



MESPILISM:

The Way Of The Medlar

The Medlar Tree

The medlar is an unassuming tree. It has small white flowers with 5 petals, and then produces small round fruit. The fruit, rough and unassuming, arrives only after patience. It ripens late in the year, waiting for the cold to soften its flesh.

In centuries past, during the barren depths of winter, the fruit of the medlar tree served as a crucial source of nourishment, when little else was available. On one such cold winter's day, a traveller set out to gather fruit from a medlar tree, its branches heavy with ripened offerings, softened by the touch of frost. As the traveller moved through the stillness of the frozen world, a profound sense of interconnectedness unfolded - an overwhelming feeling of unity with all living beings, both seen and unseen.

It was at that moment, standing before the medlar tree, that this individual felt an awakening, a revelation of sorts. Every living thing shared in a quiet, unspoken web of interconnection. This sense of unity became a lifelong companion to the traveller, never fading, always present.

From this experience arose the concept of Mespilism, the way of the medlar, named after the tree itself, *Mespilus Germanica*. It speaks of patience, for the medlar's fruit must be softened by time before it can be enjoyed. It speaks of resilience, for the tree offers its fruit when the world is otherwise bare. And it speaks of interconnectedness, the knowledge that all beings are part of the same intricate web, sustained by the same forces of nature, each dependent on the other.

The traveller found a path of simplicity and quiet awareness - a way of living that honoured the interdependence of all things. It is a way of being that calls us to live with simplicity and awareness, to trust that even in the quiet, cold moments of life, there is a purpose, and a beauty, waiting to be found.

Mespilism does not make any supernatural claims but is simply a practical philosophy for life. Furthermore it specifies that everything must be tested against our own experience and judgment, not simply taken on blind faith.

Connectedness & Acceptance

Connectedness

We are all bound by a deep interdependence. Our existence relies on the farmer who grows our food, and that farmer, in turn, depends on the environment that nurtures the crops. None of us can exist without nature, for we are a part of it, not separate from it. It is essential to foster the understanding that we are all connected, each of us contributing to the greater whole.

It is of utmost importance that we respect and safeguard nature. Our very existence depends on its well-being, as we are inextricably linked to the natural world. Protecting nature not only preserves the environment that sustains us but also ensures the continuity of life for future generations. In respecting nature, we honour the intricate web of life of which we are a part. Given our interconnection and interdependence, to harm nature is to harm ourselves.

Understanding our connections with others is not a mystical notion but a practical reality. The way we interact and engage with those around us shapes our experiences and relationships in tangible ways. Our actions often have immediate effects on the quality of these interactions, highlighting the importance of kindness and respect in our everyday lives.

When one feels this deep sense of connection, the world reveals itself as a place of immense beauty. Every moment, every detail becomes more vivid, and the ordinary transforms into something extraordinary. In this state of awareness, we see the world not just as a backdrop to our lives but as a living, breathing masterpiece, full of wonder and harmony.

Happiness, Change & Acceptance

We all, whether knowingly or not, pursue happiness. It is a quiet force that guides our actions, shaping our choices and desires. At times, we chase it eagerly and at others, we seek it unknowingly in the corners of our daily lives. Yet, the quest for happiness remains a shared thread that binds us all, woven through our very nature.

What, then, is happiness? True happiness lies not in the fleeting charms of wealth, nor in the pursuit of power, honour, or selfish love. These are like illusions, as transient as the morning mist, ever shifting and never lasting. True happiness can only be found inside us.

In life, nothing remains unchanged. Life is constantly shifting, always moving, and the only true constant is change itself. As sure as the seasons change, as sure as day turns to night and back.

Nothing in this world endures forever, not even ourselves. Change is an inevitable part of life, as is our eventual death. Given this reality, it is wiser to accept these truths with grace rather than resist or deny them. Embracing the inevitability of change and mortality allows us to live more fully and authentically, making the most of our time while we have it. The medlar fruit is inedible until it softens, a process symbolic personal growth through life's inevitable changes.

Often at the root of unhappiness is expectations and a kind of longing brought about by fear. Expectation is when we are so caught up with what we expect to happen that we don't fully appreciate an experience. Longing can take many forms; the longing for sensual pleasure, the thirst for riches and possessions, the hunger for achievement and renown, and even the pull of self-destruction.

Thus, wisdom and happiness are found in both acceptance of change and in avoiding the extremes of life, embracing instead a path of moderation and balance. This possibility of inner peace and happiness lies within each of us, inherently part of us and our mind, not separate or external from us.

