burt Wetanson; Ass't. Proofreader: Seth Aronson; Photographers: Seth Aronson and Dokai Dickenson.

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Address Correction Requested

(Continued from page 3)

Remember the thirteen year old Hanokh, whom the Yehudi encouraged to go beyond his studies to discover “the truth of not finding?” When I teach a Bar or Bat Mitzvah student, one-on-one, almost always there is a moment of recognition and trust, when I know that we have met. It might be when she has learned to sing one of

...call it “I” or “me.” But never you mind; we look right through it.

the songs or melodies, and then sings it with all her heart, then the old song becomes new. As long as we are genuine, truth unfolds.

Sometimes the noble youths tell me stories of their solitary moments in the country. With eyes bathed in innocence, they take me to vast spaces. Heaven and earth is their home.

This is Nathan’s story: “When I was six, my dad and I were lying on the grass looking at the stars. Suddenly the stars were moving, moving fast, and I was frightened.” He was afraid that the stars would pull him from the earth. “I looked away, and I saw that everything around me was still.” He put his hands on his cheeks, smiled and shook his head.

“I can’t explain it. Then I looked at the sky and the stars were still.”

“Once when Rabbi Hanokh had grown old, a fiddler played him a tune. He said: ‘Even melodies that grow old lose their savor. When we heard this one at the rabbi’s long ago, it made our hearts leap. Now it has lost its savor. And that is how it really is. We must be very well prepared and ready for old age. We pray: “Cast me not off in the time of old age!” For then we lose our savor. But sometimes this is a good thing. For when I see that after all I have done I am nothing at all, I must start my work over again. And it is said of God: “Who reneweth the creation every day continually.”’ ■