Tools For Life

It is important to note that the following are merely suggestions and that none of them are absolutes. Everything is relative and has exceptions. Beware of those who speak in grand terms yet fail to live by the ethical standards they proclaim. Words, without action, are empty, and such individuals often mislead with promises they

themselves do not honour. True integrity lies not in what one says, but in how one lives. It is important to test everything and not rely on blind faith for things we can't prove to and for ourself.

Avoidance Of Harm

It is wise to refrain, whenever possible, from taking life or harming others, except in cases of self-defence. The act of preserving life, when it can be done with care and compassion, aligns us with a more peaceful existence and deepens our respect for all living beings.

One should refrain from claiming or taking what does not rightfully belong to them. Respecting the boundaries of others fosters trust and harmony, reminding us to honour the possessions and rights of others.

Compassion, Respect And Understanding

Refrain from any act that seeks to manipulate or harm another. Such actions not only damage others but also erode the integrity and kindness that form the foundation of meaningful relationships. Treat others with respect and fairness, ensuring your intentions are guided by compassion.

Compassion is the deep feeling of empathy and care for the suffering or misfortune of others, coupled with a desire to help or alleviate their pain. It goes beyond mere sympathy, as it involves not only understanding another's hardship but also a willingness to act in response to it. Compassion reminds us of our shared connection to all living beings.

In pursuit of this ideal, it is vital that we have tolerance for the

beliefs, cultures and identities of others. Beliefs should never be imposed upon anyone, as every individual has the right to arrive at their own conclusions, free from coercion or force. Compassion, respect, and understanding should guide our interactions with the world.

Others' beliefs cannot be changed by force or coercion. By reasoning and debate alone can this happen. In other cases it's best to keep in mind an understanding that perhaps we cannot change what others think, and it is far better to focus on improving oneself. Yet, do not withdraw from the world, but remain engaged with it. Strengthen yourself, but stay connected to those around you, for growth comes not only from within but also through our interactions with the wider world.

Generosity and Gratitude

Be generous, not only with material things, but with your time, kindness, and understanding. True generosity comes from the heart, offering without expectation, and nurturing a sense of connection with others. In giving freely, we enrich both our own lives and the lives of those we touch.

In the same way, avoid waste, for to waste is to overlook the value of what we have. Use resources thoughtfully, understanding their worth. Excess leads to harm, both to the world and to ourselves. Let this understanding guide your choices, preserving the balance of nature and ensuring we tread lightly, without the traces of careless consumption.

Another way to avoid waste is by allowing our body after death to nourish the environment on which we once depended. In death, our bodies can continue giving, enriching the soil that supports life. Whether through cremation or natural decomposition, we can help feed the plants and trees, becoming part of the cycle that sustains the world long after we are gone.

Helping those less fortunate than us in life is an expression of both compassion and generosity.

As the medlar tree represents modesty and resilience, follow this example with simple living, sustainable practices, and finding joy in life's small moments, just as the medlar flourishes without excess.

Intoxication

It is wise to avoid the use of intoxicating substances where possible, as they cloud the mind. A clear mind allows for better judgment, inner peace, and a more genuine connection with the world around us. There is also the risk of addiction with some such substances, which can certainly hinder our happiness.

As with all things, this is relative. Any substance prescribed by a doctor or necessary for sustaining life serves a greater good, which takes precedence over such concerns. In these cases, the intention to heal and maintain well-being outweighs the principle of abstinence.

Meditation or Contemplation

Within each of us lies the potential to rise to a higher way of thinking, not in a mystical sense, but simply by striving to become the best version of ourselves - compassionate, connected, and

mindful. This is transcendence: being more aware of our selves in the world and the interconnections we have with others. Perhaps in some way this is what every religion throughout history has taught, but interpreted in many different ways.

Music has the power to draw us closer to our deeper self. It resonates with the unspoken parts of ourselves, helping us to reflect, to feel, and to understand ourselves more fully. Through it, we find a mirror to our inner world, a way to connect with parts of us that words alone may not reach.

A living being exists within and experiencing the world. Through this ongoing interaction with change, one begins to understand who they are in relation to the world around them. An individual cannot exist in isolation; it is only defined in reference to something beyond oneself. Like the medlar fruit, we can require time to both grow and ripen.

The traditional image of meditation often brings to mind someone sitting cross-legged on a cushion. To start with, it can be helpful to breathe through one's nose and simply focus on that sensation quietly. Yet, this is but one form. Meditation can be found in many activities - sitting in a peaceful park or garden, walking through nature, or even listening deeply to music. In terms of music, the opposite is also true – one can appreciate a quiet place, become aware of the silence and any subtle sounds. One can also find peace by patiently placing stones in a circle, letting each movement become a moment of quiet focus. Another option is planting trees – perhaps even a Medlar tree. In the simple act of arranging, there

is a sense of calm and connection, as the mind settles and our awareness grows.

Each of these acts, when done with focus and presence, can be a path to stillness and reflection, helping us connect with ourselves and the world in a meditative way. What is important is not necessarily the methods, but the simple act of taking that time to create this space in your life when possible in a world full of distractions which constantly stir up the mind and prevent us from finding or connecting with that peace within. The best kind of meditation is the one that works best for you. In our busy modern world full of constant distractions, the simple act of taking this time and creating space in our life can feel like a revolutionary act.

Meditation offers many benefits, such as cultivating compassion, strengthening our sense of connection, and fostering contentment.

Yet, it is important that our practice of meditation or contemplation does not lead to withdrawal from the world. Instead, meditation should deepen our engagement with life, helping us remain fully present and connected to those around us.

Just as the medlar fruit needs time to ripen, Mespilism teaches that personal growth and wisdom come through patient reflection and lived experience.

Consciousness

Who are we really?

If one were to peel away the layers of the body, piece by piece, seeking to find where the essence of 'self' truly resides, the question arises: at what point does the self dissolve? Is it in the loss of a hand, a leg, the eyes that see, the heart that beats? Surely, the body can be diminished, yet the self would still persist, the mind intact. But if one were to remove even more, to chip away at the senses, the flesh, when would this 'you' cease to exist?

The boundary of self, it seems, retreats ever inward, not to the bones or blood, but to the mind, where thoughts, memories, and consciousness reside. Here, many would argue, lies the true essence of 'you', hidden in the quiet flow of awareness. But even in the mind, is it truly the brain that holds the self, or is it something more elusive: this consciousness, the awareness of being?

If the mind could be stripped from the body, would this disembodied awareness still be you? Perhaps, in this thought experiment, the self would be preserved in that spark of consciousness, adrift yet intact. Yet we know the mind is no island; it cannot exist in isolation. It is bound to the body that feeds it, the senses that inform it, the rhythms of the world that shape its experience. Without the body, without the vessel that sustains it, the mind could not endure. It would instead flicker out like a candle deprived of air.

Perhaps, in the end, the question is not where the self ends, but how deeply it is entwined with everything that sustains it. You are the sum of these parts, mind and body, held together by an intricate balance, fragile and beautiful in its entirety. To be truly you is to exist in this delicate union, a harmony between the

physical and the consciousness within. It is important to take care of both your mind and your body.

What of the ‘supernatural’?

The notion that every living being is inherently burdened with a predetermined fate or moral debt from birth seems difficult to reconcile with the idea of individual growth and personal development. Rather than viewing people through the lens of inherited notions of guilt or cosmic balance, it may be more practical to focus on how each person’s actions and choices shape their journey and contribute to their unique path. Concepts like cosmic justice or life after death may offer comfort to some, but they might be more symbolic than actual. Shifting our attention to the present, where our choices and experiences directly impact our lives, can provide a more tangible and meaningful way to approach existence.

It is crucial that people are not judged or treated differently based on abstract concepts or unprovable notions. Fairness and respect should guide our interactions, rather than relying on speculative beliefs that lack concrete evidence. Everyone deserves to be evaluated by their actions and character, not by intangible or unverified ideas.

It also worth noting that there is probably no such thing as a soul which continues after death. Where is such a soul located? We are simply our mind, connected with our body. Simply ourselves. Rather than seeking divine reward or fearing cosmic justice, we

should strive to be good for its own sake, recognising the inherent value of goodness in our lives and in the lives of those around us. There is probably no heaven or hell, both existing only in our mind and circumstances. Our best days could be called heaven and our worst called hell. Do not place your trust in things that cannot be verified through your own experience.

It also seems most likely that there is no god or gods, but if we were to imagine that there were, it would be so beyond anything our human brains could comprehend that the question becomes meaningless. You'd first need to define what such a being is, and even then, how could we possibly know what such an all-powerful being would want? How can we assume such a being would want to be worshipped by the likes of us?

Of course, none of this means you should interact with those of other beliefs with anything other than acceptance and compassion.

Finding your inner peace

The meaning of life is not something given, but rather something you create for yourself. In the end, it is the meaning you choose to give your life that defines it, making your journey uniquely yours. Just as the medlar fruit's beauty is found in it's transformation, it's important to value the journey as much as the end result, embracing imperfections as part of the human experience.

Mespilism is a simple and practical philosophy and toolset which brings about greater happiness and inner peace in all who engage with it